

## Highland Council

4 September 2014

Agenda Item	
Report No	

### Corporate Performance Report 2013-14

Report by the Chief Executive

#### Summary

This report provides an assessment of Council performance against the Corporate Plan and the Council's Programme, Working Together for the Highlands. It covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Good progress is reported with 96% of the commitments (133 out of the total 139) being either completed, on target or where performance is being maintained. For 6 commitments (4%) there is mixed performance.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 An annual report of Corporate Performance is prepared each autumn, 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 Performance Framework for the Council Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' 2012-17 approved by Council in October 2012. In addition the Corporate Plan which reflects both the programme and the performance framework was approved by Council in May 2013. A further 10 commitments were added to the Programme in December 2013 and an updated Performance Framework agreed in May 2014.
- 1.2 The Council's Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' includes a commitment that: 'The Council will continue to measure its progress openly, report on it publicly and listen to its communities, to ensure we are delivering services that provide best value for Council Taxpayers.' This annual performance report contributes to this commitment. It is also scrutinised by Audit Scotland.

#### 2. Council Performance April 2013 to end March 2014

- 2.1 In total there are 139 commitments. Appendix 1 describes performance for each commitment. An overview by theme is provided in the table below. For ease of reference the following symbols have been used to provide an assessment of performance:

- ✓ Progressing well or on target
- = Actions have some slippage or indicators are maintaining performance
- M Mixed performance - positive and negative movements in indicators/actions, or where it is too early to judge
- ✗ Commitment not met (no significant progress)
- C Completed

Where a ✓ and a C have been used this refers to commitments completed in 2013/14.

Theme	✓ Good Progress	C Complete	= Maintained	M Mixed performance	✗ Commitment not met	Totals
1	26	2	4	0	0	32
2	24	1	3	3	0	31
3	8	3	2	1	0	14
4	19	1	5	0	0	25
5	7	0	1	1	0	9
6	13	2	5	1	0	21
7	6	1	0	0	0	7
Totals	103	10	20	6	0	139

## 2.2 Commitments completed, progressing well, on target or being maintained

For 2013/14 there were 133 of the 139 commitments (96%) either complete, progressing well or performance is being maintained (96% in 2012/13). Good progress is reflected across all seven themes of the programme and detailed information is provided in appendix 1 of this report. Achievements include:

- The number of businesses supported during 2013/14 by the Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) was 8803 compared to 8532 the previous year. This maintains the Council's consistent position at the top of the SBBS national league table. (cp1.7)
- Our installed capacity of renewable energy has increased in 2013/14 to 5080MW compared to 1471MW in 2012/13; this significantly exceeds our target of 2908MW by 2017. (cp1.15)
- Our target is to increase the percentage of young people leaving school moving into education, training or employment by 3% by 2017. We increased to 93.1% in 2012/13 compared to 90.7% in the previous academic year. Figures for 2013/14 as normal will be available in January 2015. (cp1.21)
- Our bi-annual survey of pupils carried out in October 2013 shows a positive picture with 87.5% reporting a positive learning environment. (cp2.7)
- We achieved 687 interventions for child healthy weight for 2-15 year olds in 2013/14. The cumulative total is now 1,068 exceeding the 3 year target of 641 to March 2014. (cp2.20)
- Customer contact levels with Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB) remain high with 42,415 customer contacts in 2013/14. The financial gain to customers from CAB welfare benefits cases totalled £11.6m for clients, up from £8.2m in 2012/13. Financial benefit to customers from the advice given by the Council during 2013/14 was £1.634m. We also assisted 1275 customers with our money advice and welfare rights service. (cp3.2)
- £2m funding for early years services has created 9 additional health visitor posts, 12 early year's practitioners, 4 social workers and 20 other posts to enhance support young children and families. (cp3.3)
- New care homes in Tain and Muir of Ord opened in June 2014. (cp3.4)
- Planning permission was granted for the West Link road in April 2014 and planning permission in principle was also granted for the associated sports hub. (cp4.6)
- Funding from Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund (BIF), totalling £700,000 over a 3 year period, has been invested in bus priority measures, to allow more efficient movement of public transport throughout Inverness. (cp4.8)
- We built 134 council houses in 2013/14 exceeding our target of 120. We have now built 261 houses against our target to build 600 houses by March 2017. We expect over 200 houses to be completed during 2014/15. (cp5.1)
- The work of the homeless prevention team has helped to significantly reduce homelessness. Homeless presentations have reduced from 2,147 in 2010/11 to 990 in 2013/14, against a target to reduce presentations to below 1,000 by 2016/17. (cp5.5)

- During 2013/14 our Unified Communications (UC) Project installed new telephone systems to 502 users at 16 locations. These systems use our upgraded data network cabling which has replaced older telephone circuits. (cp6.3).
- We aim to achieve a minimum of 85% fulfilment of customer contact at 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact, during 2013/14 this was above target at 87.9%. (cp6.6)
- The first local plans for police and for fire and rescue were agreed. Members provided feedback on both draft plans and all changes requested were taken on board prior to our final agreement of them in May and June 2014. (cp7.2)

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

There are 6 commitments where mixed performance is recorded (4%). These are summarised below, on the basis of exceptions reporting, and are cross-referenced to Appendix 1. Performance in some areas is affected by economic circumstances and constraints on funding.

- The current level of new-born babies exclusively breastfed at their 6-8 weeks review is 31.9%, below the local target of 36%. It should be noted that we are substantially above the national average of 26.2% and that Highland Council has committed to the community planning partnership breastfeeding friendly campaign (cp2.3)
- Against a target to maintain at 95% or above the grading of schools inspected as satisfactory or better by Education Scotland; for academic year 2013/14 we achieved 84.2% (improved from 80% in 2012/13) . There were 19 schools inspected (cp2.6)
- We aim to have fewer looked after children in out of authority placements. At the end of 2013/14, there were 46 compared to 44 at the end of the previous year against a target to maintain at 42 or below(cp2.9)
- We aim to reduce the rate of emergency inpatient bed days for people aged 75 and over per 1,000 population. The rate has increased to 4,930 per 1,000 in 2013/14 (October 2013 latest data) compared to 4,678 the previous year. Subject to data verification. (cp3.1)
- There were 2,680 bed days lost due to delayed discharge during 2013/14 against a target of 1650. (cp3.1)
- We aim to allow 5000 houses through planning policy by March 2017; we achieved 1725 in the first two years of this 5 year target. With over 20,000 new homes with planning permission (in principle and detailed) we anticipate delivering the 2017 target. The shortfall is largely due to market conditions for delivering new housing rather than constraints arising from the planning system. (cp5.1)
- We aim to resolve 80% of all stage 1 complaints within 5 working days. During 2013/14 we achieved 53.1%, we also aim to resolve 80% of all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. During 2013/14 we achieved 66.1%. The complaints procedure has been reviewed and an action plan is in place to support and drive improvement. Each Service now has dedicated staff to enable this change and most recent analysis has confirmed an overall improvement. (cp6.19)

### 2.4 Commitments not met

There are no commitments in this category.

### 2.5 Overall satisfaction with Council Services

It should also be noted that overall satisfaction with Council services during 2013/14 was 87% the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest figure ever reported by our Citizen's Panel.

## 3. **Review of Working together for the Highlands**

- 3.1 The Council Programme will be reviewed to take account of this performance report and any proposed changes to commitments will be presented to Council by the end of 2014. Any changes to the performance framework as a result of the review will also be

reported.

#### **4 Statutory Performance Indicators 2013/14 update**

- 4.1 We are no longer required to make an annual return of Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) to Audit Scotland and the deadline to publish the results by 30<sup>th</sup> September each year has been removed. While external audit of data has stopped we continue to internally audit and report on SPIs. This change in direction has also taken place alongside the development of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and the indicators within this framework have been adopted as SPIs by Audit Scotland. We will report local SPIs to Council in October 2014 and LGBF indicators in December 2014 once they have been published nationally.
- 4.2 Audit Scotland's approach to auditing of SPIs has been refocused onto Public Performance Reporting (PPR) and how accessible and understandable our performance information is to the public. They will now review our PPR and this includes any performance report which is published by the Council in the 12 months following any financial year end. These changes require a review of public facing reporting including our annual newspaper supplement (normally issued in December each year) to ensure our PPR meets external audit expectations.

#### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Resources: There are no financial implications as a result of this performance report. However the progress outlined above should be noted in the context of the current financial climate. With an overall 87% satisfaction rating for 2013/14, our Services continue to be perceived positively despite budget challenges.
- 5.2 Legal: Implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting.
- 5.3 Equalities and Climate Change/Carbon Clever: This report identifies the progress made with the Council's cross-cutting and specific commitments on equalities and climate change.
- 5.4 Risk: Audit Scotland produces an annual Assurance and Improvement Plan for the Council which assesses, with other scrutiny bodies, the risk of non-achievement of Council commitments. As reported to Council there are no significant scrutiny risks identified and this report highlights that good progress is being made with the Council's Programme.
- 5.5 Rural: The delivery of our commitments is supportive of the Councils' rural objectives. These include reviewing our approaches to service delivery and community resilience in our most remote and rural communities, community benefit from renewables, tackling fuel poverty and campaigning for fair fuel prices.

#### **6. Recommendations**

##### **6.1 Members are asked to:**

- Note the good progress being made with delivery of the Council's Programme for the period 01 April 2013 to end 31 March 2014.
- Note that our approach to Public Performance Reporting is under review including the annual newspaper supplement.
- Await further reports on SPIs and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework in October and December 2014 respectively.

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Author: Evelyn Johnston, Corporate Performance Manager

Date: 13.08.14

Appendix 1 - Annual Performance Report 2013/14

## Appendix 1

### The following three commitments are reflected across the themes of the Council Programme and Corporate Plan

a) **The Council commits to the principle of equal respect for the Gaelic and English languages, whilst also recognising the diversity of indigenous language and dialects within the Highland area.**

The Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2012-16 received statutory approval from Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 18 September 2012. The Council continues to oversee the detailed implementation of the Plan and of our developing and innovative aspirations for Gaelic across all the themes contained in the Plan, through the Gaelic Implementation Group. The Council submitted a comprehensive first Annual GLP Implementation Report to Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 19 March 2014. Following this, Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Chief Executive was invited to address the Full Council on 8 May 2014.

Our Annual Implementation Report covered the period September 2012 to February 2014. It showed the implementation of the Plan to be on track and with significant progress being made across the Plan's 5 Themes. For example, in the first report period, we secured funding partnerships with the Scottish Government that will deliver two new standalone Gaelic primary schools in Fort William (August 2015) and in Portree (August 2017). We also funded and participated in a ground-breaking Multi-Agency Research Project assessing the *Economic and Social Benefits of Gaelic as an Asset*.

Our Plan has a strong focus on actions for our young people and families particularly in education; in the home and in communities. We also have significant commitments to Gaelic in the arts, media and heritage sectors and we have specifically highlighted the economic benefits associated with Gaelic through education, culture and heritage. We will also increase the use and profile of Gaelic across our Services. We also work to ensure that the interests of Gaelic are taken into consideration within our numerous spheres of influence, including the Community Planning Partnership locally and the wider levels of Government beyond. Our annual attitudes and performance survey tell us that 77% of people feel we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language to a great or some extent. Further key performance indicators are also reported at 1.10, 1.21, 2.15, 2.18, 2.26, 2.30 and 2.31 below.

b) **The Council will maintain its commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration.**

Climate change declaration reports focus on how we reduce greenhouse gases from our operations; take action to reduce emissions from the Highlands; assess, and adapt to, the potential risks of climate change; and work with partners to mitigate against climate change. The nature of reporting against the declaration has been under review nationally for over 12 months and the 2013/14 report is required by November 2014. This will show good progress in 2013/14 particularly against the increase in emissions from Council operations reported for 2012/13 largely due to the cold winter in that period.

2013/14 was the first year of implementation of our revised Carbon Management Plan. This sets a target to reduce carbon emissions by 3% per annum to 2020. The plan captures a wider scope of emissions and reports on community emissions, such as those from municipal and household waste, and from energy use in council housing. Performance of the plan will be presented at a meeting of the Resources

Committee in November 2014 and data analysed so far indicates a reduction in emissions of 9% from Council operations, well above the annual target.

As part of working with everyone to achieve a Carbon Clever Highlands, the Highland Council led Carbon CLEVER initiative was launched in November 2013. The initiative has a clear vision and will focus attention on five key strategic themes: Economy, Energy, Transport, Land Use and Resources, and Engagement Strategy. A strategy document and supporting action plan is under development which will help to outline how we can achieve the ambitious target of a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025. This will be published in November 2014. As part of this initiative, a number of projects and actions are being developed and delivered by organisations and people in the region.

