

GREAT BERNERA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST
URRAS LEASACHADH CHOIMHEARSNACHD BHEARNARAIGH

Tendering Brief

GREAT BERNERA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST
FEASIBILITY STUDY
September 2014

Summary

The local residents/crofters have expressed an aspiration to investigate the opportunities and feasibility of to a community buyout of the Great Bernera Estate in Lewis. There is a growing interest in the wider benefits of community land ownership. The current owners have agreed to sell the Estate to the community of Great Bernera and it is envisaged that an amicable purchase price can be negotiated.

In order to assist the community in assessing the benefits of community ownership a feasibility study is required to identify the economic, social and environmental potential of the estate. This initial feasibility study is intended to address the viability of community ownership. It should be recognised as a priority to the Development Trust that proposal and initiatives should aim to create sustainable employment.

The lead group responsible for commissioning this study is Great Bernera Community Development Trust, all of who were elected at a public meeting, the Trust is comprised of 14 residents who live and work in and around the local community.

Background Information

Estate Details

Although it is considered to be part of the Isle of Lewis, Great Bernera is actually an island in its own right. Since 1953 Bernera has been connected to mainland Lewis by a road bridge. This road bridge is one of the few bridges crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Nevertheless, Bernera is typical of a small island community (population of approx. 233) with a strong and passionate community spirit.

Bernera's landscape is low and rolling, dotted with lochs and varied shores on to the sea. It is famous for its expansive white sandy beach at Bosta, with a reconstructed Iron Age house alongside.

The terrain of Bernera with its many valleys and scoured boulders has occurred in part as a direct result of the movement of glaciers during ice ages, and by sea erosion. Over many years the sea level has raised affecting settlement and the way the land has been used as well as altering the actual land shape.

The island is scattered with ancient sacred sites, stone circles, Iron Age inhabitation - all with beautiful natural surroundings. The Sea is also an important natural feature enjoyed by locals and visitors, perhaps quite simply as providing an enjoyable view, a spectacular sunset or a feeling of awe at its power as it smashes into the shoreline. It is also important as the source of employment in the fishing industry and also activities enjoyed by visitors including boating, angling and diving.

The crofting estate extends to approx. 5200 acres (2100Ha) and rises to a height 270 feet (82m) and is owned by the family of the late Prince Robin de la Lanne-Mirrlees. The estate has been owned by the Mirrlees family for approx. 50 years.

The estate includes 69 crofts in 5 townships on land that is predominantly peatland. There are no property assets associated with the estate.

There are still some weavers but this is no longer one of the main industries. Breacleite is home to a mini-mart & off license, primary school, a post office, church,

community centre with café, and museum, petrol station, fire station and doctor's surgery. Although not part of the Estate and unable to take part in the vote the residents of Tir Mor will be involved in all that is happening in Great Bernera.

Map of Estate Appendix (iii)

Community Involvement

Following extensive consultation with the residents of the Great Bernera Estate, Great Bernera Community Development Trust has been formed. The Trust has a mandate to investigate the potential for a community buyout.

Community Consultations have been carried out within the Great Bernera Estate and the relevant results are shown in Appendix (ii)

Affiliation with Estate

The community has a good working relationship with the estate factor, Kenneth Macdonald who is dealing with all estate matters.

The Trust has had meetings with the Estate owners regarding the buyout and discussions with them have been very encouraging.

The Feasibility Study

The study requires an assessment of the development potential of the assets and the feasibility of various development options.

An independent valuation of the assets is being commissioned separately.

The Trust identified four priority areas for potential development opportunities and a further innovative priority area to be identified by the consultants.

1. Housing
2. Renewables (independently commissioned)
3. Tourism
4. Marine Developments (Kirkibost Pontoon development element independently commissioned)

Further details on the priority areas are shown in appendix (i)

1. Estate Purchase

The purchase of the Great Bernera Estate will be accomplished by Great Bernera Community Development Trust. Great Bernera Community Development Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee

The practicability of this will be significantly influenced by:-

- The funding package which would be required for the community to purchase the whole estate

2. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following primary objectives:

- i) Analysis of the current income and expenditure pattern of the estate.
- ii) Examine title of Estate and ascertain what is for sale, are the outer islands included?
- iii) The development potential of community ownership (inclusive of the four development areas identified by the trust and an innovative area developed by the Consultants) against the status quo.
- iv) Further briefly explore a number of specific development opportunities highlighted in consultation with the community (**Appendix (ii)**).
- v) Analysis of the skills within the trust, commitment, community support, external skills available and skilled personnel that will be required to develop and manage the estates potential. Outline management structures for the estate management.
- vi) Develop a business plan to include:
 - a) Preparation of annual income and expenditure projections bearing in mind the development opportunities (including salaries).
 - b) An analysis of options for raising capital.
 - c) An assessment of the economic impact, both at the local (Great Bernera) and wider Western Isles levels.

