

Local Voices Highland Choices

Annual Report Performance Analysis

2018/ 2019

This analysis sets out progress the Highland Council made in 2018/19 to achieve the 30 commitments in its programme Local Voices, Highland Choices. These priorities are set under five key themes:

1. A Place to Live
2. A Place to Learn
3. A Place to Thrive
4. A Welcoming Place
5. A Redesigned Council.

For ease of reference the following symbols have been used to provide an assessment of performance against each commitment:

C	Completed
✓	Progressing well or on target
=	Maintaining performance or it is too early to determine
M	Mixed, positive and negative movements in indicators/actions
×	Commitment not met (no significant progress)

1. A Place to Live

1.1	<p>Effective Housing Provision <i>Provide homes across the Highlands that are responsive to local needs so that both young and old have a secure roof over their head. We need to provide affordable homes for younger generations and families; housing in areas where attracting professionals is a challenge; accommodation for the homeless; and homes where the elderly and vulnerable can be supported to live independently.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With its partners, the Council has a target to build, on average, 500 new affordable homes per year by 2021/22. This will mean a total of 2,500 new affordable homes. In 2018/19 there were 525 new homes completed with 665 approvals to go to site. In 2017/18, 290 homes were completed. Over the two years is an average of 407.5 new homes per year. • Local housing development priorities will be agreed with area committees prior to the submission of the strategic housing investment plan to Scottish Government in November 2019. 	✓
1.2	<p>Tenant and Community Representation <i>Encourage more engaged, better informed, more resilient, sustainable and attractive communities by helping and strengthening tenant and community representation structures.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, the Council carried out a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey of Council housing tenants. The survey was posted to 13,404 tenants and the Council received 2,343 responses. Tenant satisfaction with the opportunities to participate in decision-making processes is 55.7%, compared to 47% in 2015-17. • The survey also indicates that tenant satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood they live in is 68.0%, compared to 69% in 2015-17. • Work started in August 2018 to explore with Community Councils changes they may wish to see to the Scheme of Establishment and, more generally, how to improve sustainability and develop the role of Community Councils. Sessions were held with Community Councils across Highland in autumn 2018 and there was a survey of all Community Councils. A workshop was held in November with around 50 Community Councils attending. A Community Council Steering Group comprising Area Chairs and Community Council representatives was set up to support the review. <p>The Council approved the review of the Scheme in January 2019, with the proposals based upon initial feedback from Community Councils. It will conclude in September, with elections taking place in November 2019. Further work is ongoing, including developing a set of shared principles and working practices between the Council and Community Councils and also reviewing Community Council funding.</p> <p>Also, discussions have been taking place with Area Committees as part of the Council's Governance review to explore how to improve engagement and involvement with Community Councils and other community groups in area committee business. This work will be taken forward as part of the Governance review and new local area arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is still required to develop the Ward Management role. The Council's Governance Review started in 2019 and the development of a new operational management structure with a geographic focus will help to inform this in 2019/20. • The Local Governance review was launched by Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in December 2017. Phase 1 (May 	✓

	<p>to November 2018) involved engagement with community bodies. The Council supported this by encouraging community bodies to participate and by offering to host local events. This was also supported through the initial engagement with Community Councils as part of the Scheme review by asking the Government's key questions. Key messages from Community Councils included wanting to be more involved and influencing decision making rather than taking on specific new roles or areas of work. This has helped inform the Council's own Governance review.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the review sought views from public bodies. Through a seminar involving Elected Members in January 2019, feedback was gathered and submitted as part of the Local Governance review. A submission was also made by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) highlighting the need for greater resourcing and capacity building for CPPs, greater fiscal flexibility and more functional accountability – aligning national and regional priorities.</p>	
1.3	<p>Rural Proofing <i>Identify and recognise the unique challenges of living in rural and remote areas of the Highlands and ensure council policies and the provision of services have local people in mind. Work with the Scottish Government and other public authorities to do the same.</i></p> <p>The key areas of slippage are around the lobbying for rural proofing equal status, promoting the use of rural impact assessments and reviewing the evidence on rural poverty and equality where work was targeted during 2018. However, it was also anticipated much of this work would be on-going and progress has been made as outlined below.</p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Poverty and Inequality Working Group (PIWG) agreed to initially focus on understanding the experience of child poverty, particularly with the introduction of the Child Poverty Act. This reported in August 2018 and rural aspects were included as part of this. Work to develop the Child Poverty Action Report has used this and other evidence to develop a profile of the drivers of poverty in Highland. • Work is scheduled to review current processes and guidance on impact assessment to develop a more integrated approach and this was originally planned for June 2018. This will incorporate rural impact assessment and island impacts alongside equality impacts and the Fairer Scotland duty. The intention is to streamline and support staff to ensure that impact assessment is incorporated at an early stage of policy development. • Where opportunities arise, through engagement or consultation activity, the issue of rural proofing is raised – for example through the Scottish Government's consultation on a new definition of fuel poverty. • The Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) focuses on the delivery of five outcomes to address inequalities throughout Highland. Key priorities specifically focus on inequalities facing rural communities. During 2018/19, a new structure was agreed to support the work of the CPP and to specifically focus on the delivery of the HOIP. A framework to support improvement plan development was agreed and leads for the HOIP delivery groups established. At a local level, Community Partnerships continue to engage with their local communities to develop locality plans to address inequalities at a local level. 	M
1.4	<p>Town Centre Regeneration <i>Encourage and assist the regeneration of our town centres and high streets across the Highlands.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has identified and secured funding to support the regeneration of 	✓

