

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
RECOVERY, IMPROVEMENT & TRANSFORMATION BOARD**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Highland Council Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Board held remotely on Monday 23 August 2021 at 10.30am.

**PRESENT:-**

Mr Alasdair Christie (Chair)	Mr Bill Lobban
Mr Bill Boyd	Mr Alexander MacInnes
Ms Carolyn Caddick (late arrival, 10.59am)	Mr Malcolm MacLeod (non-voting) (MMcL)
Dr Ian Cockburn (Vice Chair)	Mrs Donna Manson (non-voting)
Mrs Margaret Davidson (Vice Chair)	Mr Calum Munro
Mr John Gibson (non-voting)	Mr Peter Saggars
Mr Allan Gunn (non-voting) (AG)	
Mr Andrew Jarvie	

**Non-Members also present:-**

Mrs J Barclay	Mrs B McAllister
Mr R Bremner	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs H Carmichael	Mrs M Paterson
Mr J Finlayson	Mr I Ramon
Mr R Gale	Mrs T Robertson
Mr A Henderson	Mr B Thompson
Mr D Louden	

**Officers Present:-**

Ms C McDiarmid, ECO Communities & Place (CMcD)  
Mrs K Lackie, ECO Performance & Governance  
Mrs F Malcolm, Interim Head of Integration, Health & Social Care (FM)  
Mr P Whitham, Programme Manager, Transformation (PW)  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

**Mr A Christie in the Chair**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject/Decision</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>		<b>No Action Necessary</b>
	There were no apologies.	
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>		<b>No Action Necessary</b>
	The Board <b>NOTED</b> the following declarations of interest:-	
	Items 4, 5, and 6: Mr A Jarvie (non-financial)	
	Item 5: Mr A Christie (financial)	

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**No Action  
Necessary**

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the previous meeting held on 24 May 2021 which had been approved by the Council on 24 June 2021.

**4. Recovery Action Plan: Update and Exceptions Report  
Plana Gníomh Ath-shlánachaidh: Aithisg Ùrachaidh agus  
Eisgeachdan**

**AG / MMcL**

**Declarations of Interest: Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No RB/10/21 dated 9 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Transformation.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- before any actions were marked as complete, appropriate engagement should be undertaken with external stakeholders, particularly with regard to Highland economic issues and the impact of the loss of international tourists. This would be flagged to the relevant strategic committees. Attention was drawn to the joint task force with HIE and the Chamber of Commerce that was considering economic issues, and the focus of the economic recovery partnership on two key areas, labour market challenges and housing for business. Some of the worst affected businesses were in remote and fragile communities, with reference to the small isles and the impact of social distancing on ferries on their economies;
- many businesses would struggle during the winter months and consideration should be given to seeking further business grant funding from the Scottish Government;
- reference at Item 7 of the minutes of the previous meeting to 'waste energy' should instead refer to 'waste to energy';
- it was important that vulnerable people were able to reconnect with support services they were using prior to Covid-19;
- the performance of the individual Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) varied and a method was required to ensure Members were kept up to date with CPP activities. Attention was drawn to a workshop on CPP local and strategic issues which was open to all Members and would take place on 31 August prior to the Communities and Place Committee. It was noted that the Sutherland CPP functioned well and this was at least in part due to the funded officer support it received from the Police;
- information was sought and provided on the extent to which the skills audit was being undertaken across all Council services, rather than only within services;

- in response to a query about the roll out of the R100 programme for full fibre broadband across the Highlands, information on the detail of this was awaited and engagement was being undertaken with BT Open Reach, HIE and the Scottish Government Digital Office;
- concern was expressed at the increases in some domestic power bills and attention was drawn to the services offered by the energy watchdogs and Citizen's Advice Bureaux; and
- it was suggested BT Open Reach were installing additional lamp-posts and overground wiring to the visual detriment of some areas.

The Board **NOTED**:-

- i. the latest summary of progress against the Council's Recovery Action Plan;
- ii. any recommendation or observations to Council in respect of progress on the Recovery Plan and associated actions;
- iii. the overall status of the Recovery Action Plan including that with one exception, actions were now complete, business as usual or were subsumed into the Transformation Programme, an update on which was also reported within today's agenda;

and **AGREED**:

- iv. appropriate external engagement be undertaken prior to actions being marked as complete, and that this be flagged to the relevant strategic committees; and
- v. the Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Economy and Environment, would liaise with BT Open Reach in relation reports of additional lamp-posts and unsightly over-ground wiring in some areas.

**5. Improvement and Transformation Programme 2021-2022 Update**  
**Fios às Ùr mu Phrògram Leasachaidh is Cruth-atharrachaidh 2021-2022**

**AG**

**Declarations of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland and Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No RB/11/21 dated 13 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Transformation.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- attention was drawn to the role of this Board which was to monitor, evaluate and report on progress across the Improvement and Transformation Programme on behalf of The Highland Council, with

respective Strategic Committees and the Redesign Board responsible for project delivery;

- the report and appendices were useful in providing comprehensive detail on progress; and
- it was hoped the information on the Waste Strategy at Appendix 7 would be updated for the next meeting, as potential capital and revenue savings had been identified. It was confirmed an update was due to be provided to the Communities and Place Committee on 31 August 2021.

The Board **NOTED**:-

- i. the latest progress on the Council's Improvement and Transformation Programme's Projects;
- ii. the ongoing progress regarding recruitment to the posts within the Improvement and Transformation Programme;
- iii. the latest progress on the Council's Improvement and Transformation Programme in respect of the 21/22 cashable benefits; and
- iv. the ongoing work in the PMO implementing the use of existing technologies to deliver enhanced support for a complex and significant programme and the sharing of good project management practice across the Council and partners.

## **6. Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Fund Bid Update Maoin Dèanamh Cothromach – Fios às Ùr**

**MMcL**

**Declarations of Interest: Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No RB/12/21 dated 16 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Economy and Environment.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was disappointing there had been no feedback to date on the bids, especially since the Community Renewal Fund bids had to be completed by the end of March 2022;
- the final Fraser of Allander Institute report was awaited and the need to strengthen the case for Highland to be better represented within the metrics for funding was emphasised. The draft report was requested for all Members;
- COSLA was gathering useful information from Local Authorities across Scotland to provide a national perspective; and
- a summary was provided of work being undertaken in Fort William and Portree. A more formal update would be provided to Members as soon as possible.

The Board **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** the draft Fraser of Allander report be circulated to all Members of the Council.

7. **Roads Investment Update**  
**Fios às Ùr mu Thasgadh Rathaidean**

**MMcL**

There had been circulated Report No RB/13/21 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Economy and Environment.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was clarified that this report was to provide assurance, and that specific issues would be debated at the appropriate Strategic Committee. A report on key issues was being presented to the Economy and infrastructure Committee on 1 September 2021;
- information was sought on the capital expenditure per area and this would be emailed to Board Members. It was vital the money was spent in a timely manner; and
- reference was made to the need to identify and facilitate 'quick wins' and it was suggested that a review of the maintenance and delivery programme for roads would be useful, to include the possibility of the Council purchasing a quarry to facilitate the procurement of tarmac and other materials. It was suggested that the Economy and Infrastructure Committee and / or the Redesign Board were more appropriate for those issues.

The Board **NOTED** the update provided and **AGREED** to email the breakdown of Area capital expenditure to Board Members.

The meeting closed at 11.25am.