

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
15 May 2014

Agenda Item	4
Report No	COM/01/14

Community Services – New Structure, New Approach

Report by the Director of Community Services

Summary

This report informs and updates Elected Members on progress with the new Service structure for Community Services which aims to deliver a fresh, customer-centric approach to service delivery. The report also invites Members to agree to hold a seminar on how the Service can better engage with communities (including Community Councils) and help build and sustain confidence in this fresh approach.

1. Background

1.1 On 24 October 2013, the Council approved a Service structure of 5 Directorates:

- Care and Learning
- Finance
- Corporate Development
- Development and Infrastructure
- Community Services

1.2 The Service structure agreed by Council is attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.

1.3 As of 1 April 2014, much of what was Transport, Environmental & Community Services and Housing & Property Service became Community Services (**Appendix 2** shows the management structure and key responsibilities of each post).

2. Community Services Directorate

2.1 Community Services provides many of the Council's everyday essential services in a more integrated way and will be more responsive to customer needs.

2.2 The new Community Services Management Team is made up of:

- Head of Housing – David Goldie
- Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services – Colin Clark
- Head of Roads and Transport – Richard Evans
- Area Community Services Manager (Caithness and Sutherland) – Campbell Stewart
- Area Community Services Manager (Skye, Ross and Cromarty) – Tina Luxton
- Area Community Services Manager (Inverness) – Tracey Urry
- Area Community Services Manager (Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey and Lochaber) – Cameron Kemp
- Performance and Building Maintenance Manager – Caroline Campbell

2.3 As of 1 April, all these posts were filled either through formal Member interviews, matching interviews or deployment meetings.

3. Service Teams

- 3.1 The Service Management Team agreed a number of principles that would be applied in defining structure and service delivery options:
- capture synergies between similar functions currently undertaken separately;
 - manager posts should be generic to the optimum level;
 - focus on the best option for the customer;
 - ensure the structure supports the delivery of the high volume customer contact activities;
 - provide consistency in structure, delivery and outcomes; and
 - enhance performance improvement and drive efficiency.
- 3.2 Work is under way on the alignment and deployment of posts below Service Management Team level. Any amendments to posts arising from these decisions will go through Trade Union and staffing consultation and be presented to a future Community Services committee for approval. This will not involve additional salary costs and will follow the Council's policy of avoiding compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

4. Phasing and Timetable

4.1

Phase	Action	Timetable
1	Appointment of Service Management Team	Completed by 1 April 2014
2	Appointment of Second Tier Managers	Following Community Services committee approval
3	Alignment of Service Teams with 4 new Areas	Following appointment of Second Tier Managers
4	Reviewing the asset base and seeking opportunities for rationalisation e.g. stores, depots, offices	Within 18 months

5. Service Development Progress

- 5.1 The first partnership approach meeting with Trade Unions has taken place with further meetings diared to take place quarterly.
- 5.2 A series of Area Visits to all Community Services staff has just been completed, where the Director explained the new customer-centric approach to service delivery and received direct feedback from staff.
- 5.3 A Staff Communication and Consultation Plan has been developed and shared with Trade Unions and Community Services staff providing direction and commitment to communication as a management standard for the Service.
- 5.4 An eighteen month development and training programme is being developed for management staff at the outset, to ensure support is given in driving forward the key changes of focus and culture.

5.5 A further report on the Service Team structure will be reported to the next Community Services Committee.

6. Expectations of the new Service

6.1 The new Directorate will put us all in regular contact with the people of the Highlands. As such, the Director (with the agreement of his Service Management Team) has written to all staff restating the values we should all be delivering:

- put our customers at the centre of what we do;
- discuss with communities how they could do more themselves and how we could support them to do so;
- be consistent in our dealings with people across the Highlands;
- listen to our customers and explain our decisions;
- be open, honest and transparent in everything we do; and
- focus on performance to help us be the best we can be

7. Community Engagement and Participation

7.1 This will be a key focus for the Service. At a time of reducing resources it is essential that we adopt much more of a partnership approach with our communities.

7.2 A pilot is underway in Aird and Loch Ness Ward to develop Community Action Plans.

7.3 A small Community Council Focus Group is being established by the Director.

7.4 Community Councils on the Black Isle wish “to explore ways of using our time and resources more efficiently and effectively on behalf of our residents, when interacting with the Community Services Directorate”. The first meeting to consider this is scheduled for the evening of 15 May.

7.5 Members are invited to agree to hold a seminar on how the Service can better engage with communities (including Community Councils) and help build and sustain confidence in this fresh approach.

8. Implications

8.1 Resources

In recognition of the cultural and service delivery changes, a review of the current structure of Community Services should create efficiency proposals which will be reported to future committees for approval. The Council’s policy is to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible and this should be achievable but the process of adjustment could involve one-off costs arising from voluntary severance and redeployment.