	<p>buildings, streets and sites from Scottish Government, UK Government, Historic Environment Scotland and Heritage Lottery Funding together with private sector investment over the past year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council continues to make good progress in delivering the remaining Vacant and Derelict Land Fund projects, managing Regeneration Capital Grant Fund project finance, progressing delivery of the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project and continued contamination study work at the Longman Landfill City Deal project. • The number of people living in town and city centres across the Highlands is monitored by the number of residential properties in town and city centres identified in Local Development Plans and subsequently completed. • In 2018, there were 3,096 residential properties in Highland town and city centres, compared to 3,119 in 2017. This decrease was partly due to transfers to self-catering units. • Town centre health checks for key town centres across Highland have been completed, published and will inform future Local Development Plan reviews. Town Centre Strategies for Caithness and Sutherland were prepared for consideration by Area Committees in the first quarter of 2019/20. 	
1.5	<p>Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change <i>Work with communities and partners to mitigate against and adapt to climate change while raising awareness around sustaining and improving our natural, built and cultural environment.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft narrative for the Council's new Carbon Management Plan (CMP) is complete, and work is underway in terms of target setting. Complementary work is underway to develop a five year Energy Strategy and Action Plan under the Change Programme. This is critical in respect of the final scope of the CMP, given that energy consumption accounts for 75% of our corporate carbon footprint. It is anticipated that the Scottish Government will enact a new Climate Change Bill, with a target of net zero emissions by 2045, which will necessarily impact the scale of ambition of the Council's CMP. • In preparing a new climate change adaptation strategy, the Council is working with the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and Adaptation Scotland to develop a multi-agency approach to adaptation. The level of stakeholder and community engagement, strategy and governance development included in the proposals is expected to take 18 months to complete. A workshop, led by Adaptation Scotland and Climate Ready Clyde, will be held in June 2019 with key members of the CPP, and will be used to shape the project and develop a business case. • For the Council to meet its Biodiversity Duty a progress report to Scottish Government must be submitted in January 2021. The Council must demonstrate that it has engaged positively with biodiversity, that good guidance and policies are in place to protect and sustain the environment, whilst continuing to assist local communities to undertake action to improve biodiversity. Work on collating this information has begun. The lack of a biodiversity baseline to measure gains/ losses, the management of invasive species and ongoing budget pressures are all challenges to be considered for the next Biodiversity Report. The need for partnership working, such as the Highland Environment Forum, will continue to be crucial to deliver key actions and the Highland Biodiversity Action Plan. • The Council's Environmental Advice and Consultancy team has continued to review planning policy and guidance for the protection of natural, built, and cultural heritage. The following reviews were completed or started in 2018/19: Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy; Granttown-on-Spey Conservation Area Appraisal; Wick: Pulteneytown Conservation Area; Tain Conservation Area Appraisal; and Conservation Area Guide. 	✓

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environmental Advice and Consultancy team is working to capacity in respect of specialist planning advice and consultancy work. Demand on the service continues to be high and the Council will continue to investigate the potential to employ an additional self-funded (in full or part) ecologist. The Historic Environment Scotland funded post recruited to update the Historic Environment Record continues to make good progress and the Council continues to train and upskill ecologists. In 2018/19, the team generated £67,416 for chargeable for ecological, forestry and historic environment advice (exceeding the target set of £51,259). 	
1.6	<p>Promote and Support The Gaelic Language Plan <i>Continue to promote and support the Gaelic language and culture through the Gaelic Language Plan.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Gaelic Team submitted 11 applications to the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) in 2019-2020 which is administered by Bòrd na Gàidhig (BnaG). The applications are all projects which are central to the key performance indicators in the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023. 8 projects received funding; two were approved 'in principle', and one project was unsuccessful. Funding totalling £118,650 has been approved (excluding the two projects approved 'in principle'). The Celtic Media Festival took place in the Aviemore/ Badenoch and Strathspey Area in June 2019. There were 23 Award Categories across a number of sessions, which were well attended by 434 delegates. The Council worked with the Celtic Media Festival to provide opportunities for young people who are studying at the UHI including Sabhal Mòr Ostaig to engage with the festival, especially in relation to workshop sessions, engaging with producers who are key to the industry. The Council entered the third year of a three year partnership with BnaG to continue to support the 0–3 age sector in collaboration with the Care and Learning Alliance. The funding has yet not been agreed as the total awarded was significantly less than requested. Discussions continue on this matter. The project undertakes an annual consultation with the parents to ascertain their views of the service. When asked in June 2019 whether the amount/ quality of Gaelic in the groups had increased as a result of the Gaelic Toddler Development worker input 90% agreed. 90% also agreed that their confidence and ability to use Gaelic at the group and at home had increased. When asked about whether they had become more aware of the benefits of bilingualism as a result of attending the supported groups, 91% of parents indicated that they were more aware. The ongoing consultation with parents helps identify planning and developmental opportunities for play sessions and the local promotion of Gaelic. 	✓

