

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Highland Council

**Date:** 07 September 2017

**Report Title:** **Corporate Performance Report**

**Report By:** Chief Executive

### 1. **Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an assessment of Council performance against the Corporate Plan which is the performance framework for the Council's Programme, Highland First. It covers the period 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. Good progress is reported with 89% of the commitments (64 out of the total 72) being either completed, on target or where performance is being maintained. For 8 commitments (11%) there is mixed performance.

### 2. **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- 2.1
- i. Note the good progress being made with delivery of the Council's Programme for the period 01 April 2016 to end 31 March 2017.
  - ii. Await a further report on Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework no later than March 2018.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 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 2015-17 approved by Council on 29 October 2015.
- 3.2 The principles that underpin the Council's values include that we will be fair, open and accountable. This means we will measure our performance, report on it publicly and listen to our communities, to ensure we are delivering services that provide Best Value for Council Taxpayers. This annual performance report contributes to achieving the Council's values, particularly those of being open and listening. This report is also scrutinised by Audit Scotland.

### **4. Council Performance 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017**

- 4.1 There are 72 commitments in the Council Programme, Highland First. Appendix 1 describes performance for each commitment in more detail.
- 4.2 Commitments completed, progressing well, on target or being maintained  
In summary for 2016/17 there were 64 of the 72 commitments (89%) either complete, progressing well or performance is being maintained. These also reflect a number of areas of work which are also longer term commitments for the Council. These include:
- The work of the Commission on Highland democracy, development of Area Committees and further work on participatory budgeting (commitment 1)
  - Established a new asset transfer policy and engaged with community on Council Redesign (commitment 2)
  - Continue to work to increase community ownership of assets (commitment 10)
  - Statutory Local Flood Risk Management Plan in place on target (commitment 13)
  - Continued success in growing our early year's workforce and training uptake (commitment 16)
  - Increased use of our libraries (commitment 19)
  - Launch of the Highland LEADER programme and award of first project grant (commitment 20)
  - Developing young people's skills for the workplace (commitment 32)
  - Increasing the range of Council services available online, delivering savings and securing positive customer feedback (commitment 35)
  - Delivery of the Fairer Highland Plan and statutory equality duties (commitment 47)
  - Influencing national policy on welfare reform, developing a recognised centre of expertise and working with partners to focus on poverty reduction (commitment 50 & 58)
  - Development of a 'one stop' model to support independent living (commitment 55)
  - Delivery of affordable housing and housing infrastructure development funding (commitment 60)
  - City/Region deal signed in January 2017 with a range of planned investment (commitment 64)
  - Inverness West Link remains on target (commitment 65)

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

There are 8 commitments where mixed performance is recorded (11%). These are summarised below, on the basis of exceptions reporting, and are cross-referenced to the commitment number in Appendix 1 where more information is available. Performance in some areas is affected by economic circumstances and constraints on funding.

- Following a successful pilot in Lochaber on integrated transport solutions it was not possible to find a sustainable solution with partners (commitment 6)
- The average working days lost per employee for sickness absence for both teachers and non-teachers has increased. On-going work to target reduction has included a dedicated member of staff to support managers in dealing with long term absence, a review of occupational health and compulsory training on attendance management for senior managers. (commitment 15)
- Against a target of 77% of invoices paid within 10 calendar days of receipt we achieved 63.3% in 2016/17 compared to 56.5% the year before. Stretching targets are in place to drive improvement and there is an improving trend. In addition the total direct spend with business in Highland has reduced, this will be reviewed as part of the new Joint Procurement Strategy (commitment 17)
- We have not progressed development of Work Force Planning with partners including local pilots. This work will now be taken forward within the our new Work Force Strategy with work at a local level developed through Community Partnerships and Locality Plans (commitment 31)
- The condition of our roads network for class A, B, C & U roads has not yet shown improvement following additional investment. Use of new and innovative patching techniques and Scottish Timber Transport funding is helping (commitment 36)
- There has been an increase in multiple exclusion rates from school and for exclusion rates for Looked After Children. Attainment rates for children from deprived backgrounds or those Looked After have fallen (commitment 42)
- The time taken between a Looked After Child being accommodated and a permanency decision has increased (commitment 51)
- The rollout of smart meters across council buildings and schools is behind target. During 2016-17 new regulation on the metering had to be implemented and the focus was on this statutory change. Improvement is expected in 2017/18 (commitment 61)

### 5. **Review of the Corporate Performance Framework**

- 5.1 Following the annual performance report a review of the Corporate Performance Framework is normally carried out. This year as a new Council Programme is under development a new corporate performance framework will be developed. This will be presented to Council later this year and the first review of the framework will be in autumn 2018 to take account of changes required in relation to budget decisions and policy change.

### 6. **Statutory Performance Indicators 2016/17**

- 6.1 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. 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. Subject to the publication of

LGBF data for 2016/17 we will report on SPIs to Council no later than March 2018.

## **7. Implications**

- 7.1 Resource – There are no new 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.
- 7.2 Legal – Implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting.
- 7.3 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – This report identifies the progress made with the Council's commitments on climate change.
- 7.4 Risk – Audit Scotland produces an annual Local Scrutiny Plan for the Council which assesses, with other scrutiny bodies, the risk of non-achievement of Council commitments. As reported to Council elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting there are no significant scrutiny risks identified and this report highlights that good progress is being made with the Council's Programme.
- 7.5 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) –  
The delivery of our commitments is supportive of the Councils' 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. The report also monitors the delivery of our Fairer Highland Plan on the delivery of our statutory equality duties.
- 7.6 Gaelic – This report identifies the progress made with the Council's commitments on Gaelic

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 19.08.17

Authors: Evelyn Johnston, Corporate Audit & Performance Manager  
Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance Manager

Background Papers: Appendix 1 - Annual Performance Report 2016/17

## Appendix 1

### Highland First – Annual Corporate Performance Report 2016-2017

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

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

\* Where a ✓ and a C are used this means complete in current reporting year (16/17)

## 1. Community Led Highland

1	<p><b>Strengthening Local Democracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>We will be at the forefront in Scotland of bringing democracy closer to our communities</i></b></li> <li><b><i>We will create new and better ways of involving communities in decisions affecting them</i></b></li> <li><b><i>We will deliver new arrangements to deliver decentralised local decision making, prior to the Local Government elections in 2017</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Commission on Highland Democracy has spoken with communities across Highland about how to improve local democracy. Regular reports have been produced, with a final report due in autumn 2017. We are considering how best to take this forward within the context of work to redesign the Council.</li> <li>We have set up local committees in all areas of Highland. Our Community Services budgets have been devolved to these committees to improve local decision making. Scrutiny of Police and Fire services by local committees is also happening, developing a focus on local issues.</li> <li>Community Partnerships have been established in nine communities across Highland. Responsibility for leading and resourcing these is shared between the five partners responsible for leading on community planning – Police, Fire, NHS Highland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the Council. The Partnerships are developing local plans for children’s and adult health and social care services, and locality plans for communities facing the greatest disadvantage. These partnerships are the focal point for collaboration, and engagement with communities at a local level across Highland.</li> <li>Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) have a legal duty to produce an “Outcome Improvement Plan” in order to address inequalities. Each CPP has to make sure communities are engaged and involved in developing and defining the priorities of the Partnership and that these are reflected in the Plan. We have been working with partners to engage with communities to develop Highland’s Outcome Improvement Plan.</li> <li>Participatory budgeting (PB), where communities are involved in allocating public money, has continued to develop across Highland. In 2016/17, PB processes were held in seven areas. Local groups were formed to design and deliver this. In total 2,496 people participated in the events to decide how £155,200 was spent. PB events are planned in three new areas in 2017/18. We are also working to develop our understanding of how the process can be applied to our mainstream resources/ services.</li> </ul>	<p>✓ C</p>
2	<p><b>Empowering Communities</b></p> <p><b><i>Along with our Community Planning Partners, we will bring forward ways to implement the commitments contained within the Community Empowerment Act to ensure that where they wish to, communities are able to fully participate in the development of services and taking over the running of facilities and land. This will include:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>Development of an asset transfer policy, ensuring we have a transparent and simplified process for communities</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>✓ C</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reviewing ways of supporting communities to lead on the delivery of services locally</b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We agreed a new Asset Transfer policy in December 2016. Public bodies in Highland have adopted common approaches to asset transfer and participation requests and a network set up to support the processes. Community Planning Partners are working with the Development Trusts Community Ownership Support Service to support communities with the process. We have also set up webpages to provide guidance and information.</li> <li>• As part of our redesign process, we had two rounds of engagement with community groups in Autumn 2016 to understand how to support them to deliver more community run services. We are working with partner organisations on how to make the changes required. These aim to create better ways to listen to, support, and work with communities to assist them in delivering services.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Local Community Planning</b></p> <p><b><i>Working with our partners, we will develop new arrangements to deliver Community Planning at a local level, prior to the Local Government elections in 2017</i></b></p> <p>Progress on this commitment is provided at commitment 1 above.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>C</p>
4	<p><b>Communities Delivering Social Care</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with our partners in the NHS to encourage and support communities to deliver more social care services and facilitate community led good practice</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have agreed a new performance framework with NHS Highland for adult social care. We both seek to continue to enhance community based services, and this will be a central component of the upcoming review of the Partnership Agreement.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p>
5	<p><b>Local Emergency Services</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will actively work with our partners in the emergency services to seek to ensure that national policies, practices and local plans are Highland proofed, taking into consideration local needs and the impact upon Highland communities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police and Fire Services now report to local committees on an alternative basis enabling improved scrutiny of services at a local level.</li> <li>• Work is ongoing to review Police and Fire Plans and work towards the production of new plans for 2017–2020. We will consider and scrutinise these in Autumn 2017.</li> <li>• Along with Fire Service colleagues, we have supported and promoted the recruitment of retained fire fighters in rural communities, recognising the vital role they play.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p>
6	<p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Community Transport - The Council recognises the importance of Community Transport and will work with our partners to find the best local solutions on how to deliver Community Transport provision across the Highlands</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Rural Patient Transport - 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</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Public Transport – We will work with public transport providers to improve the integration of services for communities across Highland.</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New three year community transport grants were agreed with effect from 1 April 2016 for 24 organisations across Highland. A further group was added later. These included eight organisations that had not previously been funded. We continue to maintain contact with them and monitor their operations.</li> <li>• Following the end of the Lochaber Transport Advice and Booking Service in December 2015, there has been no further development of rural patient transport provision. There was a meeting in March 2017 on the co-ordination of transport in the Sutherland, and this is likely to develop in 2017/18. We have also been involved in transport and access groups for the new hospitals planned for Aviemore and Broadford.</li> </ul>	<p>M</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During 2016/17 we arranged new public transport contracts for the next five years. Some routes were reduced or not renewed due to financial reasons, although most contracts were renewed at a similar level of service. Savings were made by attracting more competition, repackaging of routes, and improved procurement processes including supplier briefings and e-auctions.</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Helping Communities Reduce their Energy Use and Costs</b>  <b><i>The Council, with partners, will support communities to reduce their energy use and associated carbon emissions and costs.</i></b></p> <p>Progress is as noted below, please note there are related measures at commitment 53:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our Carbon Management Plan was last refreshed in 2013, and is now in need of review given our changing priorities and available resources. The Scottish Government published the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill in June 2017, which proposed even more ambitious climate change targets for Scotland. These new targets, our role as a “major player” in achieving them, and our future priorities, will affect a revised Carbon Management Plan and its targets.</li> <li>We have voluntarily reported on progress to reduce carbon emissions through Scotland’s Climate Change Declaration since 2008. This has been replaced with mandatory annual reporting. In November 2016, we submitted our first annual report to the Scottish Government, detailing our progress in meeting Scotland’s Climate Change targets.</li> </ul>	=
8	<p><b>Preventative Spend</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with its partners to maximise the use of collective resources to achieve best outcomes, demonstrating a shift to prevention and the re-allocation of resources between Community Planning Partners where this represents best value</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It had been intended for the Community Planning Partnership to jointly undertake work to develop better preventative approaches by understanding how partners were collaborating, what difference it was making, and what was needed for improvement. This action has not progressed due to budget reductions, particularly in the Council for 2016/17 onwards. It is intended to review how this can be taken forward within the broader context of the new legal duties to reduce socio-economic inequality. Specifically through locality plans for communities facing the greatest disadvantage and at a regional level through the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.</li> </ul>	=
9	<p><b>Rural Impact Assessment</b>  <b><i>We will further embed Rural Impact Assessment across The Council and share our knowledge with the Scottish Government with the aim of ensuring this best practice approach is a key consideration during the formulation of Government policy.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to make the case for rural as well as island proofing as: a member of the ministerial strategic islands group, chaired by the Minister for Transport and Islands; a member of the Convention of the Highlands and Islands and the associated Chief Officer Group; and also at CoSLA. All of our committee reports are required to consider any rural implications and identify mitigating actions. We have shared the rural proofing tool developed with other agencies including Scotland’s Rural College as part of a consultative event on the persistence of poverty in rural Scotland.</li> </ul>	✓
10	<p><b>Land Reform</b>  <b><i>The Council will engage with the Scottish Government over the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill to promote community land ownership and ensure crofting and farming communities are strengthened</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We work closely with the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust to assist communities to increase community ownership e.g. transfer of the former Lady Ross hotel in Ardgay to the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.</li> <li>We continue to meet Community Land Scotland on a regular basis throughout the year</li> <li>During 2016/17 there was one asset transfer to a community organisation (The Falls of Shin car park to Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust), and a further 15 assets which we have agreed to transfer and are going through the legal process.</li> </ul>	✓

