

AGENDA ITEM 16.ii

The Highland Council Staff Partnership Forum – Elected Members/Staff Side Group

Minutes of Meeting of The Highland Council Staff Partnership Forum held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 3 August 2018 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr Andrew Baxter (by Conference)	Video	Mr Allan Henderson
Mrs Margaret Davidson		Mr Richard Laird
		Mr Alister MacKinnon

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr John Gibson (UNISON)	Mr Ian Macleman (UNITE/UCATT)
Mr Rikki Selkirk (GMB)	Ms Margaret Macrae (RCN)

In attendance:

Mr S Barron, Chief Executive
Mr D Yule, Depute Chief Executive/ Director of Corporate Resources
Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Mrs C McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform, Chief Executive's Service
Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
Ms E Barrie, HR Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

Mrs M Davidson in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie and Ms M Smith from the Employer's Side and Ms L MacKay, Mr P MacPherson, Mr A Wemyss and Mr A Bell from the Staff Side and Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning and Mr S Black, Director of Development and Infrastructure.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated the Minutes of the last meeting of the Forum held on 4 May, 2018, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes

Arising from the Minutes the following matters were raised:-

i Parking at Diriebught Depot – it was advised that a meeting had been held recently with trade union representatives with the key issue being welfare facilities at the Depot. The Director of Community Services had given a commitment to provide additional welfare facilities prior to this Winter.

In terms of providing a solution to the lack of parking space, the Vans Home Policy would reduce the pressure on car parking at the Depot. However, there were some issues with the Vans Home Policy which would be submitted to the HR Sub Group in September, 2018 for consideration.

ii Trade Union Facility Time – It was noted that the Staff Side would provide a report for consideration by the HR Sub Group with their concerns on facility time.

In order to comply with Facility Time Regulations, the Council would require to start reporting on the provision of Trade Union Facility Time, the aim being to promote transparency and allow for public scrutiny of Facility Time. Arrangements for the reporting were being worked on by HR and this would involve discussions with trade union representatives. An undertaking was given to keep the Leader of the Council updated on this issue and consideration would be given to the appropriate forum to submit a report to on this issue for Elected Members consideration.

iii Bullying and Harassment Policy – It was confirmed that the policy had been approved. A copy would be re-circulated to the Staff Side.

iv Recruitment Health, Recognising Continuous Service – it had been agreed to recognise previous continuous service from all UK Health Boards in order to mitigate significant recruitment difficulties. However, another issue had arisen in terms of recognising reckonable service for employees of Health Boards as a result of local changes to NHS policies. A commitment had been made to working with the NHS over the next few months on the issues of recognising reckonable service for employees of Health Boards.

5. Service Trade Union Liaison Meetings

There had been circulated the following Trade Union Liaison Minutes of Meetings for information:- Care and Learning Service – 4 May 2018; Community Services – 25 May 2018; and Development and Infrastructure – 3 May, 2018.

Arising from the minutes, the following matters were raised:-

i Care and Learning Service Minute

ASN Allocation - The Staff Side reported that there were still instances with Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) being told on the last week before the Schools summer break that their job in the school would no longer be required and that they would have to move to another school. The Staff Side were of the view that if the process of allocating PSA hours had not been done by the last week of the school term, then it should not be done until the new term as this was unfair on staff.

It was confirmed that this was an issue that would need to be continued to be worked on as it was important that PSAs know their job status as soon as possible prior to the beginning of a new school term.

It was **AGREED** that the Head of Education investigate how prevalent the issue of late notification of allocating PSAs hours to schools was and report back.

ii Community Services Minute

Public Convenience Restructure – It was reported that there had been regular meetings with staff and staff side representatives on the Public Convenience Restructure. The current review of the provision of Public Conveniences would be completed by 31 October, 2018.

6. Redesign of the Highland Council

There was circulated Report No. SPF/5/18 by the Head of Policy and Reform which provided an update for the Forum on redesign, staff engagement and workforce implications since the last meeting in May, 2018.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was noted that Board Members and all trade union representatives on this Forum would be invited to attend the first annual organisational learning and achievement event for all Lean review teams on 22 August, 2018;
- It was confirmed the Redesign Board members would have the opportunity of attending the next round of staff forums in September, 2018;
- it was queried what the mechanism was for showing how the Board was performing against its savings target. It was explained that the savings would come from the programme of reviews i.e. peer reviews, lean reviews and the new peer spending reviews. It was not yet clear if the total savings target would be achieved, but the estimate of savings against reviews had been considered by the Redesign Board in May, 2018. It was noted that the grey fleet review and building trades review were both expected to deliver savings and some Lean reviews were promising savings. It was requested that this report be circulated to the Forum.

The Forum was advised that Carron McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform had accepted a secondment to the Scottish Police Authority and would be leaving the Council at the end of August, 2018. Carron's work on the Council's Redesign and Programme reviews was commended and she would be very much missed.

Thereafter, the Forum **AGREED** that the Programme Review and Savings report previously submitted to the Redesign Board in May, 2018 be circulated to Forum Members.

The Forum also **NOTED**:-

- i. Staff are becoming less reliant on using their own cars for work, with the introduction of car clubs from mid/late May going well on 5 sites and access to electric vehicle pool cars will be available soon in a further 3 areas. This will reduce costs and risks to the Council and support our duty of care to staff.
- ii. Some changes are planned to the travel and subsistence policy around staff using their own cars only as a last resort and making sure we have compliance on safety and other requirements. Trade Unions will be consulted on these changes with a view to reporting these to the Corporate Resources Committee in November 2018.

- iii. Any workforce implications from the car parking review will be considered fully by Local Committees as part of their decision-making on charging for car parking. This is important because surplus income can be re-invested locally in Community Services to grow or protect services. Where Local Committees choose not to raise income and where an income target is set by Council, Members locally will have to consider which services to reduce instead. Income targets could be set from 2019/20 with the first investment or divestment decisions from 2020/21.
- iv. Community Services is considering on how to ensure the right staff and skills are in place to support Members with their local choices across the disaggregated budget for Community Services. This will include considering the training, workload, priorities, staff roles and if required any structure changes. Trade Unions will be consulted in the normal way on proposals.
- v. As recommended by the peer review, some legal services are to be in-sourced to reduce reliance on external legal advice. The new solicitor post(s) in the legal team is undergoing job evaluation prior to recruitment. The Paralegal post is under development.
- vi. Two peer reviews are expected to conclude soon into commissioned preventative services for children and building trades services. Both so far have highlighted the benefits of building in-house capacity to reduce costs of procuring from the private and third sectors. It is intended these can be considered by the Board in August and report to Council in September.
- vii. New peer reviews are to be done for the catering service, cleaning service, our approach to recruiting agency staff and casual labour and for early years and child care provision. Most review ideas came from staff suggestions. Trade Union representatives will have places in review teams.
- viii. The Lean programme continues to grow from staff suggestions and we are training more staff, especially from out with HQ, in facilitating Lean reviews. On 22nd August all staff involved in completed Lean reviews are coming together to share their learning, identify any supports they need for implementation and to celebrate their achievements. Board Members including the Trade Unions representatives are invited to this event. Other staff side representatives would be welcome to attend and invites can be extended if there is interest.
- ix. Peer spending reviews (of non-staffing expenditure) and community reviews are two new types of review to be trialled this year. Trade Union representatives may wish to be involved in the 3 community reviews identified and this will be organised with their representatives on the Board.
- x. Redesign has featured in the management briefings in June, and some staff told their redesign story to encourage others to be involved.
- xi. The links between workforce planning and redesign were presented to the Board and workforce planning is likely to feature in the next round of staff forums to be organised across 14 locations.
- xii. The Council agreed the Redesign Board should continue indefinitely, subject to annual review.

In accordance with Standing Order 18, with the consent of the meeting, item 8 on the agenda was taken at this point.

8. Any Other Competent Business

i Pay Award – it was reported that there was no update on progress at COSLA in terms of pay award negotiations since the last meeting of the Forum. COSLA's approach to the pay negotiations was that there should be parity in pay awards across

all Groups of staff. This Council's provision, which was in line with all other Scottish Councils for the pay award, remained the same i.e. 3%, 2%, 1% across the various pay bands. This was in line with the Scottish Government's pay policy. The pay award was subject to national negotiations and there would be significant challenges for the Council in terms of affordability in meeting any pay award above what was provided for in the budget.

ii Agenda for Change Pay Negotiations – it was reported that the Scottish Government had offered a 3% pay rise and this was now being considered by trade union members.

iii Holiday Pay – in order to resolve anomalies in calculating holiday pay, the Council had agreed to pay holiday pay as from 1 June, 2018 and options would be considered with regards to holiday back pay pre – 1 June, 2018, which would be considered by the Resources Committee.

iv Budget Briefing – it was confirmed that trade union representatives would be invited to a budget briefing on 11 September, 2018.

At this point all Officers, apart from the Chief Executive and HR Manager left the room for the remainder of the meeting.

7. **Senior Officer Recruitment**

The HR Manager provided an update in respect of the recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive, The Highland Council. It was advised that 2 trade union representatives would be invited to the Assessment Centre on 13 September, 2018 to meet with all the shortlisted candidates.

The Leader of the Council also provided an update in respect of the recruitment process for the Director of Care and Learning.

The Forum **NOTED** the position.

The meeting was concluded at 11.30 a.m.