**Communications Plan workshop output 5.12.17**

Drawing on the draft communications plan circulated, Members’ discussions provided the following feedback.

**Members supported the purpose of the Communications Plan as:**

A managed approach to communications, using a variety of methods, is required to support the Council’s programme of change and to reduce the associated risks to the performance, culture and reputation of the Council.

The Board’s Communications Plan identifies the key messages for internal and external stakeholders affected by the Redesign programme of work and supports stakeholder engagement.

**Members supported the aims of the Communications Plan as:**

The Council has agreed it must adapt to changing needs with less funding. To do this it will redesign how it operates and what it does. Its approach to redesign is to be open, transparent, honest and inclusive. It is needed now.

The Communications Plan must provide clear communications of the reasons for redesign, explain what redesign means for internal and external stakeholders and what redesign is already achieving. The plan must also set out how stakeholders can be involved in redesign; understanding the decision-making process, recognising how redesign will affect them and how they can contribute ideas and action.

**On the connection between redesign and the budget, Members felt:**

* Redesign is part of the answer
* Need to make the connection but redesign on its own is not enough
* Redesign has intentions around savings
* Need to focus redesign reviews on larger savings and priority areas
* Links with workforce redesign and redevelopment

**Key messages: Members confirmed they supported these as:**

1. **The reasons for redesign**: reduced grant funding, funding gap, generating more income can help fill the gap, new and current statutory requirements mean some services are more protected from savings than others and we have growing demand for some services. Year on year savings since 2010 (and amounting to over £150m) means the role of the Council has to change; we can no longer do everything we have been doing and for the things we need to keep doing we need to think how to do them affordably. Redesign gives us the opportunity to review what we do, how we do it, what can be expected of the Council and what we can expect others to do. Redesign allows us to understand the impacts on those affected, help us with workforce planning and engage with communities and partners.
2. **What redesign means:** the Council must be: more open-minded to new ways of delivering services; more commercially-minded raising income to sustain services and jobs across the region; and more community-minded.

The importance of staff in making change happen, identifying what needs to change and seeing them as well as Highland citizens using Council services and volunteers in their communities.

The importance of elected members working together and with staff and Trade Unions early on and constructively to redesign the Council.

1. **What redesign is already achieving –** to be up-dated when the Plan is finalised and to include e.g. findings and action from peer reviews, Lean reviews, staff engagement, feedback from community bodies, Commercial Board actions.
2. **How to be involved in redesign – for redesign to be everybody’s business**

To specify the different approaches for each stakeholder group below in the final plan.

**Stakeholders**

Stakeholders were confirmed as:

* Highland citizens, general public and specific service users (1st place)
* Staff (also service users and customers and following citizens above)
* Trade Unions
* Elected members
* Private sector operating in Highland
* Third sector organisations, community groups and community councils operating in the Highlands
* Other public bodies operating in the Highlands
* The Scottish and UK Governments

Confirmed we should not identify Council suppliers separately from private, public and 3rd sectors above and not to include visitors as a separate group.

In small groups Board members then considered the reasons for redesign and what redesign means, with a focus on the stakeholders below. The feedback is listed below.

Staff and Trade Unions

Redesign means:

* Giving staff ownership and awareness of change
* Encouraging ideas
* Breaking down barriers
* Willingness to change
* Changing culture
* Bringing a fresh pair of eyes on a problem
* New approaches and thinking out of the box
* Respect
* Trust + partnership + confidence of staff
* Challenge and question

We are redesigning because…

* Good practice for any organisation
* Help reduce the funding gap
* Improve efficiency
* Demonstrate the Council is listening + responding + learning
* Reducing capacity means we must refocus our priorities
* To look for opportunities e.g. income
* To better understand costs and processes
* Wider understanding of services (staff, members and public).

Elected members

Redesign means:

* Finding ways to improve
* Reassure the public of best endeavours
* Having a grip on reality – need to change smoothly
* The Council is changing together and with buy-in
* Ensure people understand reasons
* Public benefit from cross party collaboration
* Vehicle for collaboration
* Mature discussions now (sometimes)

We are redesigning because…..

* Every organisation should refresh itself
* It’s not all about the money
* We can cull dead wood/ find efficiencies
* Creating a team spirit
* Confidence and attitude
* Better consultation/inclusion
* Members able to contribute
* Better quality and tenor of responses to enquiries/complaints to all levels of representatives.

Private sector

Redesign means….

* Maybe a move to more in-sourcing if that is more appropriate(privatisation in reverse)
* It is what all successful businesses do – not just for the sake of it
* We will have more control of the change – not a willing victim to others over-charging for example
* Local spending to grow the local economy and to support a more stable local economy. This includes the value of Council jobs to the local economy, especially in rural and remote communities.

Redesign is needed because…..

* Of the budget gap
* We need to address and counter views around the Council being inefficient
* Reviews are good business practice
* We can identify self-improvement
* We can challenge the notion that all we do is implement national policy, asserting our local autonomy – links to our localism agenda and our intention to enable more local communities to be responsible for the delivery of services and to make them more affordable and better.
* If we don’t redesign we will become irrelevant to anyone under 35 years olds – we need to future proof our services.
* If we don’t then there is scope for more conflict associated with elites.
* It’s about how we want to be seen by our community and the private sector. We want to be seen as credible, professional and leading practice.
* The Wigan Council example – the Council as one organisation for everyone ‘Our council’.
* Members are driving that we are all in redesign together.
* We want to be seen as a leader, innovative and able to compete successfully – we are the biggest so we should be the best
* We want to be a listening Council and responsive

Third sector, community bodies

Redesign means…..

* Changing the perception of the Council as inefficient and wasteful
* Building trust about the Council as a public service provider
* Operating more commercially
* Ensuring staff are involved – communications essential - Staff newsletters and brevity
* Creativity and learning
* Respect, especially around being community-minded.

Redesign is needed because….

* Of the real terms reduction in resources
* We can tap into the creativity of staff, members and the public
* We can be less risk averse and identify opportunities
* There are opportunities to be open and transparent
* There are better ways to use our resources
* We need a better balance across being open-minded, commercially-minded and community-minded.

Workshop to be continued.