

## **The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee** held **remotely** on Wednesday 19 May 2021 at 10.30am.

### **Present:**

Mrs J Barclay  
Mr B Boyd  
Mrs I Campbell  
Mrs M Cockburn  
Mrs M Davidson  
Mr A Jarvie  
Mr D Louden  
Mr W Mackay

Mrs I Mackenzie  
Mr C Munro (substitute)  
Mrs L Munro  
Mrs M Paterson  
Mr D Rixson  
Mr C Smith  
Ms N Sinclair

### **Non Members also present:**

Mr A Christie  
Mr D Fraser  
Mrs E McAllister

Mr J McGillivray  
Mr D Macpherson  
Mrs T Robertson

### **Participating Officials:**

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive  
Ms F Duncan, Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care and Chief Social Work Officer  
Ms F Malcolm, Interim Head of Integration Adult Social Care, Health and Social Care  
Mr I Kyle, Head of Improvement and Performance, Health and Social Care  
Ms J Park, Interim Head of Health, Health and Social Care  
Mr G MacLachlan, Area Care & Learning Manager, Health and Social Care  
Ms J Jennett, Head of Service (Children YP & Fam), Health and Social Care  
Ms D Munro, Lead Officer (Child Prot. Committee), Health and Social Care  
Mr B Porter, Head of Support Services, Health and Social Care  
Mr M Mitchell, Service Finance Manager, Resources and Finance  
Mr J Robertson, Programme Manager, Health and Social Care  
Mrs S McKandie, Head of Revenues & Customer Services, Resources and Finance  
Ms A Clark, Head of Policy & Reform, Performance and Governance  
Mr J Shepherd, Head of ICT & Digital Transformation  
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance  
Ms M Zavarella, Committee Administrator, Performance and Governance

### **Also in Attendance:**

Mr S Steer, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland  
Ms L Bussell, Chief Officer, NHS Highland  
Ms R Connolly, Connecting Carers

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council.  
All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to Committee.**

**Linda Munro in the Chair (except Item 9, when Nicola Sinclair was in the Chair).**

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs D Mackay, Mr K Rosie and Mr J Finlayson (substituted by Mr C Munro).

**2. Declarations of Interest  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

Item 9 – L Munro (financial)  
Item 9 – D Louden (non-financial)  
Items 4, 11 & 14 – A Jarvie (non-financial)

**3. Good News  
Deagh Naidheachdan**

During a verbal update, the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care provided good news stories on the subjects of:-

- The Placement Program Team aimed to bring out-of-area children back to the Highlands, and a bespoke residential unit had been built in Highland resulting in three children being brought back thus far;
- MCR Pathways a charitable organisation providing mentoring, coaching and resilience building to care experienced young people and aimed to help young people achieve educational outcomes, realise life chances and move into positive school destinations; and
- The Just Ask a telephone enquiry line for children, young people, parents, carers where callers could ask for appropriate advice and support from professionals.

The Committee **NOTED** the Good News.

**4. Highland Integrated Children's Service Plan  
Plana Seirbheis Amalaichte Chloinne na Gàidhealtachd**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of HLH but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude her involvement.**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/06/21 dated 29 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care. A presentation was provided by the Head of Improvement and Performance.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- Members commended the report as interesting, comprehensive and informative;
- several Members queried how outcomes would be measured and regular Member updates were requested given the length of time between meetings of the Committee;

- regarding performance and measuring outcomes, it was explained that through Transformational funding experienced consultants would be brought in to assist the Service with benchmarking and self-evaluation;
- several Members voiced support that the six Delivery Plans be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;
- in response to a question, it was explained that behind the overarching Highland Integrated Children's Service Plan there were six Delivery Groups and each had plans with performance measurements, timelines and RAG included and a link to the plans was included in the report;
- regarding governance, it was explained that the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP) would provide governance and the Integrated Children's Service Plan Board, which included a number of key stakeholders, would also provide a high level of scrutiny;
- regarding scrutiny of the report, it was explained that the Head of Policy would discuss with the Chair of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and through the Area Chairs Meeting and Chairs of Community Partnerships on the most appropriate mechanism for reporting to Members at a local level;
- information was sought, and provided, about CPP's. Several Members voiced concerns about the variation in success among CPP's across localities and it was explained that there was an action underway to have a Member Seminar in relation on this subject with resourcing to be a central theme;
- in relation to resilience of community groups and a need for dedicated resources it was explained that the resilience landscape had changed the nature of communities over the past 12 months and discussion was occurring about how resilience partnerships could link in at a local level;
- in response to a question, it was explained that the report was currently in draft format, once finalised there would be input from the Graphics team to enhance the visual look of the plan;
- young people had a very difficult time at present as it related to unemployment, mental health and general stresses;
- care experienced children and young adults having to be in acute crisis before they were able to access the proper services was concerning and had to be dealt with as a matter of urgency;
- it was important to listen to the voices of children and the crucial piece was how they would be heard and it was explained that the Highland and Young People Forum would be working alongside the Service on the Participation Strategy with a focus on active participation;
- information was sought, and provided about how the Promise presented an opportunity to think radically about care;
- in response to a question about educational outcomes and digital disadvantage, it was explained that over the past several months 610 devices (iPads and Chromebooks) had been secured through Connecting Scotland Award for those that were having difficulty connecting and almost all had been delivered;
- securing housing for care experienced youth and leavers was a massive challenge;
- clarification was sought, and provided that the report was a successor plan for For Highlands Children's 4;
- it was crucial to deliver the ambitious and far reaching strategy as there was nothing more important than preparing the next generation;
- regarding accessibility of language, it was explained that following the finalisation of the report a child-friendly version would be produced; and

- Teachers and Guidance Counsellors were in touch with young people at length and would be a useful way to keep the voice of the child heard and it was important to supplement this by talking to children directly.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the work undertaken by the Integrated Children's Service Plan Board in producing a draft of the Highland Integrated Children's Services Plan 2021 – 2023;
- ii. the proposed draft of the Plan prior to sign off by the Community Planning Partnership Board;
- iii. that there would be a Member Seminar in relation to Community Planning Partnerships with resourcing to be a central theme;
- iv. that the six Delivery Plans would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- v. that the Head of Policy would discuss with the Chair of the Community Planning Partnership and through the Area Chairs Meeting and Chairs of Community Partnerships on the most appropriate mechanism for reporting to Members at a local level.

**5. Presentation: Children and Young People's Services Assurance Report  
Taisbeanadh: Aithisg Barantais Seirbheisean na Cloinne is nan Daoine Òga**

A presentation was provided by the Interim Head of Health whereby the context of Service Delivery was overviewed in the areas of; protection of children and young people most at risk, undertaking mandatory and statutory duties, identifying children and families who might become vulnerable in response to the pandemic, maintaining clinical and professional safety in practice, ensuring staff safety and wellbeing, deployment of staff to vaccination programme, responding to families and new ways of working.

There had been circulated Report No HCW/07/21 dated 23 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- Members were pleased that there was a lot of positive information provided;
- Allied Health Professionals (AHP) were dedicated and innovative professionals and it was hoped that support was given to develop an early intervention programme within Education;
- information was sought, and provided about future-proofing the Service and ensuring that vacancies were filled and succession planning completed;
- regarding young people in care and incomplete vaccinations, it was explained that the number had increased to 75% and efforts were underway to meet the target; and
- there was a clear commitment over the period on meeting needs and it was good to have a focus on mental health and its role in the development of the attainment gap.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the measures put in place across the Covid-19 pandemic to support the commissioned child health service;
- ii. **NOTED** and considered service delivery arrangements and comment on plans for service improvement and clinical and professional governance; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

## 6. **Adult Social Care Assurance** **Barantas Cùram Sòisealta Inbheach**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/08/21 dated 23 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- Members expressed appreciation for the report and Officers involved;
- the impact of the losses felt over the course of the pandemic were not only on the families but those that cared for them;
- in relation to the Feeley Report, it was hoped that as a result there would be more attention paid to the conditions, training opportunities and compensation for care home staff to ensure a better future of Adult Social Care;
- it was a difficult time for care home staff and concerning that many might decide not to continue in their role as a result;
- information was sought, and provided on the current stability and security of the care home sector;
- regarding care at home, clarification was sought, and provided on recruitment issues and assessments in the community for Self-Directed Support (SDS);
- in response to a suggestion about communication and Care at Home, it was agreed that the Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland would investigate the feasibility of NHS Highland Locality Managers providing local briefings at ward level;
- information was sought, and provided about regaining public and staff trust in the sector;
- regarding respite for care at home staff, it was agreed that the Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland would include the provision of short breaks for respite care into one of the Transformational Programme workstreams;
- in response to a question about waiting times for elective surgeries delayed due to Covid, it was agreed that the Director of Adult Social Care would liaise with the Member (Mrs E McAllister) directly; and
- regarding access to training, it was explained that the focus had to be on building a career with meaningful development and income opportunities.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and that the Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland would:-

- i. investigate the feasibility of NHS Highland Locality Managers providing local briefings at ward level;
- ii. include the provision of short breaks for respite care into one of the Transformational Programme workstreams; and
- iii. seek further information for Mrs E McAllister on hospital waiting times for elective surgeries which had been delayed as a result of Covid.

**7. Update on Joint Transformational Programme with NHS Highland  
Fios às Ùr mu Cho-Phrògram Cruth-atharrachaidh le NHS na  
Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/09/21 dated 5 May 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- regular updates and exception reports when required would be welcomed by the Committee;
- the risk of not achieving the savings target of £3m in Year 1 was queried, noting that only £1m of savings had been identified to date. The services in which further savings were being sought were challenging, with the situation having worsened due to covid-19, and Mr Loudon offered to help identify possible areas of overspend or duplication. In response, a summary was provided of the monitoring and governance that was in place, which included weekly meetings of the Project Team, and fortnightly scrutiny by both Chief Executives. The PMO / pipeline approach being used was summarised and it was clarified that although £1m of savings had been reported, the up to date figure was £1.4m of adjusted savings, with other savings projects currently in the pipeline (£1.7m) but not yet cleared. There had been a short-term focus on 'quick win' savings, with savings arising from service transformation likely to take longer to be achieved. The importance of communication with communities during the change process was emphasised and any help offered by Members with scrutiny was welcomed;
- it was hoped the savings target was not the only driver for the programme and attention was drawn to the risks arising from possible negative public responses to transformational change, which would have to be closely monitored. It was clarified that transformation was still at an early stage and that full engagement with stakeholders would be undertaken; and
- attention was drawn to the role of the Recovery, Improvement & Transformation Board and the intention to report progress with transformational change to all relevant strategic committees to ensure their ownership of the projects and their awareness of any changes in ways of working. It was important the Joint Monitoring Committee had the information it required to make decisions.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

**8. Health and Social Care Directorate Service Plan  
Plana Seirbheis Buidheann-Stiùiridh na Slàinte is a' Chùrain Shòisealta**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/10/21 dated 5 May 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- it was important to consider how local initiatives, such as Pathfinder in Caithness, would feed into the Plan to continue to improve lives for all. It was explained that key issues included cascading and sharing learning, but also tailoring processes to suit local needs, and taking geographical issues into consideration;

- reducing duplication to improve efficiency was vital, and attention was drawn to the links between the different issues on the agenda for the meeting and the need to have appropriate personnel in place to achieve the aims of the Plan;
- the improved relationship between the Council and NHS Highland was welcomed and information was sought on digital connectivity between the two organisations. In relation to IT, the increased use of mobile technology such as iPads was a key aspiration to allow frontline staff to work more flexibly and be less desk-bound. There remained issues around the wider IT systems communicating with one another, as well as issues of data protection and further consideration of this was a significant piece of work that would be required in future. Work was ongoing on various aspects of this with NHS Highland's eHealth team;
- in relation to gathering data, it was important to consider and action challenging data as it was obtained, and to learn and support change as part of the journey of care, with particular reference to the role of corporate parent and carer;
- information was sought and provided on the recruitment of Mental Health Officers (MHOs), noting there were national issues with many MHOs approaching retirement age. Work was being undertaken with universities on this;
- there had been an increase in the number and duration of Child Protection registrations during the Covid-19 crisis, partly due to the cessation of some wraparound services and the extension of some legal processes. Numbers were returning to pre-Covid levels. It was suggested schools could act as a useful early warning system for child protection issues and continued links between schools and children's services were encouraged;
- it was necessary to tackle the housing shortage in remote and rural areas of the Highlands to encourage more professionals to work there. Various initiatives were highlighted including joint recruitment campaigns with other public sector organisations, marketing the Highlands as an attractive place to live, encouraging training opportunities to retain local people, and ensuring national recruitment websites provided accurate job location information. It was suggested Community Psychiatric Nurses be included in this due to the ongoing mental health challenges being faced;
- attention was drawn to the declining number of foster carers;
- the intention to seek and record the views of young people was crucial;
- discussion took place on how to reach and / or report children suspected of experiencing trauma, and a brief summary was provided of plans to develop a trauma-informed workforce; and
- information was sought and provided on data protection legislation covering the sharing of information between public sector organisations.

The Committee **NOTED** the comments made during discussion and **APPROVED** the Service Plan for 2021/22.

## **9. Self-Directed Support (Children) Taic Fèin-Stiùirichte (Clann)**

**Declarations of Interest:**

**Ms L Munro declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Carr Gomm and SDS advisor and left the meeting during this item. Ms N Sinclair took the Chair for this item.**

**Mr D Louden declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of "Made in Tain" a charity providing Self Directed Support but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude her involvement.**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/11/21 dated 6 May 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- information in the report on efforts to meet living wage levels was welcomed;
- engagement with Community Planning Partnerships was important;
- a report to a future Committee outlining the views and opinions of service users to inform future actions was requested; and
- attention was drawn to the possible need for redundancy payments to contracted personal assistants once their services were no longer required, for example after transition of the client from Children's to Adult Services, and whether there could be an ongoing role for experienced and trained assistants.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** to present a report to a future committee outlining views and opinions of service users to inform future actions.

## **10. Welfare Update**

### **Fios às Ùr mu Shochair**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/12/21 dated 23 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- it was clarified the £200 Child Winter Heating Assistance was an application-based one-off payment per child;
- in order to provide early intervention and support, especially for low paid workers, continued strengthening of links between the welfare team and related health and social care services was urged;
- practical, local measures, such as breakfast clubs at schools, should be considered to help combat child poverty, in addition to encouraging uptake of Universal Credit. Some Covid-related food bank provision was being wound down and could create gaps. Attention was drawn to other initiatives, such as summer programmes for children, and a report on child poverty was due to be presented at the next Committee meeting; and
- the latest child poverty data would be circulated after the meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. range of benefits and support available to families and the work undertaken by the Highland Council to ensure that the right people received the right benefit at the right time;



- ii. work being undertaken to produce the Local Child Poverty Action Update Report 2020 – 2021; and
- iii. Head of Revenues & Customer Services would provide the latest child poverty data to the Committee outwith the meeting.

## 11. **Vulnerable Children and Young People** **Clann agus Daoine Óga So-leònte**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of HLH but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude her involvement.**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/13/21 dated 15 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- it was important to tackle issues before they became a crisis when possible, and a consistent approach was required across all public sector and third party organisations and groups;
- the value to children and young people of sports and other activities outside the home was highlighted;
- it would be helpful if school coursework could be used to emphasise the consequences of sharing inappropriate images on the internet. Parents were key in reinforcing this message, alongside support and education services, and attention was drawn to the need to also provide support on recovery measures that could be undertaken after a young person had shared an image; and
- the children of Looked After young people sometimes lacked wider family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles who might provide support. Issues such as this required a Members’ seminar to develop and better understand the role of the corporate parent, ideally an in-person seminar if Covid-19 restrictions permitted.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the content of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the further development of family support services;
- iii. **AGREED** to support further consultation with services, communities, children, young people and families to identify gaps and possible solutions in relation to the provision of prevention and early intervention services; and
- iv. **AGREED** that a Members’ seminar be held to develop and understand the role of the corporate parent.

## 12. **Mental Health Strategy** **Ro-innleachd Slàinte Inntinn**

There had been circulated Report No HCW/14/21 dated 4 May 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Mental Health issues overlapped with many different services and organisations, at local, regional and national level, and a scoping exercise should be undertaken to establish a comprehensive list of all groups and individuals involved in the provision of Mental Health Services, detailing their roles and the services being provided;
- it was important that mental health services were person-centric, with a tiered approach that supported community driven change and place-based planning, with officer assistance to groups where appropriate;
- the Pathfinder programme in Caithness was welcomed and it was hoped the outcomes would soon be validated and rolled out elsewhere without waiting until the end of the project; and
- attention as drawn to transition issues for young people accessing mental health services when they turned 18, and to the challenges of keeping track of young people aged 16-18 who had left school.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the work being undertaken in this area and the proposals for building on this to create a mental health strategy that addressed the wide-ranging needs of those in the community;
- NOTED** the development of a practice model that embraced universal services through to more complex and serious mental health conditions that required inpatient treatment; and
- AGREED** a scoping exercise be undertaken to establish a comprehensive list of all groups and individuals involved in the provision of Mental Health Services, detailing their roles and the services being provided.

### 13. North Coast Care Facility Goireas Cùrain a' Chosta a Tuath

There had been circulated Report No HCW/15/21 dated 15 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the update was welcomed and thanks were extended to the staff and local communities for their work in future-proofing the north coast with a new blended way of working which involved the public and private sectors. In addition to providing care, the facility would provide valuable employment and training opportunities; and
- information was sought by Mrs McAllister on the history of the project development with a view to replicating it elsewhere.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the progress and actions taken forward to support development of a new North Coast Care Facility;
- NOTED** that a report detailing recommendations on procurement and delivery route for the project would be considered by the 24 June 2021 Council; and
- AGREED** the Head of Support Services provide further information to Mrs E McAllister on the history of the development of the North Coast Care Facility.

**14. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

**Declarations of Interest – Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of HLH but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude her involvement.**

The following Minutes had been circulated and were **NOTED**:-

- i. Highland Child Protection Committee held on 3 March 2021;
- ii. Highland Violence Against Women Partnership Group held on 16 December 2020; and
- iii. Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee held on 8 March 2021.

The meeting ended at 4.50pm