

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
RECOVERY, IMPROVEMENT & TRANSFORMATION BOARD**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Highland Council Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Board held remotely on Monday 29 November 2021 at 2pm.

**PRESENT:-**

Mr A Christie (Chair)	Mr A MacInnes
Dr I Cockburn (Vice Chair)	Mr M MacLeod (non-voting) (MMcL)
Mrs M Davidson (Vice Chair)	Mrs D Manson (non-voting)
Mr J Gibson (non-voting)	Mr C Munro
Mr A Gunn (non-voting) (AG)	Mr P Siggers
Mr B Lobban	

**Non-Members also present:-**

Mr C Aitken	Mrs L Munro
Mr J Bruce	Mrs E McAllister
Mr D Louden	Mr G Mackenzie

**Officers Present:-**

Mrs K Lackie, ECO Performance & Governance  
 Mrs L Denovan, ECO Resources & Finance (LD)  
 Ms F Duncan, ECO Health & Social Care  
 Ms C McDiarmid, ECO Communities & Place (CMcD)  
 Mr F MacDonald, Head of Property, Housing & Property  
 Mr P Whitham, Programme Manager, Transformation (PW)  
 Mr J Scott, Corporate Improvement Project Manager, Transformation  
 Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator  
 Miss M Zavarella, Committee Officer

**Also in attendance:-**

Mr A Collins, Strategic Commercial and Procurement Manager, Aberdeenshire Council

**Mr A Christie in the Chair**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject/Decision</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	<b>No Action Necessary</b>
	Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Boyd, Ms C Caddick, Mr J Gray and Mr A Jarvie.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>No Action Necessary</b>
	The Board <b>NOTED</b> the following declaration of interest:-	
	Item 5: Mr A Christie (financial)	

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**No Action  
Necessary**

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the previous meeting held on 23 August 2021 which had been approved by the Council on 9 September 2021.

**4. Programme Management Office – Delivering the Programme Update  
Oifis Rianachd Prògram – A’ Libhrigeadh Cunntas às Ùr mun  
Phrògram**

**AG**

There had been circulated Report No RB/14/21 dated 15 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Transformation.

During discussion, it was clarified that following the recent revisions to the Senior Leadership restructure, whereby the post of Executive Chief Officer Transformation had been deleted, (Senior leadership report - Highland Council 13 May 2021 refers) the transformation remit would temporarily remain with Mr Gunn in his new role as Interim Executive Chief Officer Communities & Place.

Further information was also sought on the utilisation of existing ICT within the Transformation Hub and the Chair proposed that a question and answer session should be scheduled for all Members to gain a better understanding of how the software applications were used along with practical examples.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** 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; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a Question and Answer session be arranged for all Members on utilisation of ICT applications within the Transformation Hub.

**5. Improvement and Transformation Programme 2021-2022 Update  
Fios às Ùr mu Phrògram Leasachaidh is Cruth-atharrachaidh 2021-  
2022**

**AG**

**Declarations of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No RB/15/21 dated 18 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Transformation.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the report was well written and detailed though in the subsequent reports it was suggested that the High Risks on the Risk Register should be summarised in the narrative section of the report;

- clarification was sought, and provided, on test vehicles and how fuel concerns would be alleviated as infrastructure developed in Highland;
- it was positive that the hydrogen landscape was moving quickly and it was requested that more detail be provided in this regard;
- there was a need for clearer climate targets and milestones to enable greater scrutiny to ensure delivery and also for Member briefings on key climate issues. Confirmation was provided that a series of Member briefings were being planned and a report was being submitted to Council on developing a Climate Change Action Plan that would comprise of targets to ensure progress at pace and enable scrutiny;
- the role of the Community Growing Coordinator was encouraging;
- there was keenness from Members for progress to be made around Asset Rationalisation. The need for more ambitious targets and to generate capital receipts was emphasised. It was further queried, and an explanation was provided, on whether incremental progress could be achieved prior to completion of the full report;
- it was confirmed that the New Ways of Working document, which was currently with the Executive Leadership Team for sign-off, would be released later this week once further checks had been made to ensure it had sufficient agility in view of the comments made earlier today at the First Minister's briefing; and
- with regard to the Route Optimisation workstream, confirmation was provided that all locations except for Lochaber, which required the destination site for the waste transfer station to be determined, were on track.

Thereafter, the Board:

- NOTED** the latest progress on the Council's Improvement and Transformation Programme Projects;
- NOTED** the latest progress in respect of the 21/22 forecasted cashable benefits; and
- AGREED** that reference be made within the narrative of future reports to the High Risks contained in the Risk Register.

## 6. **Highland Council – Annual Procurement Performance Report** **Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Aithisg Choileanaidh Bhliadhnail an t-Solair**

**LD**

There had been circulated for information a copy of Report RES/42/21 which had been presented to Corporate Resources Committee on 24 November 2021.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- in response to several comments, it was proposed that quantitative information to ensure that the Commercial & Procurement Shared Service (C&PSS) was value for money and benchmarking comparators (both internal and external) for improvement purposes should be taken to the next meeting of the Board;
- it was confirmed that a breakdown of the shared services costs (Scotland Excel and C&PSS) would be circulated to Members;

- although the current level of local spend was good, a request was made for the C&PSS to provide more detailed information on how this metric could be further increased and enhance Member confidence; and
- it was suggested that the C&PSS utilise the Press and issue communications to spread awareness and promote the opportunities available to generate community wealth in the Highlands.

The Board **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that:

- quantitative information and benchmarking data on the cost benefit of the Commercial & Procurement Shared Service be submitted to the next meeting of the Board; and
- a breakdown of the shared services costs be circulated to Members.

## 7. Investment and Income Generation Opportunities Cothroman Tasgaidh agus Togail Teachd-a-steach

**AG/LD**

During discussion on developing opportunities to invest and generate income to fund and support capital projects, the following main points were raised:

- it was essential that the Council invested in seeking external advice on new methods of generating income. This was no reflection on the Finance Team, who had done an excellent job, but there was a need for new vision/ideas to move this forward;
- energy options, in terms of both income generation and cost reduction, should be explored and specialist advice sought;
- the Scottish Government was currently conducting a consultation on the future of on-shore wind. A response should be submitted with a view to the Council securing ownership stakes and earning capital gains from repowering or new onshore wind energy projects;
- Further work should be undertaken on how the Council could encourage private sector investment, particularly in renewable energy, and explore partnership opportunities;
- the Highlands was a huge land mass which was energy rich and this local potential needed to be exploited;
- It was critical that additional income was generated to support the Capital Programme;
- Confirmation was provided that augmenting skills was a key strategy and a skills audit would be undertaken of Council staff to ascertain the level of experience available in respect of income generation. Any skills gaps would be filled by external experts but there was a need for agility and to streamline this process;
- It was suggested that support and advice should be sought from the Highlands and Islands Enterprise; and
- there was a need for urgency and progress of this initiative at pace with a view to formal recommendations being made to a future meeting of the Council in February/March 2022.

Thereafter, the Board **AGREED** that:

- external expert advice be sought with particular focus on energy, renewables and investment opportunities to be exploited;

- ii. a skills audit be undertaken of all Council staff to ascertain experience of income generation; and
- iii. a report comprising recommendations regarding investment and income generating opportunities to be submitted to a future meeting of the Council in February/March 2022.

The meeting was closed at 2.55pm.