

The Highland Council

Minutes of the meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday, 13 November 2024 at 10.30am.

Present:

Ms S Atkin (substitute for Mrs M Paterson)	Mr P Logue (substitute for Mr J Edmondson)
Mr M Baird (substitute for Mr R Gale)	Mrs I Mackenzie
Mrs M Cockburn	Mr A MacKintosh
Mr D Fraser	Mrs A MacLean
Mrs B Jarvie (remote)	Mrs K MacLean
Ms L Johnston	Ms L A Niven (substitute for Dr C Birt)
Ms E Knox	Mrs M Reid (remote)
Ms L Kraft	Ms M Smith

Non-Members present:

Mr S Coghill (remote)	Mr D Millar (remote)
Mr J Finlayson (remote)	Mr P Oldham (remote)
Ms M Hutchison (remote)	Mr R Stewart
Mr T MacLennan (remote)	

NHS Highland representatives:

Ms L Bussell, Director of Nursing
Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care
Mrs P Stott, Chief Officer

Third sector representatives in attendance:

Dr G Rodger, Inspiring Young Voices

Participating Officials:

Ms K Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive - People
Ms F Duncan, Chief Social Work Officer & Chief Officer Health and Social Care
Ms F Malcolm, Chief Officer, Integrated People Services
Ms M McIntyre, Head of Children and Justice Social Work
Mr I Kyle, Lead Officer Strategy, Performance and Quality Assurance
Ms J Park, Strategic Lead Child Health
Ms G Prince, Partnership Development Manager
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council.
All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.**

Mr D Fraser in the Chair

Preliminaries

The Chair welcomed Dr Gaener Rodger to the meeting as a new third sector representative, and asked her to introduce herself and her role with Inspiring Young Voices.

**1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence
Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Dr C Birt, Mr J Edmondson, Mr R Gale, Mrs M Paterson, Mr R Gunn, and Mrs M Ross.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/Aithris Fhollaiseachd**

Declaration of Interest

Item 10 – Dr G Rodger

Transparency Statements

Item 5 – Ms L Johnston

**3. Service Achievements
Coileanaidhean Seirbheis**

An update was provided on the following:

- Adults Serving Community Sentences had helped transform Invergordon Day Centre;
- The Pines had been awarded Highland Third Sector Interface Partnership of the Year 2024;
- Specialist Community Public Health Nurse Post Graduate Training;
- Education Scotland and the Home to Highland Care Experienced Team; and
- A recent Fire Skills Course for young people.

The Committee **NOTED** and welcomed the updates, and thanked all involved in the Fire Skills Course.

**4. Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24
Aithisg Bhliadhnail Àrd-Oifigear Cùraim Shòisealta 2023-24**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/19/24 by the Chief Social Work Officer.

The Committee **NOTED** the issues raised in the annual report, which had recently been presented to the full Council, and the implications for social work and social care services within Highland Council and NHS Highland.

**5. Adult Social Care Assurance Report and Strategic Update
Aithisg Bharantais agus Cunntas Ro-innleachdail Cùraim Shòisealta Inbheach**

Ms L Johnston declared a connection to Item 4 as an employee of Connecting Carers but, having applied the objective test, did not consider that she had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No HCW/20/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was clarified that there had been a loss of 218 care home beds, leaving a total of approximately 1800 beds in Highland. 377 people were currently waiting for a care at home service. It was important to remember the real lives of the people behind the statistics;
- information was sought, and would be provided outwith the meeting, on the variation in payment rates for rurality and remoteness. Details were provided of the numbers and sizes of care homes in Highland and it was pointed out that the 50-bed model for care homes to be economically viable did not suit the remote and rural nature of the Highlands, with reference to the importance of keeping care home residents as close to their families and communities as possible. In addition to the loss of care home beds, information was provided on the number of hours of care that had also been lost, in addition to increasing need. Challenges included lack of capacity, affordability and availability of workforce. This had been raised at senior political levels and at the convention of the Highlands and Islands;
- the value of the Option One Care Fund was highlighted and it was hoped this funding source would continue;
- an explanation was sought and provided on the coding system for hospital discharges, and it was pointed out that in addition to people delayed in hospital waiting for care home places, there was also a waiting list of people in the community;
- an explanation of various graphs and their keys in the report was sought and provided;
- the importance of supporting paid and unpaid carers was emphasised;
- NHS staff were thanked for their attendance at the recent public meeting about the temporary closure of Strathburn Care Home and its anticipated reopening in the new year;
- the importance of improving people's lives to help prevent people going into or being delayed in hospital, for example tailored home adaptations or digital solutions, was emphasised;
- the importance of encouraging people to organise power of attorney was highlighted;
- reference was made to the higher cost of living for people in remote and rural areas, and to challenges in accessing services. Information would be provided to Mrs B Jarvie outwith the meeting on payments for personal assistants; and
- the Chair voiced his support and gratitude for unpaid and paid carers, and emphasised the importance of providing them with adequate support.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