8.2 Risks

There may be short-term performance risks associated with the change process which can be mitigated by leadership and training.

8.3 Legal, Climate Change, Equalities, Gaelic

There are no known legal, climate change/carbon clever, equalities or Gaelic implications associated with the proposals contained in this report

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

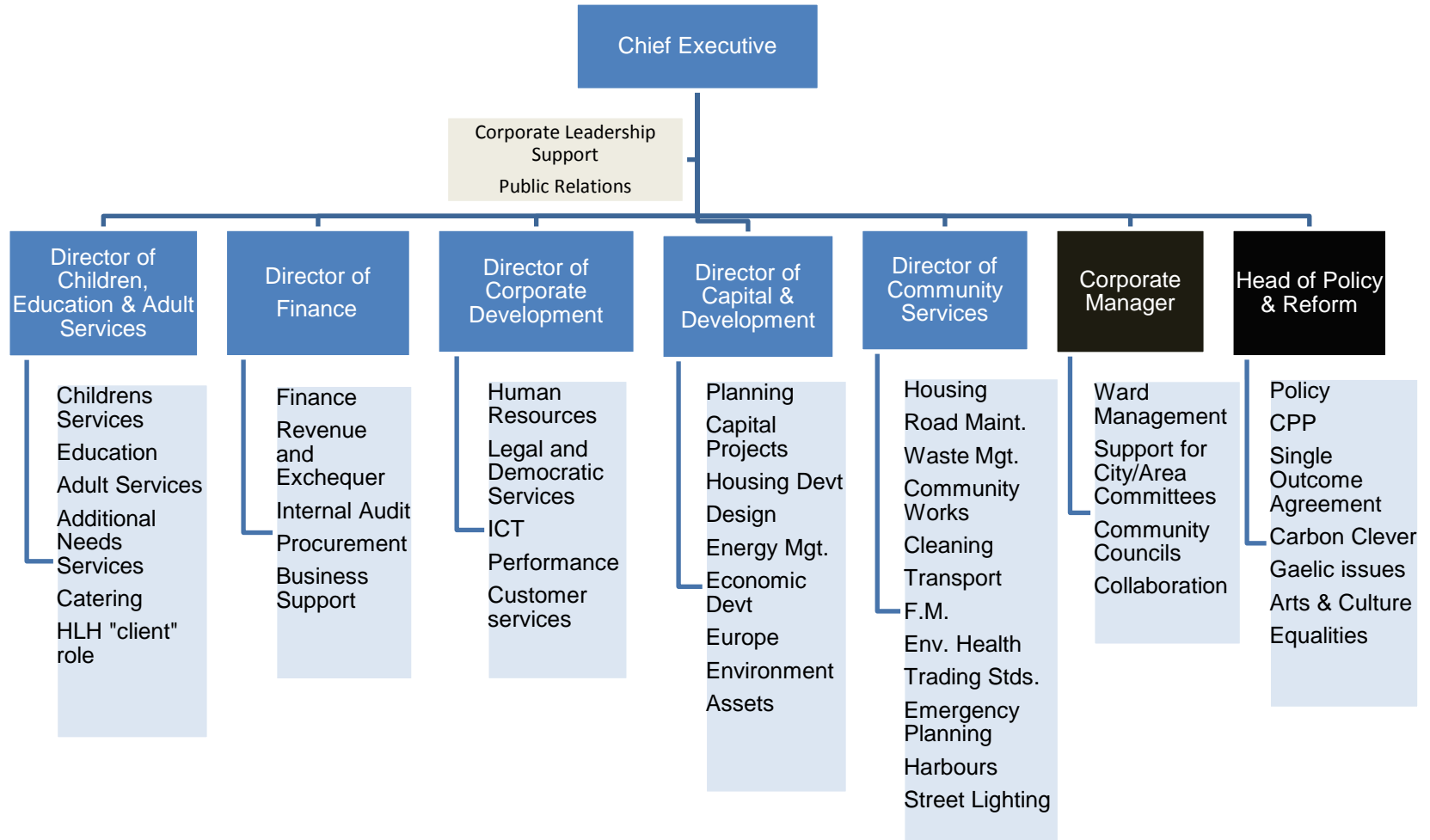
- i. Note progress with the new Service structure for Community Services which aims to deliver a fresh, customer-centric approach to service delivery and that a further report on progress with the restructure of Service Teams will be reported to the next committee; and
- ii. Agree to hold a seminar on how the Service can better engage with communities (including Community Councils) and help build and sustain confidence in this fresh approach.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Author: William Gilfillan, Director of Community Services

Date: 1 May 2014

Appendix 1 - AGREED SERVICE STRUCTURE



Appendix 2

