

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Agenda Item	13
Report No	HC/52/19

Date: 31.10.19

Report Title: **Redesign of Highland Council: up-date from the Board.**

Report By: The Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with an up-date of the Board's activities since the Council meeting in September 2019. Since the September Council the Board has had one workshop to consider the progress against the implementation of the recommendations of the Trades Services Peer Review. The Board also considered the progress of the ongoing Peer Reviews and considered the future direction of the Redesign work. Members are asked to note progress on Council Redesign work, and to agree to the series of "Rapid reviews" agreed by the Board.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note progress on Council Redesign work;
- ii. Agree to the proposed series of Rapid Reviews set out in Section 4 of this report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – the redesign programme is designed to use internal resource to challenge ways of working within the Council. Projects that arise from redesign reviews may require funding through the Change Fund, and applications for such funding will be made at the appropriate time.
- 3.2 Legal – None
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – all reviews take into account the impacts of the recommendations on these matters.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – the reviews will consider the implications for the Council's carbon footprint and other environmental impacts, particularly on biodiversity.
- 3.5 Risk – the reviews will ensure that the Council's exposure to legal and reputational risk is addressed.
- 3.6 Gaelic – there are no known Gaelic implications.

3. Redesign Update

- 3.1 The Board has had one redesign workshop since the last Council meeting which considered the implementation of the Trades Services Peer Review, as well as progress reports on the ongoing Peer reviews.
- 3.2 One of the priority recommendations agreed by Council in respect of the Trades Services work was to undertake lean reviews on the processes for Housing and Property repairs. A cross service team was put in place to complete this work, and this has now been completed, with a series of improvements planned to the process which will put in place more effective recording mechanisms for repair requests as well as more effective processes for carrying out the actual repairs themselves. This will lead to a reduction in double handing, a more effective use of Maintenance officer time and a better service to the customer. The Board welcomed the progress that had been made and agreed that the new process and procedures should be implemented as a priority.
- 3.3 The Board also heard updates on other recommendations in respect of Trade Services. The new Framework for procuring sub-contractors is progressing well, with a large number of tender returns being received. The implementation of the pilot projects to ensure better use of our in-house capacity for housing and property repairs is also progressing well, and a number of posts have now been advertised for in order to build up that capacity. The outcomes of the Lean reviews will be tested through the implementation of the pilot project in Lochaber, the Inverness Royal Academy Associated School group area and in HQ. regular progress will be reported to the the Board, to ensure that the excellent progress thus far is maintained.
- 3.4 The Peer Review on Engineering Services is also being completed, and work thus far has focussed on the benefits that a more integrated approach across the Council can deliver in both capital and maintenance projects. The outcomes of the Review will be reported to a formal Board meeting in due course, and the ongoing restructure of the Council will enable the appropriate management and governance of the recommendations to be fully implemented.
- 3.5 The second Peer Review currently underway is focussing on Catering Services, and Members will recall that Change Funding was provided to allow the Association for Public Sector Excellence (APSE) to be brought on board to act as a critical friend to the review. The Peer Review team has focused so far on school catering. As a statutory service closely governed by nutrition legislation and national guidance and regulation the scope for increased income/cost reduction is somewhat challenging. As a result, the work has focussed on:
- scope for increased uptake and income
 - running costs (including staff costs)
 - waste reduction

Key influences have been identified as:

- 4 ½ day week (secondaries and some primaries).
- Competition from other nearby outlets.
- Paid meal price sensitivity (social pricing)
- Impact of enhanced nutritional standards
- Dining environment and service flows

- Lack of flexibility in contracts means there is an inability to match resource to demand (e.g. lower uptake on Fridays and end of summer term)

3.6 The Board Workshop heard that further work/information gathering is planned around:

- Surveys of primary and secondary pupils using chrome books to get their views on meals and reasons to take/not take them.
- Discussion with Head Teachers re the Better Eating Better Learning approach and the impact of cost.
- Level of uptake in THC as compared to elsewhere in Scotland
- Financial analysis of costs and income for last 3 years (including break down of costs to key area such as staffing, food cost).
- Level of take up drop from P3 – P4 by FSM and paid meals.
- History of price rises and impact on take up in short, medium and longer term.
- Flexibility in staff contracts to adapt to varied take up levels.