11	<p><b>Crown Estate</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish Government to develop proposals for the further devolution of the Crown Estate to ensure local communities control and benefit from the assets of the Crown Estate once it has been devolved from the UK Government</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government produced a consultation document earlier this year and we are awaiting further discussions with the Scottish Government on their future proposals</li> </ul>	✓
12	<p><b>Forestry</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish Government on the full devolution of the Forestry Commission to Scotland to maximise the benefits to local communities. The Council will also seek to work with the Forestry Commission to review land management and partnership arrangements on forestry land</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Bill is currently being considered in the Scottish Parliament. The Bill transfers the powers and duties of the Forestry Commissioners in Scotland to Scottish Ministers. It provides Scottish Ministers with a duty to promote sustainable forest management and publish a forestry strategy. It also provides wider powers than are currently available for the management of forestry land. We responded to “The Future of Forestry in Scotland” consultation in 2016/17.</li> <li>• We continue to lobby the Scottish Government at every opportunity for the expansion of community owned and managed forestry in Highland</li> <li>• We continue to work with community groups that express an interest in the management or ownership of Council owned woodland assets. Notably, we received and processed an asset transfer request from the Staffin Community Trust in respect of the Storr Woodland site.</li> </ul>	✓
13	<p><b>Community Resilience Planning</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with Scottish and Southern Energy and other utility companies to deliver improved resilience planning for our communities including planning for extreme weather events</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2016/17 our flood risk management team completed all scheduled watercourse inspections and assessments on target, with maintenance works completed as required.</li> <li>• Our Local Flood Risk Management Plan was completed by June 2016, meeting the statutory deadline. We are now implementing this plan and regularly report on progress.</li> <li>• We have started working on the Highland-wide Surface Water Management Plan and are working with Scottish Water to identify priorities for assessment. We made less progress with this than we had hoped in 2016/17, but expect to be back on target in 2017/18 and publish our plan before 2022.</li> <li>• We continue to work closely with all relevant partners including utilities (e.g. gas, electricity, water) as part of the Local and Regional Resilience Partnership, to plan and prepare for severe weather events.</li> <li>• Working with Scottish &amp; Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), we have promoted community resilience planning to community councils and community groups. This has included running workshops with these groups to develop community resilience plans, and informing groups of funding available from the SSEN Resilient Communities Fund.</li> </ul>	✓
14	<p><b>Public Access Wi-Fi</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish and UK Governments to improve Public Access Wi-Fi across Highland communities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first part of the Wi-Fi project in Inverness has been successfully implemented and provides Wi-Fi in the Victorian Market and surrounding streets. The second project to provide Wi-Fi across the city centre will be completed by August 2017. Expanding the service to other key tourism centres in Highland in the future is also planned with public Wi-Fi already announced in</li> </ul>	✓

	<p>14 towns and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access Wi-Fi is currently available in (parts of) our headquarters in Inverness, and at all libraries in Highland. We are also installing Wi-Fi in our area offices and service points.</li> </ul>	
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## 2. Well Served Highland

<b>15</b>	<p><b>Developing our Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We will help to sustain our communities by ensuring our workforce has a strong presence across the Highlands</i></li> <li><i>We will further implement our mobile and flexible working policies; expand the use of video and telephone conferencing, together with the development of Mobile Service Delivery. We will plan, monitor and review this on a regular basis</i></li> <li><i>We will continue to support and develop our workforce and we will do all we can to avoid compulsory redundancies</i></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We monitor the number of staff redeployments, early retirements, posts deleted for efficiencies, and number of redundancies. These figures include teachers. In 2016/17 there were 24 redeployments; 15 flexible retirements, and 14 retirements due to ill-health; 203 voluntary redundancies and 16 through the employee early release scheme; and 25 redundancies.</li> <li>Our housing repairs and planning and building standards staff have mobile devices (e.g. smartphones, tablets). This technology helps improve efficiency. It also provides benefits to our customers, including a reduction in job delays and cancellations, more accurate information around appointments, and greater responsiveness to the customer's needs. The project is due to make £0.512m of savings, and so far has saved £0.384m.</li> <li>We are upgrading our communication systems, with new telephone systems being delivered in our schools and offices, and modern video conferencing facilities. New telephony systems for 48 schools have been completed. New systems for our Inverness headquarters and Osprey House in Alness will be ready by September 2017. Deployment of the telephone systems to a further 18 Council sites will happen by March 2018. We will also work with our new ICT contract provider (Wipro) to combine this work with other software upgrades which will provide better communication tools (Office 365 software and Skype for business).</li> <li>The percentage of jobs located out-with our Headquarters in Inverness was 96% in 2016/17, the same as in 2015/16, and higher than in 2014/15 (94%).</li> <li>The average working days lost per employee for teachers due to sickness absence was 6.85 days in 2016/17, compared to 6.1 days in 2015/16.</li> <li>The average working days lost per employee for non-teaching staff due to sickness absence was 10.41 days in 2016/17, compared to 9.6 days in 2015/16.</li> </ul> <p>We are working to reduce sickness absence through a range of activity including a dedicated member of staff to support managers in dealing with long term absence, improvements to occupational health following a LEAN review and robust management of the contract. All senior managers have received compulsory attendance management training over the past 12 months. The Chief Executive reviews sickness absence data with Directors at quarterly performance reviews.</p>	<b>M</b>
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Growth in Early Years Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We will support increasing numbers of young families to access additional pre-school hours and trial innovative approaches to early years and P1 education in some of our smaller schools</i></li> <li><i>We will plan for the increased workforce needed, particularly in our smaller communities, and find ways that we can support a sufficient and qualified workforce</i></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to explore new ways of delivering Early Years provision. Early level (combining nursery and P1) continues to have a positive impact but more evaluation needs to be carried out prior any substantial roll out. A positive outcome has been around maintaining staffing</li> </ul>	✓

levels and making smaller schools more viable.

- From 2017/18 there are 53 local authority nurseries providing flexible early learning and childcare. We will continue to adjust the amount of staff we have as these nurseries expand to ensure they provide flexible services. We are also considering options for phasing in more additional hours to meet the 2020 target of 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare. We are focused on providing high quality, flexible, accessible and affordable services. Parents are able to purchase additional hours over the 600 hours funded by the Scottish Government and we have been reviewing the systems for billing these chargeable hours. From the next academic year we will move away from invoicing parents to direct debit or childcare voucher payments only. This will enable parents to spread costs over the year.
- To encourage young people to consider employment in child care, there are college programmes on offer to school pupils to complete whilst staying on at school. These courses are offered across all three college areas in Highland providing Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) progression from level 4 to level 7. There is increasing demand for level 4 & 5 courses in Early Education and Childcare with 151 places taken up last year – an increase of 50% on the previous year. Highland colleges also offer Foundation Apprenticeship courses in: Social Services & Childcare and Children & Young People. Information and taster events are organised through the NHS programme with a focus on Health, Education, Child & Social careers.
- As flexible childcare continues to grow, we have increased the number of hours offered to our staff, enabling Early Years Practitioners to increase their core contractual hours from 23 to 35 hours. We have reviewed our management structure in medium sized nurseries, introducing a new position which will have overall responsibility for the day to day running of the nursery. We are also introducing an early years support worker role and early years Modern Apprentices. Both of these roles will allow staff to gain experience, a qualification, and be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council.
- We continue to work with colleges around the training requirements for our workforce, and with partner providers and the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) around workforce development.
- School and nursery placements across the Highlands are included on our work experience database for secondary school pupils to attend as short and long term placements. Nursery and Primary school placements are particularly popular with 138 applications in 2016/17.
- The Cost per Pre-School Education Registration is a benchmarked indicator and data for 2016/17 will not be available until the end of this year. The cost increased from £2,864.66 in 2014/15 to £3,679.87 in 2015/16. Performance was in the second quartile, ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of 32 local authorities in Scotland. The cost of providing this service has increased in line with new entitlements. From August 2014, children were entitled to increased nursery hours - from 450 to 600 hours. 2015/16 was the first full year of 600 hours entitlement.

