

Staff Connections Ceanglaichean Luchd-obrach



Staff Bulletin | March 2021 | Issue 43

'Jabernaut' mobile vaccination unit making its way to Highland communities

People in The Highland Council area will soon be receiving coronavirus vaccines in their local communities with the help of a purpose-built mobile vaccination unit coined the 'Jabernaut'.

The Highland Council transport and housing maintenance staff have procured and built a custom-made mobile vaccine unit for NHS Highland to enable health staff to deliver vaccinations across the Highlands.

Creativity and a positive approach to partnership working with NHS Highland is one that all staff involved should take pride in. They really understood the need to deliver and rose to the challenge in a tight timescale for the good of our Highland communities.

We are aware that our best way out of the COVID-19 pandemic is through the vaccine programme. The geography of the Highlands meant we required a bespoke approach compared to other parts of the country and the 'Jabernaut' is the way in which we can

best reach the communities in Highland. Mike Cooper Highland Council's Transport and Logistics Manager explained:

"Council staff are very pleased to be able to respond to NHS Highland's need for a mobile vaccination unit. We did this in consultation with NHS Highland's staff to understand what was required for their design specification. We bought a unit and 40ft box trailer and then constructed and kitted out the trailer as a vaccination centre which meets all the medical and vehicle safety requirements."

The Highland Council is also supporting NHS Highland in the vaccination programme roll-out by providing a welfare vehicle; supply vehicle and drivers in the delivery of



vaccinations to Highland communities, along with help in identifying and using other venues where needed. The Council's school nurses team is also helping to administer vaccinations.

Vaccinations at the Jabernaut are by appointment only. Please only attend if you have been given an appointment.

Photo: Simon Stuart Electrician Building Maintenance; Neil MacLean Team Leader Building Maintenance; Mattie Reffin Joiner Building Maintenance; Graeme Turnbull Small Fleet Officer Fleet; Craig Beveridge Joiner Building Maintenance; on the platform Mike Cooper Transport and Logistics Manager.

Ambitious

Sustainable

Connected

Message from the Chief Executive



Dear Colleagues

It is a year this week since we went into a national lockdown and our day to day lives changed for us all in many ways.

Events and restrictions of the past year have impacted on us all greatly and COVID-19 will continue to shape our world for some time to come.

The rapidly changing circumstances of recent weeks and the recent announcements about how we will begin to exit lockdown, mean that we are all dealing with huge change and uncertainty.

We never thought we would have to wonder about when can we see our loved ones again, when can we visit a friend or relative, when can we go on holiday, when can we interact with our colleagues in person, and even the basic things, like when can we get a haircut.

Change and uncertainty is, by its very nature, stressful and difficult. We have tried to make available a range of resources and information to help you over the past year. In addition to this, a staff survey is now out which will give you the chance to tell us how you feel, how you are coping and how we can support you in other ways.

I would urge you to please take part in the survey and make sure your colleagues know about it. www.bit.ly/StaffSurvey-Mar21

We have now set the budget for the coming year and I am pleased to say that due to all your hard work and efforts, it has been possible to replenish our reserves and to set money aside for investment. This puts us on a more sustainable financial footing to face the inevitable challenges of the next few years.

As the Constituency and Regional Returning Officer we have another challenging period ahead in delivering a safe and secure election. I am grateful for all the staff who have volunteered to assist with this important democratic process.

It will be exciting for many of our young people to have the opportunity to vote for the first time. I am delighted that we are one of the first councils to engage with this audience through TikTok and I hope we can also use this social media channel to also engage and raise awareness on a range of other matters.

I hope you find this issue of Staff Connections interesting and useful. I look forward to meeting many of you again soon, if only through our virtual engagement events.

Take care and keep safe,

Donna Manson **Chief Executive**

Review of Covid restrictions

National plans have indicated a return to the levels system from 26th April. However, the number of positive cases will need to be far lower than when the tier system operated last year.

Tiers will be aligned with the WHO's "situational levels", which range from level zero - with no known cases in the past 28 days - up to level four, which is defined as an "uncontrolled epidemic".

The strategic framework document provide these "core indicators" to decide which level a local authority is placed in, although most local authorities will move into level 3 to begin with.

Level	New case rate range	Previous case rate range
0	Close to zero	Under 20
1	Under 20	20-75
2	20-50	75-150
3	50-150	150-300
4	150+	300+

The number of positive cases in each local authority is published daily by Public Health Scotland:

www.bit.ly/DailyCasesinScotland

Currently, the Highland case rate is sitting around 30/100,000 which would mean we are likely to be placed in **Level 2**.

The Scottish government says that the "content of restrictions" (www.bit.ly/LocalProtectionLevels) within each level will also be kept under review. The updated approach is outlined in its latest strategic framework:

www.bit.ly/StrategicFrameworkFeb21

New models of working

Working from home where possible remains the advice for levels 1 and above, although guidance is subject to constant review. A project is underway to plan for new future models of working, with a more blended approach to office-based work, as many people may be able to continue to work from home. This means that the number of office buildings can be reduced, with work-stations provided in area hubs. A staff survey has been designed to inform this important project.