Further key performance indicators are reported on carbon reduction at 4.13 below and for climate change at 4.4, 4.15, 4.17, and 7.7 below.

**c) The Council will implement the Fairer Highland Plan including the general and specific duties of the Equality Act (2010), ensuring that people are treated fairly and with respect.**

The Council's equality outcomes published in March 2013 have provided an opportunity to focus on and prioritise key areas of inequality for groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. Over time, these outcomes aim to contribute to a fairer, more inclusive Highland. Areas of priority include:

- a. Improving public attitudes and awareness
- b. Education
- c. Tackling discrimination, prejudice and safety
- d. Access to employment and occupational segregation
- e. Participation and representation
- f. Income, health and rural inequalities

Supporting outcomes cover work with partners to tackle violence against women and girls and hate crimes; improving opportunities to participate in public life and influence decision making; and ensuring that our pupils and school staff have a greater understanding of prejudice based bullying and its impact. For our staff, this means working to eliminate barriers to recruitment and development that contribute to pay inequalities and to increase the proportion of staff who feel they are treated fairly in the workplace.

Progress on equalities work is reported to each meeting of the Council's Community Safety, Public Engagement & Equalities Committee, and Members regularly meet with local equality groups. During 2013/14 they met with the LGBT forum, sensory impairment groups and disability access panels. We also continue to mainstream equality work into the core business and decision making of the Council.

We support and work with our partners and community groups on projects and projects that promote and celebrate equality and diversity. During 2013-14, we have worked with DisabledGo and the Inverness Access Panel to introduce an access guide for the Inverness area; introduced new communication support arrangements for Deaf people to access Council services, supported an LGBT Youth Scotland conference; delivered women in management training with SNH. Local schools have carried out anti-stigma activities with Show Racism the Red Card and HUG (Action for Mental Health).

Responses to our annual attitudes and performance survey indicate tolerance levels may be increasing. 76.8% of the population agree Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all kinds of prejudice, continuing an upward trend from 66.9% in 2011. 52.2% of people prefer to live in an area with lots of different kinds of people, up from 46.8% in 2011. 86% people feel their community is accepting of

people coming to live here from outside the Highlands, the same high level as last year. Further key performance indicators are reported at 6.16 below.

## 1. Working together for the economy

Ag obair còmhla airson an eaconamaidh

- 1.1 **Working with partners and through the Single Outcome Agreement we will implement a comprehensive economic recovery and development plan.** ✓  
Bi-annual progress reporting to Highland Community Planning Partnership and the Highland Economic Forum on SOA delivery has been agreed. At present there has been work on-going with Glasgow University to establish an appropriate measurement and reporting framework.
- 1.2 **The Council will introduced a living wage of at least £7.45 per hour for all council staff by April 1st, 2013, helping the lowest paid.** C  
This was achieved in 2012/13 and benefitted around 800 staff.
- 1.3 **The Council will prioritise and protect frontline staff, to maintain standards of service delivery and provide stability to the Highland economy. We will do all we can to avoid compulsory redundancies.** ✓  
We make every effort to redeploy staff through stringent vacancy management processes and compulsory redundancies are avoided wherever possible by this process and in certain cases early retirement is offered. We report annually each autumn on retirements. The 2013/14 report states that there were 143 retirements of which 44 were on grounds of ill-health, flexible retirement, redundancy or efficiency.
- 1.4 **The Council will prioritise and support the creation of quality jobs in the Highlands. We will encourage local enterprise initiatives, invest locally, and support key industries.** ✓  
Through Business Gateway during 2013/14 we increased from 7 to 29 the number of clients supported in the renewables sector. We also supported 5 clients in the life sciences sector. Information on the delivery of the Economic Recovery and Development Strategy detailed in 1.1 above is also relevant to this commitment.
- 1.5 **The Council will continue to be transparent in awarding contracts, and fair and efficient in settling our bills.** ✓  
We have made progress for this commitment:
- We exceeded targets to pay 60% of invoices within 10 calendar days of receipt and 90% within 30 calendar days. During 2013/14 we paid 73.4% of invoices within 10 days (67.6% in 2012/13) and 93.3% of invoices with 30 days (90.7% in 2012/13).
  - Against a target to increase our spending with Highland businesses by 5% by 2017, total direct spend with Highland businesses increased by 2% in 2012/13 but we decreased direct spending with Highland Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by 2%. The amount we spent with Highland businesses during 2012/13 (most recent data available) for amounts of £1000 or more totalled £97m (£117m in 2011/12) with £74m (£103m in 2011/12) with SMEs in Highland, however this was after the transfer of care services budgets which reduced overall Council commercial spending from £283M to £227M. Data is not available for payments below £1000. Data for 2013/14 is due in September 2014.
- 1.6 **The Council will support small businesses and Highland entrepreneurs with advice and finance through Highland Opportunities Ltd and Business Gateway.** ✓  
During 2013/14 our Business Gateway supported 250 business start-ups (215 in

2012/13) and provided 498 businesses with advice, information or training (548 in 2012/13). The number of growth businesses supported increased to 58 compared to 41 in 2012/13. Two new growth programmes: '*Get Set for Growth: Women in Business*' and '*Leadership and Growth*' have been well received.

**1.7 Working with the Scottish Government, the Council will continue to support and promote the Small Business Bonus Scheme.** ✓

The number of businesses supported during 2013/14 was 8803 compared to 8532 the previous year. This maintains the Council's consistent position at the top of the SBBS national league table.

**1.8 The Council will work with partners to produce a social enterprise strategy for the Highlands.** ✓

We ran a workshop to consider issues and develop a work plan. Following committee approval we consulted partners on the draft strategy, this work is complete and a final draft Social Enterprise Strategy will be considered by committee in the autumn. We have agreed the actions with partners through the Single Outcome Agreement.

**1.9 The Council will promote and support local food production and continue our support for Fairtrade.** ✓

We continue to renew our application for Fairtrade Zone Status for the Highlands of Scotland with the last award in October 2013. Our next renewal application will be submitted in October 2015. Consultation on a potential local food network took place during the final quarter of 2013/14 and the results were reported to committee. Approval was given to establish a virtual network and a pilot project is currently underway.

**1.10 Working with the Scottish Government, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and private sector partners, the Council will maximise the tourism potential of the Highland area. The Council will review how the Council's cash support for tourism is allocated, working with partners to ensure appropriate and effective support is offered to promote our unique Highland identities, traditional sports and culture (including shinty, curling and our Highland games), and varied communities. Opportunities in destination-tourism, green tourism, and the Gaelic language will continue to be explored.** ✓

- A new research contract for national and regional tourism statistics with an improved methodology was tendered by VisitScotland and Scottish local authorities with the first reports (for calendar year 2013) due in summer 2014. These will be used to measure growth in Highland tourism.
- A VisitScotland Agreement was approved by committee in February 2013 and the Highland Tourism Action Plan approved. The level of dedicated Highland marketing activity undertaken by VisitScotland under the Agreement was enhanced by attracting match funding from European Rural Development Fund (ERDF).
- The Council assisted the steering groups taking forward proposals for Tourism focussed Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in both Lochaber and the Inverness and Loch Ness area with the latter being successful in winning a BID ballot in March 2014.
- The Royal National Mod (RNM) will take place in Inverness between 10 and 18 October 2014. The Mod, organised by An Comunn Gàidhealach (ACG), is an integral part of the Scottish Government's National Homecoming 2014 Programme and plans are well advanced for the RNM. The Council's Mod Liaison Group, working in partnership with ACG locally and nationally, aims to increase the visitor and participant numbers attending the Mod. We are also liaising closely with EventsScotland; and the event is now a major element of Highland Homecoming 2014.



- We provided funding support and participated in a ground-breaking Multi-Agency Research Project assessing the 'Economic and Social Benefits of Gaelic as an Asset'.
- In partnership with Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG), we continued to fund Cuach na Cloinne, the national primary schools football competition for Gaelic schools.
- We were also successful in once again attracting the Scottish Traditional Music Awards to Highland. The awards will take place in Inverness in December 2014.
- We have also held discussions to host the Celtic Media Festival in April 2015.

**1.11 The Council will work with the Cairngorms National Park Authority to support them to develop the valuable role they play in the wider Highland environment and economy.**

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- We have worked with and part funded the Cairngorms Business Partnership – the main business grouping in the National Park and played an active role in the Cairngorms Economic Forum and Sustainable Tourism forum.
- A new research contract for national and regional tourism statistics with an improved methodology was tendered by VisitScotland and Scottish local authorities with the first reports (for calendar year 2013) due in summer 2014. These include reports for Scotland's National Parks and will be used to measure growth in tourism in the Cairngorms National Park.

**1.12 The Council will work with Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Scottish Development International and statutory infrastructure providers to promote and develop the Highland area as one of the most attractive environments to do business in Scotland.**

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- The proportion of non-householder planning applications that were dealt with within two months increased in 2013/14 to 62.1% compared to 60.8% the previous year achieving the target set by the Planning Team.
- Delivery of the 2013/14 Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF) was undertaken requiring reserve projects to be progressed and associated permission secured from Scottish Government to carry over spend into 2014/15.
- The number of hectares of vacant and derelict land remediated including sites accessed for future use in 2013/14 increased to 12.98 hectares compared to 3.45 hectares in 2012/13.
- A further 16 environmental projects were completed during 2013/14 taking the total to 29 since 2012/13.
- We have been working closely with partners, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Development International and the Scottish Cities Alliance to promote a variety of inward investment opportunities in Inverness and the Highlands.

**1.13 The Council will review Council procedures, including procurement, to ensure that contracts are drawn up so as to maximise the opportunities for local business.**

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In addition to the targets to increase by 5% the total direct spend with Highland businesses and SMEs outlined in 1.5 above, procurement procedures were reviewed by March 2013. Further work has been undertaken to explore options for service delivery for immediate and longer term action. We will report to committee with our recommendations later this year.

**1.14 Working with the Scottish and UK Governments, the Council will investigate means whereby resources currently held by pension funds can be invested**

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**for the overall benefit of the people of the Highlands.**

Achieved in 2012/13. We continue to monitor developments but must protect the interests of the Pension Fund and ensure that return on investment at least equals that of the current market. At present there are cheaper funding options for borrowers than could be offered by the fund.

**1.15 The Council will support and invest in appropriate opportunities presented by renewable energy, particularly wave and tidal power. We will continue to develop the Highlands as a centre for research & development, fabrication and engineering.**

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Good progress is being made on this commitment. The first phase of the tidal scheme for the Inner Sound has consent, whilst pre-application consultation has been held for the wave scheme off Farr Point and the tidal scheme at Ness of Duncansby has had initial scoping. The application for a tidal scheme at Kyle Rhea is under consideration. Two offshore wind schemes in the Moray Firth and the Coire Glas pump-storage hydro scheme have all been permitted. Proposals have also been permitted at Nigg, Kishorn, Ardersier and Scrabster to enable shore bases to support the renewables sector. Our installed capacity of renewable energy, including all consented schemes, has increased in 2013/14 to 5080MW compared to 1471MW in 2012/13; this significantly exceeds our target of 2908MW by 2017. Even if the recent large permissions for offshore wind and pump-storage hydro (3100MW) are not counted in the total, progress is good at 1980MW.

**1.16 The Council will seek to identify means whereby communities can participate in and benefit from the development of renewable energy across the Highlands.**

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As yet no developers have formally signed up to our policy for the wider distribution of Community Benefit across Highland from on-shore wind farms. However, the introduction of the policy has effectively created an industry norm in Highland of £5,000 per MW plus RPI for on-shore wind farms. This has resulted in 23 developments paying community benefit and 34 communities receiving benefit in Highland. The policy has been reviewed and current focus is on building community capacity co-ordinated by Ward Managers and effective use of the Community Challenge Fund. The updated policy was reported to committee in June 2014. The current indicators on value and distribution of the fund are being reviewed to identify and recommend more effective ways to performance manage this work.

**1.17 The Council will continue to support Highland-wide, large-scale employment growth opportunities in the Cromarty Firth (Invergordon, Highland Deephaven and Nigg Energy Park), Scrabster Enterprise Area, Ardersier and Kishorn and in the UHI Campus development.**

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We monitor our progress in supporting large-scale employment opportunities through the available unemployment rates in key Travel to Work Areas (TTWA). These show good progress against the Scottish average in 2013/14 of 3.5% and progress towards the Highland average of 2.1%.

