

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER UPDATE – 14th November 2013

Gleann Dubhlinn hydro scheme

Planning approval should be through shortly.

Wind turbines

The revised lease for the Scarista project has been approved by SIS's lawyers who have also requested additional changes to the sales contract for the turbine which Harbon have agreed to. Due diligence should therefore be completed shortly. Dave Harbon has advised that there are a lot of orders now coming in so WHT will need to order soon to be able to get the turbine up before the end of March.

If WHT needs to put £30k over to the renewables account for the turbine project before it has claimed back grant money on the Horgabost shed, it might not have enough available reserves in place. Therefore Neil and I spoke to Robert Emmett at CnES about the possibility of a short-term loan for 2-3 months. He has agreed in principle and says that interest would be charged at 1% per annum. Further information will be given at the board meeting and directors will be asked to approve drawing down of the loan facility if required.

Rubha Romagaidh- Community Building

HIE issued a press release regarding their support for the project on 8th November. The next decision is likely to be by CnES, hopefully before the end of November.

Rubha Romagaidh – Housing

Stewart Wilson of TIG has said that there is additional funding for housing being made available for the period 2015-18. It may therefore be possible to get the project into the programme for the early part of that period. Angus Lamont (Chief Exec) and John MacIver (Director of Operations) of Hebridean Housing Partnership will be visiting at 2pm on Monday 25th November to discuss future opportunities in West Harris.

Plot sales

The purchasers of 9 Horgabost are about to submit a planning application for their site, with a view to finalising the purchase shortly. They intend to move to Harris in summer 2014 and will stay in rented accommodation until the build is completed.

The Chair sent a strong email to Paul Wheelhouse the minister responsible for the dept estates regarding the hold-ups in legal transactions. No reply has yet been received.

I met with a couple who were considering applying for a plot but they decided that North Harris would be a better location for them. There is an outstanding application for a plot and this will be considered by the Housing Allocations Committee shortly.

The planning department is amenable to an application seeking to change the condition preventing the 2 plots at Rubha Romagaidh being sold before the affordable housing is built on the nearby site. I hope to submit this application before the end of the month.

Seilebost School

Neil and I discussed with Ken Roddy MacKay of CnES the process of purchasing the school using the experience of Baile Alein. Ken Roddy has also supplied information from that process which will assist in

preparing an application for the school. The aim now will be to issue a brief to consultants following feedback from the community event on 10th December.

CERB Consultation

The Scottish Government has published its proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill with consultation responses due by 24th January. An initial discussion on the bill will be held at the board meeting.

Duncan MacPherson