**Redesign Board Workshop 14.11.17**

**Staff communication**

**New methods for engaging staff**

Through redesign the following new methods were developed in 2016 to engage staff and these are now mainstreamed as normal business. They include face to face and digital methods as listed below.

* 1. Involving staff in peer and Lean reviews

Over 50 members of staff have been directly involved in peer review teams. Many other staff affected by reviews have been consulted and have provided information for reviews. 24 staff members are trained in Lean as facilitators and over 60 have been involved in Lean teams undertaking reviews. Briefing sessions on the Lean programme are now planned to raise awareness among many more staff, with roll out from November 2017. More staff will become involved as reviews

* 1. Local face to face staff forums

These are run for staff across the region in offices and depots twice a year. They are led by the Executive Leadership Team and have involved Heads of Service too. Since late 2017 they have involved Redesign Board Members and in 2018 Trade Union representatives from the Board have participated. Further information on the current round of local forums is provided below.

* 1. Creating a staff panel to respond to e-surveys.

Around 900 staff have signed up to take part in the panel. They have responded to two surveys in 2017 on the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and the Commission on Highland Democracy with scope for future surveys to be done.

* 1. Creating a staff Facebook group

Currently there are over 700 members of staff signed up to the group. This enables quick dissemination of a variety of Council news.

* 1. Dedicated page on the intranet on redesign

This [page](https://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/23/staff_information/208/redesign_of_the_highland_council) is up-dated regularly and includes information about the Board workshops, the reviews and any external engagement. It also describes what redesign means and how staff can be involved in it. A blog to include on the page is under development. Current thinking is to include video clips of staff involved in peer and Lean reviews and for Board member interviews.

* 1. Asking for staff ideas on-line

This is done through:

* + 1. A dedicated redesign mailbox [redesign@highland.gov.uk](mailto:redesign@highland.gov.uk) for staff to contact. It is used for a variety of reasons and not just for redesign issues and was recently promoted again following the Staff Partnership Forum meeting on 2.11.17 and in the current round of local forums. It enables staff to pass on ideas and issues directly without raising them through their line managers.
    2. A new on-line ideas tool which when used in late 2016 generated over 150 efficiency ideas and over 50 commercial ideas. These are being considered in the budget theme groups. The tool was procured initially for 1 year and to avoid further costs the development of an in-house tool is under consideration.

These new approaches are in addition to methods already in use to communicate with staff. These are:

* Management Briefings;
* Senior Leadership Team sessions;
* Arrangements for cascading information through line managers (e.g. team meetings and service briefings); and
* Staff newsletters (In Brief). The last staff newsletter in September generated two new ideas for Lean reviews.

Trade Unions will also have methods for engaging with their members on redesign.

Up-date on current briefing through local forums

Between end October and 1st December there are 16 face to face forums taking place in 12 different locations. They include Council offices, depots and other community halls. Nearly 500 staff members have registered to attend and at the time of writing over 140 have taken part in four sessions. Six Members and a Trade Union representative have been able to attend these four sessions too.

The briefings cover the budget position, the agreed approach to financial and workforce planning and an up-date of redesign activity and reviews. They are designed to encourage staff to share ideas for budget savings and redesign reviews and for them to raise any issues of concern. The issues and ideas raised so far are listed below.

Issues raised:

* Communicating to staff who they can contact if they have ideas for the budget theme groups – in addition to the redesign mailbox
* A shared concern about the reducing budget and concern about being able to plan when budgets are known late in the year for only one year in advance. This included queries about the funding formula for Councils and concerns about increasing Government requirements while budgets reduce.
* A sense that the public doesn’t yet know or believe that we need to stop doing some things and change what we do and that their expectations of us have not changed.
* A concern about how people reliant on welfare benefits can cope with the changes to Council services.
* A concern about how to respond to demand from tourism when budgets are reducing (e.g. NC500 infrastructure issues)
* Concerns about any recruitment freeze and coping with work load when posts are not filled.
* Whether re-skilling would lead to salary increases.
* A concern about any further review of the service point network which has already undergone reviews and reductions.
* The scope for more Occupational Health clinics to be run locally.
* Whether any new income raised locally could be retained locally.
* Some staff knew of redesign reviews (peer and Lean reviews) and where they had been involved directly they were positive about them; others were not aware of reviews or had not been directly involved.
* A concern that we wouldn’t be able to deliver all of the actions agreed from peer reviews, with support needed to make that happen (especially waste review).
* Staff from one depot felt it was hard to know about the local sessions taking place.
* Could briefings be provided to smaller groups in different locations – e.g. Ross House? Alternate West Coast depots (e.g. next time Gairloch and Lochcarron instead of Ullapool and Kyle/Broadford)
* A local member attending wondered if there was a disconnect between HQ and the locality where staff had less knowledge of redesign processes.

Ideas proposed:

Several ideas have been suggested as described below. Some are already in hand and others can be picked up by the relevant budget theme groups and redesign.

* Income generation – selling garage services from our depots to partners and the public (e.g. MoT services); do more road maintenance work on behalf of others; using school hostels for tourist accommodation in the holidays; training people in the community (including community councillors) on enforcement to issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling.
* Efficiency and savings – composting more of our own waste; reviewing the range of skips we use for waste; greater use of the hot box for roads repairs on the West Coast; vehicle idling saving; make use of our own vehicles more to deliver goods and services; hire more apprentices but ensure there is a job for them at the end and pay them the market rate;
* New ideas for reviews
  + reviewing the balance of Trade Services delivered in-house and out-sourced and whether different trade groups could be involved in a wider range of trade services (not being confined to only their specific trade but skilled to multi-task) to enable more work to be done in-house.
  + A review of the roads service – all aspects of how it operates and the balance of in-house and out-sourced work.

Proposed next steps

The draft communications plan is being considered at this meeting and will include questions about how else to engage. Suggestions on speaking to staff groups in other localities could be picked up through e.g. the Lean awareness raising roll out and be identifying more staff in review teams from out with HQ.

On specific issues and ideas, these are being directed to individual services and budget theme groups.

Ideas for redesign reviews can be considered and brought back to the Board for a view for the December workshop. BY that time all the local briefings will have concluded.

The list of issues and ideas will be collated from all forum meetings and used in the next communication to all staff.