17

### **Contracts and Procurement**

***The Council will complete its review of procurement practices by spring 2016 with a view to supporting local businesses and social enterprises, as well as maximising spend and benefit within the Highland economy, whilst ensuring that these provide value for money for the Council and meet legislative requirements. We will monitor the actions from this review on a regular basis to ensure the objectives are being met***

Progress:

- Against a target of 95% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt we achieved 94.0% in 2016/17 compared to 91.3% the previous year.
- Against a target of 77% of invoices paid within 10 calendar days of receipt we achieved 63.3% in 2016/17 compared to 56.5% the previous year.

Stretching targets have been set for these indicators. Although 2015/16 performance was affected by moves to a new financial system, changes to business processes are delivering strong signs of recovery. Whilst the focus of national benchmarking remains only on 30 days, Highland continues to monitor/report performance against 10 days too.

- We aimed to increase direct spend to Highland businesses and for 2016/17, 35.4% was spent directly with Highland businesses, compared to 38.3% in 2015/16.
- We also aimed to increase our direct spend to Highland Small Medium Enterprises (SME) businesses and for 2016/17, 29.1% was spent directly with Highland SMEs, compared to 23.1% in 2015/16. This indicator is a national benchmark and subject to verification for 2016/17. However for 2015/16 reported to Council in March 2017 we are ranked 11<sup>th</sup>

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	<p>nationally and above the Scotland average spend of 19.7%. Procurement is a key strategic driver to enable the business community and the communities we serve to adapt, diversify and flourish despite economic pressures. The present local economic landscape has created unique but not insurmountable challenges for the region and these are reflected in the SME spend profile reported. The development of a joint procurement strategy will support the Council achieve its commercial goals while contributing to securing sustainable financial savings. This can be achieved by bringing Highland businesses and SMEs with us and a number of 'Meet the Buyer' events will be arranged between now and mid-2018. The Procurement Team and Service representatives will attend and covering a range of topics with the objective of identifying the supporting contracts, goods and services available to local SME's.</p>	
18	<p><b>Enhancing our Town Centres</b>  <i>We will seek additional opportunities to help address localised economic decline in town centres, specified streets or localities, including business rates incentives</i>  This commitment was completed in 2015/16</p>	C
19	<p><b>Libraries</b>  <i>We will work with our partners High Life Highland to build social and cultural capital throughout our communities by promoting an innovative and progressive Library Service</i>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We monitor the total number of visits (both in person and online) there are to our library services. In 2016/17, there were 3,077,760 visits, an increase on the previous year when there were 2,495,806 visits.</li> <li>The number of participants at library events increased to 324,260 in 2016/17, 31% more than the previous year when there were 258,011. Staff have provided a wider range and number of events and activities than in the previous year.</li> </ul> <p><u>Benchmark Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)</u>  All benchmark SPIs go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2016/17 until early 2018. The current position for 2015/16 as reported to Council in March 2017 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cost per library visit was £2.33 (2015/16), lower than £2.48 in the previous year. The average figure in Scotland is £2.44, and we are ranked 10<sup>th</sup> of the 32 local authorities.</li> <li>The percentage of adults satisfied with libraries was 73% (2015/16) compared to a Scottish average of 77% and we are ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of the 32 local authorities. This national data is drawn from the National Household Survey. In comparison our survey of Highland using our Citizen's panel (which is representative of the Highland population with a high confidence level) shows 90% very or fairly satisfied with the Library Service in 2016/17.</li> </ul>	✓
20	<p><b>Europe</b>  <i>We will evaluate our activities and opportunities for influencing European policy, targeting our contribution where it is most effective and ensuring we make the very best of all financial opportunities for the Highlands</i>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following national delays with the 2014-2020 European funding programmes, a number of projects supported with European funding have now started. Whilst it now appears that EU funding will continue after Brexit and there will be opportunities to extend projects, match funding issues experienced by the Council and third sector partners, will impact our ability to make the most of these opportunities.</li> <li>We have focused on working with our Highlands and Islands European Partnership partners, and our associated membership of Scotland Europa, to ensure the needs and opportunities facing Highland are identified and factored into EU and subsequent UK/ Scottish Government policy following Brexit. We have maintained our membership of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Region network which campaigns in favour of a more balanced development of the European territory.</li> <li>The Highland LEADER programme launched in May 2016 and the first projects were approved in November. There are currently 14 projects with grants committed of £463,694 (total project costs just under £1.1m). All seven Local Area Partnerships across Highland are operating well and are receiving applications. The rural enterprise/ farm diversification sub group of the</li> </ul>	✓

	<p>Highland Local Action Group has been formed. It met to consider a number of expressions of interest and business plans, and the number of inquiries suggests it will be oversubscribed. Scottish Government completed their first monitoring visit of the programme and all the systems and processes are considered to be operating effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government is setting up a working party to secure the future of the Community-led local development after Brexit, and we have requested a place on this.</li> <li>• The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund is being delivered as a joint programme between Highland and Moray. £322,033 of funding has been committed so far from the total allocation of £1,006,000. All approved projects have been in Highland.</li> </ul>	
21	<p><b>Roads, Maintenance and Future Investment</b>  <b><i>We will review capital and maintenance programmes for our Highland roads, identify clear choices and prepare for any investment opportunities that may arise</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We approved the fourth version of the Road Asset Management in November 2016 and this covers the period 2016-2019. The Plan sets out the approach and practices we will use to manage our road infrastructure and was developed using the common framework produced as part of the SCOTS Road Asset Management Project.</li> <li>• A review of the roads maintenance system was planned for review in 2016/17. This didn't happen and we intend to review this system in 2017/18. Expenditure for roads maintenance in 2016/17 was based on the existing policy.</li> <li>• We reviewed our capital plan 2015/16 to 2024/25 in December 2016 which provided an additional £24.520m for roads, bridges and harbours over the nine year period. We allocated funding for specific projects in 2016/17 in February 2016. Future budget allocations were discussed at ward business meetings during 2016/17 and will be reviewed annually with changes reported back to committee. Opportunities to secure additional external funding continue to be taken as they become available, such as the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme, from which we secured £300,000 in 2016/17.</li> </ul>	✓
22	<p><b>Winter Maintenance</b>  <b><i>We will continue to implement our winter maintenance policy including a pre gritting regime</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>The Winter maintenance policy was reviewed in April 2016. The policy is being managed by our Road &amp; Transport operations teams. Area committees can approve changes to route priorities in accordance with the winter maintenance policy and within the budget and resources available.</p>	✓
23	<p><b>Community Works</b>  <b><i>We will explore how community works, including drainage, verges, grass cutting and road improvements could be delivered in the context of local decision making and local priorities</i></b></p> <p>This commitment was completed in 2015/16</p>	C
24	<p><b>Flood Alleviation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>The Council will bring forward a Local Flood Risk Management Plan by June 2016 and we will raise awareness within our communities and individual householders on how they can protect themselves from flood incidents</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will further prioritise smaller flood relief schemes and will increase the funding available for this work</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We published our Local Flood Risk Management Plans in June 2016. These prioritise the actions we will take up to 2022. This plan includes the progression of three flood schemes at Caol, Smithton and Culloden, and the River Enrick at Drumnadrochit. Scottish Government grant funding (at an intervention rate of 80%), has been secured for these.</li> <li>• For the Smithton and Culloden flood scheme, the formal procedure of selecting contractors to build the flood schemes will begin towards the end of the financial year 2017/18.</li> <li>• Ongoing design works and public and landowner consultations are progressing for Coal and Drumnadrochit.</li> </ul>	✓

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Flood Risk Management Plan identifies 40 Potentially Vulnerable Areas within Highland and a number of flood studies and management plans are being progressed to identify solutions at these locations.</li> <li>• Following investigations into flooding, schemes were identified and works completed in 2017 at Kirkhill and Marybank to address localised flooding problems.</li> <li>• Our Flood team attends many public consultations and meetings to raise awareness of flood risk and also actions that local communities can take. This public engagement will be formalised when guidance is provided by Scottish Government to standardise and coordinate such community resilience across Scotland.</li> </ul>	
25	<p><b>Bridges</b>  <b><i>We will review the arrangements for our bridge inspections along with their maintenance and investment programmes</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We reviewed our capital plan 2015/16 to 2024/25 in December 2016 which provided an additional £24.520m for roads, bridges and harbours over the nine year period. We allocated funding for specific projects in 2016/17 in February 2016. Future budget allocations were discussed at ward business meetings during 2016/17 and will be reviewed annually with changes reported back to committee.</li> <li>• The Bridge Stock Condition Indicator (BSCI) tells us about the condition of our bridges. We achieved a slightly improved rating of 81.4% in 2016/17 compared to 81.0% in 2015/16.</li> <li>• Due to changes in staffing and the restructuring of Services, it was not possible to produce a report on the condition of bridges and priorities for investment in 2016. The 2017 report will be prepared for committee in November.</li> </ul>	=
26	<p><b>Piers and Harbours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>The Council will work with community groups to improve the sustainability and use of small piers and harbours and, where appropriate, to help rationalise the Council's ownership</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>The Council will prepare a Strategic Investment Plan to identify specific developments and areas for investment at selected Highland ports and harbours, including in partnership with the private sector</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We secured a grant of £1.2m to chill the market at Kinlochbervie.</li> <li>• We have completed our strategic investment plan for piers and harbours and this was presented to the Harbour Management Board.</li> <li>• A review of the management of piers and harbours and encouraging community ownership will happen as part of the Council Redesign process.</li> </ul>	✓
27	<p><b>Dealing with our Waste</b>  <b><i>We will develop plans to meet our obligations as a result of the landfill ban of biodegradable municipal waste by 1st January 2021</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We reviewed our waste services in 2016/17 as part of our redesign process. From this, we agreed to progress work immediately on finalising the business case for long term waste disposal in the Highlands, with a focus on whether, and at what scale, an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant would be appropriate.</li> <li>• We are about to start working with consultants to identify the preferred options (medium and long term) for the management of approximately 80,000 tonnes per year of residual waste. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alignment of our existing third party contracts for various waste streams, and development of interim solution (if necessary) to meet the 01 January 2021 landfill ban;</li> <li>○ Consideration of our energy strategy (under development) and demand for heat, and the potential role for an EfW plant; and</li> <li>○ Development of a plan to implement specific short, medium and long term actions – including site acquisition, development planning, project funding and subsequent project implementation tasks, e.g. contract(s) procurement, award and new infrastructure construction and delivery.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓

28	<p><b>Tourism</b>  <b><i>We will improve our internal practices and policies to promote the positive impact they have on the significant tourism industry in the Highlands</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2016, we completed a review of our Services and their impact and contribution to tourism. This review included recommendations on how we can further support the growth of tourism, and we are now starting to implement these.</li> </ul>	✓ C
29	<p><b>Road Safety</b>  <b><i>We will work with our communities to promote pedestrian and cycle safety such as expanding the use of 20 mph zones and safer routes to schools</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress to reduce the number of people killed and injured on Highland roads in relation to the 2020 Scottish Government targets was reported to the Communities and Partnerships Committee in December 2016. The report specifically outlined the motorcyclist casualty statistics for the 10 year period from 2005–2015 and noted the downward trend of casualty numbers. It also detailed the collision data for 17–25 year old drivers involved in injury accidents from 2011–2015 and noted the downward trend in relation to the 2004–2008 average. The report also recognised the continuing work of the Highland Road Safety Group in seeking to bring partners together to achieve continued improvements.</li> <li>The percentage of children using an active form of travel to get to and from school increased from 52% in the 2015/16 academic year to 53% in 2016/17 and compared to 58% in 2014/15.</li> <li>84% schools had agreed travel plans in 2015/16, the same as 2014/15.</li> </ul>	✓
30	<p><b>Strengthening our Partnership with NHS Highland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>The Council and NHS Highland will review the current partnership agreement with a greater emphasis on stronger financial scrutiny and governance</i></b></li> <li><b><i>We will work with NHS Highland to accelerate efforts to shift the balance of care and provide more services within our communities</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are discussing with NHS Highland the review of our Partnership Agreement. Local community partnerships are established across the authority, and these will have local plans for services for adults, including community-based initiatives.</li> <li>New sets of performance measures for district partnership level service delivery and community led care have been developed with NHS Highland.</li> <li>Governance arrangements for the management of performance indicators for integrated care are managed through the Partnership Agreement which also responds to changes at a national level. The following corporate plan indicators are therefore no longer part of the agreement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single point of access available in every district;</li> <li>Reduce the rate of emergency inpatient bed days for people aged 75 and over per thousand population;</li> <li>Reduction in the numbers of people whose hospital discharge is delayed;</li> <li>Reduce the number of bed days lost due to delayed discharges.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>New performance indicators have been provided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Delayed hospital discharges for service users”. Whilst there is no baseline for this indicator yet, the position at May 2017 was 30 people awaiting completion of social care arrangements in order to live in their own home. There is a programme of work focusing on reducing delayed hospital discharges.</li> <li>The “number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (aged 75+)”. Provisional data for 2016/17 is 1,581 days compared to 1,585 days in 2015/16. Over the same time period, data for Scotland as a whole shows a reduction from 915 days (2015/16) to 842 days (2016/17). There is an ongoing programme of work in Highland to reduce the number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The successful Reach Out campaign has tackled loneliness and social isolation in communities across the Highlands, making a difference to the lives of many older people.</li> </ul> <p><u>Benchmark Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)</u></p>	=

	<p>All benchmark SPIs go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2016/17 until early 2018. Having updated for 2014/15 in the report last year we can update the position for 2015/16 as reported to Council in March 2017 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older persons (Over 65) home care cost per hour was £32.66 in 2015/16 compared to £31.18 the year before. The Scottish average is £21.58 and this indicator is in the bottom quartile ranked 30<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• Self-Directed Support (SDS) spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults was 5.3% in 2015/16 compared with 4.2% the year before. The Scottish average is 6.7% and this indicator is in the top quartile ranked 6<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• The percentage of people aged 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home was 23.7% in 2015/16 compared to 21.6% the previous year. The Scottish average is 34.8% and this indicator is in the bottom quartile ranked 30<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• The percentage of adults receiving any social care or support who rate it as excellent or good was 83.5% (3 year average) in 2015/16 compared to 85.6% in the previous year. The Scottish average is 81.0% and Highland is in the second quartile, ranked 11<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• The net residential cost per week for older persons (Over 65) was £426.74 in 2015/16 this compares to £410.77 the year before. The Scottish average is £368.85 and this indicator is in the bottom quartile ranked 25<sup>th</sup>.</li> </ul>	
31	<p><b>Building the Local Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Where we can, we will create cohesive Highland and local workforce plans with other partner organisations</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will work with partners to develop training and apprenticeships with a particular focus on areas of skills shortages.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>With our partners, we will also seek to attract young people and families to the Highlands, to broaden the economic potential of the Highlands and enrich our communities</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highland Workforce Planning (which incorporates the Developing Young Workforce Strategy and the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan) is monitored through annual reports to the Highland Community Planning Partnership. During 2016/17, the Highland Works partnership had a number of work streams underway including broad general education, senior phase/ colleges, and communications/ talent attraction. These develop the activity contained with the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan and the Developing the Young Workforce agenda. To get the most of these efforts, and develop an innovative Highland response to skills and employability as part of the City Region Deal, the partners have started an internal review to influence collaborative activity during 2017/18.</li> <li>• The Enterprising Highland website is regularly updated to make sure it remains an attractive source of information for people interested in living and working in the Highlands, as well as for businesses and individuals looking to invest.</li> <li>• We have not made progress to identify skills gaps across the Community Planning Partners or developed a plan on how to address them. However the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) agreed in 2015/16 to establish Local Partnerships that have a responsibility for delivering Locality Plans to address inequalities in Highland communities. It is envisaged that these will address inequalities created by lack of employment opportunities and will give partners the opportunity to consider local skills gaps. We have now agreed a Work Force Strategy and an improved approach to our work force planning and this includes working with our partners.</li> <li>• We have not made progress piloting Workforce Planning at District Partnership level or below. These responsibilities will be placed on new Local Partnerships to consider these issues as part of the development of Locality Plans.</li> </ul>	M
32	<p><b>Region for Young People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>We will enable Highland's young people to develop their skills for work, and support them to achieve ambitious and positive destinations after school. We will work specifically with young people who are unemployed to support them into work</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>There is a growing business demand for young people with an interest and ability in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as language skills.</i></b></li> </ul>	✓

***The Council will encourage and promote a greater uptake in these subjects, so that Highland young people can successfully compete in a global market***

- ***We aim to provide our pupils with a technology-rich environment, to address their learner needs and curriculum goals, and transform their learning experience***

Progress:

- Helping young people develop skills for the workplace remains a high priority for schools. The implementation of the Developing Young Workforce initiative has renewed the focus on these skills. These skills are now developed from a much earlier stage than previously. Primary schools are beginning to build these skills into their core curriculum delivery. The development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as well as language skills remains a high priority for Highland. Improvements are being delivered through the STEM initiative where Highland has claimed additional resources to improve development in primary schools and the 1+2 language initiative which continues to be implemented across schools.
- We are aiming to provide a wider range of courses online for senior students. Online delivery has now been reorganised. Schools will be offered a wider choice of courses in 2017/18. A strategy group has been set up to link with the colleges and investigate future collaboration.
- The ground work has now been put in place to allow the implementation of the ICT in learning strategy from August 2017. Planning has continued to roll out one:one devices to Highland pupils from 2017/18.
- During 2016/17, 139 young people were supported into employment. 48 young people were supported as a result of funding to third sector organisations and 91 through the Council's own programmes (24 Activity Agreements, 9 Youth Trainees, 18 Graduate Placements, 11 Scottish Employment Recruitment Incentives and 29 through Employment Grants).
- A business case for a Science Skills Academy was approved by Scottish Government in January 2017 as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region deal. The £3m of funding will enable the project to develop over the coming years including initial 'Newton Rooms' in Inverness, Caithness and Lochaber. These facilities will help to encourage school pupils to consider careers in science, technology, engineering, maths and digital (STEMD)

#### Benchmark SPIs

All benchmark SPIs go through extensive verification at a national level and will not be finalised until early 2018. However the provisional calculation locally shows:

- The proportion of pupils entering positive destinations was 95.0% in 2016/17 compared to 93.8% in 2014/15. Historically this indicator was ranked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile and we ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in 2015/16.
- Continuing in education as an initial destination shows a decrease in Higher Education of 2.9%, and a decrease in Further Education of 2.4% in 2016/17. The largest positive increase is in employment – up 4.3% in Highland (107 more young people in employment).
- Changes which may have affected the positive destinations of young people include: Widening access to Higher Education; Labour market conditions; and hi-hope which is a local forum for employers to promote vacancies. More analysis is required to determine the factors leading to a decrease in Further Education as a positive destination. There is also an aim to increase the number of young people volunteering. We will work with Signpost (Volunteering Highland) for the Year of Young People 2018 to raise awareness and promote volunteering opportunities.

33

#### **Building Tourism**

***The Council will strive to grow tourism by working with partners to retain and develop world class events and promote destination management***

Progress:

- The most recent data for Highland tourism shows growth of almost 7% from 2015 to 2016. Comparable data for Scotland is not yet available but other tourism data such as "visitor attraction visits" indicates that the rate of growth in Highland is exceeding the national rate.
- We have continued working with tourism partners in 2016/17, concluding Service Level Agreements with VisitScotland and the seven Destination Organisations across Highland.
- Two major international events were supported in 2016/17 – The World Orienteering Championships which brought around £9m to Highland and Moray, and the Fort William Mountain Bike World Cup which generated £2.8m.