6. Health and Social Care - Revenue Monitoring Budget and Performance Report – Quarter 2 2024-25
Slàinte is Cùram Sòisealta – Buidseat Sgrùdadh Teachd-a-steach agus Aithisg Coileanaidh – Ràith 2 2024-25

There had been circulated Report No HCW/21/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- an explanation was sought and provided for the savings achieved by NHS Highland which had now gone up from £1.7m to £2.3m. It was clarified that savings arising from unfilled vacancies were non-recurring with efforts being made to fill these posts and the recruitment challenges were on the corporate risk register. Attention was drawn to the impact on staff of having unfilled vacancies;
- the value of community groups in keeping people in their homes longer, and facilitating their discharge from hospital, was highlighted;
- assurance was sought and would be provided outwith the meeting to Mrs K MacLean that the sterilising unit for medical equipment had been repaired. This was important to allow the reuse of equipment; and
- clarification was sought and provided on the 5 and 20 day complaint response data.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. forecast revenue position as at Q2 of the 2024/25 financial year;
- ii. progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery; and
- iii. Service's performance and risk information.

7. Delivery Plan Budget Monitoring and Progress Update – Person Centred Solutions Portfolio
Sgrùdadh Buidseit agus Cunntas Adhartais a' Phlana Libhrigidh – Cùram-roinne airson Fuasglaidhean Stèidhichte air an Neach

There had been circulated Report No HCW/22/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- with reference to the successful 'grow your own' approach to recruiting social workers, it was suggested this would be a helpful approach for carers, using designated care homes as training hubs. A summary was provided of work being undertaken to encourage young people into careers in social care;
- an explanation was sought and provided for the financial and operational responsibility for the system for recording client records;
- reference was made to the ongoing challenges around digital communication and information sharing between the Council NHS Highland, with some of the issues being IT related, and other data protection considerations; and
- the Chair voiced support for the promotion of careers in the care profession and for training and continued learning being undertaken by care at home providers. NHS Highland had hosted a successful careers event the previous day attended by around 80 school pupils.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the progress being made in the Delivery Plan projects in the report.

8. Health and Social Care Children's Services – Child Health Update
Seirbheisean Chloinne Slàinte is Cùraim Shòisealta – Cunntas as Ùr mu Shlàinte Chloinne

There had been circulated Report No HCW/23/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- a summary was sought and provided of the changes to the school nurse role in recent years, and how their services could be accessed by pupils and by Education staff, with particular reference to smaller, rural schools. It was important that awareness was raised of the new approach, noting that school nurses also worked with children in the community as well as in a school setting;
- information was sought and provided on the provision of social services when young mothers were transitioning from Children & Young People's Services to Adult Services, particularly care-experienced young people who were more likely to lack family support. This included buffer teams, midwifery and health visitor support, according to need;
- more information on staff training and qualifications being undertaken would be helpful for future committees, and attention was drawn to the number of new Health Visitors that had been supported through training since 2020. Reference was made to useful ongoing work being undertaken with various partners organisations and groups, including support for breastfeeding;
- the Highland Words Up Approach, to support new parents/staff in parent groups, was welcomed as a beneficial early intervention approach;
- information was sought and provided on the fourteen professions that came under the Allied Health Professional (AHP) umbrella, and on the success and expansion of the 'Just ask' advice line, which facilitated direct access for families and professionals to specialist AHP advice, guidance and support;
- a summary was provided of the funding and management of specialist social care equipment for individuals, including what happened to equipment purchased for an individual for educational purposes once the young person had finished their education. Noting that some pieces of essential medical equipment were bulky, it was suggested that the rules on Council tenants only being permitted one garden shed be reconsidered in special circumstances, and the Chair offered to bring this to the attention of the Housing Service;
- the importance of supported school attendance for children and young people with disabilities was highlighted;
- an update was sought and provided on the numbers of staff being trained on the Solihull emotional and mental wellbeing approach, and it was queried whether staff were also being provided with trauma-informed training; and
- it was suggested that The Promise was specifically tailored to care experienced young people.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- NOTED** on the delivery of the delegated functions for child health, service improvements and associated risks and mitigations;
- NOTED** the integrated approach, as part of Families First, to move to whole family, community based early preventative support;
- AGREED** the workforce development and improvement initiatives in line with the Highland council delivery plan; and
- NOTED** the Chair would advise the Housing and Property Service of the need for appropriate/additional storage facilities for Council tenants with family members requiring the use of bulky medical equipment.

