

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

24 April 2014

Agenda Item	7
Report No	CSB/1/14

Customer Services Review – Approach

Report by the Depute Chief Executive to Customer Services Board

Summary

This report confirms the remit for the Customer Services Board (CSB) and proposes an approach for the work of the Board, for Members consideration.

1. Background

The Highland Council, at its meeting on 13 March 2014:-

- i. **NOTED** the work undertaken as part of Customer Service Review 2;
- ii. **AGREED** that the Strategic Change & Development Fund should finance, up to £68,500, for 2014-15 the enhancements to:
 - a) the website as detailed in Section 15.1;
 - b) the Service Centre as detailed in Section 15.2; and
 - c) quality and performance improvement as detailed in Section 16.4.
- iii. **AGREED** to establish, for the next 15 months, a cross-group Customer Services Board of 10 Members with delegated powers to:
 - a) undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies, and the public on the future of the Service Point network;
 - b) consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
 - c) agree a future service delivery model for each such community on the basis of a business case which took into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.
- iv. **AGREED** that a report be submitted to the Resources Committee on achieving the saving of £355,200, as detailed in Section 19.1, should the decisions of the Board leave that saving unmet.

1.1 The Remit for the Customer Services Board is therefore to:-

- a) undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies, and the public on the future of the Service Point network;
- b) consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- c) agree a future service delivery model for each such community on the basis of a business case which took into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Proposed Approach

- 2.1 The CSB will need to decide how it wishes to approach the consultation and community engagement and how this and the decision on Service Points will be phased. It is recommended that the work of the Board needs to conclude by the end of March 2015 to allow a 3 month implementation for the decision on the final phase. An outline timetable is attached at **Appendix One**.
- 2.2 During this 12 month period there will be other activities that will impact on this work, principally the planned consultation on the Council's 5 year Budget Strategy and the restrictions placed on the Council during the pre-referendum period which will prevent consultation on controversial issues.
- 2.3 Consultation
The Council intends to undertake its Budget Consultation during 2014 it is suggested that the initial consultation on the Service Points be part of this process. It is envisaged that this will involve community consultation across the Highlands providing the opportunity to engage will communities on the proposals around service delivery in their local area. In particular this would provide an opportunity to discuss solutions and options for alternative service delivery within that community and inform the Business Cases.
- 2.4 It is then envisaged that the CSB will undertake its work in phases (i.e. grouping Service Points on an area basis) and that, as part of this, it would undertake specific consultation on the Business Case for that area with affected communities, inviting representations in writing from Members, partners, communities, trade unions and the public. The Board would also be able to invite representatives to make presentations to the Board, if required. The aim would be for the Board to make a number of decisions over the 12 months rather than leaving all decisions to the end of the process.
- 2.5 This two stage approach would ensure engagement with communities and enable specific representations from community councils and community groups. However the final decision as to the future of service delivery remains with the Customer Services Board.
- 2.6 Business Case
A Business Case would be prepared for each area (to be determined by the CSB) and this would inform the decision making of the Board detailing, for example, the cost of service delivery, service volumes, type of services accessed, alternative models of service delivery and the impact on customers and communities including an Equalities Impact Assessment. A business case template and a sample Service Point Profile is provided at **Appendix Two**.
- 2.7 The Board will need to agree criteria for its assessment of the Business Case to ensure that the decision making is transparent, consistent, demonstrates best value in terms of cost and quality of service delivery and provides continuity with policy decisions.
- 2.8 Future Meetings
The Board is asked to consider arrangements for future meetings, linked to the timetable agreed, and it is recommended that the next meeting is held at the Archive Centre (Inverness) to provide an opportunity for a presentation from the Chief Registrar on the work of the Registration Service and the opportunities for future service delivery. Consideration should also be given to inviting future

presentations from High Life Highland and the Third Sector to allow the Board to consider the opportunities for partnership working and joint service delivery.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Customer Services Board is asked to consider and agree its approach.

