The Highland Council

Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
20 May 2015

Agenda Item	12.
Report No	ECAS 41/15

Facilities Management Review - Update

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

Members are asked to note the progress to date with the Facilities Management Review, and to agree that the further consultation with Members and stakeholders on detailed proposals is carried out with a view to reporting recommendations for the future of Facilities Management to the August Committee.

1.   Background

1.1   The Facilities Management (FM) review was agreed by Committee on 14 January, with a view to reporting back to Committee in May 2015. The Review Terms of Reference were annexed to that report:
www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/67260/item_9_facilities_management_update

1.2   This report sets out progress to date with the review, emerging issues, and proposed next steps. While the stakeholder engagement and the analysis of responses have been extensive, it is important to ensure adequate time to discuss with stakeholders the proposals that are emerging from the review. Hence, final recommendations will not now be presented to Committee until August.

1.3   As stated within the review terms of reference, the review will give regard to "the valued contribution FM and janitorial staff make to the operation of Highland Schools".   Understandably however, the process has led to some concern amongst FM and janitorial staff with regard to their positions, and any implications that may arise. While the review is ongoing, regular updates are being provided to staff and trade unions, in order that they are informed of progress, and have the opportunity to comment on proposals.

1.4   The review will also consider any longer-term recommendations relating to the FM Service, which will include (but not be limited to) consideration of the links between FM and Highlife Highland and Community Services, to explore any further improvements or synergies there may be between these different functions.

2.   Progress with the Review

2.1   The FM review conducted a broad consultation with stakeholders throughout February and March 2015, with a considerable level of feedback, as summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Groups	One to one Meetings	Group Meetings	Visits	Tel/email Contact	Survey
Head Teachers	21	✓ (1)	✓ (4days)	✓	59 + 67*
FM/Janitorial Staff	16	✓ (1)	✓ (4days)	✓	71**
FM Team Leaders	5	✓ (2)	✓ (4days)	✓	
Parent Councils		✓ (1)		✓	56
Community Users		✓ (1)		✓	
Members		✓ (1)			
HC Property	✓ (2)	✓ (3)		✓	
Health and Safety	✓ (1)			✓	
Trade Unions		✓ (2)		✓	
Other Local Authorities				✓ (7 LAs)	

* Head Teachers response rate:
- Head Teachers of schools with FM: 59
- Head Teachers of   schools without FM: 67

** includes Janitorial staff FM staff and FM Team Leaders.

3   Emerging Themes from the Review

3.1   This section of the report summarises the principal themes emerging from the review to date.

3.2   **FM objectives**

3.2.1   The previously stated objectives of the FM model were:
- The creation of a universal support function that will assist Head Teachers with the significant burdens associated with property and grounds management;
- The creation of a standardised operating model that will create a facilities management structure under specialist line management arrangements;
- The creation of standardised job descriptions that will ensure that there is consistent approach to facilities management across all schools;
- To confirm whether provision Is affordable within the current budget allocation.

3.3   **Feedback from Stakeholders**

3.3.1   In general, the feedback from stakeholders has been a mixture of both positive and negative. Schools who had gained additional provision under FM were generally positive about FM, whilst those whose provision had reduced, and in particular the larger schools which had lost full time janitorial provision, were understandably less satisfied.

3.3.2   Through discussion with Head Teachers, the key principle of providing a resource which supports them in their role as RPO, and allows them to focus on learning and teaching, has been supported, albeit deployment of the existing FM model has not in all cases achieved that outcome to date.

3.3.3   On the positive side, an overwhelming majority of Head Teachers (more than 90% of respondents) agreed that they enjoyed a good working relationship with FM staff. Other benefits identified included: having access to a team of FM staff for larger tasks; the availability of holiday and sickness cover; and the fact that

FM ensures some provision for all schools.

3.3.4   Council Officers with responsibility for property management and health & safety issues, recognised the vital role FM provided in monitoring building issues and perform routine tasks and checks (such as the weekly fire alarm test) to ensure (and provide evidence) that buildings are safe for users.

3.3.5   However the introduction of FM has also raised some concerns amongst stakeholders and these are outlined below.

3.4   Rotation of staff and rotas

3.4.1   FM allocates staff to schools according to a rota and shift system, providing staff at various times between 8am and 6pm. The allocation to each school is determined by an audit of school needs. No schools receive full time provision. The rota means that some schools may be attended by as many as four or five different members of staff during a full shift rotation (usually fortnightly). Furthermore, FM operates a system of periodic rotation where staff are moved between schools to ensure that as many staff as possible are familiar with each school.

3.4.2   This particular aspect of FM relates to many of the issues outlined below, that have been a major source of concern for schools and for FM staff.

3.5   Lack of Ownership and Familiarity

3.5.1   The rota and rotation have created situations where no single Facilities Management Assistance (FMA) has responsibility for a school, and this has led to a reported lack of initiative taking and lack of familiarity with premises, which has actually increased the burden on RPOs rather than reducing it - as was the objective of FM.

3.6   Loss of Pastoral Role

3.6.1   The constant changing of staff has also led to a loss of what some stakeholders referred to as the 'pastoral role' of the school janitor. Janitors and FMA's are an adult presence in schools that some pupils value and trust because they are not teachers. Whilst the focus of the FMA role is the state of the building, this pastoral presence is valued in many schools.

3.7   Time Spent Travelling between Schools

3.7.1   FM rotas and shifts require FMAs to travel between schools, and inevitably this has led to an impression that time and money spent travelling is time that could be spent attending to schools. Whilst some travel is always going to be required to attend more remote schools, stakeholders are concerned that the rotas are creating a need to travel unnecessarily.

3.8   Insufficient allocation for largest schools

3.8.1   Head Teachers of the largest schools miss the full time janitorial provision they had received. This need was evidenced by the range and frequency of activities requiring FMA input activities - such as setting up the hall for activities, receiving

deliveries etc., which happen more frequently in larger schools.

3.9 **Inconsistent Performance**

3.9.1 Inconsistent performance was raised by some stakeholders, particularly in relation to the different approaches and attitudes of different FM staff serving a particular school.

3.10 **Clarity of FMA Role**

3.10.1 The clarity of the role of the FMA was raised by many stakeholder groups. In part this referred to the range of tasks that FMAs are able to perform (and those which they are not), including in relation to building repair and maintenance.

3.10.2 There is a perception that the introduction of FM has restricted the number of tasks that staff can perform. In fact this change pre-dates FM, as all Head Teachers were previously informed that no repairs should be undertaken by janitorial staff and that all repairs should requested by the RPO through the Maintenance Officer, to ensure work is done to required standards. This policy is now being implemented under FM line management arrangements. Nonetheless, there remains misunderstanding in schools and amongst FMAs about this - in particular, when the costs of contractors are charged to school budgets. Whatever, FMAs are able to perform a number of tasks for which they have been equipped and trained, for example working at height to change light bulbs, weed killing etc.

3.11 **Communication**

3.11.1 Communication was identified as a weakness of the FM provision. This related to communications between school and FM staff and with Maintenance Officers (regarding maintenance tasks). The FMA should have a key role, however relationships and lines of communication are not being formed due to the changing personnel caused by the rotas. A key message from stakeholders was that each school should have one FMA (even if shared with another school)

4 Taking the FM Review Forward

4.1 There is still detailed work and consultation with stakeholders required before recommendations for the future of FM can be reported to Committee. Taking account of the emerging themes described above, the suggested principles behind the developing recommendations are set out in this section:

4.2 **Retaining the FM Model**

4.2.1 While there are issues identified with the current model and implementation of FM, no strong case has emerged for developing an entirely new approach. Equally, given the stated objectives of FM, as well as stakeholder feedback, there appears to be no sound case for reverting back to the previous janitorial model. The focus of the review, based on the feedback to date, is to identify a range of improvements to the FM model which can address the key concerns. Some particular approaches which will be given further consideration and discussed with stakeholders include:

4.3   Developing new allocation models for FM resources

4.3.1   Under the previous janitorial model, schools had a full time Janitor where the roll was 146 or more pupils, with no provision for schools with a school roll less than 146. The lack of any provision for smaller schools was one of the issues the FM service sought to address. However, under FM no school gets full time provision (but all schools get some level of provision). One aspect that the review will explore, are different allocation models to give a more equitable and transparent allocation of FM resource, and where possible to give full time resource to larger schools.