34	<p><b>Gaelic</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with all our partners and across all communities to develop Gaelic as a regional asset, sharing our experience, skills and resources to continue implementing and building on the Gaelic Language Plan</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>The annual implementation report covered the period January 2016 to January 2017 and provided a comprehensive update of the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP).</p> <p>A number of achievements and pan-Highland and national initiatives took place between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017, and these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An increase in Gaelic Medium Primary 1 intake – Almost 15% higher in 2016/17 compared to 2012/13.</li> <li>○ A new stand-alone Gaelic Medium school is due to open during 2017/18 in Portree.</li> <li>○ All teachers who completed the Gaelic Immersion for Teachers course have continued to expand their Gaelic competency by continuing with training/ links to schools or related Gaelic posts.</li> <li>○ We received financial support for seven project applications from Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2016/17 and were awarded £342,000: Gaelic Immersion for Teachers; Birth to Three Strategic Partnership; Mòd Academy; Club Spòrs ann am Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar; Gàidhlig airson Inbhich – Gaelic for Adults; High Life Highland Leadership Programme; Gàidhlig airson Òigridh – Gaelic For Young People.</li> <li>○ Bòrd na Gàidhlig entered the second year of a three year partnership with us to continue to support the 0–3 age sector in collaboration with the Care and Learning Alliance. Funding has been agreed to enable the partnership to continue.</li> <li>○ The successful ‘Siuthad!’ (Go On!) Gaelic Careers Days won the Daily Record Scottish Gaelic Event award in November 2016. This annual event involves second year Gaelic learners as well as Gaelic Medium pupils. Around 250 pupils participated in the Inverness event at Eden Court on the 16th March 2017. The second Skye Siuthad event took place in October 2016. These events involve partnerships with Bòrd na Gaidhlig, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Skills Development Scotland.</li> <li>● It has not been possible to form a Community Planning Partnership (CPP) thematic group on Gaelic given the many changes across the Partnership. However, we are leading the consultation on the new Gaelic Language Plan and are forming a Gaelic Strategy Group, and it is intended to engage with the CPP as part of this work.</li> <li>● We monitor the extent to which respondents feel that we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language (Annual Performance Survey). 77% of respondents felt we did in 2016/17, compared to 76% in the previous year.</li> </ul>	✓
35.	<p><b>Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><i>We will work towards achieving Highland’s ambition to provide effective broadband and mobile (3G &amp; 4G) coverage for all</i></b></li> <li>● <b><i>We will work with our partners to develop a joint action plan in order to define and deliver solutions of broadband and mobile technology to the most difficult to reach areas of the Highlands</i></b></li> <li>● <b><i>Alongside improved connectivity, we will strive to achieve a digital dividend for the Highlands by working with partners to ensure digital inclusion for all. We will also promote and encourage innovative exploitation of the technology by the businesses and communities</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We welcome the Scottish Government commitment to ensure that 100% of premises across the Scotland, will have superfast broadband (&gt;30MB/S) by the end of 2021. We will continue to work closely with all partners to ensure that this objective is met in the Highlands.</li> <li>● We have worked with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to ensure that the first phase of superfast broadband roll-out was successful. The target of reaching at least 84% of premises has been exceeded, and it is expected that 86% of premises will be reached as part of the existing contract. This means that more communities will benefit from better connectivity, and that resources are being invested in areas where it is most needed.</li> <li>● We are working closely with all partners to ensure that resources for the second phase of the</li> </ul>	✓

	<p>roll-out of superfast broadband are used effectively across the Highlands and Islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to work closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government and the mobile Network Operators to ensure that mobile phone connectivity and 4G coverage continues to improve across the Highlands.</li> <li>• The Digital First programme provides an increasing range of services online. 42% of Council services were available online by March 2017, ahead of a target of 40%. We have successfully moved the majority of our customer contact away from face to face and telephone to on-line via the website. This has delivered savings and been positively received by customers with 75% stating they would use on-line services again.</li> <li>• Supported by Citizens Online, we led the Digital Highland project between September 2015 and November 2016. This focused on digital skills and digital participation across the Highlands. Training was given to 850 people, passing a target of 600, and thousands of other people were supported informally at drop in events and through partner organisations. The project also recruited 144 digital champions across the Highlands, surpassing the target of 30. These digital champions were members of communities who volunteered to support other people in their community with digital skills, providing a vital local resource. The lessons learned during this project continue to inform our approach to digital inclusion, including in the ongoing development of our Digital Strategy.</li> </ul>	
36	<p><b>Developing Local and National Infrastructure</b>  <b><i>Working with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, HI-TRANS and HIAL, we will lobby to increase investment in infrastructure in the Highlands with a view to improving the road, rail and air links from the area. This will include:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>The upgrade of the A9 north of Inverness, including the Berriedale Braes and the Tomich Junction</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>The upgrade of the A82</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Influence the implementation of the A9 South and A96 upgrades</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Seek a long term solution for the Stromeferry bypass</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Reducing rail journey times and costs north and south of Inverness</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Plan for communities to benefit from additional rail stops</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>A long term solution for the Corran Ferry.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Seek improved air-links to and from the Highlands, including direct access to Heathrow</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>A831 twin tracking at Torgoyle Bridge.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>A830 extension</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Seek additional funding for road and bridge maintenance</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have committed more funding to improve our roads. It will take a few years before this investment is reflected in the road condition survey results. Use of new and innovative patching techniques and Scottish Timber Transport funding is helping. For 2016/17 there has not been significant progress in road conditions in Highland. Our capital programme will also be reviewed given continuing financial pressures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 38.7% of the overall roads network was considered in need of maintenance treatment in 2016/17 compared to 39.1% the previous year; this includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 29.1% of class A roads compared to 26.9% the previous year;</li> <li>○ 36.3% of class B roads compared to 34.7% the previous year;</li> <li>○ 40.2% of class C roads compared to 39.0% the previous year; and</li> <li>○ 43.3% of U classed roads compared to 46.4% the previous year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• The cost of maintenance per km of road is a national benchmark indicator and data for 2016/17 is not expected until the end of the year. In 2015/16 the cost in Highland was £6,411 per km compared to £4,734 the year before. The Scottish Average was £10,791 and we are in the top quartile, ranked 7<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• We have raised the expansion of concessionary rail fares at a number of rail meetings and seminars in 2016/17. The Scottish Government announced a review of the National Transport Strategy in August 2016. This is expected to include a review of concessionary fares.</li> <li>• We continue to work with our partners to encourage improved connectivity between Inverness and London Heathrow and Gatwick. A new daily flight from Heathrow has proved successful since it was introduced in 2016. We continue to lobby for additional connections to London.</li> </ul>	M

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We met with Transport Scotland and their designers for both the A9 and A96 dualling schemes in 2016/17. There has been welcome investment in the A9 between Inverness and Perth, including the soon to be opened Kincaig section. We are awaiting details on the Berriedale Braes Improvement scheme from Transport Scotland following the public inquiry and making of the Road Orders in March 2017.</li> <li>• Making improvements to the A82 is a priority in the Regional Transport Strategy, and a study of the Fort William transport network has just started. We are keen to work with Transport Scotland and the regional transport partnership (HITRANS) to develop future priorities in context of the Scottish Government's "Strategic Transport Projects".</li> <li>• We continue to work with the regional transport partnership (HITRANS) and contribute to a variety of meetings relating to rail. We also participate in the "Far North Line Review Group" which was set up by the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity.</li> <li>• Following a major rock fall which closed the A890 for four months in 2011, we completed an appraisal and identified the two most appropriate solutions. Support from the Scottish Government has been identified as the only viable funding opportunity. Transport Scotland reviewed the appraisal but wanted an assessment that just focused on the localised rock fall area. We have therefore redrafted the appraisal, and this is currently being considered by Transport Scotland. Upon approval, it will be clear whether the Scottish Government will provide financial assistance for these improvements. An annual inspection occurred in spring 2017 and work to ensure the rock face is stable is happening over summer 2017.</li> <li>• Planning approval was obtained for the proposed new rail station at Inverness airport in 2016/17. The closure of Petty Level Crossing is a planning condition and the necessary consent is being sought. We are working with the regional transport partnership (HITRANS) to fund the project and it is currently anticipated that funding will be provided during 2019 to 2024.</li> <li>• We work closely with our partners to make the case for additional and enhanced air services to be introduced into the Highlands. In 2016/17 the service to Amsterdam was increased to two flights, and these are at better times during the day. This increases opportunities to connect to international flights via Amsterdam. Through the Skye Air Services Project, we are working with partners to identify the potential for scheduled air services to Skye.</li> <li>• No new international air routes launched in 2016/17 required our marketing support.</li> <li>• A long term solution for the Corran Crossing has been included in the HITRANS Research and Delivery Programme as a regionally significant scheme. An appraisal study is underway.</li> <li>• The A831 at Torgoyle Bridge is a trunk road and as such the twin tracking at this location is a matter for Transport Scotland. We have continued to meet every 3 months with Transport Scotland and the twin tracking of Torgoyle Bridge is a standing agenda item. Transport Scotland has not yet committed to the twin tracking of this section.</li> </ul>	
37	<p><b>Reducing Fatalities on our Roads</b>  <i>We will support efforts to reduce fatalities on our roads, such as a graduated driver licensing scheme and measures to reduce speeding</i>  Progress is reported at commitment 29 above.</p>	✓
38	<p><b>Cycle Tracks</b>  <i>We will work with Sustrans and HI-TRANS to focus Scottish Government cycle track investment on some of our key commuting and tourist routes</i>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HI-TRANS has committed to updating all the Active Travel Audits with any material changes (e.g. new paths), policy, and also latest census data. However, the original Masterplans and Audits remain valid and there is no specific requirement to update them within a particular timeframe. We have worked on the draft Regional Transport Strategy with partners. This includes a number of strategic active travel routes.</li> <li>• We have been awarded funding through the Scottish Government Community Links programme for two active travel routes: Slackbuie (Inverness - Active Travel Route 6); and Lochardil scheme (Inverness). We continue to explore opportunities for applications to this funding programme.</li> <li>• We submitted a funding bid to improve walking and cycling routes in Inverness through the Scottish Government Community Links PLUS 2016. The project was one of five finalists, but</li> </ul>	=