- Thurso TTWA unemployment rate in 2013/14 was 2.8% compared to 3.0% the year before.
- Invergordon TTWA unemployment rate in 2013/14 was 2.9% compared to 3.8% the year before.
- Inverness & Dingwall TTWA unemployment rate in 2013/14 was 1.8% compared to 2.4% the year before.
- Skye & Lochalsh, Ullapool & Gairloch TTWA unemployment rate in 2013/14 was 2.2% compared to 3.5% the year before.

**1.18 The Council will continue to work with private and public sector partners to promote the Highlands' ports and harbours.**

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In addition to the indicators on unemployment rates in travel to work areas outlined in 1.17 above, we continue to attract cruise liner visits to Highland ports with 98 visiting in 2013/14 slightly lower than 109 the previous year. A target has been set to attract 130 by 2015.

**1.19 The Council recognises the world-class skills of the workforce of Dounreay. We will work with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, the Dounreay Cavendish Partnership, the Scottish and UK Governments and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to ensure Caithness and North Sutherland reap maximum social, community benefits from the decommissioning process.**

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The annual target of 100 jobs (to counter the job losses arising from nuclear decommissioning) has been achieved, with 141 full-time equivalent jobs created or retained in 2013/14. We also continue to support the area's economy through the development of two new primary schools and a new secondary school in Wick and a new council HQ in Wick. We are also making progress developing the National Nuclear Archive/ North Highland Archive, which is due to become operational in 2016. We also provide staffing and office support to the Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership. In 2013/14 we gave consent to onshore infrastructure supporting the development of the MeyGen Ltd tidal energy scheme in the Pentland Firth; and to Scrabster Harbour Trust's application to create a business/ industrial park on ground designated as an Enterprise Area.

**1.20 The Council will monitor implementation of its youth employment strategy.**

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In implementing our youth employment strategy, we provide a range of services which support and enable young people to embark on their transition from school into the world of work.

- Our cross-Service Employability Board has updated the associated Youth Employment Action Plan and monitors service delivery. Information, advice and guidance helps young people assess their options in order to make informed decisions about their future career choices.
- Training and work experience opportunities were created across our services, private enterprises and third sector organisations to enable valuable experience to be gained in a variety of jobs.
- Support was also made available to both our Services and private enterprises to encourage the creation of both temporary and permanent job opportunities.

**1.21 Working with private and public sector partners, the Scottish and UK Governments, the Council will aim to ensure every 16-19 year old seeking employment has the opportunity to access a modern apprenticeship or further training.**

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Overall good progress is being made on this commitment.

- Our target is to increase the percentage of young people leaving school moving into education, training or employment by 3% by 2017. We increased to 93.1% in 2012/13 compared to 90.7% the previous academic year. Figures for 2013/14 (as normal) will be available in January 2015.
- We placed 11 young people in work placements with Gaelic organisations in 2013/14 compared to 9 the year before. In partnership with Skills Development Scotland we also organised a new careers event for Gaelic secondary level pupils. This was to demonstrate the variety of Gaelic related work opportunities across a variety of sectors encompassing arts and media activities through to language development roles.
- Work continues with businesses through grant assistance, partners through employability services alignment and Council Services through their recruitment practices to increase opportunities for 16-19 year olds to access modern apprenticeships.

**1.22 The Council will work with the Highlands and Islands European Partnership and the Scottish and UK Governments to secure maximum benefit for the Highlands from the EU funding programmes for 2014-20, including further transitional funding, and participate actively in key European organisations.**

✓

- The annual EU report for 2013 showed that in the last year of the current programme, we attracted £634,000 in new grants and claimed £1,032,298 grant on expenditure relating to existing projects.
- In 2013/14 we were an active member of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions, Euromontana and the North Sea Commission. Officers have contributed to Scottish and UK wide networks which has influenced the content of the 2014-20 Northern Periphery & Arctic, North Sea and Cross Border Western Scotland/Irish Programmes.
- Active networking and lobbying contributed to €192M transition funding (European Regional Development and Social Funds) being awarded to the Highland and Islands for 2014-20. The activity and means of delivery of these funds will be developed within the Highlands & Islands and governed via a dedicated Highlands & Islands Territorial Committee.
- We responded to Government consultations on The UK Partnership Agreement which sets out at a strategic level what EU regional funding will deliver across the UK and on the structure and content of the EU regional funding programmes in Scotland.

**1.23 The Council will work with the UK and Scottish Governments, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and telecommunications companies to seek to provide Highland homes and businesses with broadband, 3G, 4G and mobile telephony services fit for the 21st century. We will continue to support innovative and community-based schemes to drive delivery.**

✓

The £146m Next Generation Broadband Programme is currently being rolled out across the Highlands and Islands. The project is due for completion by the end of 2016, by which time it is envisaged that up to 84% of the region will have access to next generation broadband services.

**1.24 Working with Scottish Government and other agencies the Council will undertake a review of service delivery to remote and rural communities and identify a sustainable level of support necessary for the provision of services. We will develop new approaches to service delivery and community resilience in our most remote and rural communities, and pilot these in North and West Sutherland.**

✓

During 2013/14 the research projects we part-funded in 2012/13 on rural living costs and deprivation were used to develop a rural proofing tool for use when policy is being reviewed or service delivery is changing. This information was presented to Area Committees between April and June 2014. We were asked to share this work with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for their research on conducting community impact assessments. Discussions with Members in N.W. Sutherland have identified potential pilot projects for transport and culture.

**1.25 The Council will seek to support the development of our urban centres, and put local communities at the forefront of these processes. Working with the Scottish Government, we will ensure that Inverness and the wider region realise the benefits of the 'Seven Cities Strategy'.**

✓

Overall good progress with this commitment.

- We have approved the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) and it is now being independently assessed before we formally adopt the Plan in early 2015. During 2013/14 we gathered information on potential development options and ideas for the future of Caithness & Sutherland. We will now seek people's views on the main issues affecting the area to help us prepare the draft plan with formal adoption by mid-

2017. Work on the West Highlands & Islands LDP will start in late 2014 with adoption planned for late 2017.

- Through the Scottish Cities Alliance, City Investment Plan for Inverness – six major projects have been identified for delivery over the five years period 2014-18. Complementary promotion activity is on-going with the intention of securing inward investment and national and international developer interest.

**1.26 The Council wishes to see Crown Estate revenues directed to local coastal communities and management of the estate transferred from Crown Estate Commissioners to the Scottish Parliament and local communities, as appropriate. The Council will continue to make a case for the review of the management and income derived from the Crown Estate.** =

The transfer of the Crown Estate administration and management now features as a part of the report of the Land Reform Review Group (LRRG). The Planning Development and Infrastructure Committee will consider the recommendations of the LRRG in August this year and will agree how to engage with Community Land Scotland and the Scottish Government on taking forward the reform of the Crown Estate in Scotland in line with the Council's agenda.

**1.27 The Council will maintain its commitment to land reform.** ✓

Good progress being made and we remain a member of Community Land Scotland. During the year we have partnered Community Land Scotland (CLS) to deliver a series of workshops designed for those communities interested in ownership of land and/or assets. The workshop programme continues during 2014/15. We agreed to sponsor the CLS annual conference held at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in June 2014. We also contributed to all land reform related Government consultations during 2013/14 and will now engage with the Land Reform Review Group and CLS on taking forward recent recommendations on land reform. We continue to consider community applications to take on Council assets via the Asset Management Project Board and to transfer assets where community groups can demonstrate sustainable planned use at discounted values.

**1.28 The Council will work to tackle fuel poverty in the Highlands.** ✓

The Affordable Warmth Partnership Group is continuing to develop and implement action aimed at addressing fuel poverty. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme for 2014-15 places a heavy emphasis on new heating systems using renewable technology in council houses. The proportion of our council housing stock meeting the energy efficiency standard (SHQS), in 2013/14 was 81.6% compared to 74.5% the year before (amended from 80% following internal review). A new scheme is now in place for home insulation measures, the Home Energy Programme for Scotland – Area Based Scheme, during 2013/14 there were 300 measures approved.

**1.29 The Council will work with partners to campaign for fair fuel prices across the Highlands.** ✓

We have successfully lobbied for the inclusion of remote mainland areas within the UK Government's Rural Fuel Rebate Scheme, and continue to highlight specific issues that arise to ensure that as many of our remote areas as possible benefit from this scheme. This includes persuading HM Treasury not to use postcode areas as the sole determiner of eligibility for the rebate.

**1.30 The Council wishes to see a fairer system of local taxation than the current Council Tax and will work with both Scottish and UK Governments to achieve this.** ✓

During 2013/14 Officers held discussions with COSLA and the Scottish Government regarding the impact of Welfare Reform and the issues for the

payment of Discretionary Housing Payments. Discussions are now commencing on other options for supporting people with their rent. Officers are also supporting COSLA in the development of options for future funding of local government, and the balance between local and national funding. This will be the subject of discussions at COSLA during the next six months.

**1.31 We will investigate new opportunities for non-domestic rate incentives for town centres/specified streets or localities where support is needed to help reverse localised economic decline.** ✓

Officers are considering the implications of the Scottish Government's recent decision to allow councils to finance their own local non-domestic (business) rate relief schemes. This is currently the subject of consultation with an expectation that new powers may be available from 2015/16.

**1.32 We will explore all opportunities to promote wider application of the living wage across the Highlands.** ✓

Advice from the Scottish Government is that whilst mandating the living wage in Council contracts is not possible, it may be possible to give credit for the implementation of ethical employment practices such as payment of the living wage and avoidance of zero-hours contracts at supplier selection stages. This approach will be considered as part of our procurement processes where there is a significant labour element within the contract.

**2. Working together for our children & young people**  
**Ag obair còmhla airson ar cloinn agus ar n-òigridh**

**2.1 The Council aims to 'Get it Right for Every Child' in the Highlands and to tackle inequality early. In doing so, we will develop our pioneering integration work of children's services with NHS Highland.** ✓

- Low levels of child protection re-registrations (12 months or less between registrations) have been sustained at consistently less than the baseline, for 2013/14 this was 5.31%.
- A review of the Child's Plan has led to an updated format, which will continue to be audited.
- On-going audit confirms increased numbers of children with additional needs have agreed plans in place.
- Additional funding for early years services and earlier assessment and intervention is being implemented as part of enhanced integrated front line teams.
- The Family Nurse Partnership Programme has been mainstreamed.
- The joint Children's Services inspection awarded seven very good grades and two good grades.

**2.2 The Council will ensure that every child aged 3-4, and every looked after child aged 2 in the Highlands will have access to 600 flexible learning and childcare hours, in line with the Scottish Government's coming Children's Services Bill.** ✓

A dedicated infrastructure is now in place to enable implementation of 600 hours per year of flexible childcare and early learning from August 2014.

**2.3 The Council will implement the Scottish Government's Early Years Framework, and continue support for wraparound childcare across the Highlands.** M

In addition to the work on implementing 600 hours/year flexible childcare and early learning outlined at 2.2 & 2.4 the following has been achieved:

- The Supporting Parents Improvement Group has now agreed the Highland Parent Support Framework and Development Plan. This focuses on universal

support for all parents with targeted support and programmes for those with additional needs. The group is in the process of mapping existing provision across the family teams with a view to improving provision where required;

- Wraparound childcare is being provided in every associated school group where there is demand;
- We aim to increase the uptake rate for MMR1 immunisation (% of 5 year olds) and uptake increased in 2013/14 to 96.1% compared to 94.6% the previous year.
- The level of new-born babies exclusively breastfed at their 6-8 weeks review in the first three quarters of 2013/14 (for which local figures are available) was 31.9%, this compared to 32.4% the previous year. The local target is 36%. Nationally 26.2% of babies are exclusively breast fed at the 6-8 week review. Joint improvement work is on-going across Highland to improve breast feeding rates, and Highland Council has committed to the Community Planning Partnership's breast-feeding friendly campaign.
- The target of 95% was exceeded consistently throughout 2012/13 with an annual total of 97.25% being achieved in the allocation of the Health Plan Indicator at 6-8 weeks, this has continued with 96% being achieved in quarter one of 2013/14 (April- June). A full year's data for 2013/14 will be available by the end of 2014.

**2.4 The Council will work with communities to identify innovative and affordable solutions to nursery provision. Where appropriate support will be given to establish co-operative provision.**

√

We aim to provide every pre-school child with 600 hours per year of flexible childcare and early learning. From August 2014 with our partners we will provide the additional 125 hours required to achieve this.

**2.5 Working with the Scottish Government, the Council will ensure that teachers and Head Teachers have access to the necessary support and resources to continue to deliver the experiences and learning outcomes in a Curriculum for Excellence.**

√

Through additional Scottish Government funds to support the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Implementation Plan, schools have continued to be supported by working groups; curriculum development officers in both primary and secondary sectors across a number of curricular themes; conferences and seminars; and CfE policy documents and associated audit tools. A revised policy on professional review and development (PRD) for teachers has been developed which meets the requirements of the new national scheme of Professional Update for teachers, and through which teachers are required to take ownership of their own professional learning and development. The CPD calendar for teachers is reviewed annually and is designed to meet both the needs of individual teachers and the broader CfE agenda.

**2.6 The Council will seek to maintain and build on high educational standards across the Highlands.**

M

Relevant performance is also reported at 2.5 above. Data for secondary schools average tariff scores for 2013/14 will not be available until mid-September 2014 when it is published at a national level. The overall approach is changing and pupils are taking alternative and more personally appropriate qualifications not captured in tariff scores. Data for 2012/13 now available for average tariff scores (cumulative) within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework shows high levels of achievement. The scores cover the average total points awarded for all exam results per pupil. With the exception of S5 these are above the national averages:

- S4 at 196 (national comparator 192), baseline 181 in 2006/7.
- S5 at 318 (national comparator 321), baseline 294 in 2006/7.

- S6 at 404 (national comparator 393), baseline 354 in 2006/7.
- 16 schools inspected have achieved satisfactory or better gradings from Education Scotland in 2013/14. The percentage of schools achieving satisfactory or better gradings in Education Scotland inspections increased from 80% in 12/13 to 84.2% in 13/14 against a target of 95%. There were 19 schools inspected.
- The removal of 5-14 attainment levels and the introduction of CfE means that primary schools across Scotland no longer provide data on pupil progress. Highland pupils participate in the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) undertaken by the Scottish Government. This is reported only at a national level. In line with CfE, our schools are now beginning to undertake tracking of individual progress against pupil targets through pupil profiling and the tracking of performance against potential.

**2.7 Opportunities for those with a learning or physical disability, or those who are at a social disadvantage, will be provided so that every child is offered an educational experience best suited to their needs.**

√

- Work continues to reduce the number of children not in school full time. In January 2014, this involved 84 children.
- Our target is to ensure that all children with high levels of additional support needs have a Child's Plan. Our current target is to achieve 95% by June 2014. By June 2014 we achieved 94%.
- To improve the quality of handover of planning and support arrangements for young people with continuing needs into adulthood, we have established a joint group with NHS Highland, led by both Chief Executives, which has set out and is implementing an improvement plan.
- Our bi-annual survey of pupils carried out in October 2013 shows a positive picture with 87.5% reporting a positive learning environment.
- Further development work will be required to ensure the CfE programmes meet the needs of all pupils.

**2.8 The Council will work with the Scottish Government to continue to develop an ambitious 10-year capital programme to provide modern schools in the Highlands. We are determined to ensure the completion of the current school buildings programme.**

√

Good progress has been achieved during financial year 2013-14. The highlights are as follows;

- Greater Fort William: construction of 3 new campuses will commence during the first quarter of financial year 2014/15, these are:
  - combined primary school in Fort William;
  - joint-campus denominational and non-denominational schools in Caol
  - standalone Gaelic Medium primary school.
- Wick: the construction of the new combined primary school north of the river will commence in the first quarter of financial year 2014/15. The construction of the Wick Community Campus will commence in the second quarter of financial year 2014/15.
- The replacement Inverness Royal Academy will be on site during the second quarter of financial year 2014/15. This project will create the largest secondary school in Highland with an approximate capacity totalling 1,460 pupils.
- In addition, the complete redevelopment of Lochaber High School is scheduled for completion by April 2015. By August 2014 Milton of Leys Primary School will be extended by 3 classrooms. Further investments to improve the accommodation at Raigmore and Smithton Primary Schools have recently been completed.



**2.9 The Council will work for the very best standards as corporate parents for all children in our care, helping them reach their full potential and play an active part in Highland life, beyond care.**

In addition to CfE implementation reported in 2.7 above, across a range of indicators there has been improvement, performance maintained, or some decline in performance.

- Against a target to ensure 100% statutory health assessments are done within 4 weeks of becoming looked after, we were achieving 82.8% at the end of 2013/14, compared to 68.6% the previous year.
- Of those children who need to live away from the family home, but can be supported in kinship care, we have increased the proportion who do so to 18.3% at the end of 2013/14 compared to 16.5% in March 2012. A further 70 children were being supported with an allowance on a Residence Order, compared to 67 the previous year.
- We aim to reduce the length of time it takes to place children with permanent carers once a decision has been made to do this. During 2013/14, the average time was 9.8 months, an increase from 9 months the previous year but below the baseline of 12 months.
- The total number of young people supported through the Family Firm Scheme increased to 18 during 2013/14 with 25 placements, this compares to 14 young people and 19 placements the year before. Additional support has been commissioned via Barnardos to support more into placements.
- We aim to have fewer looked after children in out of authority placements. At the end of 2013/14, there were 46 compared to 44 at the end of the previous year.
- As corporate parents we review the opportunities looked after children have to ensure they develop personal interests and hobbies.
- We are taking measures to reduce the number of placement moves. Case reviews are carried out by senior managers when children have more than 2 moves in a 3 month period or more than 3 moves in a 6 months period.
- We are undertaking an extensive programme of new school buildings, all of which will be designed to meet modern standards and to fully comply with current legislation. We also continue to make improvements to existing school facilities to meet the needs of individual pupils as they arise. A 5 year capital programme was approved in June 2013 which includes funding that can be used each year to fulfil these demands wherever possible.

**2.10 The Council will provide for two school periods of physical activity every week for S1-S4 pupils. By 2014, we will ensure that all primary school children enjoy at least two hours of physical activity every week.**

Through a 5-15 years Physical Activity Plan there will be two secondary school periods and two hours in primary schools of physical activity each week. The percentage of schools achieving this provision during session 13-14 has risen from 89% to 96%. It is expected that this will increase to 98% by August 2014. However a small number of schools have still been unable to achieve this level of provision due to resource and curricular difficulties. These issues should be resolved by August 2015.

**2.11 The Council will promote energy efficiency in Highland schools, and build on the success of our 'eco-schools'.**

Activity in this area for schools and early years centres is being maintained:

- During 2013/14 we maintained the number of schools in bronze eco awards (152) and with silver awards (148). The number of schools achieving or maintaining the prestigious Green Flag award was 100 in 2013/14 compared to 104 the previous year.
- Our Early Years Centres are all expected to achieve an eco-schools award

by 2017. Good progress continues to be made and during 2013/14 there were 39 bronze (32 in 2012/13), 17 silver (8 in 2012/13) and 2 Green Flag awards, the same as the previous year.

- 5% of schools (9) were engaged with the energy element and 8.2% (16) the waste element of the Schools Global Footprint Project. For the energy element there were 24 presentations completed with 560 pupils attending the sessions during 2013/14. For the waste element there were 27 presentations to schools covering waste awareness, littering, dog fouling and general environmental issues.

**2.12 The Council will implement the Highland Play Strategy and maximise the opportunities for children to learn, develop and enjoy through active play.**

√

- There is cross-Service co-ordination to ensure that play infrastructure meets the requirements of the Highland Play Strategy
- We are supporting and consulting with communities to identify play facility needs through capital and revenue budgets. Communities are successful in finding and providing funding to more than match the Council's investment.
- Our Play Improvement Group has produced a Play Improvement Strategy and an action plan which is supporting its implementation.
- We continue to ensure all new school designs incorporate outdoor learning and play space that has been designed in conjunction with school staff and pupils.

**2.13 The Council will continue to support teachers in their efforts to raise attainment levels in literacy and numeracy at all levels. We will work to maintain high levels of achievement in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.**

√

We reported on related performance on teachers CPD in 2.5 above and on satisfactory school inspections in 2.6 above.

- Standardised testing in P3, P5, P7 and S2 are being used to inform teacher's professional judgement and to monitor literacy and numeracy. Value added information will be available for the first time in secondary schools.
- A new tool has been introduced to review the performance of pupils in their Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) courses. This new tool will provide a much broader range of information. This information for 2013/14 will be available in January in 2015.

**2.14 The Council will introduce a training programme, so that parents, parent forums and parent councils are more aware of their rights, powers and responsibilities, and are able to make a substantive contribution to the life and work of their school.**

√

A new Parental Engagement Group has been set up to improvement communication between the authority and parents. This group will develop and implement a Parental Engagement Strategy during the 2014/15 school year. We will continue to develop our links to National Parental Forum (NPF).

**2.15 Gaelic Medium Education will continue to develop and expand at all levels. The Council will also support teaching staff as they encourage new Gaelic learners.**

√

In addition to the new Gaelic primary school in Fort William reported in 2.8 above, we plan to build a new Gaelic primary school in Portree with funding support from the Scottish Government by 2017. The number of nursery, primary and secondary school pupils speaking Gaelic in 2013/14 was 1,827 compared with 1,856 the previous year. An online map now shows all pre-school, primary and secondary Gaelic provision across Highland including pupil numbers and a contact email for

public enquiries. We continue to liaise with partners of work plans and to co-ordinate extra-curricular and other Gaelic related activities in communities. We have set up a new Gaelic Education Improvement Group to provide support for Gaelic teachers and support staff across our network of Gaelic schools and Gaelic Medium departments.

**2.16 The Council will enhance services for children who need extra support, including implementation of the role of 'Pupil Support Assistant', investing further in social care, and ensuring a more personalised approach.**

√

In addition to the performance reported in 2.7 above:

- We have been a national pilot for Self-Directed Support for children and families, and we have implemented the new resource allocation model. Against a target to increase those receiving a self-directed support package 81 did so in 2013/14 compared to 78 the previous year.
- We have reduced the time that a young person waits to see a Primary Mental Health Worker, sustaining a number of months when 100% were seen within 26 weeks. We aim to achieve the target that no young person will wait more than 18 weeks from December 2014.
- We have integrated Occupational Therapy Services, and have increased staffing levels so as to reduce waiting times for all Allied Health Professional Services (data to be confirmed).
- We aim to reduce the number of children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) who are not in full time education. To do this we survey schools twice a year and gather information on all those not attending full time. We use this information to consider the support and resources needed to assist pupils to return to school full time. This includes identifying professional development opportunities for support staff, reviewing the resources allocated to schools and considering the use of additional resources to develop the curriculum to better meet the needs of individual pupils.
- The Pupil Support Assistant is fully implemented, and now allocated on the basis of assessed need, involving an additional £1.65m funding in 2014/15.

**2.17 By effectively and efficiently utilising new technology, the Council will promote a wide choice of subjects for pupils, in line with the Curriculum for Excellence.**

√

The 16+ Strategy implementation is reported at 1.20 above. We are engaging with schools and colleges to review our provision of online courses for use in the senior school. A revised development and implementation strategy is being produced to ensure we are maximising the potential benefits for young people.

**2.18 In line with the Scottish Government's commitment the Council will work to find innovative ways to introduce children to modern languages and Gaelic from an early age.**

√

Following the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 Languages Report we established a 1+2 working group. The group have developed an implementation strategy for Highland and produced spending proposals for the use of additional funding provided by the Scottish Government.

**2.19 As part of our preventative spend agenda, the Council will commit an additional £1m each year for early years services and families. We will fully utilise funds available from the Scottish Government's Early Years Change Fund.**

√

We allocated an additional £1m to early year's services and families during 2013/14. Preventative spend has been committed to a range of early years posts as part of the new integrated family teams. It is envisaged that these teams will be operational by October 2014.

