

AGENDA ITEM 17.ii

The Highland Council Staff Partnership Forum – Elected Members/Staff Side Group

Minutes of Meeting of The Highland Council Staff Partnership Forum held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 3 May 2019 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr Alasdair Christie
Mr Alister MacKinnon

Ms Linda Munro
Mrs Trish Robertson

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr John Gibson (UNISON)
Mr Rikki Selkirk (GMB)
Mr Ian Macleman (UNITE/UCATT)

Ms Margaret Macrae (RCN)
Mr Richard Whyte (UNITE)

In attendance:

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive
Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development Service
Ms S Campbell, Interim Director, Care and Learning Service
Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr S Black, Director of Development & Infrastructure
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
Mr A Bell, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Mr A MacKinnon in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs Margaret Davidson, Mr John Finlayson, Mr Allan Henderson and Ms Maxine Smith from the Employer's Side and Ms Liz MacKay (Unison) and Mr Paul MacPherson (GMB) from the Staff Side.

2. Declarations of Interest

Mr A MacKinnon declared a non-financial interest as his wife and daughter were employees of The Highland Council but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion at the meeting.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated the Minutes of the last meeting of the Forum held on 1 February, 2019, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes

Arising from the Minutes the following matters were raised:-

i Trade Union Facility Time – this policy was to be referred to the HR Sub Group for updating. In terms of the working relationship that trade union representatives had with the Council, although Staff Side representatives were on various Council Boards/Groups and welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership with the Council, this did not mean that they would always agree with the decisions of the Board/Groups if decisions were not in the interests of trade union members.

In this respect, it was suggested that at Board/Group meetings Staff Side representatives highlight if they did have any concerns or reservations about a particular issue.

ii Bullying and Harassment Policy – the Policy had not yet been added to the Council's Intranet. The Head of People and ICT undertook to make sure this was done.

iii Holiday Pay – it had been agreed to have another meeting between the Trade Unions and HR on this issue but the meeting had not yet taken place. The Head of People and ICT undertook to arrange this meeting as soon as possible.

iv Vehicles Idling – it was advised that while all new winter gritters that the Council purchased would be fitted with night heaters, the existing fleet of gritters would not be retrofitted due to the cost involved.

v Budget Engagement Plan – there was an outstanding action for an engagement plan for meeting staff and communities to be shared with the Staff Side. The Budget Leader undertook to arrange a meeting with the Staff Side to discuss this.

5. Service Trade Union Liaison Meetings

There had been circulated the following Trade Union Liaison Minutes of Meetings for information:- Corporate Resources Service – 14 March, 2019; Care and Learning Service – 1 February, 2019; Community Services – 22 February, 2019; and Development and Infrastructure – 23 January, 2019.

Arising from the minutes, the following matters were raised:-

i Community Services Minute - Arrangements for Building Maintenance Standby – it would be checked if the following actions had been completed – “Message to be sent out from Head of Service to all staff next week re flexible approach for staff being on call” and “Common sense fatigue time approach to be reviewed by HR”.

ii Actions arising from Minutes – there had been a number of actions arising from minutes submitted to the Forum which had not been completed. This would be discussed at both the Executive Leadership Group and the Political Leadership Group as there was a need to ensure that all actions were completed. In this respect, it was suggested that an Action Sheet with timescales for actions to be completed be circulated to the Forum.

Thereafter, it was **AGREED** that the Head of People and ICT would produce an Action Sheet so that actions from Forum meetings could be monitored.

6. Redesign of the Highland Council

The Head of People and ICT provided an update for the Forum on the Council's redesign since the last meeting of the Forum in February, 2019.

It was explained that the Council's Change Programme had 15 key redesign projects covering transformation and project sponsors had been assigned to these projects. The Change Programme in addition to achieving savings for 2019/20, also aimed to restructure the organisation in order to have a structured and disciplined approach to run a full Programme Management Office that is reviewed weekly by the Executive Leadership Team and reported to the Redesign Board and full Council.

In terms of progress with the Programme Management Office, a Programme Manager had recently been appointed and Project Manager and System Support Officer interviews had been arranged. An overview was provided on progress with the following key redesign projects, Grey Fleet (staff travel); Asset Management Project Board; Trade Services and Agency Casual Worker review. Further, new reviews had commenced on Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management and Engineering Services. Any suggestions for Lean Reviews from the Forum would be welcomed and should be sent to the Council Redesign Lead.

It was queried what the view of trade union members were in terms of the Redesign process. It was advised that those trade union members involved in the process had found it to be very beneficial and positive as a learning experience. Staff welcomed that the Council was listening to its employees and had an equal voice at Redesign Board meetings. However there was a concern about work commitments as staff involved in the redesign process were committed to their jobs and they needed an assurance that in future, appropriate backfilling arrangements were in place to cover their work while they were on redesign duties.

The Council supported staff and valued their involvement in the redesign process, but this had to be backed up by providing backfill to cover their work while on redesign duties.

Arising from feedback from recent Budget Holder briefings there was a need to ensure that there was a presence across all Services of the Council in Lean Reviews. Budget holders had also been tasked with sharing information on the recent briefings with their staff. Also, staff forums in local areas were to be developed.

Thereafter, the Forum **NOTED** the update on progress with the Redesign of The Highland Council.

7. Any Other Competent Business

Change Fund – it was queried if the report to the full Council meeting next week on the Change Fund would include how expenditure and achievements of the expenditure on Change Fund projects would be monitored. It was explained that progress would be monitored through Members Budget Team meetings, the weekly Executive Leadership Team and Political Leadership Group meetings. In addition,

progress on the various projects would be reported to the appropriate Strategic Committee and full Council. Consideration would be given to sharing progress on Change Fund projects with the Staff Side.

The meeting was concluded at 11.05 a.m.