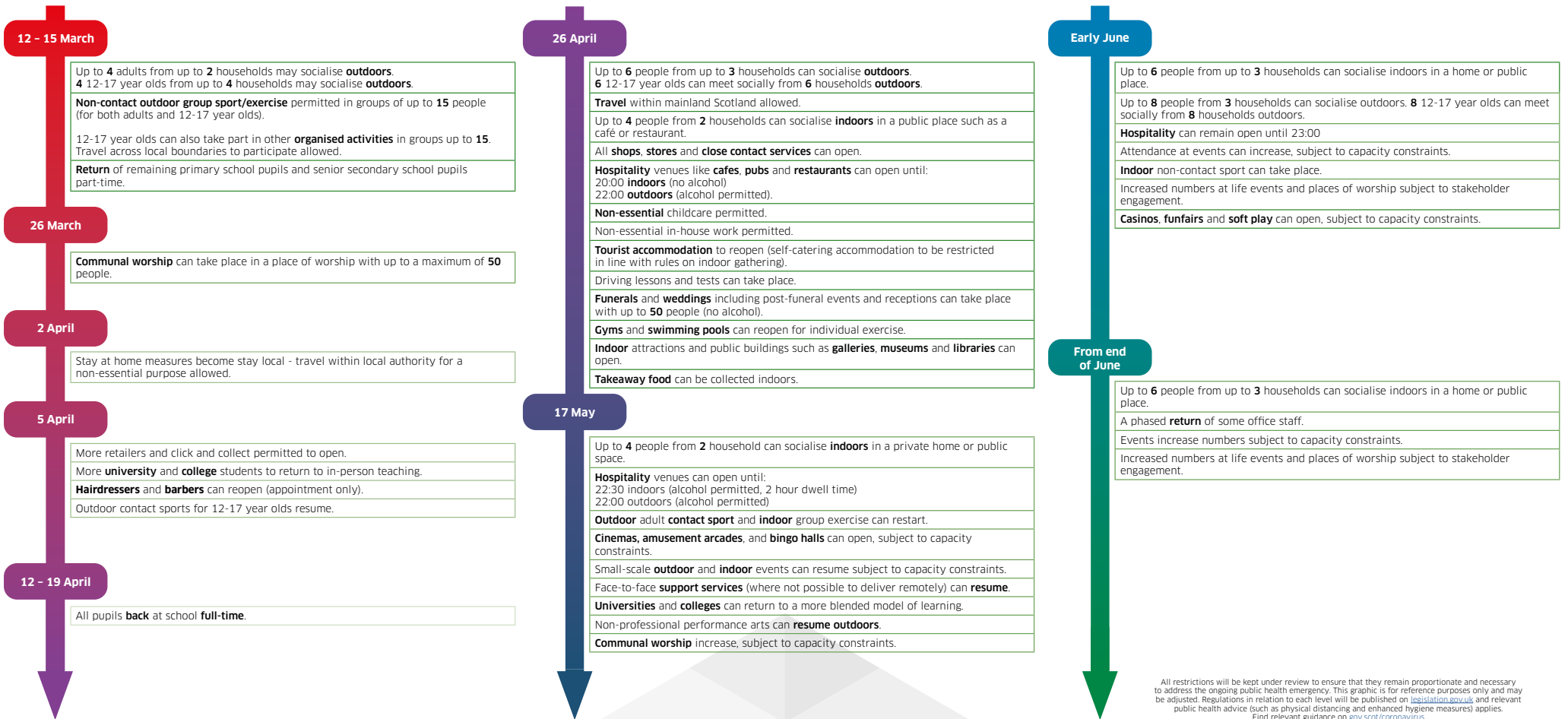
Phased return of Education

It is planned that all children will be return to school after the Easter holidays (2nd-16th April). This will largely depend on social distancing restrictions for secondary school pupils. We are expecting further guidance to be issued on this. In the meantime, all primary pupils returned to school on 15th March with all senior pupils having some time in person in school as part of the phased return.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Timetable for easing coronavirus restrictions



(correct at 25th March 2021)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Staff Engagement February 2021

In February we held another set of Engagement session with the Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer's (ECO's) who held sessions for each of their areas of geographic responsibility. The Chief Executive's session can still be viewed here:

www.bit.ly/StaffBriefing17Feb-Intranet

www.bit.ly/VirtualStaffBriefings

A total of 715 of you attended to hear updates about the current coronavirus situation, testing and the Vaccination Programme in Highland. There was also a Budget update and a discussion about the seven key transformation programmes that will define the future direction of the Council.

We gathered valuable feedback and your thoughts on how homeworking is going; some of the important issues driving your good experiences, some of the challenges you are facing and your desire to help shape new ways of working for the future.