	<p>unfortunately did not receive any funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to work with Transport Scotland on the A9 and A96 improvements, and have requested upgrades for walking and cycling routes on the north side of the A96 dualling between Balloch junction and Tornagrain.</li> </ul>	
39	<p><b>Emergency Towing Vessels</b>  <b><i>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 vessels (ETV) with fire-fighting capability covering the Minch and Northern Isles</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UK Government announced the removal of funding for the last two remaining ETVs in the UK, which were based in the Minches and in the Northern isles respectively. Following extensive engagement with the Marine Coastguard Agency, we secured the retention of a single ETV. This has been commissioned to travel throughout the waters of the Highlands and Islands in response to assessments of risk arising from the types of vessels and cargoes transiting the waters and also predicted weather patterns.</li> <li>This is a significant improvement on the Government's previous proposal to remove both ETVs and rely on there being a private sector solution in the event of an incident. However, it still leaves the Minches primarily unprotected and vulnerable. Despite our concerted lobbying, and that of our island council neighbours, the Scottish Government and other stakeholders, the UK Transport Minister has said that he does not believe there is a case for a second ETV to be reinstated in the Minches. We will continue to press for this to change, on an opportunistic basis, as and when any incidents provide a platform on which to base our case.</li> </ul>	✓
40	<p><b>Ferries</b>  <b><i>We will continue to lobby for improved and additional ferry services, including more flexibility in timetabling to facilitate employment and tourism opportunities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of meetings and communications have taken place with the Minister for Transport and the Islands, Scottish Government officials, and partners resulting in a daily summer Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry service. We are also lobbying for better freight capacity, weight, and flexibility for the small isles. This activity remains a high priority for us and we will continue to work towards a sustainable situation through a working group with local interested parties (CMAL, Calmac, and Transport Scotland Ferries) and the Scottish Government.</li> </ul>	✓
41	<p><b>Dealing with our Waste</b>  <b><i>As part of our approach to reducing and dealing with our waste, we will explore opportunities with other Local Authorities for a North of Scotland solution</i></b></p> <p>Progress is reported at commitment 27 above.</p>	✓

### 3. A Fairer Highland

42	<p><b>Reducing the Attainment Gap</b>  <b><i>We will improve pupil attainment by taking focused action in and beyond the classroom to help improve the performance of pupils, particularly those experiencing poverty and deprivation</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>Overall attainment is monitored through the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and key attainment indicators are also nationally benchmarked. Benchmark Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2016/17 until early 2018. The current position for 2015/16 as first reported to Council in March 2017 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data for 2015/16 shows that 59% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 and we are ranked 14<sup>th</sup> nationally. This compares to 59% the previous year and a rank of 11<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>Data for 2015/16 shows that 30% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 and we are ranked 21<sup>st</sup> nationally. This compares to 30% the previous year and a rank of 15<sup>th</sup>.</li> </ul>	M
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- Data for 2015/16 shows that 34% of pupils from deprived areas achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 and we are ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> nationally compared to 37% the previous year and a rank of 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Data for 2015/16 shows that 13% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 and we are ranked 18<sup>th</sup> nationally this compares to the same figure the previous year with a rank of 13<sup>th</sup>.

The following actions and measure focus on outcomes and attainment for specific groups of young people:

- Data for 2016/17 for the number of children achieving level 4 in literacy and numeracy by S6 is due to be reported in late September 2017. For 2015/16, 83% were achieving level 4 by S6 in literacy and numeracy, an increase from the previous year when it was 81%.
- Work is continuing on the Health Visitor pathway, which includes the process for gathering information on the progress of children at the 27-30 month review. Health Visitors in Highland are now using the Ages and Stages assessment tool and have received appropriate training. A baseline for the progress that children are making will be established so that progress for children at this stage in their development can be monitored. Further research is being undertaken by one family team to establish a process for sharing this information with early year's centres, to inform their support for children.
- We monitor multiple exclusions (counted as a pupil receiving three or more exclusions in any one academic year) and data will next be available for the 2016/17 academic year in late September. There were 51 multiple exclusions in the 2015/16 academic year compared to 42 in the previous year. While this increase requires further analysis and action the overall number of exclusions in schools has continued to fall for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row.
- We aim to reduce the exclusion rate (per 1000) for Looked After Children (LAC). In the 2015/16 academic year this was 182, an increase from 2014/15 when the rate was 161. This represents a fifth annual successive increase. This is set against a background of falling exclusion rates in the wider school population. The data for 2016/17 will be available in late autumn. More analysis is required to understand the reasons behind the increase, and our staff will be meeting to look at the education of LAC, including exclusions.
- The percentage of children achieving their key developmental milestones by the time they enter school has remained stable at 87% in 2015/16 to 86% in 2016/17.
- In relation to increasing the % of children who reach their developmental milestones at entry to primary four, the Quality Improvement Team continue to consider the most effective means of gathering data, guidance from the Scottish Government will determine the approach to ensure comparative data will be available across local authorities.
- The number of Looked After Children (LAC) who attain a qualification in any subject at level 3 or above is monitored and latest data for the 2015/16 academic year showed that 56.5% of children did compared to 70% in the previous year. This decrease should be viewed in the context of a five year average of 60% and the numbers of LAC pupils. Data for 2016/17 will be available in late autumn.
- The number of LAC who attain qualifications in English / Maths at level 3 or above is monitored and latest data for the 2015/16 academic year showed that 30.4% of children did so, compared to 46.7% in the previous year. This decrease should be viewed in the context of an improved performance in this area over the past 5 years, the improvements in the wider school population in this area and the overall number of LAC pupils. Data for 2016/17 will be available in late autumn.
- We aim to increase the number of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people attending nursery, primary & secondary school. During 2016/17 there were 131 children (89%) in total on a mainstream school roll with 16 children in nursery, 85 children in primary education, and 30 children in secondary education/ This compares to 2015/16 when there 126 children (83%) in total on a mainstream school roll in Highland with 15 children in nursery (12%), 91 children in primary (72%) and 20 children in secondary (16%).
- Data has not been able to be collected on the number of children and young people who experience interrupted learning, as this group could not be easily defined. Data on some of these groups Gypsy Travellers, LAC and pupils who are excluded, is reported through other measurement and so the decision for this measure not to continue was agreed by the Community Planning Partnership Leadership Group.

43	<p><b>Additional Support Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We will continue with the agreed actions to fully implement the recommendations of the Additional Support Needs Review, making the most effective and efficient use of resources and in so doing, achieve the best outcomes for children and young people with Additional Support Needs at all stages</i></li> <li><i>We will develop the work emerging around helping young people to move to adult services for those individuals with additional support needs with a particular emphasis on preparing them for work</i></li> </ul> <p>Progress: In addition to information on the number of Gypsy &amp; Traveller children &amp; young people attending nursery, primary &amp; secondary school provided at commitment 42 above, the following progress is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The performance indicator for Allied Health Professional (AHP) waiting times continues to fluctuate. For all professions numbers of requests for service and AHP reported complexity continues to increase. These are small services and waiting times have increased, due to a combination of increased referrals and staff vacancies. Work is ongoing to fill vacancies. The latest figures for waiting times for AHPs show that Physiotherapy are meeting the required target of 90% of clients being seen within the target of 18 weeks of referral.</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Wait times as at 30/06/17 (31/03/17 in brackets)</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>Profession</b></th> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;"><b>% &lt; 18 weeks wait</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dietetics</td> <td style="text-align: right;">72%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(86%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Occupational Therapy</td> <td style="text-align: right;">68%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(96%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physiotherapy</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(97%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Speech and Language Therapy</td> <td style="text-align: right;">71%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(72%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">72%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(79%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We aim to monitor the number of young people with complex disability having positive post school destinations. Changes to the data collection process for this indicator have resulted in no data being available for 2015/16 or 2016/17. The process has been reviewed and a number of young people have been identified and contacted to be part of this study.</li> <li>There has been a year on year increase in the number of Young Carers identified and supported by statutory services. This number has increased from 33 in February 2015 to 211 in February 2017. This increase is promising, but remains below the numbers expected, which would be around 1000 in Highland. We continue to focus on awareness raising and identification of young carers in need of support, working in collaboration with the voluntary support groups around Highland.</li> <li>The number of self-identified young carers who report they are supported in school was 47% in 2015/16. This data is collected from the Highland Lifestyle Survey which is conducted every two years. Data from the most recent survey will be available in Autumn 2017.</li> <li>We has continued to fund the Resource Allocation Model, enabling funding to reflect local and changing needs on a year-to-year basis.</li> </ul>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>% &lt; 18 weeks wait</b>		Dietetics	72%	(86%)	Occupational Therapy	68%	(96%)	Physiotherapy	100%	(97%)	Speech and Language Therapy	71%	(72%)	Total	72%	(79%)	=
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44	<p><b>Supporting Headteachers</b></p> <p><i>We will work collaboratively with Headteachers to provide them with the best opportunity to maintain standards, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and to drive further improvement</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have developed an ambitious 'management of schools' programme, across six inter-related work streams, to better support head teachers and promote school sustainability.</li> <li>We have invested significant resource in this area. This commitment is being delivered through implementing the National Improvement Framework. Our Quality Improvement Team has worked hard to make sure that the national requirements on schools to meet the revised improvement agenda can be met, whilst minimising any additional workload or bureaucracy.</li> <li>We broadened our review of janitorial services to also include catering, cleaning, and facilities management. Following this, we transferred all these services to a new Property and Facilities Management function on 1 April 2017. This action is now complete.</li> <li>We have also been reviewing our business support services in our schools. We are aiming to implement new arrangements, alongside the phased roll out of new management structures</li> </ul>	✓																		