- 2.20 The Council will work with NHS Highland to achieve public health targets for breast feeding, immunisations and healthy weight, and to address smoking and substance misuse.** ✓
- There is related performance information reported at 2.3 above. In addition we:
- achieved 687 interventions for child healthy weight for 2-15 year olds in 2013/14. The cumulative total is now 1,068 exceeding the 3 year target of 641 to March 2014.
  - carried out a lifestyle survey, which included self-reporting by 11, 13 & 15 year olds about smoking, and using alcohol and drugs, and indicates significant reductions in all age groups in every case.
- 2.21 The Council will continue to encourage activities and services for pupils beyond the traditional school day.** =
- The number of children and young people taking part in recognised leadership and achievement awards (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Sports Leaders and Youth Achievement Award) has reduced to 1081 in 2013/14 compared to 2,023 the previous year (amended from 1633 reported previously). Sports Leadership Awards which accounted for over 1/3 of the awards overall are no longer being delivered following Coaching Highland ceasing operation. The updated target is to maintain levels within the range of 900 to 1000.
  - Schools are making good progress in implementing the Outdoor Learning Strategy. Progress will be reviewed at the end of the 2015/16 academic year.
- 2.22 Working with our many partners, the Council will seek to expand access to culture and the arts across the Highlands, and implement the Council's culture strategy.** ✓
- In addition to the report on the Royal National Mod at 1.10 above:
- Positive customer feedback for the Blas Festival was maintained in 2013/14 with 91% of participants satisfied with the quality of events and value for money.
  - We work with a number of partners to implement our strategic commitments across our Gaelic Language Plan; including those relating to Gaelic in the arts, media and heritage
  - We continued our funding support for Fèisean nan Gàidheal, the Blas Festival and Feis Rois in 2013/14 and we review the service delivery contracts annually.
  - We also supported FilmG, the national Gaelic Film Awards and a number of schools in Highland produced films and, again, won awards.
  - We developed a Gaelic Writers and Authors in Schools Programme with author D. S. Murray.
  - We organised a successful learning visit by Gaelic pupils from Inverness Royal Academy to counterparts in Ireland.
  - We have commenced planning events, emphasising our links with Nova Scotia and Canada, which we hope will form part of the Royal National Mod 2014.
- 2.23 Working with High Life Highland, the Council will continue to ensure that a youth worker is active in every Associated School Group Area.** ✓
- During 2013/14 there was a youth worker active in every associated school group (secondary school area including its feeder primary schools).
- 2.24 The Council will provide more safe cycle tracks and 'walk to school' pathways where appropriate, and will encourage healthier and greener** ✓

### **methods of travel.**

During 2013/14 the percentage of children walking and cycling to school was 53%. Figures are based on those schools which return the Sustainable Transport (Sustrans) 'Hands Up Scotland' annual survey. The number of schools with agreed travel plans was maintained at 84%. The Scottish Government's ring fenced allocation for Cycling Walking and Safer Streets for 2013/14 was fully allocated to a variety of projects that encourage walking and cycling in conjunction with School Travel Plans. We are working with schools to identify projects for 2014/15.

**2.25 The Council will continue to roll out a single 'smart' card to all young people by 2013, allowing access to leisure, libraries, arts & cultural activities, youth information and school meals.**

√

The report on youth workers in 2.23 above is relevant to this commitment. We continue to achieve high levels of uptake of the National Entitlement Card (NEC) by secondary pupils with 88% uptake in 2013/14 compared to 92% in 2012/13. (National average 72%).

**2.26 The Council will work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Higher Education institutions to address the issues of supply of Gaelic medium teachers. We will continue to seek funding for two new Gaelic medium Primary Schools.**

√

- We have been involved in the work of and represented on the National Education Strategy Group from which a national strategy has now been developed and approved to address the challenges faced in the education, training, recruitment and retention of Gaelic medium teachers.
- We continue to work in partnership with university providers of teacher education, in particular the University of Aberdeen and University of Highlands and Islands, in order to provide suitable courses, in particular for those who cannot follow the traditional route for teacher education. In addition, we are working closely with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to identify where existing teaching staff are interested in developing their language skills to enable a transfer to Gaelic Medium education.
- Funding is in place for the Fort William and Portree Gaelic Schools which includes a £4.5M contribution from the Scottish Government.

**2.27 The Council will ensure that all bidders for significant council contracts must provide targeted plans to recruit young unemployed people in the Highlands.**

√

- Following the successful trial of the Construction Skills Standards for contractors to recruit trainees or apprentices on the Lochaber Phase 3 Project, this initiative was also incorporated into the other 'major' projects tendered last year, including Caol Joint Campus, Fort William Gaelic Primary School and Lundavra Primary School.
- We will aim to implement the relevant aspects of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act as quickly as possible to optimise the use of procurement as a tool to minimise the effects of unemployment.

**2.28 The Council will introduce a single Children's Champion, to uphold the values of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

C

Achieved in 2012/13

**2.29 The Council will support the UHI as it continues to develop relationships with secondary schools, and as we seek to retain skills in the Highlands. We will maximise the opportunities offered by the new UHI Inverness campus and other UHI colleges across the Highlands, and continue to work with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig to further develop its community partnership projects.**

√

We reported on planning guidance of enterprise areas for the UHI Campus under 1.17 above and on opportunities to engage with colleges, Sabhal Mor Ostaig & UHI at 2.17 above.

**2.30 Working with partners, the Council will play a full part in increasing the number of Gaelic speakers living and working in the Highlands.**

√

We maintained the number of 0-3 year olds, nursery, primary and secondary school pupils speaking Gaelic at 1827 in 2013/14 compared to 1856 the previous year. The number of adults learning Gaelic increased to 286 in 2013/14 compared to 224 in 2012/13. The target is to increase by 20% by March 2016.

**2.31 The Council will continue the council's memorandum of understanding with Nova Scotia.**

√

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia and the Council was signed in 2002. It is currently being reviewed and we plan to renew it at the Royal National Mod in Inverness in October 2014. We have met the Executive Director of Gaelic Affairs in the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia and the Convener has invited the Minister for Gaelic Affairs to the Mod in October.

### **3. Working together for caring communities**

Ag obair còmhla airson coimhearsnachdan cùramach

**3.1 Working with the NHS and other agencies, the Council will continue to deliver the pioneering integration of health and social care services.**

**M**

- To achieve fully integrated front line health and social care services for adults a first single point of access was established during 2013/14 in 5 local districts, against a target of 6. We aim to have one in all nine districts by the end of 2015/16.
- We have undertaken a review of services as part of the Highland Quality Approach and have service improvement action plans in place.
- We aim to reduce the rate of emergency inpatient bed days for people aged 75 and over per 1,000 population. The rate has increased to 4,930 per 1,000 in 2013/14 (October 2013 latest data) compared to 4,678 the previous year.
- We had 9 people waiting for hospital discharge beyond the two weeks target in 2013/14 compared to 22 the previous year.
- There were 2680 bed days lost due to delayed discharge during 2013/14 against a target of 1650.
- We aim to have no-one waiting longer than 18 weeks from referral to treatment for psychological therapies by December 2014. During 2013/14 we achieved 88% within timescale compared to 55% the previous year.
- We have yet to implement methods to monitor waiting times for Allied Health professional services, and are committed to reducing these in line with national targets.

In relation to delayed discharge, NHS Highland report these increases reflect a national trend, influenced by a more severe demographic impact than projected; the pace of change in care at home which is saturating the market and the suspension of admissions to care homes relating to low quality grades. NHS Highland is progressing nationally recognised work to expand care at home capacity, including an additional £1m and being the first authority in Scotland to achieve a living wage requirement for providers. They are also supporting improvement in care home quality grades across all sectors, and are contributing to the work of a national task force which recognises the serious implications of this national trend.

- 3.2 The Council will work to alleviate poverty by encouraging benefit uptake and supporting a range of advice services.** ✓
- Customer contact levels with Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB) remain high with 42,415 customer contacts in 2013/14 compared to 44,961 the previous year, and with cases presented increasingly complex, including successfully appealing welfare benefit decisions.
  - The financial gain to customers from CAB welfare benefits cases totalled £11.6m for clients, up from £8.2m in 2012/13.
  - Additional funding totalling £250k was provided to CAB and in-house teams during 2013/14 to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform. Outcomes achieved include increased customer contact time, representation at appeal stage and increased financial benefit for customers.
  - The financial benefit to customers from the advice given by the Council during 2013/14 was £1.634m. Amounts secured are consistently between £1.5m and £2m. We also assisted 1275 customers with our money advice and welfare rights service.
  - The uptake of free school meals for all schools increased to 77.1% in 2013/14, compared to 73.4% for the previous year.
- 3.3 The Council will commit at least £3million of the Council's budget each year to spend preventatively to improve the quality of life for young people, older adults and those struggling with deprivation.** ✓
- £3m was allocated to preventative spend with outcomes agreed during 2012/13 and 2013/14.
  - £3m has been included in the commission for adult social care, to support increased community based initiatives and preventative services for older people
  - £2m funding for early years services has created 9 additional health visitor posts, 12 early year's practitioners, 4 social workers and 20 other posts to enhance support to young children and their families. These staff are being recruited to the new integrated family teams.
  - £1m in funding to address deprivation has created Community Health Co-ordinators and Food Practitioners in our most deprived communities, additional support for carers and women who experience domestic violence, and employability initiatives, including for looked after children.
- 3.4 The Council will work with partners to complete the building of new care homes, run by the independent sector, in Tain and Muir-of-Ord. We will complete the refurbishment of existing local authority care homes and retain them in public or community ownership.** ✓
- The new care homes in Tain and Muir of Ord opened in June 2014.  
Refurbishment of the Wade Centre in Kingussie is now being planned and is due for completion by March 2016. A new facility in North Sutherland will be provided by March 2018.
- 3.5 The Council will establish nine district partnerships for health and social care.** C
- Achieved in 2012/13.
- 3.6 The Council will work so that adults who may be at risk of harm are better supported and protected.** ✓
- The Highland Adult Support & Protection Committee Improvement Plan 2013-16 is being implemented alongside a developing performance framework which supports a clear system of governance and effective leadership. The plan outlines a commitment to recognising and responding effectively to risks to individuals, supporting practitioner confidence and competence and to increasing public awareness and confidence.

3.7	<p><b>The Council will appoint a Carers' Champion, responsible for representing the interests of carers at a council level and with other appropriate public bodies, and engaging with carers across the Highlands.</b></p> <p>Achieved in 2012/13.</p>	C
3.8	<p><b>The Council will appoint an Older People &amp; Adults' Champion, responsible for representing the interests of elderly people in receipt of council services. The post-holder will also engage with appropriate bodies representing older people.</b></p> <p>Achieved in 2012/13.</p>	C
3.9	<p><b>Adults with additional needs will receive the support they require to maximise their independence, help promote and retain their dignity, and enable them to contribute to decisions about their care.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Highland has an action plan in place to implement self-directed support in line with the legislative timetable of April 2014.</li> <li>• The Personal Outcome Plan is being piloted, and along with the new resource allocation system, will ensure a more personalised approach to the achievement of health and social care outcomes.</li> <li>• The proportion of people reporting that they had a sense of belonging to their community (as reported by the Citizen's Panel) was 74.1% in 2013/14 this compares to 71.2% in 2012/13.</li> <li>• The Council and NHS Highland have agreed that any experiences of discrimination by people from specific care groups is not a direct indicator of performance regarding this action.</li> </ul>	=
3.10	<p><b>The Council will encourage people to consider and make use of the opportunities provided by self-directed support.</b></p> <p>We have increased the number of people receiving self-directed support over the year to 262 in 2013/14, from 223 the previous year. The new Social Care Self-directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013 came into force on 1st April 2014 and placed a duty on Local Authorities to offer 4 Options on how adults, children and carers receive the care and support they have been assessed as eligible to receive. A resource allocation system is under development and being trialled in 2 of the new integrated district teams (Invergordon &amp; Skye) and should ensure a more equitable distribution of funding.</p>	√
3.11	<p><b>Working with the NHS and other partners, the Council will support people, particularly older people, people with disabilities and Council tenants, to get the most out of technology for personal use, including tele-health, tele-care and on-line services.</b></p> <p>We are hoping to be able to evidence the impact of the service on key indicators such as prevention of hospital admission and supporting safe hospital discharge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telecare involves the use of technology to support people to live in their own homes, and over 2013/14, the number of people receiving high levels of such support increased from 380 to 445.</li> <li>• Visitor numbers at archive centres for on-line and public callers continue to rise. With the addition of Facebook pages on-line this has significantly increased on-line contact. During 2013/14 there were 207,910 on-line and public callers, this compares to 32,954 the previous year. For future years a new minimum target of 180,000 has been set.</li> </ul>	√
3.12	<p><b>Working with NHS Highland, the Council will ensure that users of care services and their families are actively involved in evaluation, quality assurance and decisions about their services. We will monitor and scrutinise the work of the NHS in this regard, to champion the needs and wishes of patients.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the new Children's Services Plan, For Highland's</li> </ul>	=



Children 4, has involved the self-evaluation of the range of services that we provide for children and young people.

- Every school, team and unit in Care & Learning Services has undertaken self-evaluation, and is preparing local service development plans.
- NHS Highland has introduced audit and self-evaluation processes across adult social care, including in care homes and care at home.
- As part of the strategic commissioning arrangements and introduction of Highland Quality Approach, NHS Highland has engaged with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and independent sectors and service user organisations in service planning and service development processes.

### **3.13 The Council will work with NHS Highland to support the retention of rural general hospitals and a network of local community hospitals and enhanced local community care services.**

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In addition to ensure performance on delayed hospital discharges and bed days lost is reported at 3.1 above. Performance has improved against targets.