2. A Place to Learn

2.1	<p>Improve Educational Attainment for All <i>Strive to achieve the highest standards in all our schools, and reduce the attainment gap, so every young person has the opportunity and skills to succeed by supporting an accessible and broad curriculum for all.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>Data to monitor levels of literacy and numeracy was published in December 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary school literacy levels (P1, P4, P7 combined) were 60.5% (2017/18 academic year) compared to a Scottish average of 71.4%; Secondary school literacy levels (S3) were 86.2% (2017/18 academic year) compared to a Scottish average of 87.3%; Primary school numeracy levels (P1, P4, P7 combined) were 69.9% (2017/18 	x
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	<p>academic year) compared to a Scottish average of 78.4%; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary school numeracy levels (S3) were 86.6% (2017/18 academic year) compared to a Scottish average of 89.0%. • There is a commitment to monitor the levels of literacy and numeracy in schools in the most deprived areas. Work has taken place to create a performance dashboard using Curriculum for Excellence achievement of a level data. This will provide a benchmark for future reporting. <p>Overall attainment is monitored through the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and key attainment indicators are nationally benchmarked. Local SCQF performance for the 2018/19 school year has improved but the national benchmark position will not be confirmed until early 2020. The current position for the 2017/18 academic year, as previously reported to Council in March 2019, is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 and the Council was ranked 19th nationally. This compares to Scottish average which was 62%. • 31% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 and the Council was ranked 22nd nationally. This compares to the Scottish average which was 34%. • 31% of pupils from deprived areas achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 and the Council was ranked 25th nationally. This compares to the Scottish average which was 42%. • 9% of pupils from deprived areas achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 and the Council was ranked 25th. This compares to the Scottish average which was 16%. • Participation rates for 16-19 years olds was 93.8% and the Council was ranked 11th. This compares to the Scottish average which was 91.8%. • School exclusion rate (per 1000 Looked After Child) is a benchmarked indicator which is reported on every two years. The rate (per 1,000) was 108.8 for 2015-17 and the Council was ranked 20th compared to 73.2 and ranked 11th for 2013-15. The Scottish average for 2015-17 is 80.0. Data will next be reported in December 2019. • The exclusion rate across the most deprived 20% of primary schools was 38 (per 1,000 pupils) in 2016/17, compared to 22 in Scotland. The exclusion rate for the whole of Highland was 8. This is a biennial indicator and data for 2018/19 will be available in December 2019. • The exclusion rate across the most deprived 20% of secondary schools was 109 (per 1,000 pupils) in 2016/17, compared to 85 in Scotland. The exclusion rate for the whole of Highland was 41. This is a biennial indicator and data for 2018/19 will be available in December 2019. • The attendance rate across the most deprived 20% of primary schools was 92.8% in 2016/17, compared to 92.9% in Scotland. The attendance rate for the whole of Highland was 95.0%. This is a biennial indicator and data for 2018/19 will be available in December 2019. • The attendance rate across the most deprived 20% of secondary schools was 87.2% in 2016/17, compared to 87.7% in Scotland. The attendance rate for the whole of Highland was 91.4%. This is a biennial indicator and data for 2018/19 will be available in December 2019. 	
2.2	<p>Grow and Retain Our Skilled Workforce <i>Grow and retain our own skilled workforce in the Highlands; making it an exceptional place to come and study, and to remain to work.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Modern Apprenticeship Programme (approved in August 2017) has created over 100 Modern Apprenticeships with 29% of apprenticeships coming from our more disadvantaged communities (as of June 2018) and is projected to exceed the 	✓

