

Agenda Item	14
Report No	HC/38/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Highland Council

Date: 29 October 2020

Report Title: **Recovery Action Plan: Phase 2 to end September 2020 - Update Report**

Report By: Executive Chief Officer - Transformation

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Highland Council Recovery Action Plan Progress Report for phase 2 to end September 2020 – is presented and Members are asked to note progress. In the previous progress report to 24 August Recovery Board, three actions due by 30 June 2020 (phase 1) reported some slippage, which are discussed in more detail at 4.9 in this report.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note the progress that has been made against those actions in Phase 2 that were due for completion by end September 2020. The Recovery Action Plan reinforces the Council’s overall objectives of recovery, with strong emphasis on the Council’s financial recovery. Challenges associated with actions required in response to the pandemic continue to exert pressure on the Council and it is testament to the diligence of staff, partners, communities and businesses and their enduring efforts that the Recovery Action Plan is sustained alongside resilience and reactive tasking required to maintain the delivery of services in a highly volatile and changing situation.
- 1.3 Within the Key Priorities some major areas of work are being progressed. These include Service Redesign, Workforce Planning and the Workforce Data Project. All three of these major initiatives are critical enablers for the Council to move forward in Recovery and beyond. Positive progress has been made with Service Redesign supported by the Transformation Service and this key priority reached a significant milestone at the end of September 2020. Further information on Service Redesign is provided at section 5 below.
- 1.4 Workforce Planning was the subject of a separate report to the Redesign Board on 8 October 2020, who are leading on this Key priority. A progress update on workforce planning is reported within item “Redesign Board update” that is also on today’s agenda. Updates on this key priority will also continue to be reported to the Recovery Board. Following the initiation of the Workforce Planning Project at the 10 June 2020 Redesign Board, and the completion of project scoping, the project team is progressing the planned work to deliver the project objectives: which includes a review the Workforce Planning Strategy, identification of Workforce Data Required and identification of Management Tools. A project team has been assembled to support this

work and an accompanying plan is now being taken forward. Additional information can be found in Appendix 1 under Key Priority 6 – Workforce Planning.

- 1.5 The Workforce Data Project is the review and development of the ICT system used to provide key workforce data supporting Payroll, Pensions, HR, Workforce Planning and Finance. A good example of the interdependency of work across the Recovery Plan is the Managers Survey now undertaken within the Workforce Planning key priority to help identify the data required to fulfil effective Service workforce planning. This takes cognisance of the current working environment, including the impact of Covid-19, as well as future requirements. Updates against all actions can be found at Appendix 1.
- 1.6 The updated guidance for example, issued on 22 September and 7 October 2020, in response to the increasing infection rates, aptly illustrates the fluid and reactive environment in which the Council is operating and reinforces the importance for parallel recovery and resilience activity. The demands associated with this are very much at the forefront of The Council's ethos with consideration for citizens and staff well-being, paramount.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- i. the latest progress of the Council's Recovery Action Plan to 30 September 2020
- ii. the associated implications and pressures on resources in the delivery of the Resilience activity and the Recovery programme.
- iii. the latest update regarding PPE requested by the Recovery Board on 7 October 2020.
- iv. that a vice-chair is to be appointed to the Recovery Board.
- v. a Brexit SWOT analysis will be undertaken by the Brexit Working Group and the outcome reported to the next Recovery Board.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource: There are no additional resource implications arising from this progress report. The staffing resources required to deliver these 11 key priorities are being deployed from within the Council's existing resources. This approach ensures that the powerful matrix of skills and knowledge across the organisation are being utilised effectively while also managing ongoing operational delivery and compliance with statutory requirements and changing national guidance.
- 3.2 Legal: While there are no presenting legal implications at this stage in the Programme, Sponsors will seek legal advice and take appropriate actions as required.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): All the Recovery Workstreams will embed our equalities and Fairer Scotland duties. Equality impact assessments are currently

being compiled led by the respective sponsors/leads and supported by the Transformation Service and Principal Policy Officer (Equalities).

- 3.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: Climate Change was subject to a separate report to the Recovery Board – 7 October 2020. Members welcomed the report that provided a concise snapshot of the current position and the role of the Recovery Board would be to review the actions determined by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, Climate Change Working Group and Corporate Resources Committee, by future updates to the Recovery Board. All tasks undertaken under the Recovery Action Plan must be reflective of The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and must also support THC's ambition to achieve a carbon neutral Highlands by 2025. The response of THC and its partners to the Covid-19 pandemic may provide opportunities to reduce region-wide emissions from energy, transport and waste whilst supporting community wealth building and resilience. Climate change and emissions reductions considerations will feature in all planning of Recovery delivery and where opportunities arise to realise gains against the Council's Emissions reductions targets, the Board will be supportive of progressing such initiatives.
- 3.5 Risk: The Recovery process has many risk elements across the 11 key priorities. Significantly, the immediate risks include, health and wellbeing of our workforce, finance, socio-economics and stability. Work continues to identify and analyse risks associated with the delivery of the action plan; as discussed above, resourcing carries significant risk, both financial and staffing.
- 3.6 Gaelic: This is inherent within the culture/tourism theme within Economic Recovery.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Recovery Action Plan has reached a second milestone – the end of Phase 2. This phase called upon the Council and its officers to action 69 tasks against the 11 Key priorities over the period July – September 2020. The backdrop of this extensive commitment was one of delivering resilience against the pandemic, reinstating the mechanisms for political governance, the continued effort around the welfare of vulnerable individuals, return of schools, managing a dispersed workforce and initiating financial recovery for the Council and the wider Highland Economy.
- 4.2 Work on phase two tasks has continued unabated with significant progress being achieved in a number of key areas. In line with Programme Management Office (PMO) principles, exception reporting continues to enable staff and Members to understand the work that has been achieved since June 2020 and to focus on those tasks that are under pressure against timelines and milestones.
- 4.3 The planned initiative to utilise existing IT systems, specifically the Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS), to provide real-time updates for Members, including self-service, has continued at pace. Transformation staff have worked with Performance and Governance colleagues to develop and refine the reporting function within PRMS system to meet the PMO business requirement; in doing so a unique approach has resulted in a number of changes to enable innovative use of the system as a programme reporting tool. This work is nearing completion and a demonstration will be provided as soon as practicable, providing a model for effective exception reporting of other programmes across the Council.















- 4.4 At the Recovery Board on the 7th October, the Board received an update on the following:
- i. Recovery Action Plan,
 - ii. Climate Change and
 - iii. Supporting the Highland Economy
 - iv. The Brexit Working Group
 - v. Tourism Committee
 - vi. Leadership, Culture & Performance











Members were advised that the rearranged Tourism Committee for 14 October 2020 (originally 1 October 2020) were asked to formally agree their Terms of Reference and seek approval at The Highland Council meeting on 29 October 2020.

- 4.5 Acknowledging the importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and availability for use across the Council, the Board requested a detailed update, which is provided at section 7 below. The Board also agreed that a vice-chairman is to be appointed to the Recovery Board. Finally, it was agreed that a SWOT analysis on Brexit be undertaken by the Brexit Working Group.

4.6 Route Map to Recovery – 11 Key Priorities Progress Summary

The table below presents a high-level status summary of the actions for each key priority.

Key Priority Phase 2	Planned tasks to end Sep	Complete	On-Track / On-going	Some Slippage	No significant Progress
					
Restoring Political Governance	3	 2	 1		
Lockdown Agility incl. Schools Reopening	7		 7		
Supporting the Recovery of the Highland Economy	3		 3		
Financial Recovery Strategy	7		 6	 1	
Community Empowerment	6		 6		
Workforce Planning & Development	3	 2	 1		
Service Re-Design	10		 10		

Key Priority Phase 2	Planned tasks to end Sep	Complete	On-Track / On-going	Some Slippage	No significant Progress
					
IT Transformation	13	 2	 8	 3	
Digital Transformation	5		 5		
Leadership, Culture & Performance	9		 9		
Asset Management	3		 3		
Total Tasks	69	6	59	4	

- 4.6 The current position is; of the 69 actions due, 6 are complete, 59 are on track/on-going and 4 show some slippage. Table 4.8 and Appendix 1 provide further details.
- 4.7 Where actions are shown as complete or on-track/on-going, using the PMO approach, these will be monitored periodically as part of the Recovery Board's programme assurance function and reporting by exception.
- 4.8 The table below lists the 4 action points where some slippage is reported against phase 2 – due end Sep 2020.