- We aim to increase the number of people, by age group, receiving a care at home service, including intensive support. During 2013/14 we achieved: Increases to:
  - 2,447 people aged 65+ receiving a care at home service (2,417 in 2012/13);
  - 923 people aged 65+ receiving evening/overnight care at home service (885 in 2012/13);
  - 1863 people aged 65+ receiving weekend care at home service (1880 in 2012/13).
  - 369 people aged 18-64 receiving a care at home service (340 in 2012/13);
  - 111 people aged 18-64 receiving evening/overnight care at home service (101 in 2012/13);
  - 187 people aged 18-64 receiving weekend care at home service (166 in 2012/13);
- We aim to reduce the number of younger adults, aged 18-64, in institutional care settings. During 2013/14 there were 236; a reduction from 245 in the previous year.
- Reablement staff are working closely with other members of the wider District Teams and in 2013/14 a total of 44.4% of people did not require on-going care interventions after the initial 6 weeks compared to 46.3% the previous year.
- From 2012/13 to 2013/14 the % of older people aged 65-74 admitted to care homes reduced from 12% to 9%, significantly, however, the % of those in the older age group of 75 and above increased from 88% to 91%.
- The Older People Improvement Group have established a baseline of available specific intermediate care home beds along with those care homes willing to discuss providing this type of service. This will be progressed through the Strategic Commissioning Plan for Older People 2014-19
- Falls Prevention initiatives are a priority across hospitals, care homes and community settings and these were implemented during 2013/14 with good success reported. Work continues to develop ways to capture A&E admissions due to falls within NHS Highland.

### **3.14 We will continue to lobby for measures that will mitigate the negative effects of Welfare Reform on individuals, providers of social housing and the Highland economy. As the first Council in Scotland to work directly with the Department of Work and Pensions on Universal Credit migration for local claimants, the Council will also seek to improve communications, data sharing and local joint working with the Department.**

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- We have worked continuously with partners to mitigate some of the negative impacts of welfare reforms. There has been keen interest from a national level in how Universal Credit is impacting in Highland as the first live site.
- The Welfare Division of the Scottish Government visited in January; Member/officer meetings with local MPs were held in March and we regularly attend meetings convened by COSLA on Welfare Reform. The Local Authority and DWP Delivery Partnership Group looking at Universal Credit issues in Highland met three times in Inverness.
- Although the numbers affected by Universal Credit locally (and nationally) are still low, appropriate local support arrangements have been put in place. Our Discretionary Housing Payments budget was boosted during the year by increased resources which have allowed temporary respite for most social sector households affected financially by DWP's Under Occupancy rules.

#### **4. Working together for the better infrastructure**

Ag obair còmhla airson bun-structair nas fheàrr

- 4.1 Working with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and partners, the Council will strongly support the upgrade of Berriedale Braes, the whole length of the A9 north of Perth, the whole length of the A82 and the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen.** ✓

We are working with partners to identify the optimum solution for Berriedale. Designs for this project were announced in April and we are working with the Scottish Government to produce a final scheme by autumn 2014. Transport Scotland has consulted on proposals for the dualling of the A9 and is also developing detailed designs for the upgrading of the A96. Improvement projects on the A82 are underway at Pulpit Rock and the Crianlarich bypass.

- 4.2 The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and Network Rail to secure improvements, reduced journey times and fairer pricing on the Highland rail network, to protect and modernise the sleeper service and to develop new commuter rail opportunities around our urban centres.** ✓

The new Network Rail control period for 2014-19 includes upgrades to the Aberdeen – Inverness line and the Highland mainline. Serco has been announced as the new operator of the sleeper service from April 2014.

- 4.3 The Council will improve the roads maintenance allocation system. We will spend preventatively on our roads according to need.** =

- We reviewed the road maintenance allocation system and reported this to committee in May 2013. Funding was allocated according to need and is based on the outputs of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey. An additional £2m of preventative spend was allocated to road maintenance and a further £1m from the Strategic Change and Development Fund to improve the condition of our roads.
- The percentage of the road network that was considered for maintenance was 35.6% in 2013/14 compared to 33.2% in 2012/13, against a target of 34% or lower. The level of road maintenance funding, good road drainage and the severity of winter weather are the main factors affecting the trend in road condition and the beneficial effect of expenditure takes a couple of years to appear in the measured road condition.

- 4.4 The Council will instigate a co-ordinated, thorough, Highland-wide programme of inspecting watercourses and cleaning gullies & ditches to avoid further water damage and support future repairs, and we will make this programme available to the public.** ✓

We started to test a new method of prioritising drainage maintenance for road side ditches in the Black Isle and Lochaber. An on-going programme for gully emptying work has been published. Gully cleaning vehicles are equipped with GPS and data logging technology to help identify gullies requiring more or less attention. That information will be fed back into future work programmes.

- 4.5 The Council will develop options for a long-term solution which provides a secure and effective transport link between Lochcarron and the Lochalsh area in consultation with partners and the local community, and pursue the options for securing external funding.** ✓
- An options appraisal for this route has been completed and community consultation has taken place. We will continue to consider the options and discuss the implications with stakeholders.
- 4.6 Working with partners, the Council will support the delivery of the Inverness West-Link road and the associated amenity and leisure improvements.** ✓
- Planning permission was granted for the West Link road in April 2014 and planning permission in principle was also granted for the associated sports hub. We are continuing the compulsory purchase necessary to undertake the scheme.
- 4.7 Working with partners, the Council will support the delivery of the Inverness Airport Rail Link.** ✓
- Dalcross Station is now included in Transport Scotland's Capital Programme for delivery by 2018.
- 4.8 The Council will introduce a plan for sustainable, integrated transport through the Highlands, including consideration of a statutory Quality Bus Partnership and support for schemes, such as the introduction of a 'Cool Rider' for young people.** =
- The plan for sustainable integrated transport in the Highlands has been taken forward as part of the Green Transport Strategy, which will be finalised in November 2014. It is also intended to update the Integrated Transport Strategy, and this will be carried out in tandem with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan in early 2015.
  - Funding from Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund (BIF), totalling £700,000 over a 3 year period, has been invested in bus priority measures, to allow more efficient movement of public transport throughout Inverness. Discussions continue with bus operators in respect of the Bus Partnerships.
- 4.9 The Council will engage with the private and third sector to carry out a review of community transport across the Highlands.** =
- Two workshops were held to gather views of providers and users, surveys of four selected groups were carried out, and maps of vehicle availability have been produced. Whilst there has been some slippage during the course of 2013/14, it is now intended to report progress to committee in August 2014.
- 4.10 The Council will work with the Scottish Government and other partners, to improve cycle safety across the Highlands, and expand cycle routes.** ✓
- We are working with the Highland Road Safety Group to improve road safety. Accident statistics were reported to committee on 12 September 2013. In Inverness improvements to Huntly Street will introduce streetscape facilities to develop cycling/pedestrian access and at Millburn Road a digital cycle counter is installed as part of planned cycle development of the area. Across Highland many more projects are being delivered to expand national cycle routes, improve amenities and encourage more people to cycle. We are working with many partners to develop sustainable travel including Highland and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) and Sustainable Transport (SUSTRANS).

- 4.11 The Council will work with the Scottish Government and other partners to improve motor cycle safety and the safety of young drivers.** ✓
- We reported jointly with the Police on road casualties to committee on 12 September 2013. We work with the Police who take the lead on motor cycle safety with targeted campaigns at the beginning of each summer season.
- 4.12 Working with partner agencies, the Council will draft a Green Transport Strategy.** ✓
- The consultation period for the draft Green Transport Strategy (GTS) has ended and responses are being collated and incorporated into a revised document. 2011 census data on various modes of transportation is now also available and will be integrated into the revised document. The final draft will be reported to committee in November 2014.
- 4.13 The Council will continue to reduce carbon emissions from its operations and work to meet the new target in the Carbon Management Plan (CMP) of a 21% reduction between 2011/12 and 2020. We will align the CMP to Carbon Clever Initiative.** ✓
- The carbon management plan includes a target to reduce emissions by 21% by 2020 from 2012/13. Our annual target for reducing carbon emissions from our operations is 3% per annum. Currently, data indicates that in 2013/14 we reduced Council emissions by 9%; although this data has yet to be verified. This would mean that total emissions have reduced by 6% over the first two years of the Carbon Management Plan (CMP). Our annual report on the CMP will go to committee in November when all data will be verified. We have started work on aligning our CMP with our Carbon Clever initiative which will be completed in Spring 2015.
- 4.14 The Council will work with Highlands & Islands Airports, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and partners to attract new and enhanced air services. We will support the development of Wick and Skye airports, and campaign to protect the Inverness to Gatwick link and reinstate the Inverness to Heathrow link. We will also encourage the development of new international air-links.** ✓
- New services to Inverness include Easyjet to Gatwick which started in March 2014 and Flybe to London City and Dublin, both commencing in October 2014.
  - Following the success of establishing the Inverness to Schiphol air service last year the Inverness to Amsterdam route has become one of the inbound routes featured in mainstream tourism marketing activity for Scotland.
- 4.15 The Council will increase opportunities for recycling and achieve a 57% rate of recycling household waste by 2017.** =
- Against our target to increase household recycling we achieved an increase of 1.5% in 2013/14 to 45.5% and we are making some progress towards our overall target for 2017 of 57%.
- 4.16 The Council will introduce a 'zero tolerance' approach to litter, including a review into the Council's bulky uplift charges, and extend the powers of community wardens to issue fines.** ✓
- The Cleanliness Score (% of streets that meet the standards). This is a new national benchmark indicator and data will be published nationally and reported to Council in December 2014.
  - Enforcement days in pre-arranged locations are now being undertaken and we continue to help communities with litter picking events.

- The review of bulky uplifts was completed and reported to committee.
- We also fund social enterprise partners to re-use and recycle waste. We are consulting them on future funding options and the outcome will be reported to committee for approval.

- 4.17 Working with the Scottish Government and partners, the Council will continue to develop flood alleviation schemes across the Highlands.** ✓
- Phase 1 of River Ness (Tidal Section) (Ness Bridge to Friars Bridge) is well underway, and Phase 2 (Friars Bridge to Harbour) started on site in June 2014. The contract for Phase 3 of the Smithton/Culloden flood alleviation works is scheduled to commence in the autumn.
- 4.18 The Council will ensure the provision of allotments and the maintenance of green spaces and public parks across the Highlands and encourage various schemes such as community growing.** ✓
- We are maintaining the number of parks and green spaces in Highland.
  - We took over maintenance from the contractor that built Phase 1 of Inshes District Park in August 2013.
  - We met the target of four new allotment sites established between 2012 and 2014, with these located in Ullapool, Nairn, Cromarty and Kingussie. This brings the total number of allotment sites we support to 9, providing 314 new allotment plots. We have exceeded the target of identifying suitable land for a further four new sites over this period with land now identified for five, located in Wick, Thurso, Inverness, Portree and Kinlochleven.
  - Allotment targets are to be reviewed in 2014 and this will now take place when new Community Empowerment legislation is enacted. We responded to the consultation on proposed changes.
  - There are 33 known community growing schemes in Highland. We agreed to target our support initially to areas of concentrated multiple deprivation. This will help to reduce inequalities and link with the Community Health Coordinators and Community Healthy Weight Dieticians employed by NHS Highland and funded by us.
- 4.19 The Council will review its winter maintenance services, to investigate new areas for innovation and improvement.** ✓  
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- A review of our winter maintenance policy and service was reported to committee on 16 May 2013. A number of improvements were agreed and a revised winter maintenance policy to reflect the changes was agreed in August 2013. The changes were introduced in the 2013/14 winter and included, reducing (and simplifying) the number of route priorities from 4 to 3 and providing 3 spare vehicles. Contact has been made with community councils in relation to the winter self-help scheme with a low take-up of the offer.
- 4.20 The Council will work with the Scottish Government to press the UK Government for the same level of protection as previously provided by two emergency towing vehicles covering the Minch and Northern Isles.** ✓
- We are continuing to progress this with partner local authorities and the Crown Estate.
- 4.21 We will devise a comprehensive strategy to bring about a reduction in energy costs in the Highlands, including particular support for fuel poor households and co-operative fuel buying.** =
- Relevant performance information is reported at 1.28 above including the Affordable Warmth Action Plan, council house energy efficiency and home insulation schemes. Work has commenced on the strategy and research is underway with a range of stakeholders to obtain the basis for the policy options.

