



MINUTES
SCT BOARD MEETING
SCT office
24.4.18
7.30pm

1. **Apologies:** Gordon Higgins, Ian MacDonald, Sine Gillespie.
Present: SCT Directors Sandy Ogilvie, Angus Ross, Martin Farquhar, Roddy Gillies, Donald MacDonald, Dugald Ross; staff: Hugh Ross, Angus Murray. Viewing Platform car park project engineer, Eric Faulds.
2. **Minutes:** The minutes were proposed to be accurate by DR and AR.
3. **Matters Arising:** HR had intended to provide detailed costings and proposal for income generation at the platform site and car park but had more work to do on this, although he had visited the Corrishalloch viewing platform site near Ullapool last week. He hoped to present it to the next board meeting.
4. **Platform Car Park contract:** SO welcomed EF to the meeting. EF said he would run through the tendering process for the platform car park contract. A hardcopy of his tender report and recommendation to the SCT board was shared. EF said the scope of the work was a new upper car park close to the quarry, an access road, footpath, barriers to separate pedestrians from traffic and extension of the grass island, as well as road markings. He explained that seven different contractors had been invited to tender for the work, which was funded by the Coastal Communities Fund.
 EF said that three bids were received. Out of that there was a base price for the car park, access track, footpath, fencing etc. EF said it would represent good value for SCT and the funder for the bidders to provide an additional price for tarring the new road linking the existing car park to the new one. The potential for Type One material for the track being washed away through rain, the gradient and churn from cars had prompted the request, as it would reduce future maintenance costs for SCT.

Three firms lodged tenders. One was over the budget allocated for the contract but the two other bids from Staffin Groundworks and Eyre Plant Hire were far closer and gave EF confidence their pricing was realistic.

EF said the bidders had visited the site with him and there had been discussion about alterations to the layout, such as having two exits from the car park on to the existing path, to save having a path next to the access road for pedestrians. The cost implications were negligible but it made for smoother management of people.

Although it was a relatively small part of the contract HR said the extension to the grass mound separating the current park from the A855 was important because it was a strict planning condition to ensure visibility splays for traffic entering and leaving.

EF said that he recommended Staffin Groundworks for the contract as the lowest tender but highlighted that there was not a huge amount of difference price wise between the company and Eyre Plant Hire, which is currently constructing a new car park at the Quiraing. Eyre said it could start at Lealt on May 9 while Staffin Groundworks' start date would be mid-May. The board approved EF's recommendation.

- Action Point - HR to offer the contract to Staffin Groundworks on proviso they can start in mid-May.

The board discussed restrictions to stop camper vans and busses using the new car park and possible 'long drops'. SO asked whether the area would be closed to the public during the works. EF said it was his preference and HR said that it may render the contractor's public liability redundant if visitors are still accessing the area. He added that Duncan McDonald who was working at the Quiraing had warned it was almost impossible to stop people accessing the areas.

EF said it was a genuine safety issue, and SCT could incur extra costs from the contractor if they had to work round tourists.

HR said SCT had to submit a traffic management plan, which had to be approved by the roads department in writing, as it was a planning condition. He had submitted it to Highland Council roads official Donnie MacLeod earlier this month for his feedback, with the proposal for complete closure.

SO said it was clear that the board strongly agreed that the entire area was closed to the public for the duration of the works in the interests of safety.

EF said the contractors intended to use fill from the quarry. DR said that the waterlogged area dried up in summer but the unblocking of the drain by the contractor would solve the problem.

DMcD said that if agreement was secured to close the area then informing the tourist office in Portree would be a good idea. HR agreed and said that he also intended to contact all the coach tour companies who visit Lealt, police, Visit Scotland, tourism related businesses etc.

- Action Points – HR to check with planning re alterations to site layout. HR to secure Highland Council approval of Traffic Management Plan (to shut car park and access)

EF left the meeting at 8.15pm.

5. **Crofters' Memorial:** AM said a meeting had been arranged with Atlas Arts and the sculptor Henry Castle for May 8 at 7.30pm in the SCT office and encouraged the board to attend. AM handed out hardcopies outlining various locations suggested for the memorial site and pros and cons for each. AM explained he wanted a steer from the board on its preferred site(s).

AR said that as a location the Valtos area would have the most relevance for the story of the crofters. MF said that the site with the most relevance to the story, the Valtos car park, was perhaps not the most attractive. DMcD said it was a fast road and there was also concerns about the cliff safety.

SO asked if the Kilt Rock was in Valtos. AR said it had been in the township's common grazing before Highland Council purchased the area.

AM said the location was also about managing traffic and visitor flow and improving location. AM said that Henry's proposed sculpture, was not huge and would be based on the quern store idea, which had proved popular at the community consultation. The Kilt Rock was also discussed as a site, with a good-sized car park already established. AM said a drawback to the Kilt Rock was that locals rarely visited there and would not see the memorial often, while the objective of the artworks was to create a destination in its own right.

Other sites discussed were near the Garafad wall, Staffin War Memorial and Loch leum na Bragh, by Digg School. The board agreed that two favoured options were the Kilt Rock and the Valtos car park and both would be discussed in more depth at the meeting with Atlas.

AM said that ATLAS was leading on a funding application to the Henry Moore Foundation which has a May 24 deadline and Henry would be in Staffin next week for two days, which would include him visiting the preferred sites.

RG said that the Digg Ceumannan sign was stolen. The board agreed it was important to report it to the police.

6. **Housing Development:** HR met with John McDonald of HIE's community assets service to discuss SCT's application to the Scottish Land Fund. This would hopefully see SCT secure a major grant to buy the land from the Department and also the surgery building from NHS Highland, while providing money for the other costs, like legal fees, surveys, etc. HR said that SCT could get funding to employ a member of staff to work on the project up to the conclusion of construction, or somebody to manage the business units after they are opened. HR said that he preferred the latter option as he felt relatively confident he could continue working on the project with HSCHT and LSHA up to the end of the construction phase. HR recommended to the board that securing a SLF grant to pay for somebody to manage the business units and storage facility would be a big help, as SCT had never managed a development like this. HR said getting a project worker in at this end would involve him having to get he or she up to speed. DMcD said HR should not be wary of creating a job and HIE would look favourably at it. The board was content for HR to include the cost of a person to manage the development after construction.

HR had been quoted £3,000, incl VAT, by HSCHT to produce a Business Plan for the development and would submit a draft to him by May 23.

HR asked the board if it was supportive of him trying to secure the Stenscholl Township's "wish list" consisting of a new fank, drainage, fencing etc through the SLF. The board was content for it to be included in the application.

7. Slipway: HR met HIE officials Phil McCaherty and Alastair Nicolson the day after the fish farms' planning decision, and the agency agreed to fund an experienced consultant to draft a detailed Business Plan for all SCT projects.

HR had drafted a brief for a new Project Plan for redevelopment of Slipway and intended to send it to John Porteous to get a quote for the work. Once that came in HIE said there would be further discussions. HR said he would send the draft to the rest of the board for their input.