Your Feedback

- “ Thank you to you and the other senior management for undertaking these sessions. It is particularly needed and appreciated in the more rural areas. ”
- “ I appreciate you are all very busy, however I just want to say that I and I am sure everyone appreciates you all spending the time visiting the areas and undertaking these Teams meetings. ”
- “ Digitisation has to be an additional capability, but paper records are still important. ”
- “ I have welcomed being at home as a lot of time was spent on the road. I have gained a lot of time back but really miss the face to face interaction which is very valuable in my role in child protection. ”
- “ I have mixed feelings. My connectivity at home impacts my ability to work effectively. I think going forward a mixture would be effective. Meetings with professionals more effective when the technology works but contact with families really needs to be face to face. ”
- “ I'd like the opportunity to get into detail about what the future ways of working means for my service and my team. ”

We are listening... but what's next?

Our engagement sessions will continue throughout the year.

Please take part in the staff survey so we can gather your ideas, experiences and feedback on wellbeing and the new ways of working.

Please take the time to fill out the staff survey:

'One Year on – Preparing for the New Normal'

www.bit.ly/StaffSurvey-Mar21

If you do not have a council email address, or a personal email stored in My View please email:

corona.staff@highland.gov.uk

to have the link sent direct to you.

Scottish

Parliamentary Election

Dear Colleagues,

The notice of election for the Scottish Parliamentary has been called so we are now in a pre-election period up until Friday 7th May.

All staff are reminded of the Election Guidance for employees:

www.bit.ly/Pre-electionGuidanceForStaff

Separate Election Guidance for elected members has been provided and there is also guidance specifically for schools:

www.bit.ly/Pre-electionGuidanceForMembers

www.bit.ly/Pre-electionGuidanceForSchools

Here is the link to all the information about the election that is on our website:

www.highland.gov.uk/sp2021election

If you have any questions please contact:

election@highland.gov.uk

A TikTok first

Many young people will be able to vote for the first time in the Scottish Parliamentary Election to be held in May.

Launched last week, we are one of only a few Councils in the UK to use social media platform TikTok to engage with young people, and we are the first Council in Scotland to use it to raise awareness with young voters by providing information to the over 16's on how to take part in the election.

Chair of the Highland Youth Parliament, Innes Morgan, has been key in assisting the Council in the development of a series of short TikTok clips.

The TikTok clips are already attracting attention and the short clips was viewed over 300 times in the first couple of days. They are designed to help new voters know what to expect and how to cast their vote, so they feel confident in taking part in the upcoming election and know that their vote matters.

The clips (www.bit.ly/THC-TikTok -external link) cover information on how to register, the different ways of voting, including in person at a polling station or applying for a postal vote in a fashionable format specifically aimed at catching the attention of our young people.

The deadline to register to vote is Monday 19th April (midnight) and to register for a postal vote Tuesday, 6th April 2021. To apply for a postal vote you must be registered to vote first.

The quickest and easiest way to register is online at:

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote (external link)

or alternatively, call the Electoral Registration Office on:

0800 393 783 to request a paper form to be sent to you.

Full information for all voters is on The Highland Council's website:

www.highland.gov.uk/sp2021election



Want to be part of an

electronic team?

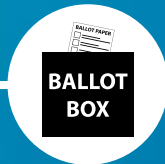
Interested in opportunities to develop new skills?

With the Scottish Parliamentary election this year in May and the Highland Council elections in 2022 we are looking for staff to step forward and be involved in elections.

There are various roles and we want to create a bank of people and build experience within our workforce, especially our young people. It is a great chance to meet other people from other services, work together as a team and gain new skills.

Our Chief Executive, Donna Manson said:

“Running elections is a statutory duty and important for our reputation. It's vital that we have a top team involved so I am authorising all Managers to release staff who are interested in getting involved in the various roles. It will be very rewarding and a chance to meet new colleagues and be part of a wider team.”



The benefits?

- **Employment opportunities**
- **If you work for the Council you are released from normal duties**
- **Enhanced payment**
- **Special leave is granted for Council employees**
- **Excellent opportunity to work as part of a team**
- **Gain valuable expertise and build up your CV**
- **Various flexible roles to suit different skills**
- **Full training provided**

Positions

Polling Stations

Presiding Officer, managing a polling station where people vote.



Poll Clerk, working in a polling station alongside the Presiding Officer.



Polling Station Inspector/Covid Compliance Officer, carrying out polling place inspections.



Information Assistant, greeting and managing voters entering the polling station.



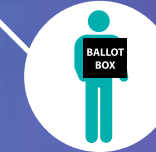
The Count



Accountants, reconciling ballot paper accounts and counted votes.



Count Supervisor and Clerks, responsible for the verifying and counting of the votes.



Box Runners, assisting with the storing of boxes.



Mixing and Counted Votes Team, batching and accounting for all papers received from count supervisors.

We are also looking to recruit staff to assist the postal voting team in the Dingwall Council Offices.

