

Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday, 23 September, 2024 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Representing The Highland Council:

Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:

Mr M Cameron

Mr M K MacDonald (substitute) (remote)

Mr L Fraser

Mr A Graham

Ms J McEwan (remote)

Mrs M Paterson (remote)

In attendance:

Mr F Finlayson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Mr R Christie, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (remote)

Ms M Thomson, Depute Electoral Registration Officer/Business Manager

Ms L Harrison, Accountant, Treasurer's Office

Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Clerk's office

Also in attendance:-

Ms E Scoburgh, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland (remote)

Mr D Fraser, Audit Scotland

Mr L Fraser in the Chair

Business

**1. Apologies for absence
Leisgeulan**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr D Crichton.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

There were no declarations of interest/transparency statements.

**3. Minutes of Meetings
Geàrr-chunntas Coinneamh**

The had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of 20 June, 2024, the terms of which were **Approved.**

**4. Matters Arising from the Minutes
Gnothaichean Ag Èirigh on Gheàrr-chunntas**

The following matters were raised on the Minutes:

- An update was provided on progress for a logo for the department and a number of draft designs for the logo were displayed. A report on this matter would be submitted to the next meeting.
- Staff were regularly reminded to be aware of the risks through blackmail or from using their laptop in a public place in relation to fraudsters gaining access to their log-on information to access systems.
- An update was provided on the new accounting system. Budgets had now been uploaded to the new system and a revenue budget monitoring report would be submitted to the next meeting.

5. Departmental Report Aithisg Roinneil

There was circulated Report No VAL/11/24 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer which outlined the main business of the department since the last meeting.

Following a summary of the report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the following main points were raised by Members:-

- It was requested that the Board's thanks be passed onto staff for all their dedication and hard work during the UK Parliamentary General Election in July;
- Changes in legislation and the timing of the election resulted in staff working excessive hours. This was in part due to prearranged annual leave with a shortage of staff but also complexities in the legislation changes and new government systems which had not been tested to any great extent in Scotland. As a result, staff had found this election very challenging to administer. The department had been training technicians and clerical staff on election work to provide extra staff resources for elections.
- There was discussion on the difficulties faced with the new ERO Portal which electors can use to apply for Voter Authority Certificates, postal or proxy voting or to vote as an Overseas Elector. A feedback meeting was held on 16 August 2024 with a research company on the use of the ERO Portal to establish how improvements can be made.
- There had been a total of seventeen clerical errors at the election. Electoral administrators would look at each of these clerical errors to identify any potential training issues. This was compounded by two days when there was no mail delivered. Also, in terms of work ongoing to create the department's identity as a separate organisation, it was felt there had been some confusion from the public on what the Returning Officer did and what the Electoral Registration Officer team did. It was important therefore for the department to have its own identity.
- It has been noted that a number of the job titles in use did not reflect the work that staff now carry out. Two examples were Clerical Assistant/Typist and Field Officer. It was proposed to review some job titles in the department so that they better reflected the roles these posts now undertook. As part of this review consideration would be given to job titles being used for similar posts in other valuation joint boards.

The Board **Noted** the recent activities of the department as set out in the report.

6. Service Plan 2022/25 Plana Seirbheis 2022/25

There was circulated Report No VAL/12/24 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer on the Service Plan 2022/25. The plan detailed the actions required for the delivery and improvement of the statutory and core functions of the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer.

Following consideration of the service plan, it was requested that in the next review the amendments to the plan be highlighted in the document.

The Board **Noted** the Service plan update report.

7. External Annual Audit Sgrùdadh Bliadhnail on Taobh A-muigh

7a Letter of Representation 2023/24 Litir Riochdachaidh 2023/24

There was circulated Report No. VAL/13/24 a copy of the annual audit letter of representation 2023/24.

The Board **Agreed** that the letter of representation be signed by the Treasurer on behalf of the Board.

7b Audited Accounts 2023/24 Cunntasan Sgrùdaichte 2023/24

There was circulated the Audited Statement of Accounts (Report No. VAL/14/24) for the financial year 2023/24.