- 4.22 **We will adopt the principles of ‘shared space’ in order to find innovative solutions for reconciling traffic movement with quality public spaces in our cities, towns and villages.** ✓  
 We are progressing design works for shared space in Academy Street, Inverness. The Huntly Street improvements as part of the Phase1 of the River Ness flood alleviation scheme include shared space. We are incorporating Designing Streets principles into new developments. We agreed a new measure in May 2014 to monitor the number of shared residential space schemes approved; we will begin reporting this in 2014/15.
- 4.23 **We will work with HITRANS and rail operators to seek expansion of concessionary commuter fares to routes south and east of Inverness.** ✓  
 We are continuing to progress discussions through Hi-Trans and ScotRail. The new ScotRail franchise will be announced in October 2014.
- 4.24 **We will campaign for incentives from Scottish and UK Governments to reduce the negative impact that poorly maintained buildings have in our communities.** ✓  
 The Buildings Recovery of Expenses (Scotland) Bill was passed in the Scottish Parliament in June 2014. We will be responsible for local implementation of the bill. We are monitoring the issue of defective building notices and will use this information in discussions with the Scottish and UK Governments.
- 4.25 **We will promote seaborne tourism by developing the network of harbours around our coastline through a partnership of Council harbours, trust ports, community owned or operated harbours, and privately owned facilities, in order to generate income and employment for our coastal communities.** ✓  
 Through the Leader and Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) funding schemes projects to enhance sailing related facilities were supported in Kyle of Lochalsh, Gairloch, Lochinver and Wick.

## 5. Working together for better housing

Ag obair còmhla airson taigheadas nas fheàrr

- 5.1 **The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Housing Associations, and the private sector to help to deliver 5000 new homes by 2017. This will include at least 600 Council houses and other affordable homes.** M
- We built 134 council houses in 2013/14 exceeding our target of 120. We have now built 261 houses against our target to build 600 houses by March 2017. We expect over 200 houses to be completed during 2014/15.
  - Through planning policy we facilitated the building of 892 houses in 2013/14 below our target of 1000. We aim to allow 5000 houses through planning policy by March 2017; we achieved 1725 in the first two years of this 5 year target. At the end of the year Planning Permission had been granted for over 20,000 new homes (in principle and detailed) this we anticipate will deliver the 2017 target. The shortfall is largely due to market conditions for delivering new housing rather than constraints arising from the planning system.
- 5.2 **The Council will deliver an ambitious Housing Capital Programme, utilising innovative, environmentally sustainable methods to build new council houses and achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for existing housing stock.** =
- In addition to progress on building new council houses reported in 5.1 above we

continue to progress towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. For 2013/14 the proportion of our housing which met the standard was 70.1%. Following a significant increase last year the proportion has been maintained this year.

**5.3 The Council will maximise the supply of new affordable housing by continuing to build Council houses and considering other innovative methods of funding new affordable housing to meet housing need.**

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We have continued to look at new ways of increasing the number of Council houses to meet the target of a minimum of 688 new properties and 200 additional 1 bed units by 2017.

- We have built 261 new Council houses against the overall target.
- We have delivered 24 new 1 bed units and secured a further 61 for delivery this year.
- We were involved in the recent national review of Scottish Government funding for affordable housing which has led to increased grant funding for new council house building and we will carry on looking for other funding opportunities.
- We have completed 72 homes utilising a housing trust type model which provides homes at a rent which is between market rent and Council rent, with tenants having the opportunity to purchase after 5 years. We are building a further 90 such homes which will be ready for occupation during this and next year.
- We are developing and promoting the Council's Empty Homes Initiative seeking to turn long-term empty properties into new affordable homes and have completed the first project delivering 3 homes for affordable rent.

**5.4 The Council will adopt innovative approaches, utilising the powers available to the Council, to bring empty properties, both in public and private ownership, back into use for the good of the community. This will include use of the powers offered by the Unoccupied Properties Bill – currently before Parliament – to increase Council Tax on empty properties.**

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We approved a pilot empty homes initiative scheme, and funding for it in April 2013. We aim to decrease re-let times (average time taken) for council house tenancy changes. For 2013/14 the average re-let time was 37.6 days. The method of calculating this indicator has changed and this new baseline will be used to monitor progress in future.

**5.5 The Council will work with partners to reduce and prevent homelessness in the Highlands.**

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We continue to make good progress in reducing and preventing homelessness. We aim to reduce the number of people/families approaching the council as homeless. Homeless presentations have reduced from 2,147 in 2010/11 to 990 in 2013/14, against a target to reduce presentations to below 1,000 by 2016/17. The number of households in temporary accommodation fell to 458 in 2013/14 compared to 477 the previous year. The work of the homeless prevention team continues to have a significant effect on reducing homelessness. During 2013/14 they dealt with 2211 referrals against a target of 1,000. They had positive results in 1642 cases against a target of 500 each year.

**5.6 The Council will work with and empower tenants to become more directly involved in the management of their local environment and council housing estates.**

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A new Tenant and Customer Engagement Strategy is being developed with the direct involvement of tenant volunteers. This will set out the range of ways that tenants can become involved as volunteers in housing services and what the service will do to promote and encourage their involvement over the next 3 years.

The new Strategy and Action Plan for 2015 – 2018 will be published early 2015.

- 5.7 The Council will work with other housing providers to develop a “housing options approach” to ensure that everyone looking for housing in the Highlands gets consistent information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about housing options that meet their needs.** ✓
- In addition to the work of the homeless prevention team outlined in 5.5 above, Work has been continuing over the last year. An upgrade of the Housing Information System is due to take place this year and this will provide the capacity to develop more web based / interactive advice and information.
- 5.8 The Council will work with tenants to develop a “Highland Housing Charter” setting out our service standards and how we will involve tenants and other customers in measuring and reporting against these standards.** ✓
- Progress against the Charter will be measured through an annual report to the Scottish Housing Regulator and to tenants. We have approved a monitoring and reporting framework for charter indicators. We are now reporting progress to committee on quarterly indicators, and will prepare our first annual report during 2014.
- 5.9 The Council will continue to press for the UK Government to write-off the council’s housing debt and seek to work with the Scottish Government and support its efforts to make the case for a debt write-off.** ✓
- During 2013/14 the Leader has discussed the issue of housing debt with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth and with the Minister for Local Government and Planning in the Scottish Government. The Depute Leader has held meetings with the Secretary of State for Scotland and with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Contact has also been established with Shetland Islands Council to discuss the terms of the agreement on their housing debt in more detail.

## **6. Working together for empowering communities**

Ag obair còmhla gus comas a thoirt do ar coimhearsnachdan

- 6.1 The Council will introduce local area committees. We will review the local area committee structure after the first year, which will see two pilot committees with substantial powers set up in Inverness and Caithness & Sutherland.** ✓  
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- Area Committees have been successfully rolled out and now deliver an opportunity for communities via their local Councillors to engage in projects to deliver improved collaboration between the Council and partners focused on improving economic vibrancy, service delivery and support for community empowerment. Examples include scrutiny of local Plans, the joint working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and improvements to the Community Challenge Fund.
- 6.2 The Council will continue to engage with and support the work of the Highland Youth Convener, Highland Youth Voice (HYV) and local members of the Scottish Youth Parliament. We are committed to giving more young people a voice in this council.** ✓
- In addition to performance on youth workers detailed in 2.23 above:
- Young people continue to be involved in policy development through the Highland Youth Voice. Work has begun on developing a Pupil Engagement Strategy which will broaden young people’s involvement in policy development.
  - The Child’s Plan format records the individual child’s views about their needs. It focuses on their engagement in their plan in an appropriate way



and takes account of the actions needed to support them and their family. Individual plans are reviewed and also sampled for quality assurance.

- 98% of our schools had pupil councils in 2013/14; this is the same as the previous year. In addition a number of schools have been exploring other ways of engaging with the young people in their schools.
- The Highland Youth Convener attends Council meetings and is a member of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee. The Youth Convener meets with senior officers; officials and partner representatives on a regular basis to ensure consultation and engagement in service planning and delivery. The Highland Youth Parliament (Youth Voice) continues to meet twice per year, bringing 80 Youth Parliament Members and partner organisations together to focus on a theme chosen by young people each time, for 2013/14 it was “For a Better Future” and “Being the Change”. Highland Youth Voice elections take place every two years and were successfully completed in 2012/13.

**6.3 The Council will work in partnership with organisations in the Highlands to improve our use of video conferencing, teleconferencing and web-casting technology – efficiently and effectively reaching every part of the Highlands.**

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- We completed a review of our video conferencing and web casting during 2013/14. The webcasting service has been successfully extended to all Area Committees. Video conferencing equipment will be upgraded as part of the roll out of Unified Communications and will enable video conferencing from PCs and laptops, as well as upgrading existing equipment within meeting rooms. We completed a review of performance indicators for video conferencing and will now report on the number of video conferences conducted and the estimated mileage avoided due to this as part of the Annual Carbon Management Plan review.
- During 2013/14 our Unified Communications (UC) Project installed new telephone systems to 502 users at 16 locations. These systems use our upgraded data network cabling which has replaced older telephone circuits. A pilot in Dingwall is scheduled for mid-September, where it will run for approximately 3 months. Assuming the pilot is deemed successful, full deployment will commence late 2014 to HQ and other sites, prioritising to locations where greatest benefits can be obtained quickly and by the needs of further office rationalisation projects.

**6.4 The Council will allow public petitions to be considered by the Council and relevant strategic committees.**

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Our public petition procedure and accompanying guidance have been in operation since 1 August 2013. The procedure allows members of the public, community groups and local businesses to raise matters of concern for consideration at meetings of the Council or our strategic committees.

**6.5 The Council will improve public access, including out-of-office-hours access, to the Council and its services, offering members of the public a range of access points including by phone, online and in person.**

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- A Customer Services Board was set up to review 23 out of 35 Service Points. The outcome of this review is underway and is due to be completed by June 2015.
- We aim to have 60% of services accessible through Customer Services including the website by March 2017. During 2013/14 we increased to 9.4% compared to 1% the previous year. Our new website was successfully launched on 29 May 2014 and will contribute to achieving our overall target.
- We aim to increase the number of people who are in urgent need who are able to access 24 hour a day help through NHS Highland’s out-of-hours

service. In 2013/14 there were 11,150 people who used this service, below the 13,064 who used it in 2012/13.

- The total number of out-of-hours calls going through our call centre service provided by Police Scotland was 9,442 in 2013/14

**6.6 The Council will increase the number of issues resolved at first contact.**

We aim to achieve a minimum of 85% fulfilment of customer contact at 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact, during 2013/14 this was 87.9% and above target.

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**6.7 The Council will engage meaningfully with the third sector across a range of policy areas and in service provision. We will also agree with partners a joint approach to supporting volunteering and community development in the Highlands.**

In addition to our report on a social enterprise strategy at 1.8 above, we:

- Have agreed through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board a partnership approach to Community Learning and Development which will meet the new statutory duty placed on the Education Authority to plan, co-ordinate and target support for those in most need and to set this out in a strategy by September 2015.
- We aim to increase the number of people stating that they volunteer on a regular basis. Feedback from the Citizens' Panel for 2013/14 shows that volunteering levels remain high with 39% saying they volunteer in some capacity (36% in 2010) and 55% of them say they do this at least every week.
- Since November 2013 we have had 11 Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP) community networkers in post, at least one per District Partnership. These posts are to support the shift of resources into community based services in health and social (preventative) care. They have helped to identify what support is required for elderly people and their carers to access existing services and what new initiatives and activities are needed to help improve the lives and outcomes for older people in the Highlands.
- Community Development staff are working in communities in a number of areas including men's sheds and Dementia Friendly Communities. Links have been made with High Life Highland around falls prevention, health and wellbeing. We have as yet no data on the number of community based activities in areas.

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**6.8 The Council will work with community councils and other community organisations to encourage community empowerment, and will introduce a community challenge fund of £1million of recurring expenditure to support community projects which explore new ways of delivering services at a local level.**

The Community Challenge Fund was introduced in January 2013 and to date 58 expressions of interest have been received and 8 of these have been asked to submit full applications. Three applications have subsequently been approved in the communities of Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston, Kyle of Lochalsh and Resolis. As a result services and/or assets have been transferred to these communities.

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**6.9 The Council will work with public and private sector partners to maximise community benefits from new development, and to channel those funds into new community developments, training and jobs. We will encourage communities to make full use of the Highland Council's community benefit system.**

In addition to relevant performance information on the community fund and renewables at 1.16 above, there were 137 community groups actively involved in community based economic development in 2013/14.