If you are interested and feel you would like to get involved and play an active role please apply at:

• www.bit.ly/EmploymentAtElections

• Anybody over 16 can apply.

• If you require any further information:

Phone: **01349 886657**

Email: election@highland.gov.uk

Health and Prosperity Strategy sets out a new approach

The Health and Prosperity Strategy set out a new approach which seeks to balance the current financial framework with drivers for economic growth and recovery from the pandemic.



At its heart is investment in the Highland economy and securing medium term financial sustainability for the Council.

The strategy has three strands, covering:

- Investment in people, infrastructure, places and business across the Highland region
- Recovery, Improvement and Transformation
- Key savings themes for delivering a balanced budget.

The budget includes sustaining reserves at a minimum of £24.7M which provides financial sustainability in the medium term to allow for future risks and enable future investment.

The collaborative budget, which will kickstart a phased investment plan encompassing:

- £6M Economic Prosperity Fund
- £1.5M Visitor Management Strategy
- £2.1M place-based investment
- £0.2M additional local ward discretionary funding
- £2.25M for a Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Fund.

Investment in local grass-roots programmes will contribute to mitigating the worst impacts of COVID-19.

In addition, the Council's capital plan will see investment of £260M across the region over the next two years.

A positive settlement, together with in-year financial prudence and building reserves during the previous year, has enabled a stronger foundation to address the many challenges The Highland Council now face moving forward.

Everyone has been impacted in some way by COVID-19. The Health and Prosperity Strategy aims to reduce or reverse some of the harms in the Highlands.



Transformation Programme to generate new employment opportunities within the organisation

A number of new fixed-term posts are set to be created within The Highland Council after ambitious Transformation Programme proposals were agreed at Council on 4th March 2021.

As part of the Council's collaborative budget, Council agreed an ambitious plan around recovery, improvement and transformation within the organisation, which will be supported by the Council's change fund. This investment will play an important role in supporting the Highland's people and economy recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

Nine key projects have been identified to help deliver approved and proposed budget savings, deliver wider cashable benefits, and support the identification of medium-term financial savings to close the budget gap from 2022/23 onwards. The projects within the programme are centred around improvement and transformation within the organisation. In total, £3.686m will be invested in these key projects, which are projected to generate £18.659m cashable benefits.

A number of new posts will be required to cover a range of roles including

administration, business analysis, project/ programme management & support, HR, and specialist roles including advisory & research.

The first of these vacancies are now live on MyJobScotland, with the remainder to follow over the coming weeks. Interested individuals should check regularly for new vacancies and are also reminded that you set your own job alerts for these opportunities in MyJobScotland. As well as alerts from MyJobScotland, you should also look out for these vacancies coming through on Twitter and Facebook.

Following recent emails highlighting various temporary Transformation posts available, please see guidance relating to secondment protocol:

www.bit.ly/InternalSecondmentGuidance

Staff should fully discuss the secondment with their manager prior to applying.

The key projects are:



1. Economy (including Growth Investment and Planning)



2. Asset Rationalisation & new ways of working



3. Service Redesign



4. Digital Transformation (including Connecting Customers, Digitising records, and Microsoft Cloud Navigator)



5. Social Care (including NHS Partnership Review, Adult Social Care, and Placement Services)



6. Climate Change



7. Waste (including Waste Strategy and Route Optimisation)



8. Roads & Transport



9. Procurement and Contracts Management

£1.5 million visitor management investment strategy for Highland in 2021/22

A £1.5 million visitor management investment strategy has been agreed as part of the Council's collaborative budget.

The long-term Highland Visitor Management Strategy is set to invest in roads; parking and visitor management; public toilets; enhanced litter and waste collection services; provision for motorhomes; and public transport. The growth of tourism, particularly outdoor leisure pursuits such as camping, and motorhome holidays has exponentially risen over recent years. Motorhome sales continue to increase and a larger domestic market as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are contributory factors as to why relevant tourism infrastructure is required.

The Highlands needs to be ready to cater for visitors and welcome them when restrictions allow and the investment will enhance the visitors experience but will also benefit Highland communities and help to preserve our precious environment.

Work is underway to put measures in place for the upcoming season and increased numbers of visitors "staycationing" in Highland.



Funding for projects in the visitor management strategy now have the green light to begin work:

- £280,000 investment in roads such as improving passing places, lay-bys, road signs and verges;
- over £200,000 investment in parking management at tourism hot spot car parks;
- ten new seasonal access ranger posts (£300,000) focusing on visitor management issues;
- £60,000 investment in public toilets;
- £180,000 increase in waste management service, frequency and capacity to help combat littering;
- £200,000 for motorhomes campsite and waste servicing;
- £60,000 for park and ride public transport schemes to 3 sites on Skye; and
- £175,000 to work with Cairngorms National Park Authority visitor management improvements in Aviemore – Glenmore corridor area.

Need help with your Council Tax?