3. Expected Outputs

- i) An opinion on the medium to long-term viability of the existing estate business activities.
- ii) An account of the development opportunities assessed with in-depth proposals on developing new enterprises/activities. Detailed consideration to be given to the three areas considered as having highest development opportunity.
- iii) Recommendations on the viability of each option addressed in 2 iii) above, together with a prioritised list of future options (**Appendix (ii)**) which should be considered to strengthen overall viability.
- iv) A recommendation on the best options for the community development and management of the estate including partnership working (agencies, development partners).
- v) The development of a Business Plan (**2vi**) to include qualitative and quantitative information to provide the basis for the development of a 10-year whole estate development plan, including an estimate of capital/revenue investment (Development Funding).
- vi) Summary document of all the outcomes.

4. Methodology

Consultants are invited to propose how they intend to approach the delivery of the requirements set out above. We would expect the following activities to be included:

- Introductory meeting with the group to assess needs and preferences, as well as to agree ways of working, timeframe, logistics, etc.
- Conduct consultations when and where appropriate with relevant

- stakeholders, CnES, HIE, Lottery;
- Site visits;
- Consult with Estate Factor and obtain copies of estate title and all relevant papers.
- Regular progress reports and close liaison and cooperation with the Great Bernera Community Development Trust.
- The finalised feasibility study will incorporate the renewable study and Kirkibost pontoon development which are to be independently commissioned
- Appropriate and well-constructed budget, demonstrating value for money
- Presentation to the Great Bernera Community Development Trust committee and also at a public meeting the findings and draft reports, with opportunities for discussion and questions. The outcome of this will be used to finalise the reports.

5. Timetable

The anticipated timetable for the study is:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Distribute brief to consultants – Submission of consultants' proposals – Selection of consultant (may include interviews) – Draft report completed by – 2nd draft report completed by – Submission of final report | <p>5th September 14
 26th September 14
 15th October 14
 End November 14
 End December 14
 Mid January 15</p> |
|--|--|

Should you be interested in tendering for this feasibility study but you are unable to meet the above timescales, please indicate the timetable that you would propose to work to.

Details and timescales to be agreed with selected consultant once contract has been issued.

6. Budget

The budget for this project will be in the region of £12,000 inclusive of expenses and VAT.

7. Reporting of Results

- The Great Bernera Community Development Trust will manage the consultancy with assistance from Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Community Assets Team and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Community Coordinators.
- The nominated contact person is Tom Macdonald, telephone no: 01851-612411, mobile no. 07791548039 e-mail: trustbernera@hotmail.com
- Two copies of the draft and final study reports should be submitted by the deadline dates. The draft and final reports should also be provided electronically.

Great Bernera Community Development Trust shall have copyright ownership of the report and Kirkibost Pier Group along with Great Bernera Community Development Trust shall have copyright ownership over the Kirkibost Pier Pontoon report.

8. Company Experience/Personnel

The consultant/consultancy team must demonstrate knowledge and/or experience of:

- the economy of the Western Isles
- an appreciation of the unique culture of Hebridean island life and its heritage
- the economics of crofting estate management and diversification
- community land management initiatives and issues
- community consultation

The consultants may also wish to add to their team expertise in the fields of crofting, estate management, renewable energy, environmental tourism, community consultation and any other discipline they feel to be relevant.

9. Proposal Documents

You are asked to submit your response to this brief by midday **26th September 2014** and it should include the following:

- Methodologies to be employed in the study
- The cost of conducting the study, indicating fees and total breakdown of expenses (inc VAT), against the person-days input from each team member
- a study timetable
- Details of the competency of the consultant(s) to undertake the tasks, and outline curricula vitae of the personnel to be involved in the study.
- Two relevant studies/work undertaken together with contact details to enable 'references' to be followed up

Great Bernera Community Development Trust

Appendix (i)

1. Housing

Sub-Brief to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most suitable development of Housing within the Great Bernera Estate .

The objectives of the feasibility study are:

1. Produce a value added judgement of all relevant economic and social and environmental aspects and possible limitations and constraints, with:
 - (a) Mutual working with township grazing committees (including Tir Mor) to identify sites suitable for new houses, primarily for young people with income generated for the Trust and Community.

