

Agenda Item	4
Report No	RDB/8/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Redesign Board

Date: 17 December 2019

Report Title: Interim Report - Review of Engineering Services

Report By: Engineering Peer Review Team

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This interim report provides feedback on a Peer Review of engineering services provided by the Highland Council. It recommends a series of measures to help create a more dynamic, flexible and efficient workforce with leadership to ensure integration and coordination across relevant functions. The recommendations are aimed at consolidating organisational structures and simplifying and aligning workstreams - taking account of the ongoing Council restructure – while fulfilling wide-ranging responsibilities and statutory duties.
- 1.2 To help finalise the findings of the peer review this interim report has been prepared for consideration and scrutiny by the Highland Council Redesign Board in December 2019 prior to a final workshop with engineering staff scheduled for January 2020. A final version of the report will be reported to the next Redesign Board.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Redesign Board is asked to recommend to:
1. Consolidate the service structure whilst maintaining a focus on dedicated local service delivery and, acknowledging that the Council restructure has partially addressed this, assimilate the wider recommendations in the detailed configuration of the service;
 2. Adopt a single service approach and a collective sense of ownership with a clear vision and strategy, and greater transparency on the associated resource and funding requirements, and the contribution that current and emerging projects will make;
 3. Consider and forecast the resources required for the delivery of all engineering services, and create a workforce plan which encourages flexibility and diversification across all functional areas, ensuring adequate resourcing of strategic transport planning and asset management functions;
 4. Consider the more detailed suggestions for integration of engineering services in paragraph 5.4;

5. Adopt a 'full cycle' approach to workload and project management, and long term asset planning and management, defining roles and responsibilities, programme and budget early on;
6. Incorporate the harbours functions within the wider service;
7. Explore opportunities to streamline process-based functions and associated administrative tasks under the new service structure, including the undertaking of lean review(s) and consideration of electronic methods of workload management;
8. Refine the approach to governance of projects delivered under the single service;
9. Review current overhead costs recovered under the cost multiplier to see if further efficiencies can be made;
10. Review the surplus income requirement (budget pressure) currently sitting with PDU;
11. Consider alternative charging models for services supplied by design engineering services (PDU);
12. Explore longer term potential for supplying in-house design services to partners and private clients;
13. To align the training and development of staff through CPD and on the job training, coupled with a 'cradle to grave' (rainbow) approach, creating a culture of knowledge sharing and nurturing staff development.
14. Explore the feasibility and implications of emerging options for reconfiguring Roads authorities in Scotland;

3 Background

3.1 The project scope is detailed at **Appendix 1**. The Review Team comprised:

- Stewart Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance
- Scott Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
- Emma Tayler, Assistant Ward Manager

There was also input in the early stages from Fiona Emslie, Learning and Development Adviser. The review team has been supported by colleagues across all of the respective teams across Development and Infrastructure and Community Services.

3.2 The purpose of this review was to examine opportunities for making efficiencies in the provision of engineering services which, at the point of commencement, were split across three Heads of Service (Tracey Urry, Colin Howell and Nicole Wallace) and the two Directors for Development & Infrastructure (Stuart Black) and Community Services (formerly William Gilfillan). Since then, a wider restructure of the Council has been confirmed that will bring the majority of engineering services under a single Executive Chief Officer (Malcolm Macleod, ECO for Environment and Infrastructure). As a result, the recommendations in this report are largely geared towards the detailed configuration of the new service.

3.3 The composition and responsibilities of the three functional areas for engineering services under the **current** Council structure are summarised below and explained in further detail at **Appendix 2** with organisational structures enclosed at **Appendix 3a to 3c**.

Transport Planning - Development & Infrastructure Service

3.4 The Transport Planning Team (see **Appendix 3a**) provides transportation advice, planning consultation response and strategic development plans advice to the Council's statutory planning services and the Cairngorm National Park Authority on

behalf of the Council as Roads Authority. The Team also issues approvals for the construction of new roads (Roads Construction Consents (RCC)). These roads are designed and built by developers but, once completed, are normally adopted with the Council taking over responsibility for their maintenance.

