

Agenda Item	15.
Report No	PEO 16/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: People Committee

Date: 23 August 2017

Report Title: High Life Highland Progress Report

Report By: Chief Executive of High Life Highland

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report is in three parts:

Part one - presents information on the performance of High Life Highland during the operating period November 2016 to June 2017;

Part two - provides general updates since the last report to the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee in October 2016; and

Part three - provides information on one aspect of the work of HLH, in this case, the service improvements achieved through the programme of joining the staffing of leisure and library services in Alness, Aviemore and Wick.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Agree that High Life Highland has met or exceeded the outcomes expected in the Service Delivery Contract with the Council for the period November 2016 to June 2017.
- ii. Note and comment on general updates since the last report in October 2016;
- iii. Note and comment on service improvements achieved through joining the staffing of leisure and library services in Alness, Aviemore and Wick.

3. Background

3.1 High Life Highland (HLH) was established by the Council in October 2011 as a charity, developing and promoting opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing. The Council has contracted with HLH to deliver its Public Services Obligations (PSO) through a Service Delivery Contract (SDC) to deliver the following nine areas of work: Adult Learning; Archives; Arts; Leisure Facilities; Libraries; Museums; Outdoor Learning; Sport; and Youth Work.

4. Part One - Service Delivery Contract Monitoring

4.1 The Service Delivery Contract with HLH is made up of objectives from the Council's programme "Highland First" and from the Care and Learning Service Plan. The formal monitoring of HLH forms part of the Quarterly Performance Reviews (QPR) of the Care and Learning Service to the Council's Chief Executive. During April to October 2016 there were two QPRs where the quarterly objectives were assessed as having been met or exceeded. The indicators which monitor progress against the Council's plans along with summary explanations can be seen in **Appendix A**. HLH reports twice yearly direct to the People Committee providing performance information, general updates and a spotlight on one area of its work per report, with the combining of leisure and library services in Alness, Aviemore and Wick being the focus at this meeting.

5. Customer Numbers

5.1 Customer numbers have been increasing year on year since HLH was established (October 2011) as can be seen in the graph below (the 2016/17 bar shows Inverness Leisure customers separately for comparative purposes because HLH and Inverness Leisure amalgamated in April 2016). The average customer number increase over the past three years (excl. Inverness Leisure) has been 10% or 0.5M per year.



6. HLH Governance

6.1 HLH directors are appointed by the Council (eight independent directors and four Councillor directors). Since the last update, to the ECAS Committee in May 2016, there have been changes under the normal schedule of retirements as required by the Memorandum and Articles of Association and there have also been changes following

the local government election in May 2017. The newly appointed Council Directors are Councillors Linda Munro, Tom Heggie, Andrew Jarvie and Duncan MacPherson. The full list of HLH Directors can be seen on the HLH web site:

<https://www.highlifehighland.com/about/board-directors/>

7. **Part Two - General Updates Since October 2016 Report**

- 7.1 **Inverness Leisure** - The amalgamation with Inverness Leisure took place on 1 April 2016. The transition went smoothly with customer feedback having been positive. Staff pay, terms and conditions have been harmonised. The planned £200K efficiency saving has been achieved and returned to the Council and the additional £220K per annum required to cover the cost of the harmonisation of staff terms and conditions is on target for being delivered through further efficiencies and income over a two year period. Members may recall that the financial reserves of the former Inverness Leisure Board are able to cover the first two years of the difference in terms and conditions. The legal process of winding up the company is complete. High Life subscriptions have increased from an average per month in 2015/16 of 5,777 to 6,233 in 2016/17 and customer numbers from 689,824 to 780,732.
- 7.2 **Thurso Leisure Centre (TLC)** - Following a £3.4M refurbishment, TLC fully re-opened to the public in January 2017. As well as the 'behind the scenes' work to replace the roof and much of the electrics and plumbing, there were service enhancements to the customer experience. The reception area has been upgraded to allow easier access to the activity area of their choice, which now includes the largest fitness suite in the HLH leisure estate, as well as a new fitness studio. The wet side changing accommodation has been modernised to provide a family changing village and the sauna and steam rooms on poolside have been replaced with modern upgrades. The official opening was held on Friday 17th February.
- 7.3 **Nucleus, Wick-** Nucleus, the Nuclear and Caithness Archive in Wick, opened to the public on 14th February 2017. Nucleus is home to the archives of the UK civil nuclear industry and the historic Council archives of the county of Caithness and its people. HLH was part of the winning operations bid by Restore, a private records management company, whereby HLH operates the front of house of the facility and Restore manages the cataloguing and transporting north of records from the UK's 17 nuclear sites. As well as offering unique opportunities to HLH to be involved in the interpretation of the fifty years of the nuclear industry in the UK, the very impressive new building provides a much improved service to local customers, with extended opening hours, additional staff and a fully accessible building with facilities to hold events and activities.
- 7.4 **HLH operation of Inverness Prison Library** – Following an approach by HM Porterfield Prison, HLH took on the operation of the prison library in April 2017. As far as can be ascertained, this is a unique arrangement in Scotland with the closest equivalent being in Glasgow, where Glasgow Life provides support and training for the prison officers at Barlinnie Prison to staff the library. The funding of the prison library remains the responsibility of the prison service.
- 7.5 **Strathpeffer Pavilion** – HLH was asked by the Council to adopt the operation of the Strathpeffer Pavilion for a three year period, to allow the community time to develop a plan to purchase it and operate it as a community run facility. HLH adopted the Pavilion from April 2017. A community group has been formed to advance a bid to purchase the facility, supported by the Council, HIE and HLH.
- 7.7 **East Caithness Community Campus** - The new community facilities at Wick High

School Campus opened to the public after the school Easter holiday 2017. The facility has a new six lane swimming pool with movable floor for swimming lessons, a family changing village and sauna and steam rooms on poolside. The dry side facilities include a two storey library, which also doubles as the main reception and foyer area of the building. There is a spacious fitness suite, fitness studio, two sports halls and a multi-functional performance space. The facilities at the campus are a significant expansion to those they replaced in Wick and the integration of the library and leisure facilities will increase the opening hours of the library and generate additional customer visits.

- 7.8 **Averon Leisure Centre (ALC)** - Facilities within the ALC have been enhanced through two phases of internal refurbishment. Phase one saw the integration of the library into the main foyer of the building, providing a combined reception area for all customers to the centre and improved access to library. Phase two of the works created a new fitness studio to host the Averon's programme of fitness classes. In turn these developments have collectively freed up space in the main games hall to accommodate more sports bookings. The overall effect of the refurbishment programme has been to provide enhanced and expanded facilities at the Averon to broaden its customer base.
- 7.8 **Inverness Castle Tower** – The north tower of Inverness Castle has been refurbished as a visitor attraction by the Council and is run by HLH. Inverness' newest visitor attraction opened for Easter 2017 and it is already scoring 4.5 out of 5 stars on Trip Advisor. Numbers of visitors and income are currently ahead of the business plan at 11,435 for April to July and there was sufficient customer interest to open for an additional two hours per day in June, July and August. The viewpoint is a precursor to the major project to develop Inverness castle as a major attraction.
- 7.9 **North Coast Leisure (Bettyhill Swimming Pool)** - HLH was asked to take on the operation of Bettyhill Swimming Pool from June 2017 by the Board of North Coast Leisure (NCL). NCL views HLH as a trusted partner to assist in the management and development of the facility by bringing operational expertise and support to the partnership. NCL continues to own the building and be responsible for the costs of addressing any significant failures in the structure of the building, such as the replacement of the roof or plant.
- 7.10 **Highland Youth Parliament (HYP) conference 15-16 June 2017** - The HYP is made up of representatives from across the Council area who have either been elected through their school or their peers via local youth forums. The conference is an annual event and this year the conference was held at the UHI Inverness College campus. As a follow-up to the conference the Youth Convener and HYP executive committee members have planned a programme of attending the nine Community Partnerships to provide feedback from the local area forums (which were part of the conference) to support the community engagement currently being carried out by Community Partnerships.
- 7.11 **Poolewe Swimming Pool** – Similar to North Coast Leisure, at the request of the local committee, the management and operation of Poolewe Pool transferred from Poolewe and District Swimming Pool Association (PDSPA) to HLH on 1 July. The Board of PDSPA are finalising a LEADER application that will seek to secure the final piece of funding that will enable a significant refurbishment of the building.
- 7.12 **Countryside Rangers** – At its June meeting, the Council confirmed that it wished to transfer ten Countryside Ranger posts to HLH. Discussions on the detail of the transfer are under way.