4.4   Allocating staff to schools

4.4.1   Resource allocation is but one aspect; the actual deployment of FM staff to schools will be a further key consideration. Taking account of stakeholder feedback, options to ensure greater consistency and continuity of staff presence will be explored, which could then create closer ties between FM staff and the school, and help build relationships. Local recruitment and use of existing staff (e.g. cleaners) will also be explored, to minimise staff travel where feasible to do so.

4.5   Inclusion of Secondary Schools

4.5.1   Some secondary schools in the more rural parts of Highland are already scheduled to be included in FM. However the benefits of supporting the RPO, and for the Council of having a universal, standard provision across the school estate, suggest that it is worth considering the inclusion of all secondary schools in FM. This could also provide a more localised model. However, there are a number of issues that will require further discussion, including with Head Teachers.

4.6   Supporting schools within clusters

4.6.1   It is important to maintain the advantages of team-working, by organising schools into clusters to allow for sick and holiday cover and for team support for larger tasks. This will also benefit the programme of work carried out when schools are closed for holidays. If secondary schools are included, they could form the basis for clusters and potentially a degree of local supervision more closely aligned with the schools.

4.7   Shift patterns

4.7.1   Shift patterns will be further considered, to consider any improvements or amendments that could be considered.

4.8   Clarity of role

4.8.1   The FMA job description is quite detailed but there are issues being raised about the clarity of the role. Consideration will be given to reviewing FM job descriptions and improving communications with schools. There will also be ongoing dialogue with colleagues in Development and Infrastructure and Community Services, to clarify the interface and division of roles between FMAs and these services.

4.9   **Communication and relationships**

4.9.1   As stated above, the options being explored with give particular consideration to communication and relationships.

4.10   **Electronic Access/Logons**

4.10.1 Many Janitors do not have access to the Council network or computers. Access to the network and the K2 system would greatly facilitate the ability of staff to support the RPO with logging maintenance requests and monitoring their progress, as well as being able to plan schedules so they are available to assist contractors with access if required.   Scope for FM staff to have access to appropriate ICT will be considered as part of the review.

5.   Next Steps

5.1   The next steps for the Review are:

- To continue to work with Members and other stakeholders to develop detailed and costed recommendations based on the principles outlined above
- To report to Committee in August to provide an update on progress and to outline recommendations for the future of FM service for Members to consider

5.2   In developing recommendations, while the August Committee will be asked to consider and agree a number of strategic recommendations to improve the existing model, it is envisaged that within that structure, there would be a need for local discussions on local arrangements for implementations, and to avoid a one size fits all approach.

6.   Implications

6.1   **Resources:** Financial implications will be modelled for options to be developed. As members are aware, the existing FM model implemented across the 5 phases to date, exceeds the current budget by circa £300k. There is therefore a considerable financial challenge associated with developing recommendations which can provide an equitable model across all Highland schools, and address the issues raised in the review.   The recommendations are likely to have financial implications, although there may be scope for these to be mitigated - e.g. if secondary schools are in scope.

6.2   **Legal and Risk:** It is critical that this ongoing service ensures the Council's legal obligations are taken full account of, and that health and safety and other property compliance obligations are properly addressed.

6.3   **Equalities:** For any recommendations to be considered by Committee in August, an Equality impact screening will be undertaken.

6.4   **Gaelic:** No implications to highlight.

6.5   **Climate Change/Carbon Clever:** It should be possible to reduce staff travel through any new arrangements.

6.6 **Rural implications:** Any new model will have to be able to support provision across the range of Highland schools.

7.	Recommendation
7.1	Members are asked to note and comment on the progress to date with the FM Review, and to agree that the further consultation with Members and stakeholders on detailed proposals is carried with a view to reporting recommendations for the future of FM to the August Committee.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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