- (b) Options for developing housing (new build or renovation). (Working with Hebridean Housing Partnership or Developers) for sale or rental by the Trust.
- (c) Specialised Housing

Expected Outputs

- (a) Identify five sites suitable for new houses.
- (b) Identify three developments for new build or renovation.
- (c) Options for specialised housing (disabled, 1 bedroom, care home, and any other options)

The outputs of the above should include:

- a full costs analysis
- development funding
- an income/ expenditure plan
- planning considerations, maps, plans etc.
- Opportunities for marketing and branding
- appendices and methodology used, persons consulted

2. Renewables

Sub-Brief to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most suitable sites for renewable development on the Great Bernera Estate showing the Economic and Environmental impacts within the area.

Note: This study will be commissioned separately.

The outputs of the renewables study will be integrated within the overall estate business plan as part of this feasibility study.

3. Tourism

Sub-Brief to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most suitable development of Tourism within the Great Bernera Estate.

The objectives of the feasibility study are:

1. Produce a value added judgement of all relevant Economic, Social and environmental aspects and possible limitations and constraints, with:
 - (a) Construction of a local Hotel in a prime location and promotion of B&B's also self-catering facilities.
 - (b) Options for development and marketing of the walking routes, archeology also fishing on the lochs with re-stocking potential. Development of way-marked paths to Bosta, Norse Mill, Dun Bharabhat and Lobster Pond, and other routes for walkers and cyclists

- (c) Identify two camper-van sites with electrical hook ups, disposal facilities & showers

Expected Outputs

- (a) To invest strategically in accommodation priorities in the area including improving the quality offered by B&B's and self catering, and seeking to attract or develop full service 4 star hotel accommodation in the area and opportunities for attracting custom in the low season, marketing and sales, investment and skills, resulting in businesses being more profitable and employing more skilled staff.
- (b) Development of way-marked paths to Bosta, Norse Mill and Lobster Pond, and other routes for walkers and cyclists. Re-establish trail to Dun Barabhat. Re-stocking of lochs throughout Island
- (c) Identify two camper-van sites with potential for amenities. Camping takes place unofficially at Bosta near the toilets and other "fly camping" sites
- (d) Little Bernera potential

The outputs of the above should include:

- A full costs analysis
- Development funding
- An income/ expenditure plan
- Planning considerations, maps, plans
- Appendices and methodology used

4. Marine Developments

Sub-Brief to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most suitable Marine Developments within the Great Bernera Estate.

The objectives of the feasibility study are:

1. Produce a value added judgement of all relevant Economic, Social and environmental aspects and possible limitations and constraints, with:
 - (a) Mutual working with Pier Group and township grazing committees (including Tir Mor) to identify possible Harbour developments throughout the Estate with income generated for the Trust and Community - Investigating the options, issues and solutions relevant to any identified sites.
 - (b) On shore facilities at Kirkibost Pier. There are two buildings for sale at Kirkibost Pier, potential should these be acquired. Investigate Marine activities.

Sub-Brief to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most suitable sites for pontoon development at Kirkibost Pier showing the Economic and Environmental impacts within the pier area.

Note: This study will be commissioned separately.

The outputs of the pontoon study will be integrated within the overall estate business plan as part of this feasibility study

Expected Outputs

- a) Pier potential throughout the Estate- Kirkibost, Croir, Hacklete, Valasay
- b) Development of harbour area and marine activities

The outputs of the above should include:

- A full costs analysis
- Development funding
- An income/ expenditure plan
- Planning considerations, maps, plans
- Appendices and methodology used

APPENDIX (ii)

- a) Develop areas for agricultural use eg. Common grazing
- b) Veg Box scheme at polytunnels and the development of produce markets
- c) Gallery selling local arts and crafts (provide opportunities for visitors to purchase local crafts)
- d) Bunkhouse facilities, 2 suitable areas to be identified
- e) Stock club

APPENDIX (iii)

Map of the Great Bernera Estate.

Details of the extent of the land to be covered in the feasibility study can be found at:

https://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Great+Bernera,+United+Kingdom&aq=0&oq=Great+Bernera&sl=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=57.684464,93.076172&vpsrc=6&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Great+Bernera&ll=58.219195,-6.842422&spn=0.152068,0.363579&t=m&z=12>

Administration

The contract will be managed by Great Bernera Community Development Trust

Any inquiry regarding this tender brief should be addressed to:-

Tom Macdonald
Chairman GBCDT
17 Kirkibost
Great Bernera
Isle of Lewis
HS2 9LX

Telephone no: 01851-612411
Mobile no.07791548039
e-mail: trustbernera@hotmail.com

Closing Date

The deadline for submission of the tenders is **midday Friday 26th September 2014**. Tenders should be as a pdf e-mail attachment or in hard copy and addressed to :-

Tom Macdonald
Chairman GBCDT
17 Kirkibost
Great Bernera
Isle of Lewis
HS2 9LX
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