

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Customer Services Board** held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday, 15 June 2015 at 2.00pm.

Present:

Dr A Sinclair
Dr I Cockburn
Mrs M Davidson
Mr J Gordon

Mr R Laird
Mrs D Mackay
Mr H Morrison
Mr G Rimell

Officials in attendance:

Ms M Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development
Ms V Nairn, Head of Digital Transformation
Ms T Page, Customer Services Manager
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager

Dr A Sinclair in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Lobban and Mr H Wood.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Customer Services Board held on 25 May 2105 which were **NOTED**.

4. Customer Service Board – Final Business Case

There had been circulated CSB/7/15 dated 10 June 2015 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which confirmed that, at the previous meeting on 25 May, the Board had agreed Alternative Proposal 3 which meant that 19 Highland Council managed Service, 2 High Life Highland managed Service Points (Broadford and Bettyhill under full TUPE arrangements) and 2 Service Points with reduced opening hours (Invergordon and Grantown) would be retained and the savings target of £160,000 would be met. Additionally, 10 Service Points had been identified as suitable for the Access Point model.

The Board had also asked Officers to finalise Business Cases, tailored for each of the Service Points and prepare an Equality and Rural Impact Assessment to support the decision making process.

In this regard, a full Equality and Rural Impact Assessment had been carried out and circulated as Appendix 1 to the report. The completed Business Cases had been attached as Appendix 2.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was concern in relation to the Business Cases and specifically the Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessments (e.g. the Potential Impact for Helmsdale and Hilton appeared to be the same) and it was suggested that these should be updated and tailored to reflect the correct position in each area;
- the proximity of some areas to Community Hubs had been described differently in certain cases (e.g. Dornoch, Brora and Helmsdale) although the distances were in fact the same so these needed to be clarified and amended where necessary;
- there was concern about the changes in gradings for some staff who would transfer over to High Life Highland and such changes should be mitigated wherever possible;
- further proactive consultation with the communities in Acharacle, Durness and Hilton should be undertaken in order to try and identify other opportunities for community led delivery of services;
- every opportunity should be taken to raise awareness of and to promote the use of services in future, including the use of Mobile Libraries to issue leaflets to as many communities as possible and through information being provided by Housing and Finance Officers in the respective areas;
- the confirmation that the required savings had been realised as a result of this process was welcomed and thanks were conveyed to the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development, Head of Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager for the considerable work which had been undertaken in this regard;
- there was a need for Services to consider as a matter of priority the delegation of work wherever possible to the Service Points in communities who would be most affected by reducing footfall in the future; and
- it was important for all the staff who would be affected by the new proposals and for the Trade Unions that this process was now brought to a conclusion and the decision of the Board conveyed to them as soon as possible.

Thereafter, the Board **NOTED** the terms of the report and the work done to date and the Equality and Rural Impact Assessment which had been circulated as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Board **APPROVED** the Business Cases which had been circulated as Appendix 2 - on the basis that they would be amended where necessary to reflect the issues raised during the meeting (and re-circulated to Members by 24 June at the latest) and on the understanding that promotion of Service Points would be undertaken at an early date.

The Board also **AGREED** the timescales and approach which had been outlined in Section 4 of the report – subject to completion of the remaining actions which had been agreed in relation to the Business Cases.

The meeting concluded at 3.05pm.