Designation: Depute Chief Executive

Date: 16 April 2014

Appendix One

	Activity
May – June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stage One Consultation• Development of Business Cases
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Business Cases inc. consultation from Stage One
August - September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CSB to consider Business Case – Area 1 & 2• Invite written representations• Consider verbal evidence
September - October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final decision on Service Points in Area 1 & 2• CSB to consider Business Case – Area 3 & 4
October – November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite written representations• Consider verbal evidence
November – December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final decision on Service Points in Area 3 & 4• CSB to consider Business Case – Area 5 & 6
January – February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite written representations• Consider verbal evidence
February – March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final decision on Service Points in Area 5 & 6

Potential Areas:

Inverness & Inner Moray Firth – Hilton, Ardersier, Fortrose, Muir of Ord, Invergordon

Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey – Grantown and Kingussie

Lochaber – Fort Augustus, Acharacle, Mallaig, Kinlochleven

Skye & Wester Ross – Broadford, Kyle, Lochcarron and Gairloch

North West Sutherland – Lochinver, Durness and Bettyhill

East Sutherland – Lairg, Helmsdale, Brora, Bonar Bridge and Dornoch

Appendix Two – Business Case & Sample Profile

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction inc. Area Profile
3. Current Service Delivery
 - a. Service Provision (e.g. location, opening hours, staffing)
 - b. Service Users (e.g. numbers, demand)
 - c. Service Volumes (e.g. payment, housing applications, registrations etc)
 - d. Partnership Service Delivery (e.g. Police Scotland, Passport Office etc)
4. Cost of Service
5. Alternative Service Delivery Options (i.e. partners, on-line, telephone, outreach etc)
6. Outcome of Consultation
7. Social / Economic / Community Impact
8. Equality Impact
9. Risk Analysis
10. Review of Key Issues
11. Proposals / Options for Future Service Delivery
12. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)



FORT WILLIAM SERVICE POINT PROFILE

OVERVIEW

The Service Point in Fort William is located in Lochaber House

Opening Times

Monday to Friday 9:30am-4:30pm

Staffing Profile

Highland Council Staff
FTE- 2.6 HC04, 1 HC06

Partnership Profile

No Partnership

Highland Council Core Business Activity

Transaction Analysis

Out of the 20000 transactions between April 1st 2013 and March 31st 2014, 52% was for payments, 45% were CRM transactions and 3% were for registration. Requests for payment services can be met by direct debit, standing order, through PayPoints, web and telephone.

There were 3465 unique CRM customers.

Core Business Activity – 1 st April 2013 to 31 st March 2014		
	Annual Transactions	Weekly Transaction
Axis (Payments)	10464	209
Registration*	566	11
CRM	8970	179
CRM – Enquiry Detail – 1 st April 2013 to 31 st March 2014		
Top 7 Processes for Fort William	Annual Transactions	Weekly Transaction
Other Requests for Service (Misc.) (See back page)	4589	92
Council Tax, Housing Benefit*	1803	36
Housing Repairs	680	17
Reporting Change of Circs*	518	10
Request for concessionary fare pass*	491	10
Request Council Tax Exemptions	370	7
Request for Residential Parking Permit	332	7
Request Free School Meals*	187	4
Total		

*The section in grey indicates where a face to face transaction may be necessary for validation purposes.

Additional Information

Cost Per Contact: TBC

Communication Support

Interpretation Requests – 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2014

Service Point Network (annual figs)	28
Fort William SP (annual fig)	0
Service Centre	2
Total	30

Alternative Service Delivery

- Service Centre – Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm & Sat 9am to 12pm
- Highland Council Website Availability – 24hrs per day, 7 days per week
- There are 15 PayPoints within 20 miles of this Service Point- 10 Post Offices and 5 PayPoints.
- Public internet access is available within Fort William, Kinlochleven and Caol libraries.

Local Transport

As Fort William is a community hub, we would not envisage customers needing to travel to other hubs.

Digital Inclusion

Mobile Coverage	No. Providers
2G	7
3G	6

(<http://ukmobilecoverage.co.uk/>)

(Number of providers is based on the top 7 providers: Orange, T-Mobile, EE, Vodafone, Three, O2 and Tesco)

Housing Tenure

There are 772 council houses in the area, representing 5.68% of total council houses in the Highlands. The percentage of houses rented from Highland Council/Scottish Homes is slightly higher (2%) than both the Scottish and Highland average.