4. The Redesign Approach – Looking Forward

4.1 The Redesign Board also considered the next steps in continuing to use the redesign process to effect change within the Council. The Board recognised that the redesign process has been operating for an extended period, and progress in implementing the recommendations from the completed reviews is now evident in both completed projects and the ongoing Change Programme. It is seen as important to reflect on what has been achieved, but also to continue to adapt the Redesign process to ensure that new opportunities and new ways of working are delivered.

4.2 Members of the Redesign Board agreed during the recent workshop that the future work of the Board should align with work already underway and that the message of the positive benefits of engaging with a peer review should be an integral part of staff development as we move forward. It was recognised that one of the issues in getting people involved has been the amount of time that redesign reviews can take, with the resultant pressures this puts on people’s substantive roles. Whilst Redesign reviews were envisaged to take around 12 weeks, the reality is that most have taken longer due to the complexity of the issues being addressed and the need to ensure buy-in from the host services.

4.3 One suggestion to enable a reinvigorated approach was to retain the current peer review approach, but to carry out a number of time limited “rapid reviews” which could concentrate on specific service delivery areas or functions. This builds on the current redesign and Lean methodology already in place with the benefit of additional pace (using design sprint techniques). This will involve time-limited reviews of particularly challenging or “wicked” problems. Not only will this help to deliver outcomes by a prescribed deadline, focus attention on learning from elsewhere (i.e. not reinventing the wheel), it will also provide team members (staff, members and Trade Unions) with more certainty about the time that they will be expected to contribute to the process.

4.4 A list of potential projects was considered at the workshop, and members of the Board agreed that further discussion should take place on other potential projects. It is therefore suggested that the following reviews are taken forward, focussing on the problems or opportunities set out:

TOPIC	Problem/Opportunity
PPP Schools Contract Compliance Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we achieving as many penalty repayments as we should be?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are our processes for reporting strong enough? • Are we robust enough with our providers? • Are there better ways of doing things elsewhere in the country? • What investment is required to deliver a better service and savings? (and over what timescale?)
Cashless Catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of our current cashless catering system? Is it still being developed? • How can we make it more dynamic/ easy to use? • How can we integrate it with other payments made through schools? • What best practice exists elsewhere? • What investment is required to deliver a better service and savings? (and over what timescale?)
Stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is our current stores network as efficient as it could be? • Are there different, innovative and dynamic ways of delivering stores (e.g. Just in Time)? • What happens elsewhere, and are there good examples that can be trialled? • Does one size fit all in the Highlands? • How do we ensure a consistent use of particular materials – link with new build housing? • What investment is required to deliver a better service and savings? (and over what timescale?)
Events and Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we achieving an effective rate of return for major events and festivals held on Council land? • How do we compare in our approach to other Councils? • Are our full costs being recovered, for example in relation to grounds maintenance, waste management and traffic management? • Are we making the most of catering opportunities – how should this tie in with developing mobile outlets? • What investment is required to deliver a better service and savings? (and over what timescale?)
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are our current procurement arrangements working effectively for us?
Internal Recharging to Capital – effectiveness and efficiency in Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all hours being relevant chargeable hours being charged to capital? • Are our systems for time recording effective? • How is efficiency in delivering projects being monitored?
Internal recharging to Capital – effectiveness and efficiency in Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all hours being relevant chargeable hours being charged to capital?

Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are our systems for time recording effective?• How is efficiency in delivering projects being monitored?
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4.5 Members are asked to agree that these short-term reviews are taken forward, and that they are overseen by the Redesign Board within the context of the Council's Change Programme.

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