

## The Highland Council

19<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Agenda Item	14
Report No	HC/55/13

### Amendments proposed to the Council's Programme 'Working together for the Highlands'

#### Report by the Chief Executive

##### Summary

This report proposes amendments to the Council's Programme 'Working together for the Highlands.' The amendments reflect the commitments already met, the commitments that would benefit from some change and new commitments proposed.

#### **1. Background**

1.1 The Council's Programme 'Working together for the Highlands' was agreed in June 2012. The first annual performance report for the programme was considered by members at the Council meeting in September 2013. This showed good progress with the programme in its first year. The programme requires some adjustment given the achievements in the first year. Since June 2012 new issues and work streams have emerged and these require consideration in the programme as well.

#### **2. Proposed amendments to the Council programme**

2.1 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed amendments to the programme. It describes:

- 5 completed commitments which require no further action or annual reporting;
- 3 completed commitments in year 1, but with annual performance updates and reporting required at least for 2013/14;
- 8 commitments that would benefit from amendment to reflect progress made in 2012/13 or to reflect other changes such as the carbon clever initiative, the partnership approach to economic recovery, feedback from the Citizens' Panel and concerns about remote and rural communities; and
- 10 new commitments proposed to provide further support to the economy, dealing with welfare reform and improving the region's infrastructure including new approaches to dealing with energy prices along with new commitments on empowering communities.

2.2 Changes to the programme commitments need to be followed through into new actions and indicators for performance to be monitored and reported. This will be the subject of a future report to Council.

#### **3. Implications**

3.1 Resource implications: At this time the commitments can be met within current budgets; however should any future resource implications arise from implementation at a later date, this will be reported to members.

Legal implications: There are no new legal requirements arising from the

proposals; although those commitments involving lobbying activity may lead to changes in national policy or legislation with implications for new or changed duties on the Council.

Risk implications: Good progress was made in the first year of delivering the Council's programme. By being clear about amendments to the programme and ensuring performance indicators are in place for all new and amended commitments, we can mitigate against the risks to delivery of the programme.

Equalities and carbon clever implications: Amendments to the programme include refreshing commitments on equalities based on the Council's equality outcomes published in April 2013 and up-dating the climate change commitments to reflect the new Carbon Clever initiative.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 Members are asked to consider the amendments proposed for its Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' as set out in Appendix 1 and to agree the final changes to be made.

4.2 Members are asked to note that change agreed for the programme will be followed through into new actions and indicators so that performance can be monitored and reported.

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**Amendments proposed to the Council Programme: 'Working Together for the Highlands'**

**Commitments completed with no further action or annual reporting required**

1. The Council will introduce a living wage of at least £7.45 per hour for all council staff by April 1st, 2013, helping the lowest paid. (Ref 1.2)  
*This was achieved and benefitted around 800 staff.*
2. The Council will introduce a single Children's Champion, to uphold the values of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. (2.28)  
*We have a Children's Champion.*
3. The Council will establish nine district partnerships for health and social care. (3.5)  
*Nine District partnerships were operational by March 2013.*
4. The Council will appoint a Carers' Champion, responsible for representing the interests of carers at a council level and with other appropriate public bodies, and engaging with carers across the Highlands. (3.7)  
*We have a Carers' Champion.*
5. The Council will appoint an Older People & Adults' Champion, responsible for representing the interests of elderly people in receipt of council services. The post-holder will also engage with appropriate bodies representing older people. (3.8)  
*We have an Older People & Adults' Champion.*

**Commitments completed with annual performance up-dates to continue at least for 2013/14**

1. Working with the Scottish and UK Governments, the Council will investigate means whereby resources currently held by pension funds can be invested for the overall benefit of the people of the Highlands. (1.14)  
*Advantages and disadvantages of this commitment were reported to the Investment Sub Committee in May 2013.*
2. The Council will commit at least £3million of the Council's budget each year to spend preventatively to improve the quality of life for young people, older adults and those struggling with deprivation. (3.3)  
*£3m was allocated to preventative spend with outcomes agreed by March 2013 and progress is reported to committee.*
3. The Council will work with community councils and other community organisations to encourage community empowerment, and will introduce a community challenge fund of £1million of recurring expenditure to support community projects which explore new ways of delivering services at a local level. (6.8).  
*The community challenge fund scheme was launched in January 2013 with agreed criteria and assessment procedures. There will be a review after year 1.*