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- 6.10 The Council will support community, business and infrastructure developments through a successor to the EU 'LEADER' programme and other EU funds.** ✓
- Work continued to successfully close the 2007-13 Highland LEADER Programme. Work started in March 2014 to prepare the new 2014-2020 Programme. This will be developed and finalised in partnership with our stakeholders before being submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2014.
- 6.11 With partners the Council will implement the changes to community planning and develop the Single Outcome Agreement in line with the Scottish Government review so that community planning is effective in the Highlands.** ✓
- The CPP has reviewed its partnership structures to ensure they are fit for purpose in delivering the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). Quarterly progress reports against each theme of the SOA are scrutinised by the CPP Board. Positive feedback is received from the Scottish Government in attendance at the CPP Board and through CPP reports presented to the Convention of Highlands and Islands in 2013/14. In 2013/14 new work started on how best to link partnership working at Highland and local levels. This has led to evolving District Partnerships as a vehicle for local community planning and a broadening of their remit from health and social care. This will be progressed further in 2014 and 2015.
- 6.12 The Council will ensure that all new school buildings will act as a community-hub. We will investigate new and innovative ways to deliver more community access to existing buildings as part of a review of the schools estate.** ✓
- Information on the school capital programme reported at 2.8 above. Information on the school capital programme reported at 2.8 above. During financial year 2013/14 good progress was achieved with the School Estate investment programme with a number of significant school investment projects reaching the construction phase. These include Noss Primary School, Wick Community Campus, Caol Joint Campus primary school and Inverness Royal Academy. Each of these new school campuses is being constructed on the basis of community hub model and includes community facilities including multi-use-games-areas.
- 6.13 The Council will continue to develop an events, festivals and public art strategy for the Highlands.** =
- Relevant performance information for 2012/13 on the Blas Festival and Feis movement is reported at 2.22 above.
- We are maintaining our commitment to maintain a Royal National Mod presence in the Highlands every three years; Inverness in 2014, Ft William in 2017 with 2020 still to be discussed.
  - Development proposals are now being informed by our guidance on public art. The River Ness flood alleviation scheme is being designed to include public art to make the river front environment more attractive.
- 6.14 The Council is proud to serve a region of many cultures and will actively promote multi-culturalism.** ✓
- During 2013/14 we remained above target with 88.5% of learners who do not have English as a first language (ESOL) and who attended classes achieving accreditation, specified goals or progress to positive destinations (e.g. employment or further education).
- 6.15 Working with Highlife Highland and other partners, the Council will widen access to English language tuition, support Adult Basic Education and** =

### **deliver progressive and innovative library services.**

Information is provided on related performance on adult learners in 6.14 above.

- During 2012/13 we added 69.6% of the recommended national target for annual number of additions to the adult library lending stock per 1000 population, this compares to 71.2% the previous year.,
- We also added 113% of the children's and teenage target for library lending stock per 1000 population. This compares to 93.7% the previous year.
- While there has been decrease in the number of borrowers (active library members) as a % of the resident population, which in 2013/14 was 17.6% compared to 19.1% the previous year, there has been an increase in the use of libraries. Comparing ourselves to other Scottish Local Authorities (2012/13 data most recent available) our libraries are:
  - Ranked 1st in Scotland for visits per 1,000 population. Actual visits in 2012/13 (which includes public libraries, school libraries and electronic "visits") were 2.15m and have risen again in 2013/14 to 2.20m and
  - Ranked 1st in Scotland for cost per visit. The cost per visit for Highland libraries was £2.00 per person, with the Scottish average being £3.31.

### **6.16 The Council will implement the Fairer Highland Plan, including the duties of the Equalities Act 2010, ensuring that staff and services users are treated fairly and with respect.**

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In addition to the detail of our cross-cutting theme of equalities and the Fairer Highland Plan at the start of this report item (C):

- We met targets to publish reports which covered our equalities outcomes and the mainstreaming of equalities during 2013 our next report is due in 2015.
- We published employment data and an Equal Pay Statement on target during 2013, our next report is due in 2015.
- We increased the percentage of women in management in our top 2% of earners to 35.8% in 2013/14. This compares to 35.5% the year before.
- The percentage of women in management in our top 5% of earners also increased from 46% in 2012/13 to 46.7% in 2013/14.
- We increased the percentage of our buildings with public areas suitable for and accessible to people with a disability to 95.5% in 2012/13. This compares to 94.3% the year before.
- Our website has been redesigned to accessibility standards including features such as customising the font and colour scheme. We have a central web team who monitor the quality of content to ensure it works for users with screen reading software. Most of our web pages are now free of accessibility errors.
- During 2013/14 we reported on the level and type of hate incidents and crimes (including in schools) and domestic violence incidents. While the number of incidents of both hate crime and domestic abuse being reported to Police had risen slightly, in both categories the actual number of crimes and offences involved had decreased. Work started on a review of policy and monitoring of bullying and prejudice based incidents in schools.
- Elected members continue to engage with equality groups on a regular basis, in 2013/14 they met with representatives from sensory impairment groups, LGBT forum, mental health advocacy group, and attended a seminar on Gypsy/Traveller issues.
- There continue to be indications of improvements in support for tackling prejudice in Highland. We monitor and report on attitudes to prejudice and discrimination and in 2014, 76.8% of respondents felt Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice, continuing an upward

trend from 66.9% in 2011.

**6.17 The Council will provide information to the public in clear language, to the 'Crystal Mark' plain English standard.**

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Procedures are in place for our corporate Graphic Design Service to include Plain English assessment as part of the process of producing key public documents. Staff develop Plain English skills through internal courses such as Effective Business Writing. Key corporate documents are now being screened by the Plain English Campaign. Trained staff in the Public Relations Team also proof read documents checking Plain English standards are being met.

**6.18 The Council will continue to measure its progress openly, report on it publicly and listen to its communities, to ensure we are delivering services that provide best value for Council Taxpayers.**

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- Audit Scotland reports that we have strong financial management. During 2013/14 we met the Government's annual efficiency targets achieving 7.921m against a target of £7.9m.
- Our accounts for 2012/13 have been approved by external audit. We will receive a report on our 2013/14 accounts at the end of October. We also agreed our 2013/14 revenue budget and Council Tax levels in February 2013.
- Despite a number of budget challenges we reported an underspend (pre-audit) of c.£6m in 2013/14. We met deadlines in issuing Council Tax bills and information.
- We provided positive annual reports on corporate performance including Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs).
- We received positive reports from external audit during 2013/14. There were again no areas of significant corporate risk in the shared annual assessment by external audit.
- The Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) 2014-17 for Highland Council produced by Audit Scotland commented that there had been significant improvements in public performance reporting.
- The public's overall satisfaction with our services in 2013/14 was 87% the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest figure ever reported.
- We realised benefits to the value of £2.945m in 2013/14 through our Corporate Improvement Programme against a target of £3.636m. Areas where a shortfall occurred where: Business Support (£0.7m) which has previously been reported to Committee, Asset Management Planning (£0.2m), offset by overachievement of procurement savings (£0.3m). Savings targets roll into 2014/15 and work continues to progress on delivering the 2014/15 project targets, including any slippage from 2013/14.

**6.19 The Council will improve public engagement, consultation and our handling of complaints.**

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We reported on related performance on public and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector involvement in District Partnership at 6.8 above.

- In spring 2014 the Council agreed a two stage approach to consulting with the public on budget savings. Stage 1 which involved local public budget events has concluded and a budget blog has been introduced. Stage 2 is to run from mid-September to November and will involve surveying the Citizens' Panel, running focus groups and surveying a newly created Communities Panel. Reports on the approach to creating the new Communities Panel are being made to Area Committees over the summer 2014.
- The Service Point Review is underway and we will implement decisions and efficiency savings arising from the Customer Services Board.

- We aim to resolve 80% of all stage 1 complaints within 5 working days. During 2013/14 we achieved 53.1%
- We aim to resolve 80% of all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. During 2013/14 we achieved 66.1%
- The complaints procedure has now been reviewed and an action plan is in place to support and drive improvement. We report progress regularly to committee. Each Service has dedicated staff to enable this change and most recent analysis has confirmed an overall improvement.

**6.20 Working with the UK and Scottish Government and Electoral bodies we will encourage voter turn-out, especially among younger people.** ✓

In 2013/14 we worked with High Life Highland and Highland Youth Voice to support the running of mock referenda in a number of Highland schools. Consultations have been undertaken with student body representatives in Highland colleges and we have supported the Electoral Registration Officer's initiatives to encourage registration. Social media was used to encourage participation including community council elections.

**6.21 We will reduce the volume of printed material produced by the Council building on a current initiative for paperless Council meeting options and developing further options for members, customers and employees to conduct Council business on-line.** ✓

In addition to accessibility to services via our website reported at 6.5 above:-

- We will introduce Carbon Clever committees on a phased basis during 2014/15 onwards.
- We will introduce a self-service human resources system for staff and managers which will further reduce paper use during 2014/15 onwards.

## **7. Working together for strong and safe communities**

Ag obair còmhla airson coimhearsnachdan làidir agus sàbhailte

**7.1L Working with the Scottish Government, the Council will support the maintenance of police numbers in the Highlands.** ✓

The national deployment model for Police Scotland was explained at the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities (CPE) Committee meeting in March 2014. This showed that there were 524 officers employed in Highland as part of the North Division for Police Scotland. This figure relates to a head count and is higher than the number of full time equivalent posts because of the working pattern of staff, e.g. some working part-time. At the time of the report (March 2014) there were 20 vacancies. In addition to the 524 staff managed by the Police Commander for Highland, there were a further 162 officers reported to be based in Highland managed by specialist divisions within Police Scotland. As far as comparisons can be made with staffing in previous years, the Area Commander has confirmed that police numbers for the North Division overall are slightly higher than found in Northern Constabulary prior to 2013. To explain the deployment model further and to enable scrutiny of it, members attended a briefing by the Area Commander in May 2014.

**7.2 The Council will ensure that elected members will play a full part in agreeing the priorities and local plans for police and fire and rescue services in the Highlands. Elected members will also monitor performance against these plans.** ✓

The first local plans for police and for fire and rescue were agreed in 2014. Members provided feedback on both draft plans and all changes requested were taken on board prior to our final agreement of them in May and June. Both local plans are aligned well to the Single Outcome Agreement and to the partnership priorities for community safety. Both plans were also subject to local consultation

at Area Committees and through Ward Forums. Performance against the plans is scrutinised at each CPE Committee and from the Summer of 2014 at Area Committees twice a year.

- 7.3 The Council will effectively engage with and scrutinise the national services for police, fire and rescue and Scottish Ambulance Service. It will do this through its community planning arrangements, its scrutiny committee and a programme of self-evaluation.** ✓
- We scrutinise police, fire and ambulance service performance effectively through our CPE Committee meetings. Board members from the national bodies are also in attendance at these meetings. From summer 2014 scrutiny will also be possible at Area Committees, with area performance reports to be presented twice a year for police and fire services.
  - Scrutiny through community planning arrangements is conducted by the Community Planning Partnership Board which considers community safety performance reports against the Single Outcome Agreement quarterly. The scrutiny arrangements in Highland are well regarded by the Government's 'Building Safer Communities Network' and by the national inspection bodies for Police and Fire, following their visits to the Highlands and observation at committee meetings. Members have agreed to hold further self-evaluation workshops in advance of any inspections planned; although these are not expected in 2014.
- 7.4 The Council will ensure that low-level, low-risk offenders will make amends to their communities, through a Highland-wide Payback scheme.** ✓
- Criminal Payback Orders and processes to support them are now in place and well established. There are a range of schemes in place, reflecting local offending patterns and local needs. There were 593 Payback Orders in 2013/14 compared to 587 the previous year.
- 7.5 The Council will make full use of the Cashback for Communities fund, and will encourage partners to provide incentives for people to channel their energies in a more constructive way.** ✓  
**C**
- Full use has been made by groups and communities of the Cashback for Communities fund.
- 7.6 The Council will work with the Scottish Ambulance Service, the NHS and the Scottish Government, to achieve better coverage across the Highlands. We will investigate sustainable solutions to improve patient transport in rural and urban areas.** ✓
- Activity during 2013/14 was dominated by efforts to secure funding to enable the Integrated Transport Provision Project, intending to pilot as an action learning project in Lochaber, to launch its principle initiative, the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service. Sufficient funding was secured by February 2014 to enable the structured 3-month set-up phase to commence. The Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service was launched in June 2014.
- 7.7 The Council will support communities to be more resilient to climate change and extreme adverse weather events, by implementing the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.** ✓
- Progress with adaptation measures is on track for flood alleviation and watercourse management as reported at 4.17 and 4.4 above. Our adaptation strategy was to be reviewed in 2014 but we instead prioritised the Carbon CLEVER initiative in 2014 so the adaptation strategy will be reviewed in 2015 and it will take into account any new Government requirements.