	<p>target of 150 by September 2019. Also, Skills Development Scotland funding has been approved for 50 Early Years Practitioner Modern Apprenticeships for 2019/20.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A primary objective of the Council's Workforce Planning Strategy (2017-2023) is to develop processes for staff transitions and retraining which supports the Council's Redesign process and ensures a flexible workforce. This is the focus of a cross-service working group and significant progress has been made in developing a Transition Portal and a resilience and wellbeing training programme for employees. 	
2.3	<p>Early Years Services <i>Provide services that support all our children to have the best start in life.</i> Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All districts deliver a core suite of parenting interventions. This is in place and maintained through the Supporting Parents Improvement Group and by Family Resource Coordinators in each area. Parents and staff are able to access availability in their own area: www.highlandmapping.wordpress.com • Children meeting developmental milestones (27-30 months) is a nationally benchmarked indicator. Changes to the methodology mean comparison cannot be made to the previous year. For the most recent reporting year, 2017/18, 63.7% of children in Highland met their developmental milestones (27-30 months). • Children achieving their key developmental milestones by the time they enter school was 86% in 2018/19, compared to 84% in 2017/18. The data has been collected annually since 2015 (85%). There has been little variance over time. • The number of children entering P1 who demonstrate an ability to develop positive relationships increased slightly to 93% (2018/19 academic year) from 92% (2017/18). This data has been collected annually since 2014 when the figure was 91%. There has been little variance over time. • For the most recent data available (December 2018), 38% of babies in Highland were exclusively breastfed at their 6-8 week review against a target of 36%. • The number of children achieving one hour or more of moderate activity (5+ days per week) as measured by the 2017 lifestyle survey was 59%, compared to 41% in 2015. The survey is undertaken every two years across Highland schools and will be completed later in 2019. The 2011 lifestyle established a baseline of 22%, and there is continuous improvement over this period. • The Council is on track to implement 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare to every eligible child through a phasing approach across Highland. The Council implemented this in seven settings over 2018/19, with an expected increase of a further 73 settings in August 2019. This is a whole Council programme with input required from estates, human resources, workforce, facilities management, communications, corporate team, legal and procurement. A significant increase to the workforce will be required and many capital projects to be completed before the full implementation. Close monitoring of progress is being undertaken through feedback to the Government. 	✓
2.4	<p>School Refurbishment and Renovation <i>Continue the programme of refurbishment and renovation of Highland schools and address the need for additional capacity.</i> Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2018/19, the Council spent £33.2m on school capital investment, improving condition, suitability and capacity. This included the completion of phase 1 of Inverness High School refurbishment, and works underway on a new Merkinch Primary School, a new Alness Academy, and Smithton Primary phase 2 works. Design work also progressed on Milton of Leys nursery annexe, and the new Ness Castle Primary School. In addition, a pan-Highland programme of works was undertaken in relation to school improvements, modular unit provision and Early 	✓

	<p>Learning and Childcare expansion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2018/19, the Council actively engaged with Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust. This was at both political and officer level, to promote the investment needs within the Highland school estate, and seek further clarity on criteria, process, and timescales associated with the £1Bn of school investment announced by John Swinney MSP in November 2018. The Council continues to explore opportunities to access additional funding, and new ways of financing, to allow a greater scope of capital investment in the future. 	
2.5	<p>Ambitious Schools Management Programme <i>Protect the delivery of education in our schools by implementing an ambitious schools' management programme to support our Head Teachers and staff, securing long-term sustainability, especially in our rural communities.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity to implement a revised Associated School Group (ASG) management structure continued throughout 2018. Work is continuing to evaluate the sustainability of each school across the Highlands. • The pupil/ teacher ratio continues to be better than the national average. In Highland the ratio is 12.9 pupils per teacher (academic year 2018/19), compared to 13.0 in 2017/18. The pupil teacher ratio is below the national average of 13.6 (2018/19). • This aspiration is about supporting Head Teachers. In 2017/18, the Council reported that 74% of head teachers felt that the Council was supporting them to minimise any increase in workload, and that 83% of head teachers report they receive adequate leadership opportunities. The appointment of five Head Teachers and a programme of new leadership development programme demonstrate an ongoing commitment. 	=
2.6	<p>Use ICT and Blended Learning to Support Children and Young People Learn <i>Promote the wider use of technology and blended teaching approaches to support the way our children and young people learn.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76% of Associated School Groups have one to one devices deployed (2018/19) compared to 10% in 2017/18. This programme continues to be rolled out across schools and it is anticipated that it will be completed within the agreed timescale. • This aspiration is about supporting staff and pupils feel confident using ICT. Last year the Council reported that 63% of teaching staff feel confident in using ICT in the delivery of learning and teaching, and 81% of pupils feel confident in using ICT to support their learning. It was also reported that a measure of the percentage of blended teaching approaches which combine online digital media with traditional classroom methods was not established. A revised set of benchmark figures are being developed based on the roll-out of Chromebooks. Survey feedback from teachers includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that Chromebooks were having a positive effect in education; ○ 92% knew where to go to receive help and support; ○ 76% said they enjoyed using the Chromebooks in their teaching; and ○ 6% said they found it difficult using Chromebooks in their teaching. 	✓

