

Development Officer Update – 19th September 2017

Seilebost School

Meeting with Porteous Architecture to be held at 6.30 on the 10th, directors welcome to attend to discuss the next stage of the planning.

Rural Housing

This was the feedback received from the Rural Housing Fund is below.

- Although West Harris Trust have not yet engaged with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, the Council are generally supportive of the project. Regarding evidence of housing pressure, the proposed project is in an area where Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) recently completed a project for social rent at Horgabost, HHP would be best placed to advise on whether there is further need and we would not be minded to fund housing needs analysis costs (but do recognise that the site investigations costs may be required).
- We note that your organisation has no direct track record of affordable housing delivery, however, you have been in contact with HHP which is a positive step.
- No information is available on proposed grant/loan levels, but this would be established once the feasibility has been completed.
- We would point out that the Rural Housing Fund main application form requires information on the target tenant group as part of your allocations policy. Please note that the fund guidance states that target tenants “must be those who, due to lower than average income, or higher than average rents or house prices in the area, find it difficult to access housing to meet their needs Applications must provide evidence of how this objective will be met”.
- We note that full planning permission is yet to be granted. You should be aware that a full planning application should have been submitted to the Council by the time you apply to the main Rural Housing Fund.
- Finally, we require evidence at both stages of the application process (feasibility and main fund) that a competitive process has been followed with regard to procurement of contractors/consultants. The application forms now ask for evidence that at least three quotes have been obtained

Before we could consider a feasibility fund application, we are seeking additional information as follows:

- Please make contact with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar to discuss your proposal and inform us of the outcome.

- Given that HHP have recently delivered affordable housing for rent, we would ask you to consider alternative tenure, as HHP mainly concentrate on the provision of social rent.

I have made contact with the contact with Iain Watson at the council and also said we would be considering shared equity which we would consider after the results of the housing needs analysis. TIG were informed that they were successful. Now just waiting on feasibility funding application to be sent to me.

Broadband

Contacted Alasdair Allan and his secretary Lewis MacAskill who are still keeping in close contact with Donnie Morrison and Stewart Robertson at HIE regarding the progress of broadband in West Harris.

VHF System/Generator/Community Emergency Plan

The VHF test – completed and all villages can communicate with each other.

Generator – I am arranging a conference call on Thursday with Ian Ross (Barnies), Donnie MacDonald (Diselecthistle), Kelvin (CDMM), and ourselves. The generator is the ideal for the centre but its connecting it to the board in the turbine shed that may cause an issue. Ian Ross suggested a call between all parties to discuss the best way forward.

Lisa MacDonald

Development Officer

06th October 2017