

The Highland Council

Resources Committee – 26 November 2014

Agenda Item	11
Report No	RES/65 /14

Strategic Change and Development Fund: Application for Funding – Care and Learning

Report by Director of Finance

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek a funding contribution of £180,000 from the Fund to deliver transformational change across the Care & Learning Service.

1. Background

- 1.1 The new Care and Learning Service faces particular challenges over the next few years, caused by existing pressures on the Service, new developments, and the need to deliver significant financial savings.
- 1.2 Budget savings proposals for Care and Learning total £17.2m and represent 3.3% of the total budget. Additional proposals are currently being considered to increase the total savings proposal. The Service will also contribute to a number of corporate efficiency projects to deliver transformational change across the Council.

2. Discussion

- 2.1 The savings proposals are predicated, as far as possible, on maintaining quality and service delivery while reducing costs. In many service areas this will present significant pressure to manage and deliver transformational change whilst maintaining service delivery.
- 2.2 The requirement for savings in Care and Learning is particularly challenging, but essential given that the Service accounts for approximately two-thirds of Council expenditure.
- 2.3 Budget savings proposals include changes to school timetabling arrangements and new approaches to learning and teaching; and for efficiencies and service review in catering, cleaning, and facilities management.
- 2.4 The proposals therefore require enhanced support for service managers, dedicated attention on specific activities, and project and change management skills.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that two officers are seconded to the Service to provide this necessary support over the next 18 months. It is envisaged that these will be managers with good experience of project planning, change management and service development.
- 3.2 The estimated cost, subject to formal evaluation of the posts, is £180,000. It is proposed to finance these posts from the Strategic Change and Development Fund, given the Fund's criteria (as follows):-

Criteria

Proposals for access to the Strategic Development and Change Fund should demonstrate a clear link to the Council's Programme "*Working together for the Highlands*, **and** seek to address at least two of the following criteria:-

- Evidence how the proposal will deliver the Council's strategic objectives
- Demonstrate how the proposal will deliver service enhancement and improvement
- Demonstrate how the proposal will change outcomes
- Evidence how the proposal will deliver financial savings

4. Implications

- 4.1 The resource implications are set out above. If agreed the balance on the Strategic Change and Development Fund will be £1.22m.
- 4.2 There are no specific Legal, Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Risk, Gaelic or Rural implications to highlight. There is however a general financial risk of failing to deliver the range of savings proposals if this work is not resourced appropriately.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to agree the allocation of £180,000 from the Strategic Change and Development Fund to support the delivery of financial savings for the Care and Learning Service.

Designation: Director of Finance

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Background Papers: None