

The Highland Council
Customer Services Board Briefing
November 2014 Update

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CSB/5/14

Report by Depute Chief Executive

Summary

The purpose of this briefing is to advise the Customer Services Board of the progress made to date regarding the consultation processes on the proposals recommended by the Customer Services Board.

1. Background

- 1.1 On the 16th September 2014 the Customer Services Board reviewed and agreed proposals for the future provision of Service Points and on how future consultation with Service Point users, Community Councils, Ward Members (and where appropriate community organisations registered as part of the Communities Panel locally) should be undertaken.

2. Consultation Proposals

- 2.1 The Board identified key stakeholders who should be included in the consultation proposal. They are:
- Communities
 - Service Point Users
 - Highland Council Tenants
 - Community Councils
 - Members
 - Staff (Unions)

These proposals include making use of consultation already planned as well as focussing on the geographical areas which members have already agreed. The geographical areas are represented below.

Service Points Areas	
Inner Moray Firth (North)	Muir of Ord, Fortrose & Invergordon
Inner Moray Firth (South)	Fort Augustus, Hilton & Ardersier
Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey	Grantown & Kingussie
Lochaber	Acharacle, Mallaig & Kinlochleven
Skye & Wester Ross	Broadford, Kyle, Lochcarron & Gairloch
North West Sutherland	Bonar Bridge, Lairg, Lochinver, Durness & Bettyhill
East Sutherland	Brora, Dornoch & Helmsdale.

- 2.3 A timetable of consultation was agreed with the Customer Services Board, taking into account good practice guidelines which included using consulting people and communities affected by any proposed service change, ensuring that the methods used are suitable to the various stakeholders and allowing sufficient time for proper engagement and feedback.
- 2.4 Some Community Councils have contributed to the local budget consultation process already in place. To avoid asking them the same questions again, once we have identified all the key stakeholder groups (Community Councils/groups) we will present them with the revised proposals electronically and ask they complete the feedback from on line.
- 2.5 As part of the consultation process it was agreed that focus group are run in each of the communities affected These focus groups will be independently facilitated. Service Point staff would invite participants to take part when attending the Service Point, filling in a form confirming their interest and availability.

Topics to be discussed during these group sessions would include :- reasons for using Service Points, What they value about it and options on alternative models for example digital self-service, access points via library provision, community hubs or appointment arrangements.

Views would also be sought on the impact of options with support required and any other ideas they may have. Findings from focus groups will be presented back to the Board.

3. Ward Member Consultation

- 3.1 Prior to any public or staff consultation, it was agreed that local Members for each of the seven areas be consulted confidentially in Ward Business Meetings.

http://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3311/customer_services_board

Local Members have been asked for their views on two key areas:

1. Local Member views on the proposals outlined by the board. These views will be considered as part of the overall consultation process.
 2. Members views are sought on whether the relevant Community Councils and local groups have been identified for consultation, and if not they are invited to identify any additional consultation required.
- 3.2 Consultation paperwork has been prepared and sent out to ward managers, ahead of the meetings. This offers stakeholders the opportunity to provide their views around the impact of the proposals and to identify alternative ways of delivering face to face customer services. A copy of the Consultation paperwork will be emailed all Members following the completion of the ward meetings in order for them to provide electronic feedback, so that we can fully capture their feedback.

- 3.3 Once the overall consultation process is complete the feedback will be reported back to the Customer Services Board in early 2015.
- 3.4 At the first local member briefing, it was agreed that members would find a visit to the Service Centre very valuable and a number of visit dates will be arranged for members to attend and the dates will be notified to members in due course.

4. Staff & Unions

- 4.1 Trade Unions were in attendance at the meeting of the 24th September. They sought reassurance on the communication process emphasising the need to keep our staff informed.
- 4.2 Staff have been receiving regular communications regarding the review via the staff communication portal. Team Leaders from the various areas will be informed about the proposals and will keep their staff updated and alert them to any new information.
- 4.3 Staff will receive a formal briefing week commencing the 17th of November. It is the intention to cascade the information via the Team Leaders.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the current position

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Background Papers: Customer Services Review Board Minutes