

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Customer Services Board** held in the Convener's Hospitality Room, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, on 25 June 2014 at 3.00pm.

Present:

Mr D Millar
Dr I Cockburn
Mrs M Davidson
Mr J Gordon
Mr R Laird

Mr B Lobban
Mrs D Mackay
Mr H Morrison
Dr A Sinclair
Mr H Wood

Non-Member also present:

Mr A Baxter

Officials in attendance:

Ms M Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development
Ms T Page, Customer Services Manager
Mr D Scott, Project Manager
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager

Also in attendance:

Superintendent A MacPherson, Police Scotland

Mr D Millar in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

There had been circulated the Minutes of the last Meeting held on 21 May 2014 - which were **NOTED** – subject to the following amendment –

Item 5 – High Life Highland – Potential for Partnership – inclusion of Aviemore in the list of joint Library/Service Point locations.

4. Exclusion of the Public

The Board **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting for Item 5 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Private Item

5. Police Scotland – Potential for future Shared Service Arrangements

Discussion was undertaken at the meeting with Superintendent Gus MacPherson, Police Scotland, on the potential for shared service arrangements in future across a range of locations in the Highland area.

In view of the sensitivity of the information and the early stage of discussion in this regard, it had previously been agreed that this part of the meeting would be considered as private and no further information provided within the Minute.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

Public Items

6. Presentation – Highland Council Website

Mr Dan Scott, Project Manager, undertook a Presentation on the new Highland Council Website during which he provided specific and detailed information in relation to the increase in online service delivery, customer contact transformation, the design brief and stakeholder engagement (both internal and external).

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for a report to be submitted to a future meeting on the CRM system, including information as to how the proposals for upgrade would address the problems which had been experienced in terms of complaints, customer contact/feedback, etc;
- it would be helpful if consideration could be given to the provision of a 'live chat' facility for users, particularly in regard to application processes;
- further information, including projected figures/statistics, on the expected reduction of telephone enquiries as a result of the promotion of new online facilities was required for the next meeting;
- there was a need to ensure that feedback on the new website from members of the public was collated; and
- the expected improvements as a result of the increase in online services and customer contact were welcomed.

The Board **NOTED** the terms of the presentation as detailed.

It was also **AGREED** that a report should be submitted to the next meeting on the CRM System as detailed.

7. Initial Feedback from Consultation and Next Steps

There had been re-circulated Report No. CS/1/14 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which had advised Members of the next steps for the Customer Services Board in terms of consultation and community engagement and how this and the decision on Service Points could be phased.

In this regard, a summary of feedback from recent Consultation had also been tabled.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for Officers to take forward work on the potential for 'shared services' following the presentations which had been received from High Life Highland and Police Scotland and also including other agencies and organisations as necessary, including Schools, and for a report to be submitted to the next meeting in August;
- as part of future work, specific and detailed consideration should be given to the options for each location and what would work best for individual communities in terms of local service delivery;
- the work of the Board should be progressed from Headquarters unless there was a really strong case made for visiting individual communities;
- liaison should be undertaken with Directors and Heads of Service within the Council to allow investigation of any feasible opportunities for the outsourcing of work to Service Points;
- face-to-face contact was imperative for those members of the public who were either unable to use or did not have access to technology although this did not necessarily mean through a Service Centre as it was recognised that this could be achieved in other ways if necessary;
- it would be helpful if detailed information could be provided for each Service Point in terms of running costs, staffing, etc in line with the Profile which had already been produced for Fort William Service Point;
- there was a need for scrutiny of the current telephony infrastructure in order to identify any possible efficiencies and/or improvements for the future;
- consideration of an 'appointments' facility should be investigated for the Registration Service, specifically to allow a peripatetic service to be introduced where feasible;
- the need to save money was recognised and in this regard it was suggested that retention of 'face-to-face' contact might not necessarily need to equate to the retention of buildings in every case as this form of contact could perhaps be provided in other ways;
- it would be helpful if Members of the Board could provide updates for their own communities on this work in order to provide information and reassurance on the process wherever possible;
- a Briefing from the Chair for Service Point staff, perhaps by email, would also be helpful and informative and would help to alleviate any worries or fears over this on-going process;
- consideration should be given to how complex and confidential issues would be dealt with in future if a Service Point building was not available in a specific location;
- all proposals to enhance and introduce remote and home working in future should be explored; and
- opportunities for remote and home working should also be investigated in terms of future service delivery.

Thereafter, it was **AGREED** that further work should be undertaken in regard to possible future 'shared service' arrangements with other agencies/organisations as detailed, including consideration of the suggestions made by Members during discussion, and a report submitted to the next meeting in this regard.

The meeting ended at 4.55pm.