- 3.5 The team also lead on active travel opportunities, apply for and manage Sustrans grants and work with consultants to deliver schemes on the ground. The Active travel side of the team is staffed by Neil Young and a two year seconded post from Hitrans. The team of 10 staff in total is managed by Richard Gerring, with Nicole Wallace as the Acting Head of Planning & Building Standards.

Project Design Unit (PDU) - Development & Infrastructure Service

- 3.6 The Project Design Unit (PDU) (see **Appendix 3b**) lead on the feasibility, design and delivery of the Council's civil engineering projects including roads, bridges, marine works, flood alleviation schemes, landfill sites, safer routes to school, cycling, burial grounds. It also provides technical civil engineering advice and also fulfils statutory duties for flood risk management and dedicated services such as quality assurance and materials testing. The PDU consists of 70 staff ranging from engineers, technicians and administrative staff. There are 7 Principal Engineers who are responsible for the respective area and specialist teams, with Colin Howell as the responsible Head of Service.

Roads & Transport Team - Community Services

- 3.7 The Roads and Transport Team (see **Appendix 3c**) covers a range of functions relating to the strategy, operation, management and maintenance of transport assets. This includes specialist teams for school, public and community transport, traffic management and parking, street lighting, harbours and piers, road strategy and policy, road safety and Safer Routes to School. Alongside, four area-based operations managers are responsible for a team of engineering staff and operational staff who undertake a range of maintenance works. Area Structures for the Inverness and Lochaber, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey (LNBS) areas are shown at **Appendix 3d**, with typical duties for operational staff listed in the enclosed example from the LNBS area team at **Appendix 3e**.
- 3.8 The team comprises a total of around staff and a further 35 operational staff for each of the four areas (based on the Inv and LNBS areas only – no data made available for Caithness & Sutherland or Skye, Ross & Cromarty).

4 Methodology

- 4.1 A number of approaches have been taken to obtain, understand and evaluate the provision of engineering services including:
- Interviews and workshops with members of engineering teams;
 - Meetings with active and potential in-house users of Council engineering services;
 - Interviews with other local authorities and representatives of national groups such as Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) and the Improvement Service;
 - Considering and critically examining a number of projects presented as case studies throughout this report;

- Benchmarking and examples of good practice across other local authorities; and
- The review team was also asked to consider the option of shared services between Councils as a possible opportunity.

4.2 A staff workshop held in the early stages of the review was well attended by staff across all relevant teams and their feedback (enclosed at **Appendix 4**) informed the framework for the review. Priorities can be summarised as follows:

1. **Single service concept**
2. **Communication and integration**
3. **Coordination across engineering services and the wider organisation**
4. **Strengthen local responsibility and delivery**
5. **Reconsider current financial mechanisms**
6. **Align with wider Council restructure**

4.3 The more detailed findings which seek to address these priorities and which link to the recommendations above are set out in Section 5 below. This includes feedback and analysis of the Council's internal structure, funding and governance arrangements, collaboration and coordination across engineering disciplines, and operational issues and opportunities for the ongoing Council restructure. More detailed commentary and suggestions from staff about the service structure are also available for consideration but are not attached to this paper.

5 Key Findings

5.1 • *Integration and Communication in a new Single Service*

5.1.1 From the inception stage of the peer review and throughout, both Heads of Service and other engineering staff highlighted that the disaggregation of engineering teams had a fundamental and detrimental impact on integration across respective services. There was a view that this contributed to an 'artificial wall' developing between teams, resulting in less integration and engagement between different workstreams and a more insular approach to discharge responsibilities and workload management across relevant teams. It was also noted that there was a very different approach to staff development. A further knock-on effect, and area of opportunity, was the commissioning of physical works which it was felt could be better coordinated.

5.1.2 In light of this, all staff were also enthusiastic about the principle of better alignment and integration between engineering services, as shown in feedback gathered at the initial workshop in paragraph 4.2 and **Appendix 4**. This included the key principle of "allowing officers to cut across engineering disciplines, projects and areas wherever possible". This set the defining tone and framework for the remainder of the peer review and leads to the first fundamental recommendation listed above.

5.1.3 During the latter stages of the peer review the announcement of the new Council structure confirmed that the majority of relevant engineering teams would be brought under a single Executive Chief Officer (ECO for Environment and Infrastructure,

Malcolm Macleod). This decision addresses a number of the fundamental issues over the current structure and may help to address concerns raised over the lack of integration between teams. It is recommended that the new arrangements and emerging structure should reflect a single service culture and encourage a sense of collective ownership and responsibility. Feedback from staff would indicate support for working in a more holistic and integrated manner.

5.1.4 Building upon this, staff put forward some specific suggestions for the consolidation of engineering teams including:

- PDU and Roads and Transport Service staff better integrating and combining skills and expertise on the design, delivery and ongoing management and maintenance of engineering projects;
- Reducing the complex mix of teams typically involved in project management and delivery – with a more simple combination of a core centralised team or teams providing the overarching framework for a network of area based teams and functions – which could include reconsideration of the previous model of Operational and Technical Teams in each geographical area;
- Integration of Traffic Signals and Street Lighting functions;
- Better consideration of the links between Transport Planning / Development Management functions and the Area Roads Teams, with potential to integrate and co-locate where possible. Some believe that the strategic transport planning and major applications functions should be kept separate from the area roads teams with some staff moving back into those teams. Irrespective of the configuration of staff, the common theme here is better integration between different functions;

5.1.5 There was also recognition that a number of key engineering functions and workstreams rely on effective communication between teams with some staff observing inefficiencies and points of congestion in workflow management. At the initial workshop staff identified a task-orientated approach as a priority for improved workflow and resource management. Examples of good practice were highlighted such as the Transport Planning Team's e-Road Construction Consent project which has introduced a more rigorous registration and validation checklist and a consistent application recording system for the administration of applications and associated bonds. Highland is the first authority to utilise the existing e-Planning, Uniform and Idox applications for this purpose.

5.1.6 Given the value of such process improvements, other opportunities should be explored further, including the possibility of a lean review of key areas, to identify opportunities for time savings and automation, and optimise performance. This should include improvements in managing workstreams electronically and to better manage peaks and troughs in workload across varying engineering team functions and geographical areas. In light of the consolidation of the service structure, and the positive staff attitudes towards integration, this is considered to be a major opportunity for the new service and is discussed further in sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

5.1.7 Notwithstanding opportunities for consolidation of the service and individual engineering teams, staff were keen to highlight the value of local teams who act as the first point of contact for service provision, with Members and who perform a vital function in our interaction with communities. Staff are keen to maintain that local presence and responsibility in the new emerging structure as highlighted in the initial workshop feedback. Similarly, a number of staff were keen to stress the importance of the Council's statutory function as local Roads Authority under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and that these should be managed as a Roads and Transport function.

Case Study – West Link

One of the first projects to be identified was Inverness West Link Phase 1. In many ways this much vaunted and long awaited project is an overwhelming success. The Project Board established at the outset under the joint direction of the Directors of TEC Services and Development and Infrastructure drove the project forward and ensured the design and build of the new road crossing and secured the relocation of the golf course and rugby facilities. There was excellent interaction with planning to ensure development opportunities were maximised.

However, following upon completion of the construction phase a number of issues have become to emerge. It is now being suggested that greater liaison could have taken place with the contractors and developers of the next stage of development at Ness-side to ensure the road layout and design was more compatible with their requirements. Similarly, Community Services were not represented on the Project Board and this has given rise to concerns about the nature of the landscaping design and footpath network that were utilised. At its most simple the tree planting schemes adopted for the green areas make grass cutting more difficult and in turn more expensive.

Looking to the future the Council should look to ensure there is greater communication between teams and a full understanding of their respective requirements. This could be as simple as early engagement with teams likely to be involved in future maintenance.

Similarly looking ahead the Council should take steps to future proof maintenance costs and be clear that these costs are a collective responsibility.

5.2 • Governance and project management

- 5.2.1 Feedback from interviews and workshops with staff identified concerns about a lack of strategy for projects being led by respective teams. Representatives of several specialist teams reported that there was insufficient resources to properly define a strategy to shape service provision. Feedback from the initial workshop includes calls for better coordination and understanding of capital and revenue budgets and what they can realistically achieve, with emphasis on the lifetime costs for asset management. Clearer definition of the strategy for delivering engineering services was seen as a fundamental to effective and efficient working across teams and with partners such as Hitrans.
- 5.2.2 Later, the Head of Roads and Transport indicated that a clearer and more robust transport strategy would assist in planning for future service provision and prioritisation of available staff and financial resources. Separately, officers observed that such a strategy would put the Council in a stronger position to manage its available resources and lobby for the perceived shortfall in funding to manage, maintain and invest in the existing transport network.
- 5.2.3 Looking at one example more closely, the review team highlighted inconsistencies in how some projects led by the Project Design Unit are scoped, defined and project managed, and also that project costs were poorly defined and monitored. This includes the Fortrose and Rosemarkie case study in paragraph 5.2.7 below which highlights the implications of shortfalls in project management.

- 5.2.4 The Development & Infrastructure Service Plan 2017-22 refers to the delivery of capital programme projects by the PDU being “in accordance with the [Council] programme and also within the allocated budget...reported to each Environment Development and Infrastructure Committee”. However, there is no explicit reference to other outcomes, drivers or the strategy context for the delivery of such projects.
- 5.2.5 A key lesson and opportunity is both improved strategy and scoping of projects managed by engineering teams to ensure projects are accurately defined with appropriate resources allocated and they are monitored and recorded in terms of their contribution to a wider strategy and outcomes for the Council. Under the new service arrangements a single Service Plan should be considered (taking account of existing relevant Service Plans) to reflect a fuller definition of how all engineering projects will be scoped, project managed and monitored. The electronic systems mentioned in paragraph 5.1.6 also hold potential to standardise the approach across teams and maximise efficiencies.
- 5.2.6 It should be noted that a workshop is being scheduled for January 2020 between a wide range of transport planning, engineering and land use planning officers with a view to establishing a new transport strategy for the Inner Moray Firth area. This may provide an ideal opportunity to begin to formulate the transport strategy that shapes service provision in the new Council structure. The timing of such a plan could also coincide with the Scottish Government’s emerging National Transport Strategy (NTS), the 2nd Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and the National Planning Framework. Furthermore it is also suggested that current ongoing commitments of the Council are considered in the context of current and emerging policy and funding considerations.

5.2.7 Case Study: The Fortrose and Rosemarkie Coastal Protection Scheme

The Fortrose and Rosemarkie coastal protection scheme was cited as an example where there could have been greater collaboration and where the PDU could have assisted in preparation and project supervision.

The project involved the design and construction of additional coast protection works to protect the caravan and camp site at Fortrose and Rosemarkie. The site is held on the Fortrose Common Good account and is let to the Caravan and Camping Club. Whilst there were a number of positive aspects to the scheme including a positive relationship with the contractor and effective site supervision there were a number of significant issues. The configuration of interests meant that Community Services were faced with attempting to address the concerns and ambitions of two clients without having the benefit of clarity of purpose. External consultants were engaged to design the scheme in part due to costs involved in using the services of the PDU. The Project Brief that was prepared was felt to be unclear and in attempting to satisfy the demands of both clients possibly did not serve either as well as might have been expected. The resulting scheme was felt to be functional but not of the highest standard.

On reflection and in the context of a move to a single, integrated function had there been engagement with PDU staff a stronger project brief could have been prepared which would have allowed the scheme to have been executed to a higher standard. Similarly, a single service would have been able to exert greater control and oversight of the project. In reviewing the scheme subsequently it was felt that with further investment support could have been offered by the experienced engineers within the PDU resulting in an improved scheme and one which would better serve the interests of both parties.

5.3 • **Staff Resources**

- 5.3.1 Recommendation 3 seeks to ensure sufficient resourcing across all of the Council's wide-ranging engineering services. This follows on from feedback and analysis which highlights inconsistencies in the resourcing of particular functions and work areas, perhaps an indirect result of the leadership of engineering functions through disparate teams. In particular, concerns have been raised over the resourcing of workstreams / projects dedicated to wider strategic planning responsibilities and the long term management and planning of assets such as public transport, active travel, road maintenance and road safety.
- 5.3.2 Feedback from the Transport Planning Team reveals that over recent years the vast majority of staff resource and work activity has been shifted to the development management aspect of the planning service, with only a small number of staff dedicated to strategic planning activities that form an explicit part of the team's responsibilities as outlined in **Appendix 2**. It was also noted that the responsibilities of such officers also extend to project management of a suite of active travel projects and initiatives. However, the importance of the link to the planning service was highlighted by the Acting Head of Service who drew attention to the team's "ongoing and significant link with development planning and development management that should not be lost in any review of the service".
- 5.3.3 The concerns over the sufficiency of staff resourcing was also raised in the context of other specialist teams across the Roads and Transport Team. In considering feedback from staff and users of the PDU, and the questions raised over the cost-multiplier in section 5.5 below, there is some uncertainty on the future resourcing and capacity to fulfil the Council's range of statutory duties and commitments. In this context, it should be noted that some other local authorities - albeit those with far smaller geographical areas and asset management responsibilities – have little or no resources allocated to the design and build of new capital road projects. Building upon this, the following submission from one particular team makes the case for a fundamental review of resourcing be undertaken as a pre-requisite to the inception of any new service:

*"A vision is required for the future of all the businesses in the Engineering Review to address the issue of losing quality and experienced staff. This should also include proper consideration of resources meeting the service demands. In this regard, any new recruitment should be frozen until the Council restructure is delivered, the Capital Programme is reviewed and the review of Engineering Services is complete. The current recruitment controls supports the Council's Work Force Planning strategy to be maximised to help improve the efficiency of the resources in A – M [as referenced in Project Scope at **Appendix 1**]"*

- 5.3.4 These combined factors lead to the recommendation for a review of the future resource requirements for all aspects of engineering services to be undertaken.

5.4 • **Training and development**

- 5.4.1 This report has already highlighted the view that staff perceive there to be an imbalance in the approach to staff training, development and career progression across engineering teams. Consolidation of the service brings an opportunity to standardise the approach to training and development across all staff, and to identify projects where

staff skills and knowledge can be diversified to provide a flexible and responsive workforce which, in turn, helps to manage resources.

- 5.4.2 Workforce planning has become a major priority for all engineering teams in recent years. The Community Services Plan (updated March 2019) states that the age profile of the current workforce present challenges for the future with 76% of the workforce over 40 yrs. of age and 52% over 50. A Development & Infrastructure service-wide workforce development plan was prepared in [redacted] enclosed at Appendix [redacted].
- 5.4.3 There is a career grade scheme of progression already in place within the PDU. The scheme starts at HC3 with a trainee technician role and allows for progression with experience and qualifications through to a Principal Engineer at HC 11. There does not appear to be such a clearly defined scheme of progression within the other parts of the engineering function. The imperative for the PDU to generate a return means that the Unit must always seek to be fully staffed in order to ensure fee income. Retention and recruitment has become more challenging for a number of reasons and is by no means restricted to Highland Council. However, the need of the PDU to continue to recruit coupled with the diminishing financial resource available within Community Services does mean that the Council has seen movement of professional staff from Community Services into PDU.
- 5.4.4 The Review recognises that the functions are not only effectively fishing for staff from an increasingly diminishing pool but, to an extent, in competition. This is not considered to serve the Council's best interests and we recommend that in the consolidated and integrated structure professionals are given the opportunity to gain experience and progress all or as many of the disciplines as they wish. The Review had sight of the 'rainbow' of progression available within the Care and Learning Service which establishes clear opportunity paths for employees both across the service and through the service. The Review would recommend that a similar rainbow is developed for the engineering function using as its foundation the PDU career grade progression.

5.4.5 Key references:

'A good highway maintenance engineer could double the useful life of a road surface. The key to this was early intervention and keeping the water out.'

Steve Isaacs, Director XAIS Asset Management

'Much of our infrastructure comprises legacy assets put to daily use by far more people than originally envisaged...this primarily means economic infrastructure including roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, water and waste water facilities, flood defences...'

In Plain Sight – Reducing the Risk of Infrastructure Failure

5.5 • Cost Multiplier

- 5.5.1 An opportunity for significant change identified through the review is the current cost multiplier model for service delivery in PDU. Recommendations 9 to 12 above relate to the following key findings:

- a. Internal Engineering Services (IES) PDU applies a charge for its design services using a 'multiplier' formula. This formula has been set at x 2.3 by the service. By comparison the cost multiplier for similar services in Moray Council is 1.49.
- b. The cost of a job is calculated on the following basis: Base hourly rate x number of hours x 2.3.
- c. The hourly rate is derived by taking the basic salary at the top of the grade ie HC11 £49,077 (2019/20 rate) divided by 1600 hours (assumed productive hours) times the 2.3 multiplier plus £1.20 to cover subsistence/mileage. The hourly charge rate for HC11 is £71.75.
- d. The service is provided on a full cost recovery basis with the multiplier recovering office accommodation costs and those associated with employing a member of staff such as NI, training, equipment etc. In addition the charging formula also generates a surplus of circa £0.9m which goes back into the overall D&I budget.
- e. There may be scope to reduce overhead costs through greater efficiencies which in turn would enable a reduction in the level of multiplier set.

5.5.2 Further examination of this approach highlighted that the multiplier charge reflects a service need for the PDU to generate a £875k 'profit' (surplus) in 2019/20. This target is embedded within the overall D&I Service budget. It is noted that for the period 2018/19 the surplus generated was £715k. The shortfall in achieving the target is attributed to the number of vacant posts. A vacant post does not generate income.

5.5.3 The £875k 'profit' (surplus) income generation is reliant on the PDU service having capacity within their staff complement to generate the income. If capacity is compromised (through illness, having unfilled posts etc) bringing it below the level originally predicted to generate the income, then the PDU will not generate the 'surplus' income at the level currently set.

5.5.4 Equally if work is not forthcoming at a level to sustain the basic cost of running the PDU as it stands then the PDU is in danger of not being self-sustaining. Whilst it is not an unusual practice for engineering services to be set a target for 'surplus' income generation (ref: SCOTS survey on trading services) this does create a particular pressure for the PDU.

5.5.5 Charges for engineering services are usually computed using one of five methods (ref: models for compensation of services). Although the multiplier method allows for the project scope not be defined early on, it can lead to more relaxed project definition and governance arrangements. Ultimately this will negatively affect the final costs of delivering a project. Removal of the 'profit/surplus' from the PDU will enable the reduction of the multiplier however this will create a budget pressure circa £0.9m for the D&I Service as a whole. This pressure will have to be met by reducing budgets elsewhere within the D&I Service.

5.5.6 Feedback from staff across all engineering teams and current/past internal clients of the PDU has queried the ongoing viability and sustainability of this approach. Some staff perceive the charge out rates as being too high / unrealistic and likely to impact on the PDU's ability to deliver an efficient service. It is argued by some that this might result in the PDU being non-competitive with the private sector and undermine the credibility and original aims and purpose for the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme and in providing expertise to other Council Services. This is backed up by feedback from

past customers, some of whom declare to have stopped using PDU on the basis of costs. In comparing our approach to Moray Council their feedback indicates that the cost multiplier of 1.49 is more palatable due to the quality of work undertaken and the notable cost difference with the private sector.

- 5.5.7 At the very least it is recommended that alternative methods of cost recovery and the financial resourcing of services are considered to identify the optimum funding model which also supports good governance. It should also be noted that capital monies are reducing quite significantly from 2021/2022. Currently this capital generates the majority of work coming through the PDU. In order to retain income levels and in turn work for staff, the PDU would need to forward plan and explore alternative income sources. As such, with the likelihood of increased capacity moving forward (assuming the PDU is fully staffed) there is potential to offer increased design services to public partners and private clients in addition to internal clients. In addition, it is recommended that the staff resource requirements across other engineering services is carefully reviewed and understood to ensure staff are in the right place to fulfil the Council's statutory requirements and all other commitments.
- 5.5.8 A key target would be to create an approach to resource and project management which results in private consultancy services being commissioned only in exceptional circumstances where there is no resource or skills across all appropriate engineering staff, as opposed to within a particular team.
- 5.5.9 Some suggest that what is understood as a high multiplier could be replaced or removed by reducing the Capital Budget and increasing the Revenue Budget to account for PDU costs.

Case Study – Wick

The development of the new Wick High School and associated community facilities was identified as an example of a project that could have been developed better had there been an integrated service in place.

Issues identified by officers included a disjointed engagement with a perceived lack of communication, particularly with Development Control officers. This led to officers having a lack of understanding of who to contact for specific issues and this difficulty has continued in spite of this being a Council project. On occasion issues arose out with client services area of control and officers experienced a – Lack of

Looking to the future and developing similar projects there is a need to ensure better engagement and ongoing communication. This would be a potential consequence of the Council simplifying and consolidating an assets approach which would complement the integrated service.

Case Study – South Loch Ness

The work undertaken on South Loch Ness was identified as an exemplar which might serve as a model for future engagement. In this situation one member of staff from within the PDU undertook various engineering functions & elements for and on behalf of the Council. The Council was able to utilise a small amount of capital funding as seed money to deliver a number of improvements across the ward area.

In some ways the success was attributable to the officer concerned. He was uniquely well qualified to undertake the role having worked across all three of the disciplines. Supported by the PDU he was empowered to undertake direct negotiations with the developers and was able to act as the single point of contact. Enjoying the support of local members as well as good relationships with both the Area Team and Development Control colleagues, developers were able to negotiate with the Council officer with confidence.

5.7 • Northern Roads Collaboration

5.7.1 The Council is an active and participating authority in the Northern Roads Collaboration. This initiative is still in its infancy but, unlike many other attempts at collaboration across Scotland in recent years, the intentions and efforts across the North of Scotland authorities are genuine and are already beginning to bear fruit for the constituent authorities.

5.7.2 Through the Collaboration Highland has called upon the services of Aberdeenshire Council to undertake preparation of a road safety strategy. The collaboration offers the opportunity to continue to provide savings through partnership work with and for other authorities. The one inhibiting factor is size as Highland is effectively already a region in its own right.

5.8 • Trunk Road / Transport Scotland

5.8.1 [To follow]

5.9 • Depots

5.9.1 [To follow] Including relationship with the Depots Rapid Review

6. Conclusions

6.1 [To follow] The findings of the peer review lead to the following actions and

6.2

7. Next Steps

7.1 [To follow] If the recommendations are approved, the next steps would be as follows:-

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8. Implications

8.1 Resource – [To follow]

8.2 Legal –

8.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) –

8.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever -

8.5 Risk –

8.6 Gaelic –

Designation: Stewart Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance

Date: 6 December 2019

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Appendix 1: Engineering Services – Scope of Review

Appendix 2: Responsibilities for Engineering Services

Appendix 3a: Organisational Structure for Transport Planning Team
3b: Organisational Structure for Project Design Unit
3c: Organisational Structure for Roads and Transport Team
3d: Structure Diagram for Inv & LNBS Operational Teams
3e: Operational Staff Duties

Appendix 4: Initial Officer Workshop

Appendix 5: Note of follow up Workshop