

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Redesign Board** held VIRTUALLY on Wednesday, 10 June 2020 at 2.00pm.

Present:

Mr B Lobban	Mr R Bremner
Mrs M Davidson	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs H Carmichael	Mr D Louden
Mr A MacKinnon	Mr A Jarvie
Mr D Macpherson	Mr P Saggars
Ms M Smith	Mr J Bruce
Dr I Cockburn	Mr G Adam
Mr J Gibson, UNISON	Mrs C Caddick
Mr P MacPherson, GMB	

Also Present:

Mr A Baxter	Mr R Gale
Mr B Boyd	Mr C Smith
Mr A Christie	Mrs M Cockburn

Officials in attendance:

Mrs L Denovan, Executive Chief Officer, Resources & Finance
Mr A Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Transformation
Ms E Barrie, Head of Human Resources
Mrs L McGunnigle, Human Resources Manager
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager
Ms M Zavarella, Administrative Assistant

Business

1. Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr L Fraser.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Joint Vice Chair of the Board

It was **AGREED** at the meeting that Mr R Bremner should act as the second Vice Chair of the Board (alongside Mrs C Caddick) in future.

3. Workforce Planning & Development

A Presentation was undertaken at the meeting by the Executive Chief Officer, Resources & Finance, on Workforce Planning & Development during which the guiding principles were highlighted and the need for transformation to reflect the

ambitious nature of the Council's approach to develop its workforce to meet the demands of the future were acknowledged.

As such, the workforce strategy themes related specifically to engagement, finance, transition, a future flexible workforce, leadership and management, continuous improvement, workforce data and a digital perspective.

Consideration would be given to corporate and strategic objectives, skills and capabilities, engagement, the impact of Covid-19 and financial challenges.

Specifically, in regard to Covid-19, a focus would be given to the main issues which included the emerging situation (response and recovery), the easing of lockdown, the fact that the situation might recur in future, goodwill, the significant financial gap, the health crisis/economic impact, recruitment controls, lessons learned and future opportunities.

Finally, and in stressing the need for a sustainable, flexible and high performing workforce in the future, the Workforce Planning Cycle was confirmed as having six separate steps, namely Context & Environmental Analysis, the Future Workforce Profile, the Current Workforce Profile, Workforce Implications/Gap Analysis, an Action Plan and Review & Evaluate.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- as part of the organisational management of this issue, it would be important to focus on the current position (whereby some staff were shielding, some were undertaking different jobs and some were continuing in the same roles but working from home) and the long term position (specifically, which services could be continued as at present but also with a recognition that there would be opportunities to be bold and courageous in providing some services differently);
- there was a need for clarification of the budgetary position across the Council and also whether all staff (below the Head of Service level) were being fully utilised at present as it was important the right people were in the right places;
- it would be important for this work to be split into sections initially, perhaps through Workshop and Group sessions;
- the potential implications arising from the Brexit situation at the end of the year also had to be considered as part of this work;
- recruitment expansion (alongside recruitment control) should be highlighted wherever necessary, alongside support for staff in development of this work;
- it was imperative that a skills audit was undertaken from the outset;
- consideration of income generation would be especially important as part of any future proposals;
- there had been a programme of change over recent years across the Council and it would be important to ensure that staff were fully informed at every stage and supported in order to avoid any situation of 'change overload';
- in response to a query as to where/when any final decisions would be made on the way forward, it was clarified that this work would be undertaken initially through the Redesign Board and recommendations made initially to the Recovery Board/s, and then to a series of full Council meetings where the final decisions would be made in the coming months;

- there was a need for clarification on whether individual Services would be required to submit Workforce Plans in the first instance as had been the case in the past;
- as part of any future Recovery Plan, it had to be highlighted that people were the most important asset for the Council and as such the aim of having a flexible and agile workforce, talent attraction procedures and succession planning in place was paramount;
- early identification of areas for improvement and the needs of customers/clients, alongside the creation of a risk analysis plan, had to be included in this work which would be part of a long and detailed process for the Council;
- there were many transferable skills already in place across the Council and as such there should be a focus from the outset in enabling staff to change roles if they wished as part of this process and this should include consideration of retraining, succession planning, bursaries, etc;
- cross-Service provision had to be a priority for the Council as part of enabling the creation of a flexible, agile workforce as this work had the potential to change lives;
- local variances also had to be taken into account as this work commenced;
- there had been significant and detailed contributions from staff as part of previous work undertaken by the Redesign Board and it was important that this was continued;
- it was imperative that accurate and detailed information on the composition of the current workforce was available from the outset;
- workforce planning across the Council was continuous and as such there would be a need to identify an 'end point' for this work which was to be undertaken by the Redesign Board;
- it was important to recognise that the recovery process would not just be undertaken by the Council but also by other organisations across the Highland area and as such there was a real opportunity for the sharing of ideas and proposals in terms of future service delivery;
- it would be helpful if an update on the previous projects which had been discussed by the Redesign Board (before Covid-19) could be provided for a future Workshop/Meeting;
- there had been a remarkable effort from Council staff to readjust to the current situation and it was vital that this enthusiasm and dedication was maintained as the Council moved forward with this work;
- there would be a need for a strong appraisal system to be in place as part of this process; and
- consideration should be given to recalling staff who had left the Council with a specific focus on Health & Social Care and Teaching, alongside an emphasis on retaining young people within those services.

Thereafter, it was **AGREED** that the Vice Chair (Mrs C Caddick) would now scope this work in terms of how it was to be taken forward and Members of the Board were invited to contact her to offer their assistance in this process.

In this regard, notification would follow in relation to Group and Workshop Sessions and also the next formal meeting of the Board when required.

The meeting ended at 3.00pm