

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER UPDATE – 19th April 2013

Gleann Dubhlinn hydro scheme

A formal offer of a grid connection date has now been received.

Scarista wind turbine

The SIS case officer is willing to recommend lending capped to £210k plus rolling over interest for the first year, leaving nearly £50k for WHT to find. Harbon are currently preparing a formal quote which may be less than the original budget quote, thereby reducing the gap.

Rubha Romagaidh- Community Building

Following the successful granting of planning permission the focus is now on funding.

Munro Gauld is finalising the business plan with the Big Lottery Fund's requirements in mind, with all key information having already been submitted to HIE. A stage 1 application was submitted to the Big Lottery Fund on 5th April with a decision on whether to proceed to stage 2 being given within 6 weeks. The capital cost of the project is now £1.37m and additional revenue support for the first few years of running the building is also being sought. A bid for £150,000 will be made to the Coastal Communities Fund by the end of April.

David Knight has approved a reallocation of the existing Big Lottery Fund grant to carry out feasibility work on installing a wind turbine to power the centre.

Rubha Romagaidh- Housing

The housing project has not made it into the Comhairle's strategic housing plan which merely mentions a single rural site. However if we have a project that is ready to go it may get funding when an opportunity arises and other projects are not in the same situation.

Crofting

The tenant of 4 Luskentyre has been refused a decrofting order by the Crofting Commission citing the large number of plots already sold in the past.

Plot sales

Both purchasers of the plots at Horgabost have confirmed in the last month that they intend to build in 2014, hopefully tying in with the Rubha Romagaidh development. It looks to be a similar situation with one of the plots in Luskentyre and the one in Scarista. One of the purchasers has initially failed to find a lender due to the conditions on the sale but Highland Small Communities Housing Trust are helping to resolve the situation.

A revised plan is being drawn up for 6D Seilebost and this is expected to move forward soon. .

JMT volunteers

A team will be in Harris the week beginning 21st May and will assist WHT on Friday 25th. Marram grass planting and assisting with setting up the beach festival will be likely tasks.

Seilebost School

The Chief Executive of the Comhairle has given a positive response to the letter expressing the Trust's interest in securing the school for the community. The Trust is able to use its existing grants from HIE and the Big Lottery Fund to conduct a study into the viability of future uses. A meeting is being arranged with Calum Mackenzie, Head of Assets, to follow this up.

Duncan MacPherson

19/04/13