The Highland Council

Community Services Committee

3 November 2016

Workforce Planning Action Plan

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report updates Members on progress with implementing actions in the Community Service Workforce Planning Action Plan.

1. Background

1.1 Workforce planning is the process that organisations use to make sure they have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. To manage their workforces effectively, organisations need to have up to date information on:

- the number of people they employ to carry out different tasks;
- what skills the workforce has and where there are gaps; and
- what skills and staff will be needed to deliver future services and priorities.

1.2 Effective workforce planning will support Community Services to:

- deliver improved services;
- review how many employees are needed;
- manage employee budgets effectively;
- ensure sufficient and appropriate training is provided;
- cope with variations in supply of and demand for various skills; and
- identify longer term workplace accommodation requirements.

1.3 The Community Services Workforce Plan has been prepared using the Highland Council six point model:

1. Environmental and context analysis
2. Future Workforce Profile
3. Current workforce Profile
4. Workforce implications/gap analysis
5. Action Plan
6. Review and evaluation

1.4 Community Services prepared an Action Plan that was agreed by Community Services committee in August 2015. This plan covers the period 2015 – 2018 and is reviewed as a standing item at Service Senior Management Team meetings and formally reviewed and reported to Committee on an annual basis. This is our annual report.

2. Progress Since August 2015

2.1 The Action Plan is attached as **Appendix 1**. It details 9 key issues to be addressed over the period of the plan:

1. Review staffing levels
2. Create a diverse, multi-skilled and flexible workforce
3. Develop competent and well trained staff
4. Promote and champion a 'can do' culture throughout the Service
5. Place greater emphasis on communications and customer care
6. Improve business and PR awareness
7. Improve attendance management
8. Improve ICT to enable better service delivery
9. Develop and promote a partnership approach with our Trade Unions

2.2 Good progress has been made with many of these actions and the plan has been updated to reflect this.

2.3 Restructuring of the Service and the senior management team took place between January and April 2016. A team of eight was reduced to four and functions were aligned to the new structure. The need for teams to be multi-skilled remains a focus.

2.4 The Voluntary Release scheme was something not anticipated when the plan was written and the Service released 60 members of staff through the scheme. This will impact on what we deliver and how we deliver it and our focus must remain on skilling our staff and delivering the best customer services we can.

2.5 The age profile across the Service is high, and action is being taken to manage the risk when qualified and skilled staff leave. Building Maintenance has a well-established and successful apprenticeship programme running and this is now being replicated in the Transport section where 7 new apprentices joined the team in September 2016.

2.6 The outcomes of the Council re-design work (involving the review of several parts of the Service) is not known at this time, and the Action Plan will be updated to reflect changes as they occur.

3. Implications

3.1 There are no known specific resource, legal, equality, climate change/Carbon Clever, risk or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the progress made with the Action Plan.

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Date: 30 September 2016
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Background Papers: Community Services Workforce Plan 2015 – 2018

Appendix 1	WORKFORCE PLANNING ACTION PLAN – COMMUNITY SERVICES			
Issue/ Need	Actions	Outcomes	Service Lead	Timeline
1. Review staffing levels and skills required to deliver Service and section responsibilities (in conjunction with 2 and 3)	1. Review roles and responsibilities 2. Confirm resource needs and review section structure plans for approval	1. Structure changes to reflect WFP outcome to be approved at CS Committee	Each member of SMT	March 15 Ongoing

Progress September 2016

Restructuring has been a constant theme since the Service was formed in April 2014.   Work was undertaken to review roles and responsibilities and this has been an ongoing activity. The most recent restructuring in April 2016 has seen the most significant change to the structure and a reduction in senior managers from 8 to 4. A new structure of third tier managers and functional teams has moved the Service towards a more integrated service delivery model, e.g. ground maintenance moved from Roads and Transport to Environmental and Amenity Services.

The number of staff in the Service has reduced by approximately 60 since April 2016 as a result of the Voluntary Release Scheme and changes in the structure have been made to reflect this.

A skills assessment is carried out when an employee moves role to ensure health and safety and skills training is identified, planned and delivered.

During the periods of restructuring the Service has remained focused on service delivery and putting the customer at the heart of what we do. The Council re-design (and current reviews) will help shape the priorities and focus going forward.

2. Create a diverse, multi-skilled and flexible workforce	1. Identify potential synergies and review job families within and across each section (utilise work already done within the Service)	1. Produce options paper for discussion and development at SMT and TU meetings	Tina Luxton and Caroline Campbell	September 15 Ongoing

Progress September 2016
Work has been undertaken to identify roles which could be suitable for cross skilling, for example Community Works Officer type roles. Progressing this has been

impacted on by restructuring.   The structure implemented in April 2016 will now enable this to progress. Progressing multi-skilling will now be facilitated by a Council-wide project, run by HR and the Corporate Improvement Team, which will use Community Services as a pilot.