Council Tax rates for the financial year 2021/22 will have no increase and remain at the current 2021/21 levels. This will take effect from 1st April 2021.

However, many individuals continue to face on-going financial pressures as a result of the pandemic during these unprecedented times. Council Tax Reduction is available for those on low incomes and can reduce Council Tax by up to 100%. For a Band D property this can be as much as £1,332.33, leaving only the Scottish Water and Waste Water charges to pay. Households already in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will have their entitlement automatically recalculated and their 2021/22 Council Tax bill will be adjusted accordingly.

Further detail on the Council Tax Reduction scheme and details on how to apply can be found at: www.bit.ly/Help-with-paying-rent-and-CouncilTax

Households can check online whether they can reduce their council tax bill by completing the 'Apply Once' application form at:

www.highland.gov.uk/applyonce

Households supply their details only once and all Council-administered entitlements which are legitimately available to them will be put into payment. Alternatively, the Council's Welfare Support Team can support individual households to complete the

relevant forms in order to maximise their incomes and reduce their outgoings. The Welfare Support Team can be contacted on: **0800 090 1004**. Households that would like support with managing their money can contact their local Citizens Advice Bureau which provides this advice service on behalf of The Highland Council.

Households who are currently paying their Council Tax by Direct Debit do not need to cancel or change their existing payment amount as this will be updated automatically from 1st April 2021.

Full Council Tax information including ways to pay and how to reduce the council tax bill are available online at: www.highland.gov.uk/counciltax



Communications and Resilience Team – behind the scenes

The Council's small Communications team put out over 750 press releases every year, so you could be forgiven for thinking that that is all they do.

The team which incorporated the Council's emergency planning function in 2016, provide communications and resilience advice and support both across the council and in regional and national multi-agency groups, chairing the Local Resilience Partnership Working and Public Communications Groups. The team provides election support, is responsible for eight COMAH and Nuclear sites and Emergency Plans, delivers major Exercises, deals with around 2500 media enquiries per year, edits, designs and produces professional publications, creates innovative digital media, delivers staff engagement, and much, much more.

Manager, Ruth Rountree-Provan, former Head of Communications for Police, and previously Head of Public Relations for Highland Hospital Trust/NHS Highland and Strategic Engagement Manager for HIE says:

" An awful lot of what we do is behind the scenes. When it comes to reputation management, sometimes there is a huge amount of work behind what you don't see in the papers. There is a wealth of experience and expertise in our small team, including expert digital, marketing and graphic design skills, and we are delighted to welcome two secondees to the team, Pamela Burns and Anthony Coyle. They will be helping to provide communications support to a number of really important Transformation projects, including Visitor Management and New Ways of Working. "

Key achievements for the team include:

- Tactical leadership and development of protocols for COVID-19 outbreaks
- Creation and development of the ground breaking Highland AR App
- Successful strategic lobbying for keeping the police NDEU in Inverness
- Masterminding the West Link Communications Strategy which turned around historic negative coverage
- Complete revision of the General Emergency Plan
- Nationally recognised Election Communications
- Design and publication of numerous publications and leaflets
- Coordination of Brexit risk management and briefings
- Development of the Stranger Smart campaign
- Successful engagement with government to open the Bellwin Scheme for recent severe weather and include Park Primary
- Development of a large following on social media channels and innovative use of TikTok to reach younger audiences

If you need communications support with a project, contact:
corporate.communications@highland.gov.uk

Ambitious plans for youth employment and apprenticeships

Ambitious plans for youth employment and apprenticeships were agreed at The Highland Council Revenue Budget – 4th March 2021.

Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2021 (1st-5th March), highlighted the value apprenticeships can bring to individuals, employers and the economy. The ambitious health and prosperity plan will enhance and grow the Highland Council Modern Apprenticeship programme and support Highland businesses with recovery from COVID-19.

There is an appetite for strategic pathways to support young people and the unemployed. The Health and Prosperity Plan focuses on opportunity and shows confidence in the capacity for the Highlands to recover and grow with the correct targeted investment.

To ensure the Modern Apprentice (MA) scheme attracts a diverse age-range and reaches those who will benefit the most, the Highland Health and Prosperity Plan will include a number of approaches:

- An action plan focused on an MA programme directly linked to the targeted young adult group, reporting of progress to the Education Committee.
- Adults falling into unemployment and those aged 50+ with experience will be provided with opportunities to learn new skills and gain valuable experience.
- There will be additional support for mentoring young people and upskilling mentors. The vision is for every Young Person to progress to a post school positive destination.
- The Mentoring programme would inspire young people, reveal their potential and guide them through their career journey.
- Developing opportunities for supported businesses providing jobs for individuals of all ages with disabilities.
- Providing training, skills and learning opportunities in partnership to respond to identified need for re-skilling and learning opportunities, based on labour market force and post COVID-19 data.
- Identifying strategies to work with businesses wishing to relocate to The Highlands.
- Targeted support for social enterprises will recognise the huge potential of the third sector to stimulate economic activity. The input of young people, staff and newly unemployed adults and those aged 50+ with experience, will be critical to stimulate ideas and develop creative opportunities.
- Collaboration with the advice sector to promote the new opportunities created by economic growth, inclusion and prosperity, and to match the broad range of individuals aged 16-65 with renewed and new prospects.