- 7.13 **Inverness Ice Centre (IIC)** - HLH has been asked by the Board of IIC to consider taking on the day to day operation of its building. Discussions and the necessary business planning to assess the viability of this are underway.
- 7.14 **Canal Park** - The new changing pavilion and clubhouse being built beside the West Link Road in Canal Park, Inverness, will be managed and operated by HLH on behalf of the Council. The facility will be home to Highland Rugby Club which will have priority use for games and training with the new synthetic pitch and changing accommodation being available for school and community use out-with these times. The construction schedule remains on target for completion this September.
- 7.15 **Library Service** – Improved Customer Service Excellence Accreditation. After a week-long external assessment, High Life Highland Libraries successfully retained the Customer Service Excellence accreditation with an improved performance. The service has not only managed to achieve 100% full compliance against all 57 criteria (80% required), but has also had 30 Areas of Good Practice identified and ten areas where the service is recognised as being sector-leading: “Compliance Plus”. Strengths include the quality and commitment of staff, services to disadvantaged customers, partnership working and the provision of excellent facilities. The service was found to have a “strong culture of innovation and of putting the customer at the heart of service delivery”. The assessor also noted that “it was abundantly clear that the Senior Leadership including the Directorate, are very customer focused and had a clear vision for High Life Highland Libraries as a modern, progressive, customer focused organisation”.
- 7.16 **Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)** – Members will be aware that statutory requirement for local authority provision of ELC is increasing from 600 hours per year to 1,140 by 2020. HLH already provides childcare at the Averon Leisure Centre and it may be possible to provide facilities for ELC at other locations, thus supporting the Council to deliver its statutory responsibilities. This is being explored by Council and HLH staff.
- 8. Part Three - Combined leisure facility and library staffing: Aviemore, Alness and Wick**
- 8.1 In the twice yearly reports to the ECAS Committee there is a focus on one aspect of HLH’s work. This report provides information on the benefits which have been achieved through combining leisure and library staffing at HLH sites in Alness, Aviemore and Wick.
- 8.2 Historically, the opening hours of leisure centres and libraries vary. Leisure centres tend to operate from early mornings (7/8am) to late evenings (9/10pm). Libraries tend to have shorter opening hours at different times on different days of the week so that they are suitable for different customer groups. Combining leisure centre reception areas and libraries allows customers to have access to both services in the same building and combining the staff roles of receptionist and library assistant allows library opening hours to be extended to match those of the leisure facility.
- 8.3 The experience of providing services in this way is that customer use of both services increases with library customer visits particularly increasing because of the extension of opening hours. While some staff savings can be made using this model, the requirement tends to be that both former sets of staff are needed to cope with peak library/leisure facility use. This model is dependent on having leisure facility reception

areas which are large enough to accommodate libraries.

- 8.4 **Aviemore** - In 2012/13 the former Aviemore library and village hall buildings were closed and a combined library and leisure/community centre were provided in the new primary school. The new facility created a community hub where parents meet their children after school, children can access after-school sports activities and children and families can use the library (including library children's activity sessions and computer access). The table below shows the increase in customer numbers before and after the new facilities were opened and when the combined staffing model was introduced.

Aviemore Library and Leisure Facilities

Financial Year	Library Visits	Customer	Library Opening Hours/ Week	Leisure Visits	Customer
2011/12	9,698		18	NA	
2013/14*	29,705		35	46,006	
2016/17**	125,528		82.5	52,055	

* First full year of operation in new building when library and leisure facility staffing were separate and library customers were only counted when there were library staff on duty.