9. **Resetting the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan Ag Ath-shuidheachadh Plana Leasachadh Bhuilean na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/24/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the increased focus on drugs and alcohol issues in the plan was welcomed;
- further traction was required on shared spaces and hubs, with some of the work being undertaken in Inverness being worthy of cascading elsewhere, with particular reference to breastfeeding support as an example;
- there were actions to be taken forward from a recent workshop on poverty and health;
- improved communication and sharing of information could help to break down barriers and attention was drawn to the value of the community planning partnerships and other cross agency partnerships in this regard;
- the value of youth work in improving young people's self esteem was highlighted, with particular reference to the need to support young people who were not attending school; and
- concern was expressed about certain physical barriers such as the lack of drop kerbs for disabled accessibility. Examples of this would be sought outwith the meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the 19 September 2024 Council report at Appendix 1 to the report and that Members would provide the Chair with any known examples of accessibility issues, with particular reference to pavements that required a dropped kerb.

10. Health and Social Care Contracts Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Chùmhnantan Slàinte is Cùraim Shòisealta

Dr G Rodger declared an interest in Item 10 as Inspiring Young Voices had a Service Level Agreement with the Council, and she left the chamber for the item.

There had been circulated Report No HCW/25/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- service providers and the Council would benefit from a procurement strategy being in place;
- the consultation undertaken with the providers was welcomed;
- attention was drawn to the hierarchy of priorities, with some contracts requiring urgent review;
- an explanation was provided of why some contracts were for 12 months and others longer;
- the benefits of co-production were highlighted, as were the possibilities for considering contracts across different Council areas; and
- attention was drawn to the importance of adding value.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** the progress that had been made to improve contract management; and
- ii. **AGREED** the current activity and future developments.

11. Champions Updates Cunntasan nan Curaidhean

- * The Committee **AGREED** that Ms Sarah Atkin be appointed as a Children's Champion and **NOTED** the updates from the following Champions:

Trauma

Mrs Morven Reid provided details of the keynote speakers, presentations and workshops at the Highland Trauma Summit that had been held in Strathpeffer Pavillion on 3 September 2024. She summarised learning from the event and made reference to the need to ensure interactions in the Council Chamber reflected trauma-informed practice.

Other achievements included the appointment of a TIP Lead Officer to drive forward how organisations achieved a trauma informed status, and the availability of Traineasy modules.

Next steps included progressing the positive feedback from the summit.

Older Adults

Mrs I MacKenzie summarised the strong local connections she had made advocating for older residents. Topics included effective and appropriate communications, and mobility issues such as dropped kerbs, cluttered pavements, overgrown vegetation, and lack of allocated parking. The importance of creating age-friendly neighbourhoods was highlighted, as was the promotion of intergenerational projects, with various examples provided. Concerns were expressed in relation to the Winter Fuel Payment and reference was made to Age UK's Silver Sunday and Highland Blindcraft Sensory Services. A video by Age UK 'Let's Change How We Age' was shown.

The Chair thanked the Champions for their work.

12. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The following Minutes had been circulated and were **NOTED**:-

- Highland Council / NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held on 19 June 2024; and
- Highland Violence Against Women Partnership Group held on 22 July 2024.

The meeting ended at 1.50pm.