Key Priority	Action Point	Remarks
Financial Recovery Strategy	<p>Review current contract Register and ensure the Council has a comprehensive Contracts Register for all contracts.</p> <p>Maintain Contracts Register.</p> <p>Initiate review of performance of contracts including understanding of spend, outputs and outcomes.</p>	<p>Slippage occurred due to both Service business as usual and resilience demands.</p> <p>Work on this action point across the Council will continue during Q3, with an aim for completion during Q4 taking cognisance of the various demands on Council staff including those of resilience.</p> <p>Whilst the review of strategic and critical suppliers has been undertaken, the review of the contract register is intended to be completed by December 20. There are already performance reviews of some contracts across the Council, e.g. ICT provision.</p>

<p>IT Transformation</p> <p>Restart, recovery & completion of existing ICT Transformation programme</p>	<p>Restart physical refresh activity in line with return of people to premises and Educations digital skills & learning requirements</p> <p>Confirmation of delivery plan and associated commercial & contractual changes</p> <p>Go live of JML & ICT Catalogue</p>	<p>The Refresh is underway but further slippage due to supply chain issues; we continue to work with computer suppliers to expedite delivery. Additionally, many of remaining users due for refresh have complex requirements which take more time to resolve. Covid-19 is also causing worldwide IT supply issues.</p> <p>Engagement with Wipro regarding the delivery plan is going well, and it is expected that a detailed agreement about a phased transfer of services in-house should be in place by December 2020.</p> <p>A separate report is due to Corporate Resources Committee on 11 November 2020 which will provide an update on the refresh project and progress regarding Project Dochas.</p>
<p>IT Transformation</p> <p>Development & Implementation of Digital & Technology Strategy</p>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Development of business case & high-level plan</p>	<p>Decision made about new CRM system. Resource-Link also under focus as part of Workforce Data Project. Corporatisation of ICT is being considered under the Service Redesign process.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement has continued at a tactical level to meet immediate service requirements.</p> <p>Engagement at a strategic level will continue in Q3 with updates provided in the next progress report but subject to impact of Covid & competing Council priorities.</p>
<p>IT Transformation</p> <p>Development & Implementation of Digital & Technology Strategy</p>	<p>Implementation plan defined</p>	<p>The Council requires further engagement with Microsoft Cloud Navigator and will also undertake engagement across Council Services as part of the commitment to finalise implementation plan by Q3 wherever practicable.</p>

4.9 The table below lists the 3 action points from phase 1 (due end June 2020) where some slippage was reported; further information is detailed below.

Key Priority	Action Point	Remarks
IT Transformation	Strategic Engagement with Microsoft - Cloud Navigator Programme – Informs both ICT Delivery Model & ICT Strategy.	<p>Some positive progress being made.</p> <p>This Action Point was previously on hold as engagement with Microsoft was paused due to Covid and the requirement for agreement on the broader strategic approach for Project Dochas. Engagement with Microsoft has now recommenced and will continue during phase 3.</p> <p>Given the time pressure on transition with the current contract coming to an end in March 2022, the initial focus with Microsoft will be on transition and modernisation of the core ICT Service as opposed to transformation. This work has been re-scheduled, and the aim is to continue with this work in phase 3.</p>
IT Transformation	Replacement of Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) (Links to strategic review of applications but requirements are defined	<p>Action now complete.</p> <p>Previously awaiting a procurement decision. The new Project Board convened and met on August 24th. Following a comprehensive review of the work to date and evidence provided on the suitability of the recommended solution, Board approval was given to move to procurement of Granicus CRM solution – affordable within the current budget. This decision supported by the Resources Governance Board, means that procurement is now in progress alongside detailed implementation project planning. Contingency in place with existing supplier to ensure current solution remains in place as we transition.</p>
Leadership, Culture & Performance	Re-branding and communication - Public perception of HC Brand under COVID – capture & build on the positive	The capacity to progress this task has been hampered due to higher priority demands on the

	reputation that has been built during the crisis	Resilience and Corporate Communications Team. This Action Point will be reviewed during Phase 3 including the delivery timeline for consideration by the Recovery Board in November 20.
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5. Service Redesign

- 5.1 This major initiative for the Council is approaching a significant milestone at the end of September when it reaches the end of the Review stage. The key milestone dates approved as part of the Council's Recovery Action Plan for Service Redesign are to undertake a Review by September 2020, Redesign by December 2020, Implement during 2021.
- 5.2 Each ECO is supported by staff from the Transformation Service, HR and Finance. This phase includes reviewing current Service structures, current performance – financial and non-financial, and Covid Learning. Workshops to better understand the current position, and future needs and requirements, taking account of changes emerging from the pandemic have been undertaken using business tools, in particular PESTLE and SWOT, which have shaped the workshops and aided the review process overall. PESTLE analysis enables an examination of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors which may affect current and future Service delivery. SWOT is a strategic planning technique to examine the external and internal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in relation to the totality of the Council's responsibilities and services.
- 5.3 With the Review stage completed at the end of September 2020, as planned, the Chief Executive led a two-day peer review workshop with the ECOs in early October 2020, to review findings and work continues as we enter the *Redesign* phase. A seminar for Members will be held in November, led by the Chief Executive, as agreed at the Highland Council 10 Sep 2020.
- 5.4 As detailed in The Recovery Action Plan the next stage will be to undertake the *Redesign* phase of Service Redesign by December 2020. An example of the analysis that will be carried out under this next phase, is to examine how best The Council will support a cross-service response to poverty reduction in the Highlands. The Chief Executive and ECOs have committed to progress Service Redesign at pace with work continuing in the *Redesign* stage in November and December with submission of reports to respective Strategic Committees, as appropriate.

6. Transformation

- 6.1 As reported to Council in June 2020, the introduction of the Transformation Service has resulted in a single approach to programme management, re-aligning change activity under one PMO and maximising existing resource. This approach has not only made best use of existing staff resource but also drawn upon a wide range of skills and experience from other areas of the Council; with staff providing additionality from within their current roles. To meet the extra demands associated with Recovery, this approach delivers agility and provides excellent development opportunities and empowerment for staff.

7. Personal Protective Equipment [PPE] Update, Covid-19 Requirements

- 7.1 There are a number of product categories that are important in supporting Highland Council Services during the Covid-19 period – hand hygiene, gloves, eye protection, masks, aprons, overshoes, surface cleaner and paper towel blue roll. Council Services request Covid-19 related supplies through the process outlined within the [Intranet](#). The quantities and cost of items ordered through Integra can be reported and as can the stock levels being held within Council Stores.
- 7.2 Highland Council maintains an active dialogue with suppliers to manage the sourcing of products. The Logistics Team also has regular interaction with Council Services which builds understanding of Services' requirements. For each of the main product categories Highland Council has been working since July to build stock resilience, to alleviate any potential market supply difficulties that might arise over the winter months and through the rising incidence of Coronavirus. This approach will seek to ensure that Highland Council maintains its target of three months' stock resilience for the key product categories.
- 7.3 As a result, Council Services which support communities and deliver vital services across the Highlands, such as Schools, Roads, Waste Collection, Building Maintenance, Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Health & Social Care Services (including Children's Services Health Visitors and School Nurses, Children's Units, Mental Health support and Criminal Justice Service) are receiving the supplies required. The Covid-19 related product supplies for adult care homes in the Highlands are managed by NHS Highland.
- 7.4 For schools, a replacement surface detergent has been sourced and will be available to request from the Council's Store for use following the October holiday. The Scottish Government's [guidance](#) states that there should be regular cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces, and provision of appropriate cleaning supplies to enable young people in secondaries to wipe down their own desk/chair/surfaces on entering and leaving a room. The new product comes ready to use (the previous product required dilution by CCFM) and is more suitable for use by young people.
- 7.5 Through its frequent dialogue with suppliers, Highland Council keeps informed of market conditions. Whilst over the duration of the pandemic there have previously been supply difficulties, at present market conditions are stable – Highland Council is securing its required supplies for each of the important categories noted above. Tighter national market conditions do, however, exist for nitrile gloves, and are expected to do so until the middle of next year. That being said, Highland Council continues to be able to source its requirement for this product through regular interaction with suppliers.
- 7.6 In the September update to Council, it was noted that Highland Council was experiencing difficulties with supply availability/lead-in times for vinyl gloves and triggers for spray bottles. The supply situations for both have improved in the interim, and Highland Council has increased stock levels of both products. There are currently no warnings from suppliers to Highland Council of emerging market supply problems for the important Covid-19 related product categories. As indicated above, however, Highland Council will continue with its approach of building stock resilience.

- 7.7 The use of such PPE products to support day-to-day operations and service delivery is part of a broader, risk-assessment based process which involves applying the 'hierarchy of control'. This stepped protection approach involves:
- Elimination – don't undertake the task, remove yourself from the situation completely or don't enter into it in the first place.
 - Substitution – can something else be done that will achieve the same or broadly the same outcome if that is appropriate and removes the risk?
 - Ensure that good hygiene practices and infection prevention and control measures are implemented.
 - Engineering controls – examples with relevance to Covid-19 practice could include making changes to minimise contact such as physical barriers, markings or changing the placement of equipment or seating to maintain a 2-metre distance.
 - Administrative controls – examples could include signage/warnings and/or changes in working practices such as procedures / guidance / rules / training to maintain social distancing.
 - Personal protective equipment. Where none of the previous levels of action achieve either complete mitigation of the risk or reduction to satisfactory levels, and to comply with Scottish Government's FACTS approach, appropriate PPE should be considered to reduce the risk to acceptable levels.











Designation: Executive Chief Officer Transformation

Date: 12 October 2020

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**The Highland Council Recovery Action Plan – Key Priorities Phase 2 Update
Exception Reporting**








1. Restoring Political Governance Sponsor Kate Lackie						
Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
		●		●	●	
Committees	Strategic Committees and Area Committees to be established using virtual meetings wherever possible (Business as Usual Phase).	●				Virtual meetings now well established and business as usual.
	Prepare a detailed management plan for physical distancing in Highland Council HQ for Members who wish to attend the meeting in person.		●			No prospect of a return to HQ for some time yet. At the point at which this may be permitted the management plan will need to reflect the guidance current at the time and so will need to be drawn up as and when required. In light of the latest guidance issued on 21 Sep 20 work continues on guidance but given the fluid environment and Scottish Governments direction regarding continued working from home any further guidance and planning will be revised when appropriate.
	Bring forward formal meetings into the 'recess' period as required	●				Complete

2.Lockdown Agility						
Sponsor: Mark Rodgers						
Schools Re-opening: Nicky Grant (ECO – Education and Learning)						
Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete 	On Track/On-going 	Some Slippage 	No Significant Progress 	Remarks
National Guidance	Implement changes to workplace settings to ensure full health & safety provisions are in place and enable a managed return as circumstances dictate.					On-going. Guidance document has been prepared by Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Team, 'Reopening of premises following lockdown'. Key conditions for use of workplace communicated. Updated guidance package being distilled for access via Intranet. Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland updates monitored to advise on workplace access requirements. Contributing to Scottish Government consideration of ventilation requirements to assist subsequent updating of advice to staff working indoors.
PPE	PPE is provided to those returning to work in work in accordance with regulations and guidance.					On-going with provision to reflect evolving Scottish Government guidance.
Return of services	Continue to support staff working from home settings, including appropriate workspace assessments and welfare/training support. Continue ongoing feedback from staff – at work and from home to continue to learn, challenge and review all policies so they remain fit for purpose.					Staff continue to be supported to work from home in accordance with national guidance and direction. Individual managers are taking note of any feedback from their teams and providing advice. Initial learning from Covid and staff survey reported previously to Council. Additional dialogue with service managers to ascertain the requirement to return personnel to office workplaces at an appropriate time and to understand where flexible and working from home options could continue.
	Amend working arrangements as required for return to work as any changes to national advice are made by UK and Scottish Government					Ongoing. Arrangements continue to be considered in context of the most recent Scottish and UK Government pronouncements.
	Implement solutions for these staff and make changes promptly and flexibly as required within affordability.					Ongoing. Emerging operational requirements managed to reflect national guidance.
Schools Reopening (ECO Education & Learning)	Weekly project board, sub-group and area consultation meetings continue with escalation of any issues or decisions that require support to the board. Schools and settings reopen on 11 th August with adapted operating model. Continued test of assurance/ continued risk assessment and community engagement.					All schools and ELC settings opened by 17 August and continue to take account of local circumstances in updating detailed risk assessments. Area Project Boards now run on a fortnightly basis, with a focus on individual school and community issues relating to transport, catering, FM and digital issues. Operational Groups meeting as appropriate. Close working with and joint comms for parents with the Highland Parent Council Partnership (HPCP). Links between The









	Provision 'readiness' and health and safety monitoring.					Highland Council resilience teams and Public Health teams have forged effective communication and partnership working. Development of flowchart for schools, parents and carers, in addition to Scottish Government advice. A tactical response team now meets regularly with protocols in place to respond to any future cluster outbreaks or incidences in schools, as well as local Emergency Liaison Groups as required in each Area.
	Inspection and testing programme to enable the recommissioning of premises – structured programme firstly within school estate then office estate. Remedial works where needed.		●			Significant inspection and testing programme undertaken to ensure systems safe for schools to reopen. Ongoing maintenance and remediation to support schools.

3. Supporting the Recovery of the Highland Economy						
Sponsor: Malcolm MacLeod						
Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
		●	●	●	●	
	Longer term strategic partnerships to be established and maintained with a focus on supporting and promoting the Highland economic recovery and delivering our aspirations as a net-zero region.		●			Highland Recovery Partnership established and has met once. This will continue over the coming period to ensure actions are taken forward. The next meeting of the Economic Recovery Partnership will be held in the last week of October 20.
	Work on the key areas identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Sector and Community Led Economic Development • Construction and Infrastructure Delivery (with a focus on supporting construction activity, digital infrastructure, transport and active travel and housing delivery) • Retail, Town and City Centres • Tourism and Culture • Energy and Renewables • The Rural Economy • Technology and Innovation 		●			Whole range of work being carried out to ensure resilience in these sectors, including discussions with Government, businesses and partner agencies.
	Review all available funding to support the wider economic recovery, including discussions with SG/UK Governments in respect of the Highland City Region Deal. Focus on delivery of all available funding to the Highlands to support growth and a		●			Discussions continue regarding Highland City Region Deal and other funding streams that will contribute to economic recovery. In respect of the Highland City Region Deal, the Scrutiny Panel will meet as soon as practicable to consider options, with an update report being brought to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 4 th November 2020. The reality is that there is limited scope to amend

	response to the climate and ecological emergency.					the current Deal outwith the projects already identified, but efforts continue to look at options
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4. Financial Recovery Strategy						
Sponsor: Liz Denovan						
Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
Financial Recovery Strategy	Develop Financial Recovery Strategy (as part of Council's overall Financial Strategy). Future Finance reports presented to Recovery Board, Corporate Resources Committee, and The Highland Council.					Regular reporting being provided to every Highland Council and Corporate Resources committee meeting with latest report provided to full Council on 1st October.
Capital Plan	Identify Essential / Contracted General Fund Capital Spend					Financial recovery strategy will need to be flexible to allow for potentially significant changes around Covid financial impact as well as allowing best advantage to be taken of emergent fiscal flexibilities proposed by Scottish Government
Introduce robust spend controls	Review controls and their effectiveness. Identify further controls if required and implement. Continue to report progress, highlighting material issues.					Capital elements presented in Council budget reports of 25th June and 1st October identifying essential capital projects and seeking Member approval to progress agreeing contractual terms.
Review of contracts management	Review current contract Register and ensure the Council has a comprehensive Contracts Register for all contracts. Maintain Contracts Register. Initiate review of performance of contracts including understanding of spend, outputs and outcomes.					Slippage occurred due to both Service business as usual and resilience demands. Work on this action point across the Council will continue during Q3, with an aim for completion during Q4 taking