	across our schools. This will happen on a pilot basis during the new school year.	
45	<p><b>Physical Activity and Health</b>  <i>We will continue the introduction of PE groups in each Associated School Group and we will trial simple and effective initiatives such as the 'Daily Mile' project in Highland Primary Schools</i></p> <p>Progress:  In addition to the percentage of children walking and cycling to school reported at commitment 29 above, the following is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We aim to increase the number of children achieving one hour or more moderate activity on 5+ days per week. In the academic year 2014/15 41% of pupils achieved this. This has increased, and 55% of children achieved this level of physical activity in 2016/17.</li> <li>PE groups have been established in all the associated school groups across Highland. Schools continue to implement and develop innovative initiatives such as the daily mile to improve the health and wellbeing of their pupils.</li> </ul>	✓
46	<p><b>Positive Mental Health and Stigma</b>  <i>We will support work across all partners to reduce stigma around mental health and promote good mental health and wellbeing in our communities and our staff. We will have a particular focus on positive mental health for our young people and will support innovative ways to address this issue</i></p> <p>Progress:  We have been unable to capture data to monitor the gap between formal agency recording and self-reporting rates from children and young people affected by domestic abuse. The Highland Violence Against Women Partnership has been developing a new strategy and action plan, and a new national performance framework for Violence Against Women is being developed. The Highland Partnership is piloting the new framework and developing new localised measures which will be used from 2017/18.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During 2016/17 academic year the percentage of children who reported they feel safe and cared for in school was 84.8% compared to 85.4% the previous year.</li> <li>Measuring that the gap between formal and self-reporting of bullying decreases is a biannual indicator last reported in 2014/15 as 36.2%. This data comes from the School System Providers SEEMIS. Due to a change in their methodology, this data is not yet available and cannot be reported at this time.</li> <li>Our aim is for more young people to say they know where to get help with bullying. 88.2% of young people said they did in the academic year 2016/17. This has remained the same as in 2014/15, but is slightly lower than in 2012/13 (91%).</li> <li>Our aim is for more young people to say that they would tell someone if they were being bullied. 77.5% of young people said they would in the academic year 2016/17. This has increased from 76.7% in 2014/15 and 61.1% in 2012/13.</li> <li>We established a baseline to monitor the number of staff trained in Brief Interventions and Motivational Interviewing in 2014/15 at 15. Data for 2015/16 is not available but for 2016/17 172 people were trained.</li> <li>During academic year 2016/17 the number of children entering P1 who demonstrated an ability to develop positive relationships was 93% compared to 94% in the previous year.</li> <li>The number of schools participating in the delivery of Resilient Kids was 201 in 2016/17, compared to 145 in academic year 2015/16.</li> </ul>	=
47	<p><b>Treating People Fairly, with Dignity and Respect</b>  <i>The Council will continue to work towards achieving the equality outcomes set out in the Fairer Highland Plan and will promote equality of opportunity in all its work</i></p> <p>Progress:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have a duty to report on progress with equality matters every two years. This includes a progress report on addressing equality outcomes, a mainstreaming equality report which includes employee equality information, and progress on reducing the equal pay gap and occupational segregation. Every four years we are required to review our equality outcomes and Equal Pay Statement. We published our Equality progress reports in February 2017 and revised Equality Outcomes (for the Council, Education Authority, and Licencing Board) were agreed which will contribute to a fairer, more inclusive Highland. The number of equality</li> </ul> </p>	✓

	<p>outcomes was reduced from 20 to 10 to have a more focused approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We monitor the percentage difference between men’s average hourly pay (excluding overtime) and women’s average hourly pay (excluding overtime). Data is available every two years. For 2017, the gender pay gap was 7.2%. This is an improvement of 1.4% from the 2015 figure where the pay gap was 8.6%.</li> <li>• We published a revised equal pay statement and report which includes race and disability in 2017, in addition to gender.</li> <li>• We continue to focus on the equality impact of budget savings proposals, and have now combined this with considering potential rural and poverty impacts. In 2016/17 we examined each budget proposal with support from equalities staff from our public sector partners. This helped us to consider local and national evidence as well as feedback from local equality groups to previous budget consultations. Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) were carried out where required to ensure that the needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty are considered in all budget decisions. The outcomes of the screenings and assessments are published with the budget reports to make sure we make informed decisions.</li> <li>• An accessible Web can offer the possibility of unprecedented access to information and interaction for many people with disabilities. Accessibility barriers to print, audio, and visual media can be much more easily overcome through Web technologies. The Equality Act 2010 provides guidance that websites should be AA standard as a minimum. Our website (<a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk">www.highland.gov.uk</a>) exceeds this and has achieved AAA status. We will now continue to maintain this high standard. This action is now complete.</li> <li>• We aim to increase the percentage of women in management in the Council top 5% of earners. This is a national benchmark indicator and data will not be verified until the end of 2017. Our calculations show that 51.7% of our top 5% of earners were women during 2016/17 compared to 47.2% in 2015/16. We have continued to take positive action to encourage women into management posts. This includes our Women in Management Programme.</li> <li>• In February 2017, we published an annual update on the partnership approach to address hate crime in Highland with Police Scotland. Data from Police Scotland showed an increase in the number of reported incidents and in hate crimes during 2015-16. However, year-to-date figures for 2016-17 showed a reduction in reports and an increase in levels of detection. The report contains more information on hate crimes in Highland, a summary of actions to address prejudice based bullying in schools, and related partnership activities.</li> <li>• Our annual performance and attitudes survey asks the Highland Citizens’ Panel for their views on equality and diversity. The 2016 results show a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who agree with the statement that Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice. The percentage of adults who feel there is sometimes good reason to be prejudiced against certain groups has reduced from 33% (2011) to 18% (2016).</li> </ul>	
48	<p><b>Council Housing Schemes Environmental Improvements</b>  <b>We will target 10% of Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme spend on external works including environmental improvements</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring reports are provided to each meeting of the Community Services Committee on the percentage spend against HRA capital programme budget.</li> <li>• A comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey in 2015/16 reported 69% of tenants were satisfied with our management of their neighbourhood. This established a baseline on tenant satisfaction.</li> </ul>	=
49	<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We will promote and support more community led housing initiatives in rural areas to deliver housing to meet local need.</b></li> <li>• <b>Working from the initial modular housing pilot project developed in Alness and Invergordon, we will encourage development of locally produced energy efficient modular housing units to deliver part of the Council housing programme quicker and more efficiently than traditional built housing</b></li> <li>• <b>We will develop new methods of meeting the needs of disabled householders who have a need for ground floor facilities irrespective of tenure</b></li> </ul>	✓

	<p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust we have worked directly with 45 communities on community led housing options. A recent example is the community led housing project at Ardgay in Sutherland.</li> <li>• We are developing more modular housing at Kenneth Street, Inverness and are working with Albyn Housing society to deliver further projects in Alness, Inverness and Nairn.</li> <li>• We have piloted modular extension to existing properties to enable disabled householders to remain in their own properties.</li> </ul>	
50	<p><b>Poverty and Deprivation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>With our partners, we will develop an anti-poverty strategy that also recognises the issue of poverty in rural areas. It will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable within our communities and help us meet the new legal duties for community planning partnerships to reduce inequalities from socio-economic disadvantage in specific localities. This will include maximising incomes, addressing fuel poverty, improving digital access and capability as well as equipping people with the skills to manage their money</b></li> <li>• <b>We will aim to reduce the number of Highland data zones in the most deprived national 15% with the aim of having no such data zones in the next decade</b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The operational plans of work we intend to deliver using funding from the “European Social Fund Poverty and Social Inclusion Programme” were submitted to the Scottish Government in April 2016 and approved in autumn 2016. It is intended that these operational activities will now begin in September 2017.</li> <li>• We agreed at a meeting of the Highland Council in December 2016 not to progress work to develop an anti-poverty strategy. Instead we are concentrating on the delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) and Locality plans which are focused on addressing socio-economic inequality. The HOIP will be considered by the Community Planning Partnership Board for approval in October 2017.</li> <li>• We aim to increase the number of customers reached by our money advice and welfare benefits teams and this includes the funded work of the Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB). From April 2016, we no longer provide money advice services, and CAB provides these services on our behalf. In 2016/17, 15,248 customers accessed money and welfare benefits advice, an increase of 35.7% from 11,240 customers in the previous year.</li> <li>• We increased the financial benefit to customers from the advice given by the Council from £4.0m in 2015/16 to £4.65m in 2016/17.</li> <li>• We are monitoring the number of Highland data zones identified through the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as in the most deprived 15% of data zones in Scotland. In 2012, 17 data zones in Highland were in the 15% most deprived in Scotland. The new version of the SIMD was released in 2016, and 20 data zones in Highland were in the 15% most deprived in Scotland. Seven data zones have moved into the 15% most deprived in 2016. Four have moved out, but of these, three are still in the top 20% most deprived. SIMD is a relative measure of deprivation and therefore not designed to measure absolute change.</li> <li>• A Poverty Impact Assessment tool has been developed and will be used alongside the existing equality and rural impact assessments to consider potential impacts of policies and proposals. The tool was used for the first time to assess our budget proposals for 2017/18 and to inform the decision making process.</li> </ul>	✓
51	<p><b>Looked After Children</b></p> <p><b><i>We will put the views of our young people who have experienced care at the heart of our decision-making &amp; will build on the commitment for all Community Planning Partners to provide employment for care leavers. We will continue to reduce the number of children who are placed outwith Highland &amp; will progress the case for a new residential home in Inverness for young people with Autism</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to decrease the delay in the time taken between a child being accommodated and permanency decision. During 2016/17 this increased to 16.7 months from 9.7 months in the year before. This is an average length of time and this can vary considerably from case to</li> </ul>	M

- case for a number of reasons. We have continued to seek permanency for harder to place children, e.g. with significant additional support needs, older children or sibling groups, the overall time target (9 months) has not been achieved.
- There were 29 Out of Authority placements in 2016/17, the same as in the previous year. This remains a key focus and during the year the approval processes have been tightened up and progress made towards putting all spot-purchased placements through the Scotland Excel framework. The number of placements has remained the same despite the reduction in Highland-based commissioned residential services during the year.
  - During 2015/16 the percentage of children needing to live away from the family home but supported in kinship care was 17.7% compared to 15.8% the previous year.
  - We aim to increase consultation and engagement with Looked After Children. The Highland CHAMPS board (a regular meeting between care experienced young people and senior officers from organisations with corporate parenting responsibilities) has been in place for some time and is being reviewed to see if any changes are required. The one stop shop for care experienced young people should be ready in autumn 2017 when building work is completed. This will provide a base for young people to obtain advice and support and to meet with other young people.
  - Following detailed work on the strategic requirements of residential placements for young people, we concluded that a new residential home for young people with autism in Inverness would not deliver on a spend-to-save basis. An alternative plan is being developed.