Percentage of households that are rented from the Council/Scottish Homes

Ward	Highland	Scotland
15.2	13.2	13.2

Source: Census 2011

Ward Statistics

Fort William and Ardnamurchan is our third largest Ward and has one of the lowest population densities. The population profile is similar to the average and the total population grew by 0.9% by 2010 with inward migrants moving to the extreme east and west of the Ward from outside Highland.

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Total Population	11,712	232,910	5,313,600

Source: NRS 2012 mid-year estimates

Unemployment and Benefits

Unemployment and Employment and Support Allowance claim rates are slightly above the average while the Long Term Unemployment rate is similar to that for Highland. The Incapacity Benefit claim rate is just below the average. (Latest unemployment rates (January 2014)

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Unemployment rate	2.7	2.2	3.4
Long term unemployment rate	0.8	0.8	1.5
Youth unemployment rate	4.3	3.5	5.5
Youth long term unemployment rate	0.6	0.8	1.7

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/ward22/ward-22-z-wardstats.htm>

Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disability Allowance / Employment and Support Allowance (August 2013)

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disability Allowance claimant rate *	0.3	1.1	1.7
Employment and Support Allowance Claimant Rate *	5.2	5.0	6.1

* Percentage of resident working age population

Source: Department for Work and Pensions data from NOMIS

Income and Deprivation

No data zones are identified as severely deprived. The Fort William Plantation data zone, classed as deprived in the 2006 Index, is no longer regarded as deprived due to improvements across most domains although levels of education, skills and training remain low. The percentage of people classed as income deprived is slightly above the Highland average but the percentage classed as employment deprived is similar to the average. Average household incomes are well below the Highland average.

<i>CLASSIFICATION REASON</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>CLASSIFICATION REASON</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>CLASSIFICATION REASON</i>	<i>Number</i>
Housing Benefits and Grants (1554)	2971	Care and Carers (1350)	4	Criminal Justice Social Work (1396)	1
Council Housing (925)	1948	Housing Associations and Co-ops (1023)	4	Grants for Disabled People (689)	1
Council Tax (701)	1452	Town Centre Management (1539)	4	Jobs, Tenders and Contracts (771)	1
Public and Community Transport (1526)	598	Council Departments (690)	3	Legal Advice (368)	1
Parking and Car Parks (1265)	526	Jobs at the Council (1089)	3	Police, Courts and Criminal Justice (1173)	1
Housing Finance (1026)	338	Road Safety (1529)	3	Regeneration and Town Centre Management (209)	1
Rubbish and Recycling (1054)	317	Services and Advice for Young People (543)	3	Support for Businesses (230)	1
Childcare, School and Educational Grants (678)	207	Transport Policy (1528)	3	Tourist Information (1492)	1
Roads and Pavements (1284)	81	Commercial Waste, Pollution and Recycling (42)	2	Venue Hire and Hall Bookings (15)	1
Planning and Building Control (161)	73	Community Advice (335)	2	Voluntary Organisations and Support Groups (534)	1
Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces (495)	47	Countryside, Farming and Wildlife (1225)	2		
Animal Welfare and Pest Control (1211)	43	Disabilities and Adapting Homes (1397)	2		
Licences, Permits and Permissions (1125)	43	Equality, Diversity and Citizenship (751)	2		
Housing Advice (997)	38	Home Care (1453)	2		
Street Care and Cleaning (1330)	27	Leisure Clubs, Groups and Societies (426)	2		
Improvements and Repairs (1028)	25	Marine and Waterway Services (1235)	2		
Partnership (2021)	24	Services and Advice for Older People (1456)	2		
Land and Property (1034)	22	Supported and Sheltered Housing (1075)	2		
Politicians, Elections and Democracy (772)	21	Trading Standards (264)	2		
Consultations, Complaints and Compliments (670)	20	Activities and Support for Young People (828)	1		
Private Housing (1053)	18	Benefits (592)	1		
Services (2022)	15	Business Rates (2)	1		
Environmental Health (1231)	14	Childcare and Family Care (1361)	1		
Schools (878)	9	Commercial Land and Property (6)	1		
Data Protection and Freedom of Information (704)	8	Conservation (1220)	1		
Adapting Homes (918)	7	Council and Government Grants (677)	1		
Extra-Curricular Activities (834)	6	Council Information, Performance & Statistics (695)	1		
Birth, Marriage and Death (640)	4	Crime Prevention and Community Safety (396)	1	Total	8970

SAMPLE