** First full year of full time library opening after combined staffing.

- 8.5 **Alness** – As described in paragraph 5.9 above, there was a refurbishment carried out at the Averon Centre. The refurbishment included relocating the library, which was in a separate part of the building, into the heart of the centre by combining it with the leisure centre reception. There were similar benefits achieved as described above for Aviemore and the relocation of the library also allowed the creation of an exercise studio for fitness classes. The refurbishment was completed in November 2016 and the table below shows comparisons for quarters three and four 2015/16 and 2016/17. There has been an increase in leisure facility customer visits of approximately 1000 per quarter and library visits (formal interactions) have doubled.

Averon Leisure Centre/Alness Library

Financial Year	Library Visits	Customer	Library Opening Hours/ Week	Leisure Visits	Customer
Q3 2015/16	5,575		44.5	13,582	
Q3 2016/17	11,992		84	14,865	
Q4 2015/16	7,321		44.5	18,305	
Q4 2016/17	15,126		84	19,369	

- 8.6 **Wick** – The new Wick High School opened on 26 April 2017 when the library and swimming pool (which were formerly in separate buildings) were combined into the new school facility. This also allowed the school and community libraries to be combined. The Council was able to sell the former swimming pool site achieving property savings. The table below compares May, June and July 2016/17 with May, June and July this year and there has been a significant increase in both library and leisure customer visits.

Wick Leisure Facilities and Library

Financial Year	Community Library Customer Visits	Community Library Opening Hours/ Week	School Library Customer Visits	Leisure Customer Visits
May, Jun, July 2016/17	13,043	42	5,724	15,635
May, June, July, 2017/18	29,609	87	n/a*	21,349

*May, June, July 2017/18 figure shows combined school and community library customer visits as both aspects of the service are now provided in the same facility.

- 8.7 HLH is currently considering whether the same approach could be taken at the Fingal Centre, Portree and the Badenoch Centre, Kingussie because their layouts would allow this to be done with a relatively small amount of capital investment. Further consideration to the layout of community facilities at the proposed new High School in Tain will also follow.

Designation Chief Executive of High Life Highland

Date 11 August 2017

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HLH Performance Summary April 2016 to March 2017

SOA Action	Notes – HLH contributions to the Highland Single Outcome Agreement
Activities for pupils beyond the school day	Active Schools Coordinators provided 484,004 participant sessions in 2016/17an increase of 51,658 on the previous year.
Communities Use of Schools Policy (THC's Policy is to develop schools as part of its capital programme into community hubs)	With the addition of the operation of the community sports facilities at Inverness Royal Academy from August 2016, and Wick High School sports facilities and library from April this year, HLH now operates seventeen school and community facilities outwith school hours on behalf of the Council.
Councils policies in cultural and sports services	<p>HLH operates the two regional Museums, the Highland Folk Museum and Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, supports the work of the Highland Culture Strategic Board and is supporting the on-going work of the Council to develop a new Highland Cultural Facility in Inverness.</p> <p>HLH programmes exhibitions and activity programmes in three Galleries. The attendance figures of the Inverness Gallery are reported as part of the Museum's visitor numbers. The Caithness gallery attendances in 2015/16 were 5,646 and following the re-opening of the Swanson Gallery in Thurso after refurbishment attendances increased to 9,580 in 2016-17.</p> <p>HLH operates 21 stand-alone and joint school/community leisure centres. Customer visits in 2015-16 were 1,184,750 and in the same period in 2016-17 were 1,156,161. The decrease is accounted for by the closure of Thurso and Craig Maclean (Grantown) Leisure centres and had they been open there would have been an increase of approximately 15,000. HLH and Inverness Leisure amalgamated on 1 April 2016 and to allow comparison between the two years, Inverness Leisure numbers have been excluded from this calculation. When Inverness Leisure numbers are included there were a total of 1,936,903attendances at leisure centres in 2016-17.</p> <p>The Highland Folk Museum and Inverness Museum and Art Gallery continue to grow, with total customer visits (visits in person plus visits by other means) in 2015/16 having been 185,105, increasing to 194,811 last year. Income from donations and earned income increased from £321,485 in 2015-16 to £389,422 last year.</p>