3. A Place to Thrive

3.1	<p>Improve Digital Connectivity <i>Urgently seek new and better ways to ensure superfast broadband and digital services are provided to all communities across the Highlands.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p>	✓
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council continue to work closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Government to ensure that the delivery plan for Highland Broadband is completed. This plan has the ambition of 100% superfast broadband coverage in the Highlands by 2021. As part of the Inverness and the Highlands City Region deal, the Council are working with partners on the development of a Local Full Fibre Network (LLFN). This will contribute to 100% coverage target by providing fibre connectivity in a number of towns across the Highlands. • Town centre Wi-Fi systems across the Highlands were delivered in 2018. • The Council continues to work with partners to ensure that Highland communities have access to superfast broadband. 91% of homes and businesses had access to superfast broadband in 2018/19 compared to 79% in 2017/18. • 14 town centres across the Highlands now have public Wi-Fi systems. • Scottish Government has announced a £600m investment programme aimed at ensuring all Scottish premises will be able to access broadband with a download speed of at least 30MB/s by 2021. This will support the ambition of all communities to access superfast broadband. 	
3.2	<p>Whole System Approach Integrated Children's Services <i>Support children and young people to be protected, healthy, safe and responsible by delivering a whole system approach to integrated children's services.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months is a nationally benchmarked indicator and was 0.7% in 2017/18 in Highland. This compares to 5.1% in 2016/17, and the Scottish average of 6.1% (2017/18). Highland ranked 6th out of the 32 local authorities. The dataset and methodology are being reviewed to ensure that this data can be collected and understood in a more robust way. • The number of children who report that they feel safe in their community as measured by the 2017 lifestyle survey was 82.9%, compared to 84.7% in 2015. The survey is undertaken every two years across Highland schools and will be completed later in 2019. • The number of children and young people reported to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) was 223 in 2017/18 (current reporting period) compared to 207 in 2016/17. • Against a target of 90%, 100% of all the children and young people referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS) service were seen within the 18 week target in 2018/19. • The percentage of children and young people sustaining full time attendance at school was 99% in 2018/19, the same as in 2016/17 and 2015/16. • In the 2016/17 academic year, 89.3% of S4 pupils on 50% timetables presented for Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) exams. The average tariff score for those pupils was 34.8. This analysis has not been possible in the past year due a reduction in available resources. 	M
3.3	<p>Tackle Poverty and Discrimination with Partners <i>All people should live a life free from poverty and discrimination and benefit from good mental health and wellbeing. We will work with our partners to achieve this.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Poverty and Inequality Working Group (PIWG) agreed to initially focus on understanding the experience of child poverty, particularly with the introduction of the Child Poverty Act. This reported in August 2018 and rural aspects were incorporated as part of this work. Work to develop the Child Poverty Action Report has used this and other evidence to develop a profile of the drivers of poverty in Highland. • The PIWG agreed an improvement plan in August 2018. Three key areas were 	✓

	<p>identified: Child Poverty, Transport Inequality, and Income Inequality. Work has also taken place during 2018/19 to review these priorities in light of the HOIP Poverty Reduction Delivery Group to determine whether the priorities align and whether one partnership group should oversee all work on poverty and inequality. This is ongoing. A particular focus for PIWG during 2018/19 has been the development of the Local Child Poverty Action Report. This has involved reviewing the evidence on understanding child poverty, considering the drivers, reviewing work contributing to child poverty across Highland and considering areas for action for the coming year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work is required to finalise the measures and actions for the PIWG Improvement Plan. • Progress on the Council's equality outcomes and mainstreaming equality activity was reported to committee in March 2019, including gender pay gap information and employee data. This resulted in a new set of actions to take forward and to be incorporated into a revised Fairer Highland Plan. It is proposed that this revised Plan will incorporate wider inequality and mental health and wellbeing activity across the Council. • Four seminars on Mental Health and Wellbeing for Elected Members took place in 2018 focusing on: local challenges in acute mental health services; lived experience of mental health illness and use of services; awareness of local community-based support; the Council's role as an employer, and support to children, families and schools. The seminars included partners, community organisations and users of services with lived experience of mental health illness and services. This helped to develop a Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for the Council focusing on: Reducing stigma surrounding mental health and increasing awareness; increasing understanding of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and linkages with mental health and wellbeing; focus on local solutions and local services – understanding of what support is available e.g. peer support, community support; and support for staff, Elected Members and communities in relation to suicide awareness. 	
3.4	<p>Maximise Benefits of City Region Deal <i>Build on the work of the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal to help businesses to fully cultivate commercial opportunities including the development of international markets.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the City Region Deal (CRD) the Council committed to delivering the UHI Life Sciences Innovation Centre by 2021 with the lead partner, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). This will be co-located with the new elective hospital and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Life Science business incubator building on the Inverness Campus. Match funding of a further £3.75m from European Regional Development Fund has been secured to enhance the facility. This will improve the commercial activity of Life Sciences across the Highlands and the rehabilitation of patients from across the region. A commercial director is working with approximately 80 projects from new and inward investing companies to develop life science solutions. • The Northern Innovation Hub being led by HIE had faced significant delays in securing the business case approval, however all elements of the business case are approved including the capital element for a new food and drink centre. The team is in place and operating with businesses and individuals from across Highland about the initiatives on offer, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regular coaching, mentoring, workshops, webinars and other support is being provided to 11 businesses in cohort 1 of the IMPACT30 programme; ○ Digital Tourism elements already underway are being managed by the Northern Innovation Hub team, with support from the HIE Tourism team; ○ The contract to deliver the Digital Tourism Leaders Academy has been 	✓

	<p>awarded to Edinburgh Innovations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A six-part series of the Tune in to Tourism Webinars completed in March with around 300 unique businesses benefitting; ○ The XpoNorth Digital programme is being developed; ○ Pathfinder Accelerator: Second Inverness Cohort began 15 November 2018 and completed 7 March 2019; ○ NHS Market Ready is running as a pilot initially; and ○ NEXUS (collaborative space): Relocated to larger facility at new building Solasta House (Inverness), six companies now tenanting offices and a further eight desk users (including 4 Pathfinder participants). There are a total of 14 businesses currently operating in the space, eight of which are life sciences, five technology/ engineering and one supply chain professional services. 	
3.5	<p>Promote and Support Highland Businesses <i>Promote and support Highland business from all sectors including traditional sectors like agriculture, forestry and aquaculture as well as newer technology-driven businesses.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Business Gateway Service continues to support businesses across the Highlands start-up, trade successfully, and grow. The Local Growth Accelerator Programme has been crucial in supporting growing businesses with specialist advice and growth workshops. Business Gateway continues to collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure these businesses are supported at all stages in their development. This service has achieved the following in 2018/19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 280 start-up businesses were assisted; ○ 1,802 business enquiries were successfully handled; ○ 58 growth businesses were supported, with a number looking to employ people, take on new premises, and develop new markets; ● Also, via the Council's loan company (Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited), £936k was invested in 21 businesses, including 3 community businesses. 	✓
3.6	<p>Lobby for Improved Key Transport Links <i>With Government, HITRANS, SUSTRANS and others, deliver improvements to our key transport links.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Council contributed to the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) regional transport strategy. This is now on hold until after the publication of the National Transport Strategy. ● The Council works closely with HITRANS, providing ongoing input to its programme, including a number of strategic projects in the Highlands. ● During 2018/19, the Council liaised with Transport Scotland over strategic projects including A9 Dualling and A96 Dualling, City Region Deal transport projects and Fort William Pre-Appraisal STAG Study. ● The Council had a number of successful bids to Community Links funding for active travel improvements in 2018/19. In addition, a number of active travel studies have been undertaken using developer contributions. ● The transport planning team contribute to Local Development Plans and other strategies to ensure integrated planning and transport strategies. ● During 2018/19, the Council continued to work with Transport Scotland on the delivery of improvements to Uig harbour, and preparation of the development brief is ongoing. Options for the operation of the Corran Ferry were reported to committee and a project officer (based in Community Services) will be appointed in 2019. ● The Council worked with partners to influence air access to Heathrow and other hubs through involvement in working groups. 	✓

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Inverness Community Links Plus project is underway. Governance arrangements have been set up and a number of the specific infrastructure interventions are being progressed. There is some slippage arising from engagement and design matters. 	
3.7	<p>Fewer People Experience Transport Barriers <i>With partners and transport providers ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing services, employment or leisure activities, including working with communities to develop community transport schemes.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Senior Transport Officer (Network & Community) was appointed in November 2018 and a new Transport Officer was recruited to support this work. In November 2018, the Council rolled forward the funding agreement for community transport grants till March 2020 with some adjustments, the original target was to complete the review by September 2018. Criteria for community transport grants has been reviewed, including consultation with the community transport sector. This will be reported to the EDI Committee seeking approval and inviting new bids. Work has begun on supporting the expansion of community transport activities to enable savings in home to school transport, and a pilot project will commence in Poolewe in August 2019. Community reviews are now being incorporated into a Transport Project which will run till 2021. Minibuses managed by Community Services are available for hire by community groups when not required for home to school transport. A minibus based at St Clement's school is now used for home to school transport, replacing three taxi contracts. Legal and operation arrangements have been agreed in principle for existing fleet. Work is still to be done on developing a corporate policy; this is a joint exercise with the Care and Learning service, the original target for this work was September 2018. The Transport Bill will replace the current Statutory Quality Partnerships with a new and more adaptable Bus Improvement Partnership structure (expected to be early 2020). It is intended that a partnership will be formed under the new legislation, building on work already carried out between the Council, HiTrans and Stagecoach. However, there is a pressure on achieving this due to current quality failings on bus service outside the Council's control. Measures have been taken by the Council to resolve this and will continue, through contract management and regular discussions regarding service reviews and performance of commercial services. Inverness Community Partnership has agreed to host a Bus Users' Forum for the Inverness area, beginning in autumn 2019. The Memorandum of Understanding with HiTrans for public transport publicity is currently under review, to be agreed by spring 2020. Also, the Council will develop a Bus Information Strategy which will require consultation with bus operators. It was hoped to have achieved co-ordination of timetables by December 2018. 	M
3.8	<p>Grow and Invest in Community Based Adult Services <i>Work with NHS Highland and others to grow and invest in community based services for adults across the Highlands.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic and financial delivery plan has been drafted, jointly, with this being further developed and the intention to finalise this in parallel with the review of the Partnership Agreement during 2019. The target to complete this work was February 2018. Under the Scheme of Integration, a new Partnership Agreement is required as it is due to expire in March 2020. The Council has agreed a new post to lead the review. Work continues on developing a Care Home strategy. A Strategic Implementation 	M

	<p>plan has been discussed with NHS Highland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Care at Home contract has been developed. Contract terms have been prepared and are due for implementation from 1 July 2019. The contract period will be from 1 July 2019 for a 21 month period to 31 March 2021. • New outcomes and measures for Health and Social Care continue to be developed and considered on an ongoing basis. The target to complete this work was September 2018. 	
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4. A Welcoming Place