						<p>cognisance of the various demands on Council staff including those of resilience.</p> <p>Whilst the review of strategic and critical suppliers has been undertaken, the review of the contract register is intended to be completed by December 20.</p> <p>There are already performance reviews of some contracts across the Council, e.g. ICT provision.</p>
Review of Procurement Services	<p>Undertake scoping review of Procurement Services.</p> <p>Complete business case and design project plan.</p>		●			<p>Project Outline completed including scoping & milestone dates.</p> <p>Project Sponsor (ECO Resources & Finance), Project Leads (ECO Transformation and Head of Revenues & Customer Services) and Project Manager (Business Analyst) agreed.</p> <p>This review will include an assessment of the costs of, and savings delivered by, the Shared Service and taking cognisance of the business case for this Shared Service as agreed by Resources Committee in August 2016.</p>
Development of Business Intelligence - financial and non-financial	<p>Jointly lead session with ECO Performance & Governance to scope and review Business Intelligence requirements – financial & non-financial</p>		●			<p>As detailed below, work is on-going into this task. Building on the discussions with the CEx and ECOs further sessions will be held to continue to take this matter forward</p>
	<p>Undertake scoping exercise with ECO Performance & Governance to better understand current performance including VFM (value for money).</p> <p>Review of previous year LFR submission to support base line benchmarking.</p>		●			<p>Local Financial Returns (LFRs) LFRs form part of Scottish Local Government Financial Statistics (SLGFS) which is an annual publication that provides a comprehensive overview of Scottish LA financial activity. The publication covers a range of areas including revenue costs. During August and September, Transformation Service staff have examined the data contained within the LFRs to 18/19 (19/20 LFRs to be submitted Dec 20) and discussed with the CEx and ECOs. This analysis has helped to provide an enhanced understanding of Service costs across the Council and Scotland. Further analysis will be undertaken as required. Scoping exercise to continue, and reflective of the nature of this work, there is an on-going commitment to continue this initiative.</p>



5. Community Empowerment						
Sponsor: Carron McDiarmid						
Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete 	On Track/On-going 	Some Slippage 	No Significant Progress 	Remarks
Sustainable service delivery model for humanitarian assistance, including support and coordination of community action (with groups and TSIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New arrangements in place internally to coordinate humanitarian assistance – from any proposals agreed Additional community bodies and new volunteers mobilised Relocation from schools to new premises 					Continuing to provide humanitarian support where local outbreaks occur and to respond to requests for support as a result of welfare/food insecurity concerns
Learning from, and building on, good practice from Community Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing data on who has accessed support (analysis of service provided based on need) Proposals for supporting further community action in new areas e.g. grounds maintenance, community growing of food Presentation from community body at Strategic and Area Committees Working with the community to establish local community networks where not already in place Collating evidence from local community networks and partnerships 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial conversations (14) with community support groups completed. Follow-up survey being developed. All area committee presentations now complete. Strategic committee engagement ongoing. Engagement planned to explore new areas for community action taking a place-based approach.
Greater community and business involvement and connections in the delivery of local services and in local decision-making (place-based approach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community asset transfer (CAT) approvals to C&P Committee Statutory annual report on CAT and participation requests 					CAT reports agreed at C&P committee in August
Understanding experience and impacts of Covid on our communities and hopes for the future in order to develop consensus on shared local priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initial data gathered surveys underway some virtual engagement update at C&P Committee 19.8.20 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial conversations (14) with community support groups completed. Follow-up survey being developed. Design of survey for recipients of support underway Working with partners to design of engagement with Covid-impacted communities of interest underway

	<p>As above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for reviewing CLD activity Agree approach to engaging equality groups to inform the statutory review of equality outcomes March 2021 		●			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLDE group currently reviewing Covid activity to understand learning from response and impacts for CLDE Working with partners to design of engagement with Covid-impacted communities of interest underway Through service redesign, learning from Covid response to help inform poverty reduction approach in Highland.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feed in learning/any new requirements to the specification for new solution. 		●			<p>Learning from Helping Hands and consultation with staff contributed to development of CRM business case. Business Case agreed by Project Board at end of August, preferred supplier identified and procurement stage for project phase 1 is complete.</p>

6. Workforce Planning and Development













Sponsor: Liz Denovan

Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete 	On Track/On-going 	Some Slippage 	No Significant Progress 	Remarks
Convene Re-Design Board	Commence Workforce Planning Reviews including Review of current Workforce Planning Strategy					<p>A full report on Workforce Planning was submitted to the 08 October 2020 Redesign Board, detailing work completed, progress, and planned.</p> <p>Following the initiation of the Workforce Planning Project at the 10 June 2020 Redesign Board, and the completion of project scoping, the project is progressing the planned work to deliver the project objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Workforce Planning Strategy – to ensure ongoing currency and fitness for purpose 2. Identification of Workforce Data Required – assessing what data is already held, what is required to enable managers to effectively manage their teams (right people, right place, right time), identifying the gaps and taking action to rectify 3. Identification of Management Tools – assessing what is in place, what managers need, revising and adding to the tools as required <p>Summary of the work completed, in progress, and planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project sponsor, lead officer, Transformation project manager and project team are in place and meeting regularly (including members of the Redesign Board) • Project Plan produced detailing tasks, timescales and responsibilities • Redesign Workshop was held 07 August 20 and completed a PESTLE review of the Workforce Planning Strategy to provide a member perspective and insight into the external factors impacting workforce planning • Survey of Managers was issued 23 Sep 20 to inform the review of the Strategy and to help inform areas for further improvement such as additional data, management tools and support required • As a follow on to the Survey, Workshops are to be held during October to further understand from a manager and staff perspective of what changes are required, where are the gaps and weaknesses that need to be addressed (e.g. data, tools, support)

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A progress report will be presented to the Redesign Board 27 Nov 20. <p>Workforce data types currently held and available have been assessed for the purpose of identifying where there are gaps in the data required (to be delivered through the Workforce Data Project – see “Workforce Data Project” entry below)</p>
All ECOs	Review Service Workforce Plans					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This task is on-going including the learning from managers/supervisors from the management survey issued on 23 Sep 20, with workshops and interviews planned with managers and supervisors to take place in Q3. Workforce planning by its very nature is an iterative process and therefore discussions, engagement with managers/supervisors (and staff) will continue as required.
Workforce Data Project (ResourceLink)	Continued maintenance of interim establishment. Design and finalise Project Plan. Commence project.					<p>Project initiated. Project sponsor, lead officers, Transformation project manager and project team in place.</p> <p>Project Plan produced detailing tasks, timescales and responsibilities, and the project is currently progressing the planned work summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Establishment Data – activity progressed to cleanse and complete data set covering all established posts (this work is feeding into and supporting the wider Workforce Planning Programme and Service Redesign). The focus of this work is on our immediate data requirements HR/Payroll System Assessment – work has been progressed to assess what short-term improvements can be achieved through rationalising the number of HR systems and processes used to create efficiencies, identifying how existing system functionality could be widened to capture more manual processes, and how a greater application of self-service functionality could be introduced to maintain workforce related data and access to management information and reports. Where applicable short-term improvements will be made – the priority being the maintenance and ongoing integrity of establishment data. <p>Workforce Data Project Board met mid-September; all involved recognise the positive influence Boards have to the successful delivery of timeous outcomes thus further Board meetings will take place regularly.</p>

7. Service Re-design











Sponsor: Allan Gunn/Malcolm Macleod







Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
						
All ECOs	Implement short-term Service changes in the context of experiences learned during the lockdown period and reflecting the serious financial position of the Council.					Covid learning has been captured by Services and an overall assessment has been collated. Service delivery continues to be adapted, reacting to guidance from Scottish Government as appropriate.
ECO Resources & Finance	Review Structures					This Key Priority is approaching reached a significant milestone at the end of September - the end of the Review stage.
ECO Communities & Place	Review Structures					Key milestone dates approved as part the Council's Recovery Action Plan for Service Redesign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review by Sep 20 • Redesign by Dec 20 • Implement during 2021.
ECO Performance & Governance	Review Structures					Each ECO is supported by staff from the Transformation Service, HR and Finance.
ECO Housing & Property	Review Structures					Review phase included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing current Service structures • Current performance – financial and non-financial • Covid Learning • Workshops (PESTLE and SWOT) • Chief Executive led peer review workshops with the ECOs early Oct 20 and work continues as we enter the <i>Redesign</i> phase.
ECO Infrastructure & Environment	Review Structures					Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive will hold a seminar in November 2020 for Members as agreed at the Highland Council on 10 Sep 20
ECO Transformation	Review Structures					As detailed in The Recovery Action Plan the next stage will be to undertake the <i>Redesign</i> phase of Service Redesign by December 2020. An example of the analysis that will be carried out under this next phase, is to examine how best The Council will support a cross-service response to poverty reduction in the Highlands.
ECO Health & Social Care	Review Structures					The Chief Executive and ECOs have committed to progress Service Redesign at pace with work continuing in the <i>Redesign</i> stage in November and December with

ECO Education & Learning	Review Structures		●		submission of reports to respective Strategic Committees, as appropriate.
ECO Transformation	Revisit completed/in process Redesign and Rapid Reviews and identify key activities that are still to be implemented or require further work. Task as appropriate.		●		<p>In relation to Redesign, a summary position is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/06/20 Redesign Board - Workforce Planning and initiated the project scoping work • 7/8/20 Redesign Workshop - included completion of a PESTLE review of the Workforce Planning Strategy to provide a member perspective and insight into the external factors impacting workforce planning • 1/9/20 Redesign Workshop – updated on the Lean review of Burials and Cremations administration • 8/10/20 Redesign Board –Workforce Planning & Development report to be presented • 27/11/20 Redesign Board arranged, with further Boards and Workshops to be scheduled <p>In relation to Rapid Reviews, a summary position is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rapid Reviews in late 2019 identified 17 possible savings opportunities • 10 of the 17 opportunities are included in the 20/21 budget approved by Council in in March 20 • These 10 opportunities are estimated to deliver savings of £1.551m, or 93% of all the possible savings highlighted within these 17 reviews • For the 7 opportunities not included in the budget, 4 were considered to deliver possible savings. Foregoing initial investment required, the assessment of available supporting information (e.g. Outline Business Cases) is that at present (e.g. due to the changed environment such as COVID impact) these remain not viable. <p>The 10 Rapid Reviews savings approved for 20/21 are under significant pressure for delivery due to COVID19.</p>









8. IT Transformation


Sponsor: Liz Denovan









Phase	2 – to end of Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
ICT Transformation in response to significant change to operational requirements as a result of Covid – 19. (Remote working/ online collaboration, connectivity & teamworking)	Completion of AOVPN rollout to Education					Complete
	Phase 2 Rollout of MS Teams further enhancing remote working and online collaboration capability					Work continues with roll out and utilisation of Teams.
	Evaluation of new platform specifically designed for virtual committees from Public i					Consolidating on MS Teams as the preferred platform for virtual committees with trials ongoing to connect HQ Chamber and Area Committee Rooms to Teams meetings
	Implement solutions for these staff and make changes promptly and flexibly as required within affordability.					Refresh project being adapted to cater for new requirements as a result of home working. Specific engagement with Health & Social Care to ensure correct solutions are in place.
	Management and action as required					Complete
	Trial of softphone capability – allows significant proportion of corporate user's (circa 2500) ability to use desktop phone functionality on their laptop/desktop – No cost to deliver as part of current telephony system capability and licencing					
Restart, recovery & completion of existing ICT Transformation programme (Corp & Curriculum end user computing refresh, automation of JML (HR joiner mover, leaver, process), ICT Catalogue supporting tooling & infrastructure)	Restart physical refresh activity in line with return of people to premises and Educations digital skills & learning requirements Confirmation of delivery plan and associated commercial & contractual changes Go live of JML & ICT Catalogue					The Refresh is underway but further slippage due to supply chain issues; we continue to work with computer suppliers to expedite delivery. Additionally, many of remaining users due for refresh have complex requirements which take more to time to resolve. Covid-19 is also causing worldwide IT supply issues. Engagement with Wipro regarding the delivery plan is going well, and it is expected that a detailed agreement about a phased transfer of services in-house should be in place by December 2020. A separate report is due to Corporate Resources Committee on 11 November 2020 which will provide an update on the refresh project and progress regarding Project Dochas.

Development & Implementation of Digital & Technology Strategy	Definition of programme dependent upon outcome					Service engagement delayed due to other priorities. First area to be looked at in detail will be Education and Learning with workshop completed in September 2020. Also waiting for further engagement with Microsoft Cloud Navigator Programme.
	Strategic engagement with core ICT supplier					
	Stakeholder Engagement Development of business case & high-level plan					Decision made about new CRM system. Resource-Link also under focus as part of Workforce Data Project. Corporatisation of ICT is being considered under the Service Redesign process. Stakeholder engagement has continued at a tactical level to meet immediate service requirements. Engagement at a strategic level will continue in Q3 with updates provided in the next progress report but subject to impact of Covid & competing Council priorities.
	Implementation plan defined					The Council requires further engagement with Microsoft Cloud Navigator and will also undertake engagement across Council Services as part of the commitment to finalise implementation plan by Q3 wherever practicable.
	Strategic review - Line of business applications – Includes application roadmap for key LOB systems and resourcing of systems support – Corporatisation of ICT					Review of managed print contract undertaken, and print volumes continue to be significantly lower than previous years. Telephony review will be undertaken as part of the ICT Strategy work. Assessments thus far indicate that no urgent requirement as softphones are operating and investment in telephony over that the last 12-18 months is still delivering benefits.
Complete managed print review and action as required Commence fixed telephony review linked to Microsoft strategic engagement (Move to cloud, adoption of softphone)					Review of managed print contract carried out and opportunities for savings identified. Print volumes continue to be significantly lower than previous years. Telephony review will be carried out as part of ICT Strategy work. No urgent requirement as softphones are operating and we have recent investment in telephony that is still delivering benefits.	
Organisational Change Management Programme Underpins all transformation activity work but is a separate defined activity - includes; Continued development & Utilisation of Change Network Communication Training Benefits Realisation & Ownership	Implementation of Phase 2 MS Teams training Development & Implementation of OCM Programme in line with ICT Transformation Programme development					OCM activity is continuing – targeted through the Change Network comprising all managers, Head Teachers and school Digital Champions.










9. Digital Transformation						
Sponsor: Malcolm MacLeod						
Phase	1 – to end Sep 2020	Complete 	On Track/On-going 	Some Slippage 	No Significant Progress 	Remarks
Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) (Implementation of the funding from DCMS' Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge fund. The Highland project, totalling £7.5m, will see gigabit capable, full fibre connections installed in 152 public buildings in Fort William, Inverness, Thurso and Wick).	Inspect and manage the delivery of the programme					Project management resource being recruited which will greatly aid progress towards deadline of 31 st March 2021. Discussions ongoing with UK Government on the potential for some slippage in timescale given the impact of COVID. CityFibre have completed 40 locations and the majority of construction activity has now been completed in Thurso, Wick and Fort William. The key challenge is to ensure that the site list (152 public building sites) is finalised to allow CityFibre the final list that they have to connect to by the end of the project in March 2021.
Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) Programme (The procurement of higher bandwidth network services for public buildings that will be delivered through the deployment of full fibre infrastructure.)	Manage the delivery of the programme of works					All project documentation has now been completed and agreement reached with the UK Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). The supplier is Openreach and they have completed the surveys for the Highland RGCP order. We await details of the proposed installation timetable which is required to meet the DCMS March 2021 funding deadline. Openreach are confident this date can be achieved. Costings for a second phase of sites is being prepared to ensure that there is a continued access to this funding stream for 2021/22. This is expected soon.
R100/Highland City Region Deal To deliver a digitally capable region and stimulate economic growth.	Implement project as soon as practicable					It is positive to report that the R100 North Lot has cleared the court challenge that was underway. Scottish Government are now working with Openreach on the proposed roll out of the programme and details of the implementation plans will be available by the end of the year. The Council Leader has met with both UK Government and Scottish Government Ministers in recent weeks to stress the importance of both administrations working together to ensure that the full benefits of the R100 and City Region Deal Funding are brought forward at pace. This could include for example a greater number of Fibre to the Premises projects than was originally envisaged.
External Collaboration and Partnerships	Continue to lead the Digital Programme Board and highlight the critical importance that digital infrastructure has in ensuring a					The Digital Programme Board meets regularly with the next meeting, most recently on 30 th September. The Board noted progress across all workstreams and identified the key risks along with mitigation of these, particularly in respect of the LFFN project.

	sustainable recovery for the Highland area.					
	Ensure appropriate project management resource is available for the continued delivery of the digital workstream					Recruitment underway – HIE temporarily carrying out Project Management, dedicated resource to be in place by end Oct 20.

10. Leadership, Culture and Performance						
Sponsor: Donna Manson (CEO)						
Phase	1 – to end Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
						
Cultural Development – reimagining, revisioning and renewing	Implement the strategy and collate findings from interactions, stories, staff forums, connections, ECO task – Develop a report to inform cultural change					Post Covid-19 Employee Engagement Strategy was agreed at Highland Council on 30 July and implementation has commenced
Leadership Development, Support and Performance	Develop collaborative leadership approach – Re-framing, understanding problems, co-production					The following high-level objectives have been identified from the engagement undertaken to date with citizens, partners, employees and trade union representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive improved performance, process and outcomes • Get the right people in the right place • Build the capacity of our leaders and managers • Ensure employee engagement and wellbeing • Develop a learning culture • Deliver the governance and management system to support change
	Re-framing staff development initiatives and programmes to encompass agile approaches, collaborative problem solving, shifting leadership style away from hierarchical stance. Link in with revised ERDs					It is proposed that a 3-stage differentiated Leadership Development Programme (LDP) will be delivered: Tier 1, Senior Leaders/Executive management Tier 2, Established Leaders and Managers Tier 3, Emerging Leaders/Talent Development All of the stages will involve a number of common elements such as self-assessment and reflection, performance management, coaching and mentoring, action learning and system reinforcement, and professional development and accreditation. The LDP will involve a combination of mandatory and voluntary elements with indicative timeframes for certain elements to be completed. This will be reflected in a Leadership Competency Framework aligned to each Stage and refreshed induction programme for new staff and also for staff newly promoted to management. Monitoring will take place as part of the refreshed Employee Review and Development Process (ERDs). The wider employee development approach will emphasise empowerment of staff and explore what leadership behaviour looks like at all levels.
Quality Improvement and Performance	Develop a new performance improvement strategy to include performance team restructure and building a strong, data driven, performance network across all Services. Focus on identifying and measuring priority impacts and outcomes, and on					The development of a new strategy for performance improvement is tied to the Service redesign workstream in the Recovery Programme, which now has a revised timeline through to the start of the new financial year. However, work is progressing in relation to performance with a Business Partners (BP) model being recommended which would be delivered through a single central performance team. Performance BPs will be responsible for supporting Service Management Teams to drive improved performance through

	measuring against the Recovery Programme Link in with care for staff and cultural development workstream					more effective use of data and data analysis. The BP model cover four themes: engagement & partnership, risk management, performance and self-assessment. The widening of the Council's Values to include 'Caring' demonstrates a focus on how we treat our employees and care about their welfare and general wellbeing – particularly in the context of Covid. Staff and elected members will be surveyed on the behaviours that need to underpin this additional value and the Organisational Framework will be amended accordingly.
	Develop revised performance framework in line with Recovery Programme priorities and revised Council Programme		●			The Council's Performance Framework continues to evolve as new plans and strategies are agreed and these are managed through the Council's performance and risk management system (PRMS). The Recovery Programme Plan has been built in PRMS and subject to PMO verification is ready to launch which will move monitoring into an electronic, interactive environment. To support Service Redesign all ECOs have been offered support in reviewing their performance against corporate cost, quality and satisfaction measures the majority of which offer a national benchmark position and family group comparators. The Council Programme is currently under review by the Administration and will take into account the focus of the Recovery Plan themes. The performance framework will be updated as this work concludes to ensure that there is alignment.
Re-branding and communication	Continue to understand the wider impact of Covid on staff and varying circumstances – stress, anxiety and how this will affect their return to work.		●			Findings from the recent Employee Engagement Wellbeing survey, reported to Highland Council on 30 July, provided valuable feedback from the workforce. An action plan has been developed in consultation with trade union partners was reported to Highland Council on 10 September. A programme of staff engagement is also underway.
	Identify ways to engage with staff differently e.g. Videos, bulletin board, staff Facebook page, forum		●			During the period of the pandemic a variety of media have been used to communicate and engage with the workforce including emails, Facebook and Twitter posts, YouTube videos, management briefings, surveys and staff forums. This will continue through the staff engagement programme.
	Develop, advise and provide tools for managers to discuss circumstances with staff. Tie in with refreshed ERD and CPD arrangements		●			Work continues to develop methods, toolkits and approaches for managers to engage with staff across Highland. Next steps planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop with the Extended Leadership Team on the refreshed Employee Review and Development (ERD) process and outline LDP; • An employee survey, targeted at managers, to undertake a skills gap analysis and seek feedback on the draft LDP and ERD and possible delivery methods
	Identify ways to retain the positive attitudes of staff and public towards their roles/their council as result of Covid-19		●			Findings from the recent Employee Engagement Wellbeing survey, reported to Highland Council on 30 July, provided valuable feedback from the workforce. An action plan has

	<p>Revisit the way we engage with communities – link to C&P Community Empowerment initiative under COVID and beyond. and the media to harness current positivity (wider public mood) towards council as an organisation</p> <p>Understand what the public has valued about the council during the pandemic</p>					<p>been developed in consultation with trade union partners and was reported to Highland Council on 10 September.</p> <p>During the period of the pandemic a variety of media have been used to communicate and engage with the workforce including emails, Facebook and Twitter posts, YouTube videos, management briefings, and surveys and staff forums.</p> <p>A Community Engagement approach has been agreed through the Communities and Place Committee.</p>
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11. Asset Management						
Sponsor: Mark Rodgers						
Phase	2 – to end Sep 2020	Complete	On Track/On-going	Some Slippage	No Significant Progress	Remarks
						
Returning to Work (Offices and Schools – excludes depots)	Implement solutions for these staff and make changes promptly and flexibly as required within affordability.					The broad principle behind building rationalisation is being developed. School and office requirements are being managed to fit current operational demands. Going forward office building rationalisation will be developed to reflect future staff needs and operations.
Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Investment Plan	<p>Continue scoping requirement(s) to initiate Corporate Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>Start to gather evidence (stock condition surveys of relevant assets and buildings)</p>					Both approaches approved in outline at Housing and Property Committee August 2020 and updated to full Council in September 2020. Proceeding with work to define the RAG rating process for buildings and identifying resource requirement for CL model. Updates on progress regarding both due to Housing and Property Committee on 10th December and full Council thereafter.
Corporate Landlord Strategy	Continue scoping requirement(s) to initiate Corporate Landlord Strategy Develop Corporate Landlord approach, to include partnership working opportunities.					See comment immediately above.

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
RECOVERY BOARD**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Highland Council Recovery Board held remotely on Monday 7 October 2020 at 10.30am.

PRESENT:-

Mr A Christie (Chair)	Mr A Gunn (non-voting) (AG)
Ms C Caddick	Mr R MacWilliam (substitute)
Dr I Cockburn	Mrs D Manson (non-voting) (DM)
Mrs M Davidson	Mr B Lobban
Mr J Gibson (non-voting)	Mr A Mackinnon
Mr K Gowans	Mr M MacLeod (non-voting) (MMcL)
Mr J Gray	

Non-Members also present:-

Mr B Boyd	Mr G Mackenzie
Mr J Finlayson	Mr D Macpherson
Mr R Gale	Mr C Munro
Mr D Louden	Mrs L Munro
Mrs B McAllister	Mr I Ramon
Mr J McGillivray	Mr T Robertson
Mr A MacInnes	Mr B Thompson

Officers Present:-

Mrs L Denovan, ECO Resources & Finance
 Mrs K Lackie, ECO Performance & Governance (KL)
 Ms C McDiarmid, Executive Chief Officer Communities & Place (CMcD)
 Mr A Maguire, Head of Development & Regeneration
 Mr A McCann, Economy & Regeneration Manager
 Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
 Mr P Whitham, Programme Manager
 Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer (KM)
 Mr A MacLeod, Brexit & EU Policy Co-ordinator (AMcL)
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator
 Miss M Zavarella, Administrative Assistant

Mr A Christie in the Chair

Item	Subject/Decision	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	No Action Necessary
	Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Jarvie and Mr P Sagers.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	No Action Necessary
	There were no declarations of interest.	

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

**No Action
Necessary**

There had been circulated the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 August 2020, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

**4. Recovery Action Plan: Progress Update to 30 September 2020
Plana Gníomha Ath-shlánachaidh: Cunntas às Úr mu Adhartas gu 30
Sultain 2020**

AG

There had been circulated Report No RB/15/20 dated 29 September 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Transformation.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Chair proposed that there be two additional recommendations, namely, the appointment of a Vice Chair and an update on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) included in the report to Council;
- It was felt that specific reference should be made to Brexit within the Economic Recovery section of the report and the Chair proposed that a SWOT analysis should be undertaken and reported to the next meeting of the Board. He supported the view that Brexit should be incorporated into the recovery process and advised that a meeting of the Brexit Working Group had been scheduled for 28 October 2020;
- The progress that was being made was welcome and confirmation was provided that further reports would be provided on training and how the acute issue of short terms jobs in Highland would be addressed at the Economy and Infrastructure Committee and reported back to the Recovery Board prior to Council; and
- The importance of PPE in terms of maintaining continued service delivery was stressed and assurance was sought on maintaining supply chains and early identification of any gaps in provision. The Chief Executive advised that there was a very strong partnership approach in terms of Adult Social Care and the needs of each care home were assessed on a daily basis. In terms of schools, the approach and materials being used had changed but good progress was being made and every school had passed the national health and safety unannounced spots checks. Particular consideration would need to be given to Social Work in terms of supporting the most vulnerable people in their own home and the supporting of this was likely to become a bigger requirement.

The Board **NOTED**:-

- i. the latest progress of the Council's Recovery Action Plan to 30 September 2020;
- ii. the associated implications and pressures on resources in the delivery of the Resilience activity and the Recovery programme;

and **AGREED** that:-

- iii. a Vice Chair be appointed to the Board;
- iv. the report to Council include an update on PPE; and
- v. a BREXIT SWOT analysis be undertaken and the outcome reported to the next meeting of the Board.

5. Economic Recovery Strategy
Cunntas às Ùr mu Thaic do Eaconamaidh na Gàidhealtachd

MMcL

There had been circulated Report No RB/16/20 dated 23 September 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The Chair recommended that the Opposition's Spokesperson for the Economy and Infrastructure Committee should be invited to the next meeting of the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership. He also indicated that the development of the Economic Recovery Strategy would be a key milestone and therefore suggested that the Highland and Islands Enterprise presentation, which should dovetail with this aspect to help provide greater context to the Strategy, should be made to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee rather than the Recovery Board and this was supported;
- The report was welcome, and the need for a multi-agency approach to develop a long-term economic plan to put the Highlands on a trajectory to address major issues such as the climate emergency and the need for skilled and high paid jobs across the region. However, it was indicated that further information was required on Freeports and the potential risks and benefits as concern was expressed that Freeports distorted local economies and lowered standards/employment rights. In addition, concern was expressed that a consortium had been assembled to progress a bid for Freeport status at the Cromarty Firth. Therefore, further information was sought and provided on the process to date and the Chair drew attention to paragraph 9.4 of the report which advised that a report would be submitted to next meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee to seek confirmation of the Council's support for the Opportunity Cromarty Firth project. However, further concern was expressed that this paragraph implied that the decision had already been made in support of the bid prior to an opportunity for democratic debate from Members and it was suggested that an additional recommendation should be made whereby this report informed debate on whether or not to progress with such a bid;
- Appreciation was expressed to officers for preparing the report and for the consultation with local Members. It was felt that the Opportunity Cromarty Firth project comprised of a number of appealing elements including the potential to switch from oil and gas to renewables which was in keeping with the Council's agenda. There was a need for the Council to identify the priorities/opportunities that it was in favour of and wanted to support. Key elements of the Opportunity Cromarty Firth proposals included offshore wind and research opportunities in relation to hydrogen which fitted with the need to develop transport and heat solutions. Although the benefits were recognised, caution was expressed as this was not a new initiative and there was a need to be careful not to undermine ports across the region which had to compete against other ports across Scotland and the wider UK. Therefore, the opportunity for discussion in more detail at the Economy and Infrastructure Committee was welcomed and it was suggested that

the report should contain additional information on why Freeports had not been established previously and the current position in Europe whereby many ports were seeking to exit from Freeport status. The need for more information to enable Members to discuss and make an informed decision was recognised. However, the view was expressed that this matter might need consideration at full Council given the wider implications for the whole of the Highlands. It was also suggested that the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure could undertake a briefing to give Members further information and a greater understanding of the concept of Freeports prior to discussing the matter at the Economy and Infrastructure Committee;

- A request was made for future reports on Economic Recovery to contain more information on innovation and technology and how the Council could work with partners to support this; and
- Officers were commended for their work at Area Committees and further information was sought and provided on the immediate plans to tackle the forthcoming surge of unemployment. It was noted that the Council had an excellent track record in delivering Modern Apprenticeships and it was queried whether consideration had been given to sharing this good practice with partners. The Chair proposed that a showcase event be held highlighting the work that had been undertaken through this initiative via the Community Planning Partnership and partners, businesses and interested parties could be invited to attend.

The Chair gave Mr MacWilliam an assurance that the report to Economy and Infrastructure would contain detailed information on the pros/cons and advantages/disadvantages on whether to support the Opportunity Cromarty Firth project. However, Mr MacWilliam indicated that he wished to proceed with moving his motion to ensure the matter on whether or not to support a bid would be debated prior to the Council adopting a formal position.

On that basis, Mr R MacWilliam, seconded by Mr K Gowans, **MOVED** an additional recommendation requesting that the report coming before Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 4 November 2020 was written as an impartial discussion document to inform debate on whether the Highland Council should support any bid to attract Freeport status for any area of the Highlands.

The Chair ruled that the Motion was not competent on the grounds that the Recovery Board had no control over the Economy and Infrastructure Committee and had no influence over what formed a report.

Thereafter, the Board:-

- i. **NOTED** the latest contextual information available from Highlands & Islands Enterprise and **AGREED** that the agency be invited to present to a future meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress being made on setting out the key priorities for economic recovery;
- iii. **AGREED** that a full report be prepared for the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 4 November 2020, setting out the Economic Recovery Strategy;

- iv. **AGREED** that the Opposition's Spokesperson for the Economy and Infrastructure Committee be invited to the next meeting of the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership; and
- v. **NOTED** that the Chair would undertake to arrange an event being held through the Community Planning Partnership to showcase the Council's work on delivering Modern Apprenticeships.

6. Climate Change Atharrachadh Gnàth-shìde

MMcL/KM

There had been circulated Report No RB/17/20 dated 16 September 2020 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- Members welcomed the report which gave a concise snapshot of the current position. The Chair explained that the role of the Recovery Board would be to review the actions determined by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, Climate Change Working Group and Corporate Resources Committee in regard to paragraphs 6.6.1 – 6.6.4 of the report and consider how this related to the overall Recovery Plan;
- A request was made for partners to be identified to work collaboratively with the Council to develop new and emerging technologies to create an innovative industry within the Highlands for renewables and climate change and work towards being a world leader in this sector;
- It was suggested that there should be greater focus on fuel poverty and dialogue was required with Ofgem to determine how they could support the Council on this aspect. The Leader of the Council confirmed that a meeting was being arranged with Ofgem and the Chair advised that a cross service approach needed to be adopted on fuel poverty;
- The more difficult problems to overcome related to transport and heat and further exploratory work was required on these aspects to establish alternative solutions such as the development of a hydrogen economy. There should also be a plan for retrofitting all of the Council's assets with solar/solar thermal PV systems;
- With reference to Target Setting (paragraph 6.6.2 of the report), there was a need to be careful to ensure this target was clearly defined and further information was sought and provided in respect of the likelihood of being able to achieve the target of a carbon neutral Highland by 2025. The Leader of the Council felt that this commitment related to the wider Highlands but acknowledged that there was a need for the Council to commit to achieving net zero emissions from its operations. The Leader of the Council advised that she would raise this matter with the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group;
- The key strengths of the Highlands, its vast landscape and the amount of energy that it produced, needed to be maximised and it was important that the partnership arrangement with the University of Edinburgh was progressed. There were also significant opportunities for inward investment in the Highlands and a clear strategy needed to be developed to drive this forward. There was a need for more

clarity on what benefits could be generated for Highlands and the local communities from renewables. The resource implications of driving the climate change agenda forward were recognised and it was confirmed that good progress was being made with staff appointments to strengthen the team; and

- With regard to paras 6.6.1 and 6.6.2 of the report, it was highlighted that minimal millage was being incurred by Members and staff due to current circumstances and thus a budgetary saving was being generated in regard to car hire and mileage expenses. It was therefore queried and confirmation was provided that the reduction in travel could be quantified and it would be feasible for further information on the impact of this on Council's emissions to be reported to a future meeting of the Climate Change Working Group.

The Board:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the report;
- ii. **AGREED** the Recovery Board consider how the actions, to be determined by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee/Climate Change Working Group/Corporate Resources Committee, outlined at paragraphs 6.6.1 – 6.6.4 of the report related to the overall Recovery Plan with any decisions arising from this being submitted to Council; and
- iii. **NOTED** that the Leader of the Council would liaise with the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group on having a future agenda item on the need for setting a corporate target to achieve net zero emissions.

7. **Leadership, Culture & Performance Update** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Cheannardas, Cultar & Coileanadh**

KL

There had been circulated Report No RB/18/20 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, the following key points were raised:-

- The Leadership Development Programme was vital following the reorganisation of the Council and to ensure the success of the new structure. Unfortunately, training and development budgets were often the first to be cut as soon as there were any financial pressures and it was welcomed that this was being prioritised as it would be essential to moving the organisation forward;
- It was essential that the Programme delivered business impact and this should include ensuring that senior managers had full responsibility and accountability for budgets;
- It was noted that the Programme comprised of a combination of both mandatory and voluntary elements and this was supported. Group coaching and mentoring were important but it was vital that learning was transferred into practice. Although welcome, concern was expressed that the refresh of the Employee Review and Development Process had not been reported to the Workforce Planning Project and further information was sought and provided on this process. It was important to have these measures in place to ensure that the right outcomes were being achieved. It was queried

whether the refresh of the Employee Review and Development Process had been applied across all levels of the organisation or only at senior level. In addition, it appeared that there were two pieces of work being taken forward separately via the Workforce Planning Project and through the Leadership Development and Culture workstream that were completely related but not connected and further clarification was sought and provided on the performance process including who was undertaking this and at what level. The Chair recommended that this be reviewed at the next meeting of the Redesign Board to ensure that these aspects were aligned;

- It was suggested that the word '*Supportive*' should be added to the Council's strapline instead of '*Caring*' as this was more wide-ranging;
- Improving Education would require a resource allocation and there was a greater need for online resource to support the blended learning approach but this too would require investment to drive the programme forward. Overall, the delivery of education would require seismic change and a resourced team to ensure delivery;
- It was noted that para 3.3 of the report, Resource Implications, indicated that the resources would need to be provided to support the Programme and confirmation was provided that the detailed costings had yet to be determined and this information would be provided once known;
- The Chief Executive advised that the need for staff training and strong financial awareness had been recognised. Consequently, the Council was currently working with CIPFA to provide Financial Management training for Leaders and this also included sharing of best practice. The Council senior management team was also involved in a peer learning project with the National College for Leadership Programme working with 100 leaders across the UK and a strong theme within this two-year programme related to looking at how 100 organisations across the UK were working together to deliver a sustainable financial footprint. In addition, the Chief Executive was working with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to develop a public sector engagement strategy across the Highlands. A key strand of this would be how senior leaders deliver a financial approach in partnership with other organisations on a place-based approach to ensure best value for the public purse. In terms of the ongoing work within the organisation, every Executive Chief Officer (ECO) had had their budget unpacked and rebuilt by the Finance Team and each ECO had to share their knowledge and understanding of their budget including their HR and staffing resource. Members would be invited to a seminar on the outcome of this work which would set out all the budget headings and the ECO directly responsible. In conclusion, the Chief Executive also advised that the Big Blether on Blended Learning across the Highlands would be held during the month of November 2020. As part of this, feedback would be sought from pupils and teachers which would be incorporated into a whole Council approach commencing with listening, learning and sharing. In addition, work had already started in terms of developing the IT provision and talent already within the organisation would also be used to move blended learning forward.

The Board:-

- i. **APPROVED** the proposed inclusion of 'Caring' in the Council's organisational values;
- ii. **NOTED** the progress that had been made to date to develop a Leadership Development Programme and steps being taken to deliver a strengthened corporate performance approach;
- iii. **NOTED** the intention to engage with Members, managers and staff on the further development of the Programme;
- iv. **NOTED** the work also being progressed for staff training and development more broadly which included a focus on staff welfare and wellbeing;
- v. **NOTED** the proposed next steps at section 12 of the report;
- vi. **AGREED** to recommend that the Redesign Board ensure that the relevant Leadership Development Programme workstreams were aligned with the Workforce Planning workstream;
- vii. **NOTED** that there would be a Member Seminar on the work that had taken place in respect of Financial Management.

8. **BREXIT Update** **Cunntas às Ùr mu BREXIT**

RC/AMcL

There was a verbal update by the Chair of the Brexit Working Group during which the Board was advised that ongoing preparations included updating businesses on the new obligations and environmental standards. The Society of Chief Officers Environmental Health Scotland were pursuing both the UK and Scottish Governments and support was being provided through CoSLA and SOLACE. The Scottish Government Stakeholder Group had been established to discuss the policy and deliver designations of border control in Scotland. The Local Resilience Partnership had set a timeline commencing on 19 October 2020 to consider preparation, self-assessment and gap testing. On 7 December 2020 the National Co-ordination Centre (NCC) would start familiarisation and the Scottish Government Resilience Room would activate. Highland Council had appointed a single point of contact within each Service to consider the impact of Brexit. The key known issues related to import and export changes for business, immigration changes and the speed at which freight flowed was likely to be reduced. The current transition period would conclude on 31 December 2020 when the UK would formally leave the European Union and the Prime Minister had advised that there needed to be agreement by the time the European Council met on 15 October 2020 or the UK would move towards a no deal outcome. However, the EU felt that the end of October/beginning of November 2020 was a more realistic timescale for the deal.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- An update was sought and provided on the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) during which it was reported that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets Mr P Scully MSP had announced on national TV that any repatriated EU funds would be administered by the UK Government and not via the Scottish Government. In terms of the Internal Market discussions, mechanisms were in place for the UK Government to deliver directly on what was EU funding. The

Chair recommended that there should be an update to the next meeting of the Brexit Working Group on the SPF;

- Scotland would be losing Northern Ireland as a trading partner and the Brexit Working Group should consider how this trade route would be maintained; and
- The Chair of the Brexit Working Group recommended that Members reread the previous documentation as he felt this would be helpful. He advised that the risks were extremely high and the information gave an indication of the complexities of the position. With regard to the SPF, he advised that the Islands were already having ongoing dialogue with the UK Government on this matter. He explained that there was a need to ensure that the Council was informed of the options available to ensure it did not miss out on any opportunities.

The Board **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** that an update be provided to the Brexit Working Group on the SPF.

9. **Tourism Update** **Cunntas às Ùr mu Thurasachd**

MMcL

There was a verbal report by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment during which the Board was advised that the next meeting of the Tourism Committee would consider the Infrastructure Plan and give thought to any gaps in provision; examine a draft Visitor Management Plan which impacted across all Council services; a report on Motorhomes and Wild Camping – a meeting had been held with local Chambers of Commerce and Scottish Water on the need to develop a strategic network of campervan waste disposal facilities; and provide a verbal update on the bids that had been submitted to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. He further highlighted that there were resource implications for each of the reports and consequently there was a need to prioritise investments in order to deliver the best outcomes across the Highlands.

During discussion, the resource implications were recognised but it was highlighted that there were income generating opportunities to develop self-sustaining solutions. It was further indicated that there was a need for the right messages to be conveyed to encourage visitors to be responsible.

The Board **NOTED** the update.

The meeting was closed at 12.25pm.