

Agenda Item	4
Report No	RB/14/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Board

Date: 29 November 2021

Report Title: Programme Management Office (PMO) – Delivering the Programme - Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer – Transformation

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Programme Management Office (PMO) is established as a centre of expertise for programme and project management for the Council's Improvement & Transformation programme approved on 4 March 2021. The PMO role includes acting as the information hub of the programme, while fulfilling a monitoring role, supporting and co-ordinating activities for the programme on behalf of the Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Board. The PMO also supports standards for project management across the Programme, promoting best practice, tracks project status and projects interdependencies — all in one place.
- 1.2 The PMO also aims to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place and provides project management documentation and guidance to projects, which is available on the *Transformation Hub*. Other support provided includes enabling knowledge sharing e.g. through the monthly PMO drop-in session to share programme and project updates, research items, good practice and provide project management staff the opportunity to network and build relationships.
- 1.3 This report presents the ongoing work being undertaken by the PMO including Programme assurance, Transformation Hub, sharing good practice and research and analysis.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the ongoing work of the Programme Management Office including its overall approach, risk management, making better use of utilising existing ICT, research services and sharing good practice within and outwith the Council.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** The Improvement and Transformation Programme approved by Highland Council on 4 March 21 included PMO resourcing of £263k annually for 2 years covering roles of Programme: management, co-ordination, assurance, finance and administration.
- 3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** There are no Community implications arising from this report.
- 3.4 **Climate Change:** There are no climate change implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Risk:** There are no risk implications arising from this report.
- 3.6 **Gaelic:** There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. Programme Assurance

- 4.1 Programme Assurance is administered through the PMO and provides assurance that the projects that fall within the scope of the transformation programme will wherever possible complete on time, on budget and with the expected benefits as outlined in the project brief. This can provide the Board with confidence that the resources being invested in transformational projects are being managed effectively and are subject to independent scrutiny. The length, scope & complexities of individual projects will determine how many assurance reports may be undertaken throughout the project lifecycle.
- 4.2 Risk management involves understanding, analysing, and addressing risk to make sure organisations achieve their objectives. Risk Management is an integral role within project assurance where both a subjective and objective view is taken of risks identified by project managers and project boards for their respective projects and assessing those risks independently to determine whether the mitigations identified are sufficient. The PMO also provides advice and guidance on further risk mitigation options where necessary or providing escalation to the Board and/or including in the Council’s Corporate Risk Register.
- 4.3 Understanding and mapping project connections (also known as interdependencies) is another area where the PMO are facilitating knowledge sharing by enhancing the toolkit for project managers. This also helps identify interdependencies which for 9 projects with 21 workstreams is an ambitious programme with a number of interdependencies and below is an example which sits on the Transformation Hub.



- 4.4 The PMO continues to work with Project Managers and workstream leads to support the overall delivery of this Programme, including facilitating the provision of updates on their projects for this Board. One example of this support includes the design and provision of standard highlight report.
- 4.5 In order to facilitate and support the provision of updates, each of the 9 Improvement and Transformation projects (and associated workstreams) are assigned a lead contact from the PMO who has been engaging with each of the Project Managers or workstream leads.

5. Transformation Hub

- 5.1 Using existing ICT, the PMO Team has developed a Transformation Hub utilising (SharePoint site) and Microsoft (MS) Teams for all of the Transformation Projects. By its very description the Transformation Hub provides a central point for Project staff to access Project documentation such as templates and research material. Recent developments to the Hub include Project Connections, the culmination of work undertaken by the Programme Assurance Manager which has been developed and presented on the Hub by the staff in the PMO Business Team. Development of the Transformation Hub research has progressed and includes academic project management methodology articles, quality assurance articles and case studies of peer reviewed best practice. Development has also commenced on displaying project specific research in pictorial format and how this can be linked to specific MS Teams research 'channels'.
- 5.2 The Transformation Hub is live for Project Managers and Leads and access to the site will be extended further as part of our ongoing approach to promote the Transformation Programme and effective management of business change. This 'Hub' approach complements the monthly PMO drop-in sessions which is discussed in more detail at section 6.