## **Commitments amended to reflect changing context or policy progress**

1. Amend the overarching climate change commitment of 'The Council will maintain its commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration' to 'The Council will maintain its commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration and work with everyone to achieve a Carbon Clever Highlands by 2025 (a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands).'
2. Amend the overarching equalities commitment from 'The Council will implement the Fairer Highland Plan including the general and specific duties of the Equality Act (2010), ensuring that people are treated fairly and with respect.' to 'The Council will aim to achieve its equality outcomes, so that: people are, and feel, free to live their lives without harassment and discrimination, and can take part in community life; people benefit from public services in a fairer way and are able to have their say about them; and staff feel there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.'
3. Amend commitment 1.1 from 'The Council will produce a comprehensive economic recovery and development plan, detailing a strategy for growth.' to reflect this was done and up-date it to include partnership involvement in its delivery as, 'Working with partners and through the Single Outcome Agreement we will implement a comprehensive economic recovery and development plan'.
4. Amend commitment 1.20 from 'The Council will prioritise the publication of a youth employment strategy.' To reflect this was done and up-date it to allow progress to be monitored as, 'The Council will monitor implementation of its youth employment strategy'.
5. Extend commitment 1.24 from 'Working with Scottish Government and other agencies the Council will undertake a review of service delivery to remote and rural communities and identify a sustainable level of support necessary for the provision of services.' To include 'We will develop new approaches to service delivery and community resilience in our most remote and rural communities, and pilot these in North and West Sutherland.'
6. Amend commitment 3.11 from 'Working with the NHS, the Council will support people, particularly older people, to get the most out of technology for personal use, including tele-health and tele-care.' to take into account the feedback from the Citizens' Panel on older people, people with disabilities and council house tenants requiring more support to access on-line services, to, 'Working with the NHS and other partners, the Council will support people, particularly older people, people with disabilities and Council tenants, to get the most out of technology for personal use, including tele-health, tele-care and on-line access to services.'
7. Amend commitment 4.13 from 'The Council will continue to reduce carbon emissions from Council operations, with their associated costs, to achieve the Scottish Government's target of 42% reduction in emissions by 2020. We will publish a carbon management plan by 2013.' to reflect the new plan and initiative to, 'The Council will continue to reduce carbon emissions from its operations and work to meet the new target in the Carbon Management Plan (CMP) of a 21% reduction between 2011/12 and 2020. We will realign the CMP to Carbon Clever Initiative.'
8. Amend commitment 7.3 from 'The Council will plan for effective engagement with the new national services for police and fire and rescue and the Scottish Ambulance Service.' to reflect we have put in place arrangements for local engagement, to, 'The Council will effectively engage with and scrutinise the national services for police, fire and rescue and

Scottish Ambulance Service. It will do this through its community planning arrangements, its scrutiny committee and a programme of self-evaluation’.

## **New commitments proposed**

### **The economy**

1. We will investigate new opportunities for non-domestic rate incentives for town centres/specified streets or localities where support is needed to help to reverse localised economic decline.
2. We will explore all opportunities to promote wider application of the living wage across Highland.

### **Caring communities**

3. We will continue to lobby for measures that will mitigate the negative effects of Welfare Reform measures on individuals, providers of social housing and the rural economy. As the first Council in Scotland to work directly with the Department for Work and Pensions on Universal Credit mitigation for local claimants, the Council will also seek to improve communications, data sharing and local joint working with the Department.

### **Better infrastructure**

4. We will devise a comprehensive strategy to bring about a reduction in energy costs in the Highlands, including particular support for fuel poor households and co-operative fuel buying.
5. We will adopt the principles of ‘shared space’ in order to find innovative solutions for reconciling traffic movement with quality public spaces in our cities, towns and villages.
6. We will work with HITRANS and rail operators to seek expansion of concessionary commuter fares to routes south and east of Inverness.
7. We will campaign for incentives from Scottish and UK Governments to reduce the negative impact that poorly maintained buildings have in our communities.
8. We will promote seaborne tourism by developing the network of harbours around our coastline through a partnership of Council harbours, trust ports, community owned or operated harbours, and privately owned facilities, in order to generate income and employment for our coastal communities.

### **Empowering communities**

9. Working with the UK and Scottish Government and Electoral bodies we will encourage voter turn-out, especially among younger people.
10. We will reduce the volume of printed material produced by the Council building on a current initiative for paperless Council meeting options and developing further options for members, customers and employees to conduct Council business on-line.