Success for Highland Apprenticeship during COVID-19 pandemic

March highlights the Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2021 (1st-5th March).



Amy Riddle is a business administration apprentice with The Highland Council's Economy and Regeneration team and has been an exceptional ambassador for the Modern Apprenticeship

Programme (MAP) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The apprenticeship programme appealed to Amy as it offered the opportunity to combine working towards a qualification whilst gaining work experience. The apprenticeship was part of the Economy and Regeneration team and Amy was keen to make a positive contribution to improving the local community.

The Highland Council are a Living Wage Employer – which was another reason Amy was drawn to an apprenticeship, as it offered the opportunity to earn whilst gaining her apprenticeship.

Amy Riddle said:

"I am working towards an SVQ Level 3 in Business and Administration. This qualification comprises of 9 units and Core Skills which involves continuous assessment. I've found my assessor extremely supportive and helpful.

"The pandemic has had a major impact on my job role but has also offered a pathway to new opportunities and career progression. I am currently working to deliver the COVID-19 Business Grants. My main tasks include managing the grants email inbox and replying to enquiries from members of the public. I am also responsible for supporting the wider team who are carrying out the day-to-day processing of the grants and answering any queries.

Before the pandemic, I worked in various offices throughout the week. I liked the diversity of the roles as it allowed the opportunity to work with different colleagues. During this time, I completed a range of administrative tasks for the Council's Employability Service and Business Gateway team. I highly recommend the programme and would encourage anyone to consider new career pathways."

The Highland Council have seen over 270 employees enrol in the Modern Apprenticeship Programme; they include a combination of apprentices from those upskilling their existing skills within their role as Council employees to new recruits joining The Highland Council.

The Modern Apprenticeship programme (MA) consists of 14 frameworks: Business & Administration, Social Services (CYP), Construction – Technical, IT & Telecommunications, Electrical Installation, Domestic Plumbing and Heating, Automotive, Project Management, Construction - Civil Engineering, Social Services & Healthcare, Construction – Technical, Construction - Building, Housing and Freight Logistics.

The Highland Council have facilitated many opportunities both for new employees and existing staff and plan to grow the portfolio of apprenticeships. The Modern Apprenticeship Programme is suitable for people of all ages 16 - 67yrs old. My Job Scotland advertises all our apprentice posts, throughout the year.

Any employees or Managers with apprenticeship enquiries should email: HR@highland.gov.uk

International Women's Day – March 2021

This month, March 8th, was International Women's Day when the achievements of inspirational women of all ages and backgrounds across the world, both now and in the past are celebrated.

The Highland Council recognises the great contribution women make within the Council, but also continue to strive for equality throughout the year.

#ChooseToChallenge campaign 2021 is the theme for International Women's Day this year. A year to raise awareness against bias, work together to create a world free from discrimination, and where everyone has access to the same opportunities.

We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer, yet recognise that there is always more that can be done.

Encouraging people to change the way they look at certain careers is a good example. Roles such as those in the care sector, primary and nursery schools and the arts often attract more applications from women. Roles, such as those in construction, roads, business,

and finance, tend to have more males in position. This is despite all people being capable of excelling in any career.

The Highland Council will be working throughout 2021 to spread the **#ChooseToChallenge** and in partnership with the Modern Apprenticeship Programme to support women to achieve their future goals.

Why is the Council supporting IWD?

- The Highland Council are supporting this campaign as we recognise that an equal Council is an enabled Council.
- Gender equality works both ways and it's important to have equal levels of access to opportunities to enable all our employees to reach their full potential. Equality is not only a women's issue and is going to take everyone to think about being inclusive – all the time.



International Women's Day

Inspirational comments from Council employees:

“ We all have a part to play in working together to make a change in our lives and communities. ”

“ The message of worthiness is very important – Everyone is worthy of achieving their goals - Be open, honest and transparent. ”

“ Challenge yourself, great things happen out with your comfort zone and can have a really positive effect on your life. ”

“ Equality is improving as a generational shift happens, women in 21st century can achieve and be anything they want to be. ”

All staff encouraged to help tackle climate emergency

The Highland Council is launching a new carbon reduction programme so that everyone can play their part in our commitment to tackling the climate emergency.

The local authority's Climate Change Team has created a fun and interactive way for departments and teams to improve their health and wellbeing, connect with other staff across the organisation and make positive changes to the workplace and our environment.

The programme is called Green Impact and you can all take part in fun and engaging actions through an online toolkit.

The environment is everyone's responsibility, and for as little as half an hour a week, you can gain a sense of satisfaction, teamwork, collaboration and take small but crucial actions towards wider change.