HLH Performance Summary April 2016 to March 2017

SOA Action	Notes – HLH contributions to the Highland Single Outcome Agreement
Councils policies in cultural and sports services (cont.)	HLH operates 70 libraries on behalf of The Highland Council and fulfils its statutory obligation to provide adequate library services. In 2016 -2017 there were 3,077,760 total library visits, (an increase of 19% on the previous year). Of these, 1,989,823 were physical visits, (a 14% increase) and 1,087,937 were online visits, (a 27% increase). There were 324,260 attendances at library events and activities, (a 31% increase). The reasons for the improved performance are the introduction of new services and facilities, an improved online offering and new community engagement initiatives.
Deliver ESOL & Adult Literacies	HLH delivers a programme of Literacy and Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and 1:1 support. There were 13,543 attendances at these programmes in 2016/17. Different performance information was collected prior to April 2016 so comparisons will be available from April 2017 onwards. The number of SQA qualifications gained by adult learners dipped slightly with their having been 92 in 2015/16 and 82 in 2016/17.
Deliver the Arts strategy	HLH programmes exhibitions and activity programmes in three Galleries. The attendance figures of the Inverness Gallery are reported as part of the Museum's visitor numbers. The Caithness gallery attendances in 2015/16 were 5,646 and following the re-opening of the Swanson Gallery in Thurso after refurbishment attendances increased to 9,580 in 2016-17.
Deliver the Youth Work Policy	HLH provides a targeted youth work service across all 29 Associated School Group areas in Highland. Attendances at "Fusion" diversionary activity programmes were 3,504 2015-16 and were 3,280 last year and a target has been set to increase this in 2017/18. The number of attendances at youth work activities in 2015-16 was 86,319 and 83,613 in 2016-17. Within the context of the Council and national direction being a greater emphasis on targeting young people in need (prevention agenda), the expectation was that headline youth work engagements would and will reduce as the service focuses on a smaller number of harder to reach young people, The youth work team has set a target to increase the number of learning hours which it delivers for 2017/18 to reflect this.

SOA Action	Notes – HLH contributions to the Highland Single Outcome Agreement
Delivery of lifelong learning	HLH delivers a programme of Literacy and Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and 1:1 support. There were 13,543 attendances at these programmes in 2016/17. Different performance information was collected prior to April 2016 so comparisons will be available from April 2017 onwards. The number of SQA qualifications gained by adult learners held steady with there having been 92 in 2015/16 and 82 in 2016/17.
Develop new ways of supporting adult learners	There has been a reduction in this area and a deliberate focus on the delivery of lifelong learning as described above due to agreed budget savings. In an attempt to mitigate this, HLH has submitted a grant application (£43K funding was confirmed in June 2017) called “The Learning Ladder of Possibilities: First Steps of Engagement from Rural Poverty”. This is a collaborative project which will be delivered by High Life Highland, Creativity in Care, the Social Enterprise Academy, and UHI. It is funded by the Scottish Government and the European Social Fund and is a Stage 1 Social Innovation Fund project which aims to improve services for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage. Following this project HLH may be able to apply for a Stage 2 grant which will build on this work.
Develop the High Life low cost leisure access card	Between HLH and the other leisure providers in Highland which operate the High Life Leisure Access Scheme 39.5% of the Highland population hold a High Life card either as family or individuals who pay a subscription or people who use a card under the “pay as you go” part of the scheme. HLH’s number of paid subscriptions rose by 1,102 between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The High Life card can be used as a library card, a Young Scot card, a cashless catering school meals card and a National Entitlement Card. The scheme has now been, adopted in three other Scottish local authority areas: the Western Isles; Moray; and Orkney and one Northern Irish Council area, Antrim and Newtownabbey.