Following commentary on the Accounts by Officers, the Board **Approved** the Audited Accounts for signature.

7c Report to Those Charged with Governance on the 2023/24 Audit Aithisg Dhaibhsan air a bheil Uallach airson Riaghladh air Sgrùdadh 2023/24

There was circulated Report No VAL/15/24 by the External Auditor, Audit Scotland which set out matters that arose during the 2023/24 audit of the Boards accounts. It was highlighted that there were no specific matters to report and there were no unadjusted errors in the accounts. The audit opinion for 2023/24 was unmodified and therefore it was a clean audit certificate.

In presenting the report to the Board confirmation was sought and received from Board Members who were charged with governance that there were no instances of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud; no subsequent events that have occurred since the date of the financial statements; and no material non-compliance with laws and regulations affecting the entity that should be brought to the Auditors attention.

Thanks were extended to Officers, particularly those in the finance team for supporting the audit process.

The Board **Noted** the report.

7d Annual Audit Report 2023/24 **Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Bhliadhnaile 2023/24**

There was circulated 2023/24 Annual Audit Report No. VAL/16/24 by the External Auditor, Audit Scotland which summarised the findings from the 2023/24 annual audit of the Board.

The main judgements from the report were that Audit opinions on the annual accounts are unmodified. The management commentary, annual governance statement and the audited part of the remuneration report were all consistent with the financial statements and properly prepared in accordance with the applicable requirements. Overall the Board was operated well and this was reflected in a good set of accounts.

The Board **Noted** the report.

8. Code of Corporate Governance **Còd Riaghlachais Chorporra**

There was circulated Report No. VAL/17/24 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. The Code of Corporate Governance provided an overview of the functions of the Board and described aspects of its governance and management.

Reference was made to some constituents on the electoral register whose postcodes were different to those living in the same street. This confused those delivering mail to households. It was advised that this was not an issue for the Assessor and ERO, but a UK Government issue.

The Board **Approved** the Code of Corporate Governance 2024/25.

9. Travel and Subsistence Policy **Poileasaidh Siubhail agus Teachd an Tìr**

There was circulated Report No. VAL/18/24 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer which provided an updated travel and subsistence policy. The policy had been changed to incorporate increases to subsistence allowances and guidance on car usage.

The Board **Approved** the updated Travel and Subsistence policy.

10. Exclusion of the Public **Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Board **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

11. Departmental Report – Inverness Office Lease **Aithisg Roinneil – Aonta-màil Oifis Inbhir Nis**

There was circulated to Members only Report No. VAL/19/24 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer which considered whether the lease for the Board's Office in Inverness should be extended.

Following consideration, the Board **Approved** the recommendation detailed in the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.55 am.



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board held in the HIE Boardroom, An Lòchran, Inverness Campus, Inverness, and via Microsoft Teams, on Friday 20 September 2024 at 11.00 am.

Present:

The Highland Council:

Derek Brown, Chief Executive

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Stuart Black, Chief Executive

NHS Highland:

Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Michael Humphreys, Area Commander (remote)

The Scottish Government:

Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Place Director (remote)

High Life Highland:

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

Highland Third Sector Interface:

Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer

NatureScot:

Graham Neville, Head of Operations - North

Skills Development Scotland:

Roddy Bailey, Area Manager

University of the Highlands and Islands:

Chris O'Neil, Principal and Chief Executive, Inverness College UHI (remote)

In attendance:

Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive – People, The Highland Council

Malcolm MacLeod, Assistant Chief Executive – Place, The Highland Council

Fiona Duncan, Chief Officer - Health and Social Care, The Highland Council (remote)

Pam Cremin, Chief Officer, Community/Highland Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS (remote)

Jen Valentine, Chair, Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group

Cathy Steer, Chair, Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group

Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group

James Maybee, Chair, Community Justice Partnership (remote)

Carron McDiarmid, Chair, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (remote)

Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager
Melanie Murray, Principal Committee Officer, The Highland Council

Also in attendance:

Colette Macklin, Head of Gaelic and Lifelong Learning, The Highland Council
James Turner, Head of Strengthening Communities, HIE
Aldene Woodward, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (remote)

Mr S Black in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Raymond Bremner, Councillor Graham MacKenzie (due to technical issues), Eann Sinclair, Sarah Compton-Bishop, Fiona Davies and Chief Superintendent Rob Shepherd.

2. Minutes of Meetings

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership Board – 5 June 2024, subject to the correction of a typographical error under Apologies for Absence;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 6 March 2024; and
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 21 May 2024.

3. Action Tracker

The Board was asked to review progress of its agreed actions as set out in the Action Tracker which had been circulated.

The following updates were provided:

- in relation to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Service Review Programme, the Partnership Development Manager had now met with the Scottish Government Place Director to discuss the points raised regarding the need for a place and person-based approach to public service change;
- with regard to the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Annual Reporting Template 2023/24, information on the People First – Language Matters – Partner Pledge had been circulated to partners together with information on The Highland Charter for Climate, Nature and Health; and
- in relation to the possibility of aligning the Children and Young People's Mental Health Fund to the priorities of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Steering Group, a meeting of partners/stakeholders would take place on 1 October 2024 to discuss a way forward.

The Board **NOTED** the Action Tracker and the updates provided.

4. Highland Outcome Improvement Plan – Delivery Plan

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/17/24 by CPP Senior Officers.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- ensuring there was a focus on prevention and inequalities was welcomed. However, there was more to be done, and it was highlighted that work was underway looking at metrics and outcome indicators. In addition, inequalities was currently included mainly within the health and family elements of the plan, and it could be expanded more broadly. Others added their support for developing more indicators around prevention and reducing inequalities;
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that employability pathways to aid recovery could be included under the Employment/Employability theme;
- in relation to the population indicators in the draft HOIP Performance Framework, it was confirmed that “reduce net migration” was a typographical error and would be amended to “increase net migration”;
- with regard to the Shared Approaches to Commissioning theme, the Chief Officer, HTSI, questioned whether she had sufficient leverage to deliver what was set out, and she undertook to liaise with CPP Senior Officers in that regard;
- reference was made in the Delivery Plan to identifying “potential priorities”, and it was suggested it was necessary to be more certain, and to tighten up the language used;
- in relation to measures of success, it was important to be assured that benchmarks were in place, and it was questioned whether that was the case in some instances. It was suggested it would be helpful to have a follow-up report on the health-check process that sat at the point at which the Board would adopt the plan and measures; and
- most of the Prosperity population indicators were around getting people into employment, and it was suggested there should be an indicator relating to average wages or income levels.

The Board:

- i. **AGREED** the updated Delivery Plan, including the responsible delivery group (delivery mechanism) and senior officer sponsor, purpose, deliverables and measures of success, subject to the points raised during discussion; and
- ii. **NOTED** the draft performance framework, subject to the points raised during discussion, and that further work would be undertaken with performance officers from across the partnership to finalise this, along with baseline measures, for consideration by the Board in December.

5. Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2024 - 2027

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/18/24 by the Head of Lifelong Learning and Gaelic, The Highland Council.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the section of the plan on Aligning Partnership Practices was welcomed. In that regard, it was suggested it would be helpful to consider the Planet Youth Icelandic prevention model under the umbrella of CLD, and to have explicit mention of it in the CLD Plan;
- thanks were expressed for the work that had gone into improving the layout of the plan;
- in relation to section 7.3 of the plan, under Community Capacity Building, it was suggested that “HTSI develops a strong third sector in Highland” should be amended to “HTSI supports the development of a strong third sector in Highland”;

- with regard to not only the CLD Plan but all plans that came before the Board, it was questioned whether there was an understanding of current resource commitment across the partnership so changes could be measured over time, and how fragile it was, how susceptible it was to the changing political environment and whether the Board understood the associated risks. Detailed discussion ensued as to how best to achieve a full understanding of the totality of resource, during which it was suggested a systems map with resources aligned to it was needed as, at present, there was a risk in that the Board did not understand the underpinning systems that would enable it to make the changes it wanted;
- reference was made to justice clients and the need to tackle discrimination and stigma and encourage learning, thereby increasing employment opportunities. It having been commented that there was no specific reference to justice in the plan, attention was drawn to the agreed priorities set out in section 2 of the report, which were broad and flexible enough to incorporate the point raised. It was explained that the intention had been not to be too prescriptive so the plan was flexible enough to respond to local needs.

The Board:

- NOTED** the content of the report; and
- APPROVED** the Community Learning and Development Plan 2024 – 2027, subject to the points raised during discussion.

6. Highland Green Health Partnership Annual Report

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/19/24 by the Head of Health Improvement, Public Health, NHS Highland.

The issue of future funding having been raised, it was explained that, whilst the funding support from NatureScot had come to an end, there were opportunities for further discussions around the potential for obtaining private funding. It was added that one of NatureScot's emerging pieces of work was around sourcing private investment into nature outcomes, and that HIE had been successful in securing funding from renewables companies to support the Science Skills Project.

The Board:

- NOTED** the progress of the Highland Green Health Partnership and achievements in Year 6 of the programme;
- NOTED** the priorities for Year 7 of the programme; and
- AGREED** continued support for the work of the Green Health Partnership and the approach to embed Green Health networks with local Community Partnerships.

7. Community Justice Partnership Annual Report

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/20/24 by the Community Justice Partnership Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- thanks were expressed to Kevin Flett, who had recently been appointed as Community Justice Partnership Manager, for bringing the annual report together in a short timescale;

- attention was drawn to minor typographical errors which would be fed back to the Community Justice Partnership Manager to correct prior to the annual report being submitted to Community Justice Scotland;
- information was sought, and provided, on whether Skills Development Scotland were doing anything nationally in terms of supporting former prisoners into employment;
- discussion took place on the need for more buy-in from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the judiciary which, it was explained, was a long-standing issue both locally and nationally. Concern having been expressed that there was a standing apology from the Sheriff on the Community Justice Partnership, it was suggested it was an issue that needed to be raised nationally, and the Scottish Government Place Director undertook to take it up with Community Justice colleagues.

The Board **APPROVED** the Community Justice Partnership Annual Report 2023-24, subject to the correction of typographical errors referred to during discussion.

8. National Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Self-Assessment

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/21/24 by the Partnership Development Manager.

It having been queried whether Independent Chairs were being asked to take part in the self-assessment as they were not Board Members, the Partnership Development Manager undertook to check this with the Improvement Service. Nevertheless, it would be useful for all attendees to complete the self-assessment checklist as the information could be used internally.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the development of a national CPP self -assessment and associated briefing session
- ii. **AGREED** that Board Members and attendees would complete and submit individual CCP checklists when circulated; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a Board Development Session would be set up to review the Highland CPP checklist report, once available from the Improvement Service, to identify actions.

9. Consultation on a Population Health Framework for Scotland

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/22/24 by the Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, who gave a presentation in amplification of the report.

The Director of Public Health invited comments on the framework and the questions set out in the report, and suggested that any further comments be fed back to him by email within the next week or so.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- reference was made to the preventative benefits of sport and physical activity, particularly in relation to diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and it was queried how the proposed Population Health Framework fit with the Physical Activity for Health Framework that was due to be announced imminently. The Director of Public Health responded that, whilst the links would be there implicitly, he had not seen any explicit link between the two frameworks, and it would be a useful point to feed back. In addition, the links with the natural environment were not adequate;

- it was questioned what the proposed framework was going to accomplish if it was not aligned with other Scottish Government frameworks and did not address the wider macro forces that could affect public health. The framework also did not address the rural population challenges faced in Highland, including the aging population and remoteness;
- for transparency, the Chair of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership declared a connection to this item given her role as a Non-Executive Director of Public Health Scotland. However, she did not consider it to be a conflict of interest;
- on the point being raised, the Director of Public Health confirmed that when local forecasts on the burden of disease were available he would be happy to bring them to the CPP Board and other forums to have action-oriented discussions on the regional challenges and how to prevent the forecasts from becoming a reality; and
- reference was made to the links between ill-health and lack of employment. The economic inactivity rate was considerably higher than it used to be, and was a significant issue in certain parts of Highland, and it was suggested getting people back into productive work should be a priority.

The Board:

- NOTED** the presentation and the contents of the engagement document; and
- AGREED** that any further comments on the approach and the questions be fed back to the Director of Public Health by email.

10. Place Director Role

Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Place Director, spoke to the voluntary Place Director role which she had undertaken since 2017 alongside her senior civil servant role, currently Head of European Relations. There were 32 Place Directors in Scotland, aligned with local authority areas, and it was explained that the purpose of the role was to provide a facilitating link, on both a formal and informal basis, between local authority areas and the Scottish Government. An important part of the role was not only communicating Scottish Government priorities to partners but gathering intel as to how things were being received locally and feeding it back centrally. It was also to support activity informed by local priorities, and events such as ministerial visits. She encouraged partners to contact her if they had any questions or issues they wished her to feed back.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the development at Ardersier Port was cited as a good example of collaboration between local partners and national players. However, that was not the norm, there often being a lack of coordination between local partners and national government, and it was suggested there should be someone within the Scottish Government responsible for ensuring it was playing its part in terms of supporting Highland with large-scale industrial developments and key issues such as housing and transport. In that regard, the voluntary nature of the Place Director role was questioned, and it was queried whether it was likely to become more formal;
- help was needed to navigate and break down the silos that existed within the Scottish Government, which had worsened since the Covid pandemic;
- Inverness was a burgeoning city, and one of the challenges was ensuring the benefits of the economic development opportunities seized there were felt across Highland. Some developments were being funded by the UK Government, and there was a need for intergovernmental oversight of things such as the Strategic Transmission Investment Programme and housing;

- there was a sense that the scale of the opportunities in Highland were not fully appreciated and understood by the Scottish Government, and local officers had a role to play in terms of communicating to the Place Director not just the problems but the opportunities that existed;
- the Place Director commented that the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (CoHI) should act as a vehicle for cohesion, and that it would be worth considering whether better use could be made of it to achieve a collaborative whole-system approach for Highland. In that regard, the Chair suggested that the Regional Economic Partnership was more significant as it was driving change and asking difficult questions of central government;
- it was necessary to think collectively and imaginatively about how to solve some of the issues raised during discussion;
- there were a lot of smaller projects where there needed to be unlocking between the public and private sector;
- reference was made to earlier discussions regarding social justice and the work being done by Timpsons, and it was suggested that the new prison being constructed in Inverness presented opportunities to work with the private sector to address social justice issues;
- it was considered that the Rural Affairs Directorate was not taking enough of a holistic view, and the Economy Directorate needed to be more aware of the opportunities within Highland and the significant amount of funding coming into the region through network upgrades and on and offshore renewable energy developments. The transition to Net Zero was a huge economic driver, and much of the energy required was going to come from the Highlands and Islands; and
- pre-Brexit, Highland had benefited from a significant amount of European funding. That was no longer the case, and the Scottish and UK Governments needed to consider future funding for the Highlands and Islands as without economic investment there would be depopulation. It was added that the Highland Growth Deal finished in less than two years, and it was questioned what was going to replace it.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

11. Communications Strategy

A draft Communications Strategy had been considered at the CPP Board meeting on 5 June 2024. Feedback had been incorporated and, in consultation with Corporate Communications colleagues, the Communications Strategy had been finalised and had been circulated. The strategy applied a framework to the structure of communications across the Partnership, both internally and externally. The aim of the strategy was to create a consistent basis for how the CPP communicated and engaged with communities across Highland.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- reference having been made to the potential to utilise partners' extensive social media reach to get messages out, it was confirmed that this was alluded to in the strategy under Channels of Communication, but it could perhaps be made clearer; and
- information was sought, and provided, on the fortnightly Highland Council and CPP Community Briefing.

The CPP Board **AGREED** the updated Communications Strategy.

12. Partnership Development Team – Year 1 Report, Year 2 Milestones and Quarterly Update June to August 2024

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/23/24 by CPP Senior Officers and the Partnership Development Manager.

In introducing the report, it was highlighted that the Partnership Development Officers had been recruited on temporary contracts for two years, until May 2025. It was important that an early review of the ongoing resourcing requirements was undertaken to consider next steps. Senior officers would progress this and report back to the next Board.

During discussion, the illustration at Appendix 3 of the report was commended. However, it was commented that there was a lack of female representation within it.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Year 1 Report in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the proposed Year 2 Milestones in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- iii. **NOTED** the Conference and 2024-2027 HOIP Illustration in Appendix 3 of the report.

13. Review of Strategic Risk Register

The Strategic Risk Register had been circulated for consideration and review.

On behalf of CPP Senior Officers, the Chair of the Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group spoke to a number of proposed changes to the register, including updates to the narrative and scoring in respect of several risks, and the proposed removal of 01/20 Reputational; 06/20 CPP Communication; and 08/22 Support and Resourcing for People Fleeing Crisis. Views were sought in relation to 06/21 Pandemic/Influenza Resilience and whether the Board was content that the wider risk around the possibility of another pandemic/influenza outbreak sat within resilience structures. In relation to 10/23 Public Sector Funding, consideration needed to be given to scoring, and it was queried whether it should also include third sector funding.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- in relation to 06/21 Pandemic/Influenza Resilience, the Director of Public Health commented that a pandemic had been at the top of national Risk Registers for some time, but Covid had highlighted the impact of a pandemic on the population. The risk relating to Covid and Influenza had been downgraded on the NHS Highland Risk Register, and it would therefore make sense to do the same on the CPP Risk Register. He confirmed he would be happy to look at rescoping the risk outwith the meeting;
- there was a public sector funding impact on the third sector but there were also multiple other factors at play, and it was suggested there might need to be a separate risk around third sector funding and capacity in Highland. However, it was questioned whether there was an understanding of what the risks were;
- it was suggested that 08/22 Support and Resourcing for People Fleeing Crisis should remain on the Risk Register as, whilst some elements were business as usual, systems were under severe pressure at present in terms of the resettlement of Afghan refugee families at Cameron Barracks in Inverness;
- 02/20 Failure to deliver against strategic priorities – People, Place Prosperity, and 03/20 Commitment to Partnership Activity might be driven by circumstances that could be linked back to public sector funding; and

- the Chair suggested that any further comments on the Risk Register be fed back to officers outwith the meeting.

The Board **AGREED** that the Strategic Risk Register be revised, taking into account the points raised during discussion, and presented to the next meeting for consideration.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 10.00 am.

The Chair highlighted that the next meeting would be chaired by Sarah Compton-Bishop, Chair of NHS Highland Board. He thanked Board Members and attendees for their input, and officers for their support, during his tenure as Chair of the CPP Board.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm.

**The Highland Council
Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held Remotely on Monday 28 October 2024 at 4.00p.m.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr A Christie
Mr J Finlayson

Mr K Gowans
Mr B Lobban
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:-

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate
Mrs K Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive – People
Ms K MacDougall, Talent Manager, Corporate
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr R Gale.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement

There were none.

3. Minute of Last Meeting

There was circulated minute of meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held on 30 September 2024, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Acting Chief Officer – Primary and Early Years

There was circulated job advert for the post of Acting Chief Officer – Primary and Early Years, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

5. Exclusion of the Public

The Panel **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

6. Shortlisting for Chief Officer HR & Communications

There had been circulated a copy of:

- i. the Chief Officer HR & Communications Job Description and Person Specification;

- ii. a summary sheet of applications; and
- iii. copies of the applications received for the Chief Officer HR & Communications.

Members were provided with an assessment of the applications received. The Panel thereafter considered applications for shortlisting for interview. The Panel considered that 2 candidates be shortlisted. However, given the seniority of a Chief Officer post in the Council it was felt that there would be merit in trying to attract further applications so that the Panel had a greater choice of candidates given the seniority of this role. Members were in agreement that the post be re-advertised and in addition assistance be sought from an Executive Search Services with this recruitment. Further, the 2 candidates shortlisted did not have to reapply for the post.

Following consideration, the Panel **AGREED** that:-

- i. the Chief Officer HR & Communications post be re-advertised as soon as possible and that contact also be made with Executive Search Services for assistance with this recruitment. The Panel would then meet to consider the shortlisting for those applicants from the readvertisement; and
- ii. 2 applications (Reference numbers 11 and 15) be shortlisted for interview and did not need to reapply for the post.

7. Dates of Meetings

The Panel **NOTED** that dates of meetings scheduled for the remainder of this Chief Officer recruitment process would be cancelled.

The meeting ended at 4.35p.m.

**The Highland Council
Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held Remotely on Tuesday 19 November, 2024 at 4.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr A Christie
Mr K Gowans

Mr B Lobban
Mrs T Robertson
Mr R Stewart

Officials in attendance:-

Mr M MacLeod, Assistant Chief Executive - Place
Mrs L McGunnigle, HR Manager, Corporate
Ms K MacDougall, Talent Manager, Corporate
Ms H Jones, HR Business Partner, Corporate
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Corporate

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement

There were none.

3. Minute of Last Meeting

There was circulated minute of meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held on 28 October, 2024, the terms of which were **Approved**.

4. Exclusion of the Public

The Panel **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

5. Shortlisting – Chief Officer Planning and Economic Development

There was circulated to Members only a copy of:

- i. the Chief Officer Planning and Economic Development job description and person specification;
- ii. a summary sheet of applications; and
- iv. copies of the applications received for the Chief Officer Planning and Economic Development.

A review of the Level Indicators used to support Members consideration of candidates would be undertaken to make it clearer what level of support would be required for candidates in some areas.

The Panel therefore proceeded to consider applications for shortlist.

The Panel **Agreed** to shortlist 4 candidates for interview for Chief Officer Planning and Economic Development.

6. **Shortlisting – Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet Management**

There was circulated to Members only:-

- i the Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet Management job description and person specification;
- ii a summary sheet of applications; and
- iii copies of the applications received for the Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet Management.

Following consideration, the Panel **Agreed** to shortlist 3 candidates for interview for Chief Officer Facilities and Fleet Management.

7. **Shortlisting - Chief Officer Operations and Maintenance**

There was circulated to Members only:-

- i the Chief Officer Operations and Maintenance job description and person specification;
- ii a summary sheet of applications; and
- iii copies of the applications received for the Chief Officer Operations and Maintenance.

Following consideration, the Panel **Agreed** to shortlist 3 candidates for interview for Chief Officer Operations and Maintenance.

8. **Dates of Meetings**

The Panel **Noted** dates of meetings for the remainder of the Chief Officer Place cluster recruitment process:-

- Psychometric testing feedback - Tuesday 3 December, 2024 – 4.15pm; and
- Interviews - Wednesday, 18 December, 2024
- Thursday, 19 December, 2024

The meeting ended at 4.20 p.m.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Redesign Board of the Highland Council** held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on 20 November 2024 at 2pm.

Members present:

Mr M Baird (remote)
Mr B Boyd (remote)
Mr R Bremner (remote)
Mr A Christie
Mrs M Cockburn (remote)
Mr M Green (remote)
Mrs J Hendry
Ms B Jarvie (remote)

Mr B Lobban
Mr G MacKenzie (remote)
Mr A MacKintosh
Mrs T Robertson (remote)
Ms L Saggars (remote)
Mr J Gibson, UNISON
Ms C A Stewart, GMB (remote)

Non-Members present:

Dr C Birt (remote)
Mr S Coghill (remote)
Mr L Fraser
Mr R Gale (remote)
Mr J Grafton

Mr S Kennedy
Mrs K MacLean (remote)
Mrs A MacLean (remote)
Mr P Oldham (remote)
Mrs M Ross (remote)

Participating Officials:

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate
Ms A Clark, Chief Officer, Housing and Communities
Mr J Shepherd, Chief Officer, Business Solutions
Ms A Brown, Principal Project Manager, Strategic Improvement
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Fraser, Mr R Jones, and Mr D Macpherson.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were none.

3. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Board **NOTED** the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2024, which had been approved by the Council on 31 October 2024.

4. Redesign of Highland Council – Work Programme Update
Ath-dhealbhadh Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd – Cunntas às Ùr mun Phrògram Obrach

There had been circulated Report No RDB/09/24 by the Chief Officer, Business Solutions.

During discussion, a summary was provided of efforts to include some senior pupils in the work of the Food in Schools working group, with Head Teacher support as required. It was clarified that engagement would be undertaken with all services users, including all pupils and parents. The importance of engaging with smaller schools without on-site cooking facilities was emphasised, as was the need to engage on local school initiatives that had already been tried and tested.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Work Programme Update;
- ii. **AGREED** that phase 1 of the Roads Redesign project is brought to closure and phase 2 is progressed; and
- iii. **AGREED** that In-House Bus Operations is now a “business as usual” service and will no longer be reported to the Redesign Board until the appropriate time for discussion of options for expansion and review of the operating model.

5. My Council Programme Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Phrògram na Comhairle Agam

There had been circulated Report No RDB/10/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Specific areas of feedback on the website design included the following:
 - a preference not to have text over images;
 - to take into consideration the challenges images could present to screen readers;
 - a preference was expressed for Concept 3, and for the font on Concept 2;
 - the categorisation tabs should be as simple as possible;
 - links should be clearly indicated;
 - age 55+ clubs might be a useful place to consult on the website;
 - consultation on the website design should take place with neuro-diverse people, with older people, and with people sight related disabilities. A brief summary was provided of the engagement, including with access panels;
 - the website design should be similar to the design of other governmental websites;
 - advice should be taken on the use of colours and patterns, and it was clarified that the website would comply with accessibility legislation;
 - the importance and prominence of Gaelic was emphasised;
 - other languages used in the Highlands should be incorporated or signposted as appropriate and it was highlighted that a translation function was being explored and improved BSL content was being progressed; and
 - attention was drawn to challenges searching on the current website where items were in alphabetical order but incorrectly named.
- Ms Stewart sought information on the total number of people surveyed about CRM, noting that 100 responses had been received, and this information would be provided outwith the meeting; and
- it was queried why the ability to indicate challenging customers on CRM was no longer functional, and it was clarified that a system for this, and for sharing information on customers across services, was being worked on to support

the revised Customer Relationship Policy The importance of this from a safety perspective for staff and members conducting home visits was emphasised.

The Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate indicated that the views of the Redesign Board would be sought on the final website design, possibly via email due to time constraints, and the Convenor suggested that a workshop would be a good format for this.

The Board **NOTED**:

- i. the updates provided for all the My Council Programme projects within the Delivery Plan;
- ii. **NOTED** the design ideas for the Website, seen in Appendix 1; and
- iii. **NOTED** the suggestions made during discussion.

6. Asset Rationalisation Rianachd So-mhaoin

There had been circulated Report No RDB/11/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive, Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- information was sought on an office building that had been for sale in Nairn, and further updates on this would be provided to Mr L Fraser outwith the meeting;
- assurance was provided that the Community POD project would not delay the school project at Tornagraim;
- attention was drawn to the importance and value of staff welfare areas and it was requested that this be brought back to the next meeting;
- Milestones and timescales / gantt charts for the various projects were requested for future reports;
- confirmation was provided that discussions were being undertaken with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in relation to their asset rationalisation project and the possibility of shared facilities; and
- assurance was sought that if office facilities were to be rented out, there would not be different standards for those rented and for Council staff.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the progress on the asset rationalisation workstreams;
- ii. **NOTED** the brief update on progress with the New Trades Framework; and
- iii. **AGREED** to incorporate timescales and to report on the provision of staff welfare areas in the next report.

The meeting ended at 2.50pm