4.1	<p>Promote the Highlands <i>With businesses and partners identify “pull factors” to actively promote the Highlands as a desirable and welcoming place to work, live, invest and create businesses.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Highland and Island’s Talent Attraction Strategy is in place and partners are progressing the regional and local activity required. As an early contribution, work is progressing on the refresh and population of the Enterprising Highland portal website as a critical source of local information to aid (re)location decisions. 	✓
4.2	<p>Partnership Approaches to Workforce Plans and Skills Gaps <i>Collaborate with our partners to develop integrated workforce planning strategies to address skills gaps, attract key workers and encourage young people to return after studying away. Engage with Scottish and UK Governments to develop measures that allow for greater workforce freedom of movement.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With partners, the Council established the “Talent Attraction, Retention and Returns Strategy Group”. A Talent Manger has been appointed to focus on key areas for improvement, including developing the Council’s offer as an employer of choice. • The Council has actively supported our EU staff through the Brexit process, with a regular flow of information and a website established to allow them to access the most up-to-date advice and guidance. 	✓
4.3	<p>Promote Highland as a Tourist Destination <i>Tourism continues to be of massive importance to our economy and we will work with business and partners to promote and develop the Highlands as a world class, year round, tourist destination.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has continued to invest in a number of its sites such as the Storr. Nine applications were submitted to the first round of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund with six being successful with £1.1m of grant offered. A further sixteen applications were submitted in January 2019, but results are yet to be announced. • The Council’s visitor facilities are operated by High Life Highland. Additional support in terms of advice and industry intelligence has been provided by Development and Infrastructure Service officers as required. Service Level Agreements with Destination Organisations include an obligation that these organisations assist in promoting our visitor facilities. • Support for the tourism sector and its supply chain businesses has been provided through the Business Gateway Service. This includes hosting dedicated workshops on subjects such as maximising the opportunities brought by the North Coast 500. Several tourism related start-ups were supported in 2018/19. • Annual Service Level Agreements were in place with seven Destination Organisations across Highland in 2018/19. In addition, £36,000 of funding was 	✓

	<p>awarded across six organisations with individual amounts related to the scale of the organisation. This funding encouraged industry collaboration and projects designed to improve the quality and range of the tourism offer in their areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official data for 2018 on visitor numbers and the economic impact of tourism is not yet available. Anecdotal evidence from businesses and industry groups, along with research such as the Visitor Attraction Monitor which measures visitors to attractions, suggests 2018 business levels were similar to 2017 (6.4m visitors and economic impact of £1.25bn). 	
4.4	<p>Increase Road Safety and Reduce Accidents <i>Continue to implement a wide range of measures with our partners so that communities feel safer around roads and to reduce accidents.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2018/19, three new 20 mph schemes have been developed and one scheme implemented. • Whilst the Council has not developed a specific strategy document for piloting 20 mph limits/ zones, a strategic approach to implementing 20mph schemes based on the evaluation of collisions is taken. This ensures that limited resources are used effectively. To date 19 schemes have been introduced with 9 remaining in the current programme for implementation, depending on available resources. Capital funding for the 20mph programme has now ceased. Therefore, the remaining 9 schemes in the programme will be delivered with the remainder of the available budget/ subject to additional funding being secured. The Council are also following national developments, including a Private Members Bill to replace the current 30 mph default speed limit on restricted roads with a 20 mph limit. Scottish Parliament voted against its potential implementation in June 2019. • The percentage of children walking and cycling to school was 52% in the 2017/18 academic year, a slight increase from 51% in 2016/17. • Schools with agreed travel plans was 84.0% in 2018/19, the same as in the previous two years. • 13 Speed Indication Devices signs were installed via the 20 mph programme in 2018/19. These were located in Alness, Dingwall and Wick. 	✓

5. A Redesigned Council

5.1	<p>Accelerate Local Decision Making <i>Accelerate work to bring decision-making to local areas</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local workshops were run with Councillors in 2017/18 to identify how to develop localism. Common themes were: new conversations with Community Councils; making real choices on the disaggregated community services budgets; developing Participatory Budgeting not only for grants but also for mainstream services and service choices; community involvement in transport arrangements (trailing a community review approach); and some place-based ideas. • The Council's approach to localism continues to evolve. During 2018/19 this included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Considering and responding to the Scottish Government and COSLA's Local Governance review on potential areas of local decision making ○ A seminar to consider strategic, local and community governance in Highland ○ Establishing the Council Governance Review and supporting Steering Group ○ Review of the Community Council Scheme including establishing the Steering Group, engagement sessions with Community Councils, and seminar with 	=
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	<p>Community Councils. Focus on understanding how to improve the relationships and communications with Community Councils, and improve involvement in local decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuing to support local participatory budgeting events where Wards identify local funding. This involves supporting a local multi agency partnership to design and deliver the process. In addition, the Council are exploring how to roll out PB approaches to mainstream budgets, working with partners (an expert social enterprise) to scope out how this could apply to Highland. This is closely linked to the work to improve local decision making and involvement of communities in local decision making. ○ Supporting Community Asset Transfer requests and reviewing the process for improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two participatory budgeting events were held in 2018/19. The focus is now to plan how participatory approaches are applied to mainstream service activity. A planning session with the Senior Leadership Team will be held by December 2019. • The Council actively participated in the Local Governance Review during 2018/19 (see commitment 1.2) • Further details of the work to develop the role and sustainability of Community Councils are provided at commitment 1.2. • The third pan-Highland development day for all Community Partnership members was held in November 2018. The Chairs development group continues to meet to address ongoing issues and share knowledge and good practice. The Governance review will also consider how to improve engagement and collaboration between Community Partnerships and Area Committees. 	
5.2	<p>Affordable, Efficient, and Local Services <i>Develop new ways to deliver services that are affordable, efficient and local in order to be fit to embrace future challenges.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018/19, the Redesign Board oversaw and completed peer reviews on Trade Services, Children’s Commissioned Services and Agency and Temporary Workers. Recommendations were agreed and are being implemented under close scrutiny from the Board. Two new reviews have started – on Catering Services and on Engineering Services. Lean reviews have continued with work on cash collection and trades services, and further proposals to be considered. • Piloting a community redesign process and associated communication plans have not been progressed as the focus has been on the delivery of the Change Programme. Therefore, the June 2018 target had not been met. The focus of redesign shifted to create a Programme Management Office with Project Management support to implement redesign reviews. A change programme of 17 corporate projects is now established, supported by a Change Fund. • There is limited interest from partners to streamline support for community bodies and to develop a “community gateway” providing a single point of contact to support community bodies. Therefore, the June 2018 target had not been met. Work is therefore focused on working to involve and work with communities locally to improve involvement and engagement with Council business. 	M
5.3	<p>Reinvigorate Local Democracy <i>Consider the key recommendations from the Commission on Highland Democracy, which seek to reinvigorate local democracy.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission on Highland Democracy interim findings were reported at a Council meeting in June 2017. The final recommendations were launched in December 2017. 	✓

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings of the Commission on Highland Democracy were discussed at the Community Planning Partnership Board in March 2018 and it was agreed to test Partnership decisions against these findings on an ongoing basis. • The Commission’s recommendations are being used on an ongoing basis to inform the Council’s work on localism. This includes the Council’s current Governance review and the principle of improving local decisions making and how to achieve greater community involvement in local decision making. 	
5.4	<p>More Commercially Minded Council <i>Adopt a commercially minded and innovative approach to generate income to support council services and jobs across the region.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial proposals continue to be developed and brought through the Commercial Board. Opportunities in the energy, tourism and land and property sectors are being progressed. 	✓
5.5	<p>Support Asset Transfer and Community led services <i>Many communities across the Highlands are increasingly ambitious to control more assets and land with increasing interest in local service delivery. The council will work with public agencies and communities to simplify our processes and to innovate and spread good practice.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A LEAN review of the community asset transfer (CAT) process is being managed through the Property Board. The review highlighted that community bodies were generally satisfied with their experience of CAT. It was clear that for many, progressing their CAT application was ‘work in progress’, however they were receiving support both from within the Council and from support organisations such as the Development Trusts Association and Highlands and Island Enterprise. The process also looked at the Council’s governance of community asset transfer to ensure it was fit for purpose and is open and transparent. This resulted in an update of the Council’s Community Asset Transfer Statutory Reviews Process. The review highlighted several areas that requiring ongoing work. Actions to address this are in progress and will support our proactive approach to disposal of property both thematically and by area, these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A SharePoint site to enable more effective sharing of data; ○ An online form for groups to submit requests ensuring all required information captured first time; ○ Manage the Expression of Interest stage so that requests are regularly reviewed; ○ Directing all requests to the Council website to ensure that groups are aware of process and support; ○ Make awareness training available for staff and Members; ○ Work to increase legal capacity to ensure processes can take place to speed up requests; and ○ Work to capture costs and benefits of historical leases, forthcoming CATs and capital receipts versus revenue savings. • The Council produced its annual community asset transfer report for 2018/2019. 49 expressions of interest were received, and 15 full community asset transfer requests were received. Of the asset transfer requests received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8 have been agreed; ○ None were rejected; ○ 3 are under consideration; ○ 4 were withdrawn by the Community Transfer Body. • A key element of progressing asset transfers is working with partners to support 	=

	<p>communities to take on assets and successfully sustain them. The Council has worked closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Development Trusts Association to ensure that communities can access support.</p>	
5.6	<p>Align the Council's Strategic and Financial Priorities <i>Align the council's strategic and financial priorities and aspire to work more closely with our public sector partners and businesses to understand and, where we can, to support their priorities.</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council agreed a 3 year revenue budget in February 2019. Whilst this still shows a funding gap in years 2 and 3, this is a significant step forward in terms of restoring medium term financial planning. The Council expects the Scottish Government to restore 3 year grant funding (even indicative) from December 2019 which will provide greater certainty around future funding. The budget in February was presented in a new format that provided a direct link to the Change Programme 2019 – 2022; with a focus on the four themes of Making the Council more Efficient; Commercialism and Income Generation; Redesign and Improvement; and Flexible and Well Managed Workforce. A five year financial plan by February 2018 was the original target. • A new Workforce Strategy continues to be developed; the original target for completion was June 2018. This is now embedded as one of the four key themes of the Council budget agreed in February 2019. There is a direct link between the Workforce Strategy and Financial Strategy with a commitment from the Council to avoid redundancies and manage the transition to new and redesigned services, supporting employment especially in rural areas. 	M