Green Impact is split into three categories, Gold, Silver and Bronze, and each depends on its impact and difficult level. Interaction is strongly encouraged, and the Climate Change team is urging departments and teams to join in.

Our current and future ways of working due to the COVID-19 pandemic should not be a barrier and should be seen as a way of fostering a greater sense of teamwork and togetherness at a time where many are working from home.

Although the moral responsibility is hugely rewarding there will be awards handed out after everyone involved has completed their actions. You'll get up to nine months to complete them.

Green Impact is easy, flexible, rewarding and fun and by getting involved you can:

- make your workplaces a more enjoyable and efficient place to work
- work with new people from both within and outside the organisation
- learn about social, health and environmental issues and begin to make a real impact
- be recognised for positive actions you are doing already
- benefit from the shared experience of thousands of others across the country who also take part in the Green Impact programme
- attend and perhaps win something at the annual awards ceremony.

The Climate Change team will be holding a series of "bite-sized," webinars throughout the year, as well as doing ring rounds to see how you are getting on.

continues overleaf



You will also receive regular communications and the team is always there to support anyone who needs advice. Teams will also be supported by students from the University of the Highlands and Islands to complete their actions.

There are 141 various actions to choose from. For each completed action you'll receive points. Actions are scored from 2-10 depending on time commitment and impact.

To win a Bronze Award you must accrue at least 100 points, for a Silver Award it's at least 170 and a Gold is at least 210.

Climate Change Coordinator at Highland Council,
Joe Perry said:

"There are lots of fun and interactive ways all our staff can get involved with the Green Impact programme and I would encourage as many people as possible to get involved.

"Your team can organise sustainable lunches, go on biodiversity walks, run energy awareness campaigns and even work with students to identify potential food growing sites at work."

Staff can register their Team Name and contact details on the website below, using **Code: 2855**.

www.greenimpact.org.uk/highlandcouncil

Joe added:

"You can encourage colleagues to join your team and even begin completing actions right away."

Future updates will be available on the dedicated webpage:

www.bit.ly/GreenImpactProgramme

The Highland Council's response to climate change isn't just about one team driving it forward, it is about the Council as a whole, working with partners, to make progress on areas such as renewable energy generation and the need for us to benefit directly and from supply chain activity.

The Council is also driving forward its own projects. In January the Council announced news on the Ness hydro scheme. This project is due to start this year and shows the benefits of using renewable energy directly into our local authority buildings.

The Highland Council has begun detailed design works on a major £2.5m energy project at a site on the River Ness, part-funded by the Scottish Government through Salix Finance. The project is set to save up to 1,420 tonnes of CO₂ per annum which will help to meet vital climate and ecological emergency targets.

www.bit.ly/HydroelectricTurbine

The Highland Council – A Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)

Disability Confident is a Government promoted scheme led by the Department of Work and Pensions.

There are 3 levels of accreditation:

- Disability Confident Committed Employer (Level 1)
- Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)
- Disability Confident Leader (Level 3)

The Highland Council has been recently awarded Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status for another 3 years through to February 2024.

HR has established a Disability Confident Working Group who are now progressing the existing good practice within the Council looking to achieve 'Leadership' status as an employer - Disability Confident Leader (Level 3). The Disability Confident Working Group are working with management and services to build upon the Council's offering for staff and customers with disabilities.

As a Disability Confident Leader the Highland Council will also encourage and support other businesses in their supply chains and networks to become Disability Confident thus creating a more

inclusive society.

Self-assessment for Level 3 Leader status has begun, and this will be externally validated to ensure that the council are delivering against all of the core actions as a Disability Confident Leader. The Council will also commit to the DWP's Voluntary Reporting Framework, voluntarily reporting on the percentage of individuals within the organisation who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long term physical or mental health condition. This information, gathered in May, will be shared at a corporate level afterwards.

A narrative to explain the activities in the Council in relation to the recruitment and retention of disabled people will be



provided to DWP as part of the Leader accreditation process. The Disability Confident Working Group will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to ensure ongoing commitment to continuously review and develop our offering to disabled people.

It must also be noted that there will be an element of non-disclosure of disabilities amongst our staff. We will strive to ensure that the available assistance such as the Employee Assistance Scheme, Mental Health Reps and Occupational Health schemes are accessible to all of our workforce.

The Disability Confident Working Group would welcome further ideas or queries. Please contact them at:

TalentTeam@highland.gov.uk

First Aid Provision and Needs Assessment

In order to ensure adequate and appropriate First Aid cover, RPOs should liaise with Duty Holders and Line Managers in carrying out a First Aid needs assessment to determine the extent of cover required in their workplace. Details on provision and assessment can be found on the Councils First Aid Policy and guidance.

www.bit.ly/FirstAidNeedsAssessment www.bit.ly/FirstAidPolicyandGuidance

First Aid training

Plans are under way to resume the delivery of First Aid training in the workplace. Courses will be advertised through the Learning and Development page on the intranet and current first aiders will be contacted by someone from the L&D team when these become available.

www.bit.ly/LandD-TrainingCourses

First Aid online modules (non-certificated)

All staff can now access First Aid modules online through My Online Learning:

www.bit.ly/MyOnlineLearningLogin

Lone and home workers especially are encouraged to access these resources.

