

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Re-Design Board of the Highland Council** held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday, 18 April 2016 at 2.00pm.

Present:

Mrs M Davidson	Mr B Lobban
Mrs I McCallum	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr B Fernie	Mr A Christie
Mr A MacKinnon	Mr T Prag
Mr B Thompson	Dr J Davis
Mr M Reiss	Mr J Gray
Ms M Smith	Mrs D MacKay (by tele-conference)
Dr I Cockburn	

Non-Member in attendance:

Miss J Campbell

Officials in attendance:

Mr S Barron, Chief Executive
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager

Business

1. Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr T MacLennan.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

It was **AGREED** to appoint Mrs I McCallum as Chair of the Board.

It was also **AGREED** to appoint Mr B Lobban as Vice Chair.

4. Proposed Terms of Reference

There had been circulated Report No. RDB/1/16 dated 11 April 2016 by the Chief Executive which proposed draft Terms of Reference for the Board to finalise and agree, including Objectives, Scope and Timescales.

In terms of the Objectives which had been listed in the report, Members raised the following issues:–

- Objective 4 should refer also to the option of Shared Services
- Objective 3 to be amended to read “Reprioritising statutory and non-statutory duties and reviewing the level and standards to which services

should be delivered to achieve the outcomes and meet the reasonable expectations of the public.

In further discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- a statement of the Council's purpose and values should be produced;
- clarity on the outcomes that the Council was seeking to achieve should include the expectations of the public wherever possible;
- there was a need to reprioritise and closely examine the current level of statutory and non-statutory duties and future expectations in this regard;
- consideration of the delivery of public services in future should also include shared services and should clearly identify where it was possible for services to be delivered by other agencies or organisations (and not the Council);
- there was a clear role for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Local Committees in terms of establishing links to the Council's localism agenda in that they were best placed to review powers at a local level and how these could be used in the future;
- there should be close liaison with the work of the Commission on Highland Democracy in terms of bringing forward recommendations for increasing public participation in Council services;
- the term 'public participation' often meant different things to different people and it should be highlighted that helping to deliver services in the future would be key to future discussions in this regard;
- it would be important for Services to take account of the work being done by the Board whenever an internal Service re-organisation was being planned or undertaken in the next few months;
- it was essential that the proposed terms of reference for the Board were not overly prescriptive in that they were able to be changed as necessary as work progressed;
- it would be important to be clear about proposals and to inform the public as the work of the Board progressed, including seeking views on which services could perhaps be provided differently in future;
- in terms of the involvement of key stakeholders, this should include young people wherever possible and there was a need for more clarity on the composition of the 'other service providers'. Further, in regard to Trade Unions, it would be helpful if the Chair and Vice Chair could meet with Mr John Gibson at an early date to discuss trade union involvement as the work of the Board progressed and specifically attendance at future Board meetings; and
- consideration should be given as to how input from respective stakeholders was to be 'weighted' by the Board as work progressed.

In terms of the Scope which had been listed in the report, it was noted that a paper was to be produced by the Director of Finance on potential budget scenarios in order to aid discussion of future proposals for the delivery of services.

It was also suggested that discussion should be undertaken with Central Government wherever necessary in terms of proposals which might come forward for new ways of delivering services.

Finally, in terms of Timescales, it was confirmed that the Board would report its proposals to the Council in two stages, namely the re-design proposals for the budget for 2017/18 onwards to the Council meeting on 15 December 2016 and the other aspects of re-design (including operational arrangements, public participation approaches and a programme for staff development) to the Council meeting in March 2017.

In addition, it was confirmed that interim reports on progress, including Minutes of Meetings, should be provided to future Council meetings in line with the schedule set for Board meetings throughout the year.

Thereafter, the Board otherwise **AGREED** the proposals attached at Appendix 1 to the report for the re-design of Highland Council as detailed and with the amendments set out above.

5. Methods Proposed

There had been circulated Report No. RDB/2/16 dated 11 April 2016 by the Chief Executive which proposed a range of methods for the Board to discuss and consider in support of its leadership of the re-design project.

In this regard, the proposed methods included early workshops with the Board, wider engagement with Members, Citizen's Panel, partners, trade unions and staff groups on the statement of the Council's purpose and values, reprioritising statutory and non-statutory duties to achieve the outcomes and reviewing the standards to which services should be delivered to achieve the outcomes.

