

BUIDHEANN TIGHEADAS LOCH AILLSE AGUS AN
EILEIN SGITHEANAICH LTD
LOCHALSH AND SKYE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**MINUTES of MEETING of BOARD OF MANAGEMENT held on
Monday, 8 May 2023 at 2.00 pm by Zoom/in person**

PRESENT:

In person	Mrs Audrey Sinclair	(Chairperson)
	Mr Ian Young	(Vice-Chairperson)
	Mr Iain Lewis	(Elected Member)
	Mr David Clapham	(Elected Member)
	Ms Liz Williams	(Elected Member)
	Mr John Watson	(Elected Member)
	Mr Robert Muir	(Co-opted Member)
By Zoom:	Mr Robin Nairn	(Elected Member)
	Mr Rory Brown	(Co-opted Member)
	Ms Emma Johnston	(Elected Member)
	Mr Ken Wong	(Co-opted Member)

IN ATTENDANCE:

In person:	Mr N Clapperton (Chief Executive - CE)
	Ms J MacInnes (Corporate Services Assistant)
	Mr J Lamont (Care & Repair Manager) for Presentation only
	Ms L Richards (Tenant Engagement & Support Manager) Item 7
	Mr J Swinnerton (Development Manager) Items 10, 11 & 12

On Zoom:

1. **APOLOGIES**

Mr Gareth Morgan (Elected Member), Donald Fergusson (Elected Member),
Robin Sarkar (Co-opted Member).

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared.

3. **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE: CARE & REPAIR**

John Lamont provided a presentation about the Care and Repair Service. He advised that he works alongside the Highland Council, who are the budget holder and grant approver for the service. He also works with NHS as it tends

to be Occupational Therapists who provide referrals for adaptations giving details of what is required for the needs of the clients.

He advised that the main adaptation requests are for wet rooms, level access showers and access ramps.

Care adaptations on medical grounds are means tested to determine the amount of grant. Every client has some contribution to make although this can be minimal.

The general criteria for Care and Repair grant assistance is that you are over 65 years old, or registered disabled and have been resident in Skye and Lochalsh for over 2 years.

The Care and Repair service deals with around 65 referrals per year and works closely with smaller local tradesmen.

For adaptations to our own properties, grants are available through the Scottish Government.

A Member asked if there was any threat to the service due to cuts in Highland Council budget. CRM advised that he was not aware of this and advised that they had paid for some projects which were almost complete prior to invoices being submitted to get the funding through before the March year end. CE advised that the funding has been frozen for a few years, having been reduced a few years ago.

In response to a member's question, John advised that the biggest risk to Care and Repair service is gaining grant approval and front funding if possible and having staff resource to get jobs pushed along and completed is the best mitigation to risk.

A Member asked if the Board or CE could do anything to make the job better. CRM advised that he has discussed resources with CE and has been working on digitising the system.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday, 27 March 2023 were proposed as a true and accurate record by David Clapham, seconded by Ian Young and approved unanimously.

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday 17 April 2023 were proposed as a true and accurate record by Robin Nairn, seconded by Robert Muir and approved unanimously.

5. PROGRESS REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The CE advised that most items are complete, with the meeting between CHA and HHA being arranged by CE but no specific date agreed.

6. **OTHER MATTERS ARISING**

A Member asked if something could be circulated giving a background on the HHA, CE advised that he will send information by email to members.

ACTION:-

- (i) *CE to circulate information on HHA to members.*

7. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

The CE advised that following a discussion with planners working a multi-settlement Black Isle Local Place Plan at the Glasgow University NPF4 Seminar he is trying to engage with the Council on how to take forward a similar plan for places like Elgol.

A Member advised that he'd visited Raasay and the community there are having the same issues as Elgol.

A Member advised that the Black Isle have managed to secure a lot of funding for the local Place Plan and that the Council are also doing a Community Action Plan for Easter Ross, but funding is not coming through quickly for this.

Members **noted** the rest of the report.

8. **TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

TESM joined the meeting, she advised that she would like to check that the Board are satisfied with the Strategy before taking it forward to tenants and other partners for sense checking. She advised that she'd tried to make it accessible, fun and presentable for tenants.

Members were all complimentary about the content of the strategy and advised that it was a very good, clear report. A couple of members felt that due to it being in landscape format that some of the lines were long and difficult to read.

A Member asked if all the actions fell on TESH. She advised that there would be involvement from other staff, but she would ultimately have responsibility for monitoring progress. She advised that there are events which others e.g. Housing Services have which she could get involved in, and is also trying to be proactive at community events.

A Member suggested that the Action Plan should have some dates as this would be a way to build trust and require explanation if by chance they weren't met. Also there should be some matrix to set out ambitions so it can be checked. TESH advised that she didn't want to over commit to something and it fail, but did appreciate the idea of being open and transparent. She advised that she will add into the strategy how we'll measure ourselves.

