

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER UPDATE – 16th May 2013

Gleann Dubhlinn hydro scheme

The offer of a grid connection date has been accepted and Ross-shire Engineering are repricing the cost of the project.

Scarista wind turbine

Harbon have given a firm quote which is valid for 3 months. Adding in other costs and a £5,000 contingency gives a budget of £257,000. This leaves a shortfall of £27,000 after the Trust's contribution and the potential SIS loan are taken into account. Other funding options are being explored but nothing is immediately able to fill the gap.

Rubha Romagaidh- Community Building

There has been no response so far from any of the agencies to the applications for funding. HIE are still considering whether there is a State Aids issue with the proposal.

HIE are funding consultancy advice on future VAT options. The simplest route is not to register for VAT but that would require finding an additional £250-300k to finance the build which is not likely to be possible in the current funding environment. It would appear that the likely best outcome would be to have the Trust build and own the building and then lease it to a trading subsidiary, with both companies VAT registered. A full discussion of options will be held at a future board meeting.

The business plan work by Munro Gauld is now largely completed. Sections on project delivery (linked to the VAT advice above) and risk analysis will be written by me once decisions have been taken on business structure. Section 4 on Development proposals and the accompanying revised budget will be discussed at the board meeting.

Plot sales

The Trust is now formally recognised as a Rural Housing Body able to impose burdens on titles.

The potential purchasers of the Scarista plot are keen to move forward once their solicitor is satisfied over the form of burdens on the title.

The Housing Allocations committee will be meeting shortly to consider applications for the available plot at Luskentyre.

Crofting

The croft rents for May 2013 have now been issued.

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 meeting with Calum Mackenzie was positive and the subsequent paper summarising options that was distributed previously will be discussed at the board meeting.

SNH/RSPB National Twite Survey

SNH/RSPB will be surveying grid square NG0093 (largely covers Traigh Sgarasta and sea) for twite between May and July as part of a national survey.

Duncan MacPherson

16/05/13