Succession planning is an importance consideration. 46% of staff are older than 51 years of age and 10% older than 61 years of age. The Service is continuing its successful Apprenticeship programme in Building Maintenance and re-invigorating the programme in the Transport function where 7 apprentices were recruited in 2016.

| 3. Develop competent and well trained staff | 1. Develop a performance management strategic programme for the Service that includes (a) an effective implementation of the ERD process and (b) a review of job and person specifications where appropriate and relevant to ensure roles are meeting Service needs
2. Implement the programme established with Business Support and Learning & Development (L&D) that records all relevant training and reviews as a result of performance management. | 1. Questionnaire to each manager asking for input to program return to CC/TU for analysis
2. Roll out ERD process
3. Each manager to review own staff job/person spec and make return to CC/TU for analysis
4. Complete analysis, make recommendations and draw up implementation plan
5. Review progress annually and report to service management team
6. Learning and Development training plan established for the Service | Colin Clark and Tracey Urry

Each member of SMT | 1. Implement ERD process across the Service by April 15
2. Review ERD process and implementation plan by Mar 16 |

Progress September 2016
Each Head of Service has committed that 100% of staff will have had an ERD by March 2017. A new ERD form has been designed for manual teams and managers are recording the completion of ERDs so compliance reporting can be carried out more effectively.   Training plans will continue to be developed as an outcome from ERDs.

New job descriptions and person specifications have been developed for new and amended roles. Where roles have not been impacted on significantly by restructuring, Managers are reviewing the job descriptions to ensure they reflect the Service priorities. This will result in changes for some staff. The Employee Development section is working closely with the Service and training has begun to be delivered, for example, a session on how to present reports to Area Committees has been delivered to third tier managers.

4. Promote and champion a 'can do' culture throughout the Service	1. Employee engagement work with L&D to develop a training programme for front-line staff and managers that enables culture change 2. Empower staff (through training, one-to-one meets, team meets, toolbox talks and ERDS) to take decisions that deliver responsive and timely services to communities within budget. 3. Through skills and technique development, support staff to say 'no' where appropriate	1. Training and Communication Strategy developed to effect culture change in customer service delivery. 2. Second employee questionnaire on communication and culture change	William Gilfillan Each member of SMT	July 15 December 15

Progress September 2016

Quarterly Extended Management Team meetings are in place and are delivering positive outcomes. Heads of Services and their direct reports are working closely on strategic matters and this is improving how we deliver our services. Training in key topics has been delivered and this includes disaggregated budgets, attendance management, customer services/complaints handling and operational and health and safety topics. Direct reports are meeting their teams on a regular basis and re-enforcing the importance of ERDs and effective communication with service users.

The second communications survey has not taken place due to restructuring. It is something that will be carried out in the early part of 2017 and will enable us to measure what has improved since the first survey and what requires further attention.

5. Place a greater emphasis on communications and customer care	1. Specific training workshop for all front-line staff and managers 2. Establish officer(s) in each section as the key link(s) with communities and Members 3. Develop protocols with the Service Centre that improve responsiveness at first point of contact for the public	1. Framework agreed and named officers established as key links with communities and Members 2. Action Plan developed with Service Centre to improve responsiveness to enquiries, complaints and compliments 3. %age reduction in numbers of complaints received through CRM/Laggan by CS	Caroline Campbell and Richard Evans	April 15 March 15 March 16

Progress September 2016

A key contacts list is now established, broken down by Local Committee. It contains the names, job titles, contact details and locations of key personnel for each function and area. This is re-issued to Members and staff following any changes.

Work is ongoing with the Service Centre to ensure it always has the most up to date information about what the Service is doing so the call handlers can deal with queries at the first point of contact.   Work was undertaken to understand the nature of repeat calls with the aim of reducing these.

Customer Care training was delivered to front-line staff as part of the roll out of the Customer Relationship Management system in June 2016. The training focused on the Customer Care standards as well as the new IT system.

The focus for the Service has been responding to MP/MSP enquiries, Stage 2 complaints and FOIs within the timescales set out by the Commissioner. Improvements are being made, as reported in the Community Services Performance Reports.   The Service receives the highest volume of contacts when compared to other Council Directorates, with approximately 3000 for the year ended March 2016, and has set a target of reducing complaints by 10% during 2016/17.

6. Improve business and PR awareness	1. Work with PR and L&D to instigate an internal/ external marketing and communications programme	1. Community Services Marketing and PR programme in place	David Goldie	Presented to May 15 CS Committee

Progress September 2016
Due to the front-line nature of the Service it is inevitable that the Service will receive a significant number of complaints and negative publicity. To give this some balance, we have introduced a Good News section to the CS Committee agenda; our Newsletter highlights positive work delivered across a range of functions; our performance measures now include a compliments section that is reported at our Quarterly Performance Review meetings; and our pr is more aware and proactively targeted at positive messages, where this is merited.

7. Improve Attendance Management	1. Identify areas/ sections of high absence relative to any underlying issues e.g. under resourcing, lack of training etc. 2. Provide specific training for all supervisory/ management staff (corporate project) to effect changes in the establishment of proactive management of attendance	1. Define and agree 'high' 2. Identify areas suffering 'high' absence rate 3. Identify reason for absence and any trends 4. Identify key staff and specific training needs of key staff 5. Deliver training 6. Communicate to staff that absence will be dealt with proactively according to policy	Colin Clark and Cameron Kemp	1-6 by July 15

		7. Implement and maintain policy 8. Review absence rates quarterly 9. Review progress of specific programme annually		

Progress September 2016

Due to the nature of the work carried out by Community Services the absence rate is higher than in other Council Services. Environmental and Amenity Services is one such area. Managers are effective in managing absence through monitoring, occupational health referrals, return to work interviews, and where necessary capability assessments, all in line with the Attendance Management Policy. The service has a target to reduce the cost of absence by continuing to adopt a robust and consistent approach to attendance management. For 2016/17 the target is £72,000 and £71,000 for 2017/18.

Absence rates are monitored at Senior Management Team meetings and the Quarterly Performance Review with the Chief Executive, and reported to the Strategic Committee.

The Annual Health Safety and Well-Being Report was presented to the Central Safety Committee in August 2016 for the year 2015/16 and will provide a useful benchmark for improvements in future years. The report contained details of reasons for absence and trends where theses were available.

From April 2016 absence data is available on a rolling 12 month period and a target of a 3% reduction in absence quarter on quarter has been set for 2016/17. During October 2016 all managers will be required to attend an Attendance Management half-day training session.

Stress Management training is mandatory for all managers and any manager new to their role will attend during 2016.

8. Improve ICT to enable better service delivery	1. Roll out use of mobile technology across the Service, where appropriate with reference to Corporate initiative through CIP 2. Develop an IT Strategy for Community Services	1. Identify efficiency savings (in relation to delivery time and cost) in relation to use of IT	Caroline Campbell and Richard Evans	Proposals to CS Sept 15 committee and Corporate Improvement Programme Board

Progress September 2016

The Service was the first to roll out mobile service delivery in 2012. Since then many improvements to the IT system have been made. Mobile Service Delivery is now a Corporate Improvement project managed through the Corporate team. The Project Manager has identified areas where mobile working and scheduling of staff will deliver efficiency savings. The new structure will facilitate this and enable some staff to be more flexible when carrying out inspection activities, for example.

Linked to this action is the development of on-line forms for customers. Tenants can now request a routine repair on-line, anytime, anywhere, using any device. This will deliver a saving at the Service Centre as fewer requests will be made by telephone.   This function was rolled out in April 2016 and although uptake is low at around 3%, activities to promote this functionality are taking place to encourage tenants to raise routine repairs this way.

The development of the IT strategy is on-going and will be finalised once the new ICT contract has been embedded. The change in supplier management and moving solutions to cloud based storage will impact on how the Service manages its IT. A Transformation project will be looking for synergies between systems and for opportunities to rationalise similar systems across the IT estate. As part of the ICT restructure each Service has a Business Partner who will assist in all IT-related matters.

| 9. Develop and promote a partnership approach with our Trade Unions | 1. Formally raise with TUs to gain agreement of definition and what it means in practice
2. Roll out the Council's draft model of Partnership Working with TUs for Community Services | 1. Produce service agreement with TUs in relation to communication, consultation and working together to meet Service objectives | William Gilfillan and Campbell Stewart | June 15 |

Progress September 2016
The Service has established quarterly meetings with Trade Union representatives, chaired by the Director. This is in addition to the more informal meetings that take place locally between managers, staff and TU reps.   TU reps are always invited to join Working Groups and to comment on proposals.

A Service Agreement was prepared but, following discussion with the TUs, they wished to concentrate on the newly formed Staff Partnership Forum at that time. The Service Agreement will now be revisited as we move forward with Council re-design and reviews