It was also proposed that there should be recommendations on options for the delivery of public services which were affordable and designed with performance in mind, clear links to the Council's localism agenda, recommendations on increasing public participation in Council services, recommendations on the structure and management of Council operations and a draft programme to support organisation change for modern public services and for staff and Member development.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:–

In terms of the methods proposed to achieve Objective 2 (clarity on the outcomes which the Council seeks to achieve) -

- establishing the statutory duties which the Council had to undertake should be the starting point for the work of the Board;
- it was envisaged that there would be a need for some future meetings of the Board to be held in private in terms of the subject matter to be discussed and this would be highlighted on agendas as and when necessary;
- the suggestion for a Workshop focused on the Christie Commission findings was welcomed as this would provide detail of the focus on prevention and the public feedback which had already been received;
- it would be essential to fully consider the potential and different outcomes from every proposal; and
- research had been done (as part of the budget process) on the steps being taken by other Councils who had already undertaken re-design

measures and it would be essential to examine this information in detail in order to assess where changes had been successful. In this regard, it was agreed that copies of the information received to date should be circulated to all Members of the Board. It was also agreed that consideration should be given to visiting other Councils over the next few months to allow further research to be undertaken and to the arrangement of a Workshop thereafter to allow evaluation of all information received.

In terms of the methods proposed to achieve Objective 3 (reprioritising statutory and non-statutory duties to achieve the outcomes and reviewing the standards to which services should be delivered to achieve these outcomes) –

- there could be a need to enter into discussion with Central Government over services the Council currently delivered, how they were delivered and how they might be delivered differently in the future;
- in terms of reviewing how other Councils provided services, consideration should be given as to whether there needed to be a shift to becoming more reactive in future (as opposed to proactive);
- it was essential that, as part of the work to be undertaken, the Board concentrated on outcomes (rather than function) and how these could be best achieved; and
- the aim should be for an ‘enabling’ Council which would help and assist others to deliver services in the future.

In terms of the methods proposed to achieve Objective 4 (recommendations on options for the delivery of public services that are affordable and designed with performance in mind) –

- reference should be made to recent Audit Scotland Reports on the ‘Costs of Services’ and ‘Benchmarking & Performance’ on the basis that these reports had provided valuable information and advice which could assist the work of the Board; and
- it would be important to establish how the Council performed in regard to the delivery of services, and specifically where improvement was required, and in this regard it was suggested that discussions should be undertaken with staff in order to research ideas and areas for improvement.

Finally, in relation to external contribution and assistance for the work of the Board, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would submit a report to the next meeting on how this could be achieved, including reference to possible assistance from SOLACE, private sector businesses, community planning partners, other local authorities and the staff side.

Thereafter, the Board otherwise **AGREED** the range of methods proposed within the report in order to achieve objectives within the timescale which had been set.

6. Operation of the Board

There had been circulated Report No. RDB/3/16 dated 11 April 2016 by the Chief Executive which requested consideration of the operating arrangements for the Board.

In this regard, it was confirmed that there were a number of issues to be considered in terms of operation of the Board, including the frequency of meetings, how to make the work of the Board accessible, the need for Board Members to feed back to their groups and whether there should be a name for the Board which communicated its purpose simply and supported the ethos of how it wished to operate.

Following discussion, the Board **AGREED**:-

- that meetings should be held fortnightly wherever possible with the next two meetings being arranged for Tuesday, 10 May and Tuesday, 24 May (both at 3.00pm);
- that agendas and public reports for meetings should be posted on the Council Website in advance of meetings and Minutes made available online after approval by the Board;
- that Members should be emailed copies of the agendas and reports in future (with paper copies only being available on request);
- that in future the Board should be referred to as the 'Redesign Board'; and
- that the agenda for the next meeting should include (i) a report from the Chief Executive on External Support for the Board, (ii) proposals for the first Workshop which could focus on defining outcomes, (iii) a report from the Director of Finance on potential budget scenarios, (iv) copies of the research which had been carried out in regard to the redesign work undertaken by other Councils, (v) an outline of the statutory services currently provided by the Council and (vi) proposals for consultation with staff on where there was the potential for improvement in the delivery of current services.

The meeting ended at 3.50pm.