SOA Action	Notes – HLH contributions to the Highland Single Outcome Agreement
Development apprenticeship for young people supported by youth services	HLH runs a Young Persons' Leadership Programme delivered by Active Schools Coordinators which has 992 young people actively involved in it. Youth work staff provide opportunities for young people to gain achievement awards (Saltire Awards, DofE etc.) which are of significant benefit for young people in gaining employment or higher and further education places – in 2016/17 year young people gained 1,427 achievement awards. HLH leisure facilities continue to deliver modern apprenticeships. HLH youth work staff continue to deliver the Youth Parliament apprentice day.
Development officers for disability and sports coaching	HLH has Development Officers for disability sport, coaching/volunteer development and community sports hubs. These posts work in partnership with the national governing bodies to develop sports clubs, support community based sports clubs and deliver locally based coach and volunteer training.
ECS volunteering policy	HLH has developed a volunteering policy which includes recruitment, induction, training and review for volunteers and has 1608 volunteers in sport, 97 volunteers in libraries (84 of whom are teenagers involved in the High Voltage initiative) and 60 in adult learning.
Evidence children are included across ECS	HLH contributes to this objective by supporting area youth forums and the Highland Youth Parliament which covers a variety of topics, including specific sessions on schools on behalf of the Care and Learning service and by its targeted youth work.
Expand access to culture & arts across the Highlands	<p>HLH operates the two regional Museums, the Highland Folk Museum and Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, supports the work of the Highland Culture Strategic Board and is supporting the on-going work of the Council to develop a new Highland Cultural Facility in Inverness.</p> <p>HLH programmes exhibitions and activity programmes in three Galleries. The attendance figures of the Inverness Gallery are reported as part of the Museum's visitor numbers. The Caithness gallery attendances in 2015/16 were 5,646 and following the re-opening of the Swanson Gallery in Thurso after refurbishment attendances increased to 9,580 in 2016-17.</p>

SOA Action	Notes – HLH contributions to the Highland Single Outcome Agreement
HLH to ensure balanced programme of activity for young people	The active schools and youth work programmes provide a wide range of activities. There is a particular emphasis placed by Active Schools Coordinators on encouraging girls to remain active and, there is therefore a focus on less traditional activities such as dance, exercise to music and gymnastics. Youth work staff provide a wide range of activity which includes employability programmes, a range of achievement awards and diversionary activity.
Online learning solutions for adult learning	HLH libraries have a range of on-line resources which support learners in Highland including a formal language learning resource as well as e-books; e-magazines and audiobooks.
Property Asset Management Strategy for HLH	The Council's Property Asset Management Strategy links its secondary school building programme with community facilities so that new schools become joint school and community facilities. The latest examples of this are where HLH took on the operation of the sports facilities at the new Inverness Royal Academy in August 2016 and Wick High School in April 2017. This approach has led to increased use of facilities by the public in every case.
Single smart card	The range of services which can now be placed on one card are: National Entitlements (travel), Young Scot, High Life leisure, Highland Libraries and school cashless catering.
Targeted numeracy and literacy services	HLH delivers a programme of Literacy and Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and 1:1 support. There were 13,543 attendances at these programmes in 2016/17. Different performance information was collected prior to April 2016 so comparisons will be available from April 2017 onwards. The number of SQA qualifications gained by adult learners held steady with there having been 92 in 2015/16 and 82 in 2016/17.

SOA Action	Notes – HLH contributions to the Highland Single Outcome Agreement
Targeted young people in need - High Life Highland	HLH provides a targeted youth work service across all 29 Associated School Group areas in Highland. Attendances at “Fusion” diversionary activity programmes were 3,504 2015-16 and were 3,280 last year and a target has been set to increase this in 2017/18. The number of attendances at youth work activities in 2015-16 was 86,319 and 83,613 in 2016-17. Within the context of the Council and national direction being a greater emphasis on targeting young people in need (prevention agenda), the expectation was that headline youth work engagements would and will reduce as the service focuses on a smaller number of harder to reach young people. The youth work team has set a target to increase the number of learning hours which it delivers for 2017/18 to reflect this.
With HLH provide integrated community facilities	A strong focus of all recent and planned school campus new build or refurbishments is the provision of integrated facilities, the new with Inverness Royal Academy, Wick High School being the most recent and Tain Royal Academy and Alness Academy in the pipeline.
Youth Convener and Youth Workers engage with young people	The Youth Convener post is recruited annually and works with the Highland Youth Parliament Executive Committee which meets six times per year in addition to the annual Highland Youth Parliament conference.
Youth Convener attendance at Full Council	The Youth Convener attends full Council meetings and other Council Committees as required.
Youth Voice elections	HLH supports the bi-annual Highland Youth Parliament (formerly Youth Voice) elections.