6. PMO Drop-in

- 6.1 The PMO has an established monthly drop-in session which Project Managers and other Project Team members. These sessions are organised and co-ordinated by the PMO and the agenda includes updates from Transformation Projects, Programme Assurance updates, highlighting research items and any general Programme updates such as reporting requirements and timescales.
- 6.2 The drop-in sessions also enable project management staff to make linkages and connections with other projects, share knowledge and good practice and also be kept up to date on other aspects of the Transformation Programme overall. A recent example of this was the link identified between Climate Change and New Ways of Working (NWoW) regarding the need to reduce energy demand to achieve net zero and the need to understand implications of low carbon heating and fabric first policy when considering the NWoW model and hub offices and whether there may be any impacts on other projects such as procurement and contracts management.

7. MS Teams for Projects

- 7.1 The PMO continues to promote the use of MS Teams within Projects and uses this method to communicate with all of the Projects regarding Reporting requirements and PMO drop-in Agenda items for example. This means for example a significant reduction in the use of e-mail, especially personal e-mails as using MS Teams

supports consistent and up to date information with all Projects staff. Whilst developing this, the PMO has already extended its support in the development of MS Teams to other extended Project Teams out with the Council's Improvement and Transformation Programme such as Highland Adapts, Inverness City Active Travel Networks (ICATN) and Neuro Developmental Assessment Service (NDAS). This is a positive example of increased use of existing ICT and sharing learning across the organisation.

8. Research services

- 8.1 The PMO has undertaken extensive research on behalf of Council Services. Research requesters use MS Teams Research 'channel' to submit research requests, and PMO uses the same channel to share research findings. This innovative approach to sharing research has three strands:
- i. Consolidate and share research into highlights bespoke to project teams
 - ii. Build the cross-project PMO research library
 - iii. Gather the information held on previous strategic committees and working group minutes
- 8.2 Examples of research requests are a combination of both comparative and exploratory research on topics such as carbon sequestration, value-added services associated with Planning, Hybrid Working, Amenities (Service Provision and Play Strategies and equipment). This involves a mix of both desktop research and contacting other Councils & organisations. A high level overview of a recent Climate Change request can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 8.3 The PMO has a clear process and format in which requests for research are managed and undertaken. The feedback on the research work undertaken is positive including the quality of work undertaken, extensive research and reading and the time it has allowed projects to focus on other activities. An example response was *"Having a specific / specialised resource to do a directed piece of work enabled the project team to focus on current and priority outputs without losing the opportunity to take wider approach. This ensured we had sufficient management information to enable, support and change the decision-making process, and provided a benchmark that was appropriate and worthwhile."*
- 8.4 The PMO also works with partners, external organisations and networks as part of our commitment to continuous improvement including increasing capacity of the team. The PMO is also reaching out to Scottish and English Local Authorities via participation in the Change Managers Network run by the Improvement Service for example. The PMO also participated in 'Introduction to Agile' training run by the [Scottish Digital Academy](#) to learn more about this improvement approach and how it could be applied within the Programme. Meetings have also been held with our NHS Highland PMO colleagues to share best practice as well as working with the Scottish Digital Office and Improvement Service.

9. **Business Analyst network**

9.1 The *Analysts Network* was launched in October 21 and will be held regularly. Various topics will be discussed such as undertaking surveys, data sets and analytical techniques. Initial attendees are those associated with Projects and those working in project support and will be extended further in due course.

9.2 This network will allow peers to share good practice and experiences and to develop a reference guide to assist others across the Council with some of the practical skills. It also offers an opportunity to share knowledge across the projects which can be particularly important given the interdependences across many of the projects that comprise the overall Programme.

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Public Sector Carbon Sequestration

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Task

- Find out the current (or to be expected) national guidance
- Sequestration best practice
- Sequestration options
- Associated costs

Method

Secondary research: Scottish Government, Advisory Bodies, Academic Papers, etc.

Primary research: THC SME & Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN)

Key Findings

Sustainable Scotland Network:

- National Guidance expected before COP26
- Overly-ambitious targets viewed negatively by Scottish Government
- Future sequestration £'s will increase

Academic Sources:

- Various political and market factors = an unclear picture

Benefit

- Build upon existing project evidence base
- Build upon connections / network
- Greater understanding of public sector context
- Research highlights future sequestration £'s will increase

Carbon emissions
Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) is the primary greenhouse gas released into the atmosphere due to human activities

Sequestration
To restore carbon to the land or sea through natural processes, such as tree planting

Carbon sequestration

- Climate change reduction methods
- Goal is to reduce > sequester
- Previously termed 'carbon offsetting'

360° impact on LAs
From housing and buildings to data processing