The CE suggested that the direction for customer services is delivering more for tenants and an element of that will be trust, however, trust is a bigger picture than just tenant participation.

TESM advised that she has an informal record of tenant participants and sometimes the quality of meaningful engagement can be better than just volume.

A Member asked if there is a clear distinction made between tenants and other residents and another enquired about the Community Fund. A member advised that the Community Fund had previously been absorbed into TESH budget. TESH advised that she'd also managed to get £13,000 from a wind company for the Energy Strategy.

TESM gave a couple of examples of community engagement she'd been involved in and advised of a recent event to launch the use of a green space at Home Farm, which had included partnership involvement. THC were to provide a press release which hasn't yet materialised, however, she will have a PR opportunity when presenting a prize to the winner of the "Name the Pitch" competition which was held at the launch event. Members advised that publicity is important so we get recognition for what we're doing. Another member advised that it is also important to have valuable partnership working.

A Member asked about what TESH plans to do to improve evaluation. TESH advised that one to one tools worked well and that impact and outcome sharing is better internally at the moment.

Members **approved** the working Tenant Participation Strategy document to go out to consultation with tenants and stakeholders.

TESM left the meeting.

9. **HIGHLAND HOUSING REGISTER**

A Member commented that the HHR Policy Review seems to be very protracted.

A Member advised that it would be worth reviewing the introduction of a bidding system like choice based lettings. Another member advised that this approach was used in low demand areas like Sutherland.

10. **EPB-PROBITY POLICY ALLOCATION REPORT**

CE advised that individuals had been on leave so they couldn't get the report together in time. This would come to the Board in due course.

11. **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT**

DM joined the meeting.

DM advised that he had tried to act on past comments by the Board and simplify the report.

A Member asked if the report could be fine-tuned to match decisions made in strategy.

A Member advised that it would be useful to know the housing mix in developments listed in the 5 year programme.

A Member felt it would be improved by showing units being constructed by us for others, for example LSHO with a rural burden.

The CE advised that the contractor for the Kyleakin and Armadale developments has raised a number of concerns about unforeseen costs. More detail would follow but the CE wanted to make the Board aware. A Member asked if there was any mediation involved and DM advised that there is and also that we have ongoing contract with them.

A Member advised that there are other contractors saying they're cutting back on social housing and focussing on private as it's more lucrative and wondered if there is something that the Scottish Government can be doing to remedy this.

A Member asked about the RAG status and there was a discussion about what constitutes a "red" site. DM will provide the criteria for the traffic light system.

Noted.

ACTION:-

- (i) *DM to provide criteria for traffic light system in Development Report.*

12. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A Member asked if, for future, the Board should set a target for the tenure mix. The CE suggested that he talks with the communities first and see what they want and then set targets afterwards, based on a bottom up approach.

Board Members **approved** the Development Strategy and were content for it to be added to the Business Plan.

13. KILTARAGLEN SITE, PORTREE

A Member questioned the owner wishing to remain confidential when it would have been in the public domain as soon as a planning application had been submitted. The CE agreed it was unusual and confirmed that planning in principle has been approved.

A Member advised that it could be done in phases, private and public, but all should be mixed neighbourhoods and asked about the process of how we decide on the mix? The CE confirmed it would be considered on a phase by phase basis, with input from stakeholders on mix and that there is still a lot to be determined.

A Member asked if we could gather other housing needs data or use Skye Connect information to find out what is needed apart from what is on HHR. Another Member felt there was no need to rush to do this as the information could be out of date by the time groundworks were due to start.

DM advised that there is currently at least 9 – 10 month delay with de-crofting applications, so Kiltaraglen would not have been looked at yet and, with the size of this development, it would be hard to gauge how long it will take.

Noted.

DM left the meeting.

14. **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairperson advised that previously a list of correspondence was received including material from the SFHA but now there wasn't much actual mail for the Board. She reminded Board Members to check the SFHA website, and that Lesley Kirkwood had provided details of how to log in.

The CE advised that there are regular online news bulletins.

15. **A.O.C.B.**

The Chairperson advised that she had attended the Joint Board Meeting along with the Vice-Chairperson and CSM. She advised that it had been a very useful meeting with all Highland and Islands Housing Associations represented and it was agreed to have meetings on a regular basis.

She advised that speakers were Sally Thomas from SFHA, Lynn McCulloch, a consultant who had previously worked for the Housing Regulator, Ronnie MacRae from the Communities Housing Trust and Sheena Knight from Albyn Housing Society. The key point made in Lynn McCulloch's session was that the regulatory risk to RSLs was governance.

The Chairperson advised that we had reached 2 hours and all members were happy for the meeting to continue.

Chairperson *A. Suckling*

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm and went into the Private Session.