You can also have specialist help at your fingertips with the British Red Cross First Aid app:

www.bit.ly/BritishRedCrossApp

Further information and guidance can be obtained by emailing: HealthSafety.andWellbeing@highland.gov.uk

Designated First Aiders will still have to complete their relevant requalification course available through Learning and Development. The online modules can be used as refreshers for designated first aiders prior to gaining their requalification.

www.bit.ly/LandD-TrainingCourses

Advice on First Aid during the Covid-19 pandemic can be found by visiting the HSE website:

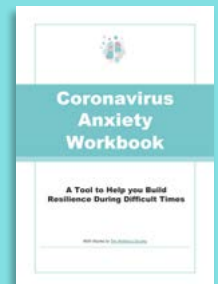
www.bit.ly/CoronavirusFirstAid



Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook

A new, self-directed work book is available for anyone with anxiety around Coronavirus.

www.bit.ly/CoronavirusAnxietyWorkbook



Armed Forces Network

Support for veterans and families of veterans

As a member of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Highland Council offer support to employees who are veterans and to their families.

We are inviting colleagues with Forces experience to join the Highland Council Armed Forces Staff Network.

If you are interested, please email: james.mccreath@highland.gov.uk

The network has trained volunteer mentors who are able to support members struggling with adjustment to life after service through our Armed Forces Network Mentoring scheme.

Your local mentors are:

Liz MacKay	Golspie	liz.mackay3@highland.gov.uk	01408 635286
Denise Walsh	Lybster PS	denise.walsh@highland.gov.uk	01593 721224
Jim McCreath	Inverness	james.mccreath@highland.gov.uk	07557 484744
Phil Croughton	Alness	phil.croughton@highland.gov.uk	07920 727564
Andy Huggett	Inverness	andrew.huggett@highland.gov.uk	07715 001660

Your mentors are there to listen and support you, and to signpost to additional sources of support.



**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT**

**EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
SCHEME**

SILVER AWARD

MS Teams video training

Microsoft Teams is your hub for teamwork which brings together everything a team needs: chat and threaded conversations, meetings & video conferencing, calling, content collaboration and training sessions.



Microsoft Teams is a platform that combines workplace chat, meetings, notes and attachments. Learn how to take advantage of everything Microsoft Teams has to offer in these short videos.

Please note: Some features of Teams are not yet available to Highland Council. If you see something that you think would be useful for Highland Council please email the ICT Implementation team:

ICT.ImplementationTeam@highland.gov.uk



Microsoft Teams video training



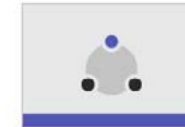
Quick start



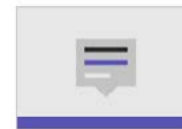
Intro to Microsoft Teams



Set up and customize your team



Collaborate in teams and channels



Work with posts and messages



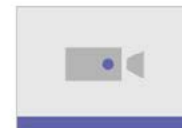
Upload and find files



Start chats and calls



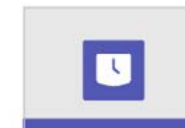
Manage meetings



Set up and attend live events



Explore apps and tools



Manage team schedules with Shifts



Walkie Talkie, Tasks and Praise



www.bit.ly/Teams-Video-Training

Employee Assistance Programme

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a confidential counselling service that provides support to company employees and your family.



24/7



**Our EAP is available
24/7, 365 days a year covering:**

- Counselling
- Legal information
- Financial information
- Consumer information
- Career guidance
- Life coaching
- Mediation
- Health information
- Health information
- Cancer support
- Autism support
- Infertility & pregnancy loss
- Elder care support
- Parent coaching
- International employee support



Register online:

<https://app.spectrum.life/login#>
Organisation code: **j5n2Rh73**



spectrum

.life 

is
the Council's new Employee
Assistance Programme.

Discover Spectrum.Life,
our new online health and
wellbeing service, by
watching the video here:

www.bit.ly/Discover-Spectrum-Life

and signing up using our
organisation code.

Organisation Code

j5n2Rh73

Support includes a Counselling service with web chat support, fitness plans, legal assistance, financial advice, and eLearning content relating to a variety of wellbeing topics.



Clear Your Head Campaign



These are worrying and uncertain times.

The coronavirus outbreak has changed daily life for us all in Scotland and has had a real impact on how many of us are feeling. It's ok to not feel yourself right now, and we have some great tips to help get you through it.

'Clear Your Head' highlights the practical things people can do to look after themselves whilst staying at home.

Find tips on how to stay positive and feel better at:
www.clearyourhead.scot