#### Benchmark SPIs

All benchmark SPI go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2016/17 until early 2018. The current position for 2015/16 as reported to Council in March 2017 is:

- The Gross Cost of "Looked After Children" in residential based services per child per week was £3,747 in 2015/16 compared to £3,191 in the previous year. The national average is £3,406. There is a trend towards more costly placements due to the nature of the young people requiring placement.
- The Gross Cost of "Looked After Children" in a community setting (e.g. fostering) per child per week was £211 in 2015/16 compared to £206 in the previous year. The national average is £292. The cost of supporting kinship carers has increased due to the national standardisation of allowances that are paid.
- In 2015/16, 83.4% "Looked After Children" were looked after in a community setting compared to 81.7% the year before. This national figure is 90%.

52	<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Housing Associations, and the private sector to help to deliver 5000 new homes between 2012 and 2017. This will include at least the completion of, or starting on site of 1700 new affordable homes including Council and housing association houses, low cost home ownership and mid-market rent homes. We will also work with the NHS to deliver housing for the elderly via clusters of self-contained houses with care support</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2016/17 there were a further 435 council house completions bringing the total to 1,028 against a target to achieve 688 by March 2017. We are developing, along with Albyn Housing Society, NHS Highland, The Highland Hospice and the private sector a pilot project in Alness which will deliver a cluster of sustainable and digitally enabled homes.</li> <li>• In 2016/17, 779 new homes were constructed in Highland. A total of 4,308 new homes were built between 2012/13 and 2016/17, 692 less than a target of 5,000. Additional measures, such as the Housing HUB (a regular meeting with housing association partners and Scottish Government), seek to address barriers to development and maximise the delivery of affordable housing. We continue to provide a generous supply of viable housing land across Highland, identified within the three local development plans. Action programmes for these plans aim to create a strong framework for the delivery of new homes.</li> <li>• We meet monthly, through the Highland Housing Hub, to review progress on affordable housing. This allows early identification of issues that may affect our ability to meet agreed targets ahead of the fixed quarterly review meetings held with the Scottish Government. This</li> </ul>	=
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	<p>approach maximises opportunities presented by available investment to develop affordable homes within the Highlands. The Highland Housing Hub is recognised by the Scottish Government as an example of excellent partnership working and Scottish Government is encouraging other local authorities to set up similar partnership working.</p>	
53	<p><b>Affordable Warmth</b>  <i><b>We will work with our partners to bring forward a new affordable warmth programme as part of our anti-poverty strategy and will aim to prioritise the delivery of as much as we can at our own hand</b></i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to monitor the proportion of the council's housing stock meeting energy efficient standards (SHQS) during 2016/17 we achieved 94.4% compared to 92.4% in the year before. We have completed our programme to bring the housing stock up to SHQS standard. We will continue to address any properties which fall below the standard through ongoing capital investment.</li> <li>• We continue to improve the energy efficiency of our Council stock in line with the regulatory requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and – for 2020 - the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. Our housing capital programme will commit over £5m per year towards energy efficiency measures for our housing stock.</li> <li>• The Affordable Warmth Partners Group continues to meet to progress the Affordable Warmth Action Plan. This involves progressing energy efficiency works in the private sector, promoting energy advice and maximising household income.</li> <li>• We administer the Scottish Government Home Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEPS-ABS) in Highland for home insulation. We receive the relevant funds as an annual award, and use this to lever in additional funding from the energy supplier through the Energy Company Obligations (ECO). The areas that were focused on in the programme for 2016-17 were Caithness, Fort William, Aird &amp; Loch Ness, Gairloch, Mallaig and Applecross and a total of 344 homes received insulation.</li> </ul>	=
54	<p><b>Temporary Accommodation</b>  <i><b>We will refresh the plan and continue to deliver supported temporary accommodation for those who are homeless, such as one bedroom flats as an alternative to bed and breakfast</b></i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>We have agreed an approach to the future provision of temporary accommodation for Homeless people and monitoring reports will continue to be provided to the Committee. The following monitoring indicators have been established for 2015/16 forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to reduce the number of bed and breakfast type temporary accommodation. During 2016/17 we used 307, compared to 254 the year before. This is due to an increase in the number of homeless applications received in the year and our difficulty in securing permanent accommodation for those applicants.</li> <li>• We aim to increase the use of Council owned temporary accommodation. We have made progress in relation to this target. During 2016/17 we had 170 temporary furnished accommodation units, compared to 136 in 2015/16.</li> <li>• We opened 608 housing options cases and closed 616 cases in 2016/17. In 2015/16 we opened 1677 housing options cases and closed 413. The figures are significantly different due to a change in Scottish Government guidance.</li> </ul>	=
55	<p><b>Supporting Independent Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>We will support independent living by leading on the delivery of adaptations and technology enabled care with, and on behalf of, our NHS partners</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>We will use the Highland Council's Scheme of Assistance Model to work with partners to deliver works for injured Armed Forces personnel</b></i></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current arrangements for delivering housing support services were reviewed to meet new statutory duties introduced in 2012. The service assesses housing support needs and provides access to integrated housing support for all, and tailored support for homeless people. We have worked with current housing support providers regarding the requirements for change through one to one consultation sessions. The new housing support contract</li> </ul>	✓

	<p>started on 1 April 2017 with a re-drafted specification which sets out consistent service delivery requirements; arrangements for referrals of clients to support providers; and reporting and monitoring of outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scheme of Assistance is set up to receive referrals from and on behalf of Service Personnel and to react accordingly. We have worked with Agencies representing Personnel to ensure that our services meet specific needs, whether it is assistance with Handyman tasks such as minor repairs, adaptations or Telecare installations, or larger structural works to adapt properties to accommodate injuries/disabilities. Housing Options and Housing Development are linked to this process to offer a range of solutions for injured personnel returning home.</li> <li>• In 2016/17 we developed a “one stop” delivery model, using the Handyman Service to deliver Repairs, Adaptations, along with Telecare installs and maintenance (on behalf of NHS Highland) to speed up the process, minimising duplication and ensuring that clients get the benefit of a suite of services from a single Handyman visit. We are looking to include adaptation stores management within the service, better integrating the range of services on offer. We received a COSLA Quality Award for this service.</li> <li>• We report on the number of adaptations and timescales for their delivery. During 2016/17 89.0% were approved compared to 69.1% the previous year.</li> <li>• The average number of days to complete medical adaptations applications improved to 58 days compared to 71 days in 2015/16.</li> </ul>	
56	<p><b>Tackling Empty Properties</b>  <i>We will work with partners to use the Scheme of Assistance and Empty Property legislation to tackle property disrepair in the private sector, including empty flats and properties above shops, improving housing stock, promoting affordable warmth, and returning empty and substandard property to housing use</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to work with our partners to tackle property disrepair in the private sector. We receive around five new queries each week from owners of empty properties. We assist by either providing advice, issuing them a VAT reduction letter for works required to their property (If the property has been empty for 2 years or more), or by issuing grants and interest free loans to work with them to bring properties back into use.</li> </ul>	✓
57	<p><b>Alcohol Dependency</b>  <i>Working with our partners including the Drug and Alcohol Partnership, we will support efforts to address alcohol dependency in all of our communities</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a biennial lifestyle survey in schools and from 2015 we asked children and young people to self-report whether they have ever had an alcoholic drink. In 2017: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 90% in P7 said they have never had an alcoholic drink, the same as in 2015;</li> <li>○ 56% in S2 said they have never had an alcoholic drink compared to 63% in 2015;</li> <li>○ 23% in S4 said they have never had an alcoholic drink compared to 29% in 2015.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership has established and now reports every year on the performance of reducing drug and alcohol related harm against 64 indicators.</li> </ul>	=
58	<p><b>Welfare Reform</b>  <i>With our knowledge and experience we will inform the UK and Scottish Governments about the impacts of Welfare Reform in the Highlands and seek to ensure a fair and equal welfare system for our communities</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our staff have successfully influenced policy development at a Scottish and UK level, including discussions with senior civil servants within the Department for Work and Pensions. We are seen as a centre of expertise and excellence, and we are included in any national discussions as standard. This is down to the significant achievement of our staff in minimising and offsetting the worst impacts of welfare reforms.</li> </ul>	✓
59	<p><b>Modernising the Council Tax System</b>  <i>We will work with the Scottish Government, other Local Authorities and COSLA to devise fairer forms of local taxation and work towards Local Authorities controlling a greater</i></p>	✓

	<p><b>proportion of their funding</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government undertook a review of local taxation during 2015/16 and then announced changes to the Council Tax system in 2016 for implementation from 2017/18. During the last couple of years our staff have contributed to national discussions on these issues and options for taxation, including giving evidence and a written submission to the Commission on Local Tax Reform. We will continue to monitor the situation and contribute to any future discussions on these matters.</li> </ul>	
60	<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We will lobby for an infrastructure grant fund mechanism from the Scottish Government to open up strategic sites throughout the Highlands to enable the delivery of new affordable housing</b></li> <li>• <b>We will continue to lobby the Scottish Government for additional resources to enable us to deliver more affordable homes in the Highlands</b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to progress reported at commitment 52, the following progress has been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are the only Council in Scotland which has secured infrastructure funding direct, obtaining a £9 million loan for housing development infrastructure. This commitment is now complete.</li> </ul>	✓ C
61	<p><b>Fairer Fuel and Energy</b></p> <p><b>We will work with UK and Scottish Governments and energy suppliers to promote fair domestic fuel pricing for the Highlands and a fairer system for targeting energy efficiency funding based on levels of fuel poverty</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the monitoring and reporting on the Affordable Warmth Action Plan and the number of home insulation measures committed through the Home Energy Programme for Scotland (Area Based Scheme) outlined at commitment 53 above, the following progress is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have continued to monitor the situation regarding fair fuel prices across the Highlands, working with partners, including the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure equity across the region. Following the decision to leave the European Union (EU) this issue may come back into sharper focus. The existing discount scheme has EU approval, and future schemes may have to be developed.</li> <li>• We have continued to work with partners, including local communities, to ensure that we retain fuel stations across our fragile areas.</li> <li>• Roll out of smart metering in our public buildings has remained at 32% in 2016/17, against a target of 50%. Increasing smart metering has been affected by the changes to the regulatory framework for metering. We have focused on the required alterations to the existing meters rather than any new installations. We expect to achieve the target of 50% in 2017-18.</li> <li>• We are developing a strategy for the upcoming Scottