

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Corporate Performance Report 2008-9  
Report by the Chief Executive

**Summary**

This report provides an assessment of Council performance against the Corporate Plan and the Strengthening the Highlands programme. It covers the period April 2008 to end March 2009. 83% of the commitments (93 out of the total 112) are progressing well or are on target. For one of the commitments it is too early to assess performance or no change is recorded yet. For 18 commitments (16%) there is mixed performance. All commitments are being delivered.

**1. Introduction**

1.1 An annual report of Corporate Performance is prepared each autumn, normally covering performance for the previous financial year. The report is based on performance against the Council's commitments and corporate performance indicators which are set out in the Corporate Plan, agreed at Council in October 2008. The Corporate Plan contains all of the Council's commitments expressed in Strengthening the Highlands the programme of the Highland Council.

1.2 The Council's Programme contains a commitment that:  
"The Council will continuously review performance to improve the way in which Council services are designed and delivered. We will do this by measuring our progress, reporting on it publicly and listening to our customers and communities".  
The annual performance report contributes to this commitment.

**2. Council Performance April 2008 to end March 2009**

2.1 All of the Council's commitments are listed in the Appendix, grouped by each of the five themes of the Strengthening the Highlands Programme approved in 2008. It follows the reporting format used last year.

In addition a web version is available, which includes data tables and narrative explanations by theme.

[http://ntintra1/miweb/current/performance/administration\\_performance\\_reports/administration\\_performance\\_reports\\_homepage.htm](http://ntintra1/miweb/current/performance/administration_performance_reports/administration_performance_reports_homepage.htm)

In total there are 112 commitments. The appendix describes performance for each commitment. For ease of reference the following symbols have been used to provide an assessment of performance:

- ✓ Commitment progressing well or is on target
- Too early to assess impact or no change is recorded yet
- M Mixed performance - positive and negative movement in indicators
- ✗ Commitment not met

2.2 Commitment progressing well or is on target

93 of the 112 commitments are either on target or progressing well (83%).

2.3 Too early to assess impact or no change is recorded yet

For 1 of the 112 commitments it is either too early to assess whether the commitment is being met or no change is recorded yet. The reasons for this assessment are:

- Work is being taken forward to ensure the council uses best practice in sustainable design and facilities management. A Sustainability Unit is being established and staff training and development under way.

#### 2.4 Mixed performance - positive and negative movement in indicators

There are 18 commitments where mixed performance is recorded. These are:

##### What we will do for Children and Families

- While the 10 year capital programme for schools is anticipated to come back on target there has been some slippage to date;
- While indicators for looked after children (LAC) in terms of reducing the number and length of placement have declined this is contrasted with targets for LAC leaving care with a pathway plan being achieved. Overall the report highlights a very good corporate parenting picture. More relevant outcome based indicators for LAC are proposed below.

##### What we will do for communities and Older People

- The majority of indicators for benefit uptake, advice on welfare rights and uptake of concessionary priced services are all showing good progress with the exception of the average number of days to process new benefit claims, the new target is 24 days by 2010/11, for 2008/9 34 days was achieved.
- In relation to reducing drug and alcohol misuse while alcohol and drug related crime has dropped the number of drug related deaths has doubled from the 2006/7 baseline of 10 to 20 in 2008/9.
- There was an increase in the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation while the proportion of homeless cases treated as priority needs showed improvement to 81%.
- A number of indicators within the Gaelic Plan still require baselines and there was also a slight decrease in the number describing themselves as 'well disposed to Gaelic'. The number of pupils with Gaelic speaking parents/carers has increased.
- Pilot work is being undertaken using the national standards of community engagement following review and this will require rolling out across Highland. The score for how well the Council is 'listening to local people' has improved.

##### What we will do for the Economy

- Business start up rate indicators have been adversely affected by the recession but an effective recession action plan is in place. Early indications from the handover of Business Gateway to the Council show good levels of support for the sector being provided.
- Work on new local development plans are progressing well however the % of house-holder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has fallen back below the 2006/7 baseline.
- While good progress is being made in supporting communities to hold assets delays with the start up of the LEADER programme has limited the number of projects supported in 2008/9.
- The target of 34% of the road network being considered for maintenance treatment has been achieved. However the target for reducing council and private bridges failing to meet bridges meeting European standards currently stands at 31.3% against a target to reduce to 26%

##### What we will do for the Environment

- Work is on-going to promote and enhance forestry, farming, fishing and crofting in Highland; however a baseline in order to monitor through % of GDP is still under development.
- The installed capacity of renewable equipment (kW) has increased for Council buildings. The programme of heating installation has started with plans to accelerate the programme to meet the target by 2010/11.
- Recycling continues to increase but landfill targets remain challenging.
- Biodiversity groups have been established supporting local projects with Lottery Fund support. The indicator for ranger guided walks is under review.

#### What we will do to make Highland Council more effective and efficient

- Response times within target for handling complaints and enquires have declined while there has been improvement in compliance with response time for Freedom of Information requests.
- Equalities monitoring is in place and reported to committee every 6 months. There have been increases in the % of women managers in the top 2% and 5% of earners. Further work is needed to embed the use of screening and impact assessment tools across Services.
- There has been a reduction in sickness absence for all categories of staff. An updated figure for staff with PDPs is awaited for 2008/9.

#### 2.5 Commitment not met

There were no commitments which are not being met or being progressed in 2008/9.

### **3. Next steps**

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to report on its performance to the public. A newspaper supplement will be produced containing a range of performance information drawn from this report, the results of the public performance survey reported separately to this meeting and the Statutory Performance Indicator report which was considered at Council in September 2009.
- 3.2 In addition to this annual corporate performance report progress on corporate plan indicators is monitored through quarterly performance reviews (QPR) undertaken by the Chief Executive. The move to an electronic Performance and Risk Management System in 2010 will further improve monitoring with data sets accessible through web browsing facilities and the ability to immediately flag and review data as it goes onto the system.
- 3.3 To improve performance information and reporting for 2009-10, the following new indicators are proposed:

Looked after Children outcomes:

- Improve the educational outcomes for Looked After Children across all indicators;
- Every accommodated child to have their physical, mental and emotional, health needs assessed within six weeks of notification of being accommodated;
- Reduce the length of time children are accommodated and the number of placements;
- Fewer Looked After Children in Out of Authority placements
- Greater proportion of Looked After Children in Kinship Care and supported at home;

- Maintain at good or better inspection reports in relation to fostering and adoption service.

3.4 Members will note that the Programme commitment on homelessness; to develop an up-dated homeless strategy by 2008 has been achieved. The following amendment to the commitment is proposed by the Director of Housing and Property:

“We will work with the Scottish Government and partners to prevent and reduce homelessness and provide responsive services to homeless people”.

#### **4. Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- Comment on the performance report for April 2008 to end March 2009 and to note that a newspaper supplement will be produced to report performance to the public.
- Approve the inclusion of new indicators for looked after children as detailed in 3.3 above.
- Approve the refreshed commitment on homelessness in the Strengthening the Highlands Programme as detailed in 3.4 above.

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Author: Evelyn Johnston, Strategic Performance Manager

Date: 5.10.09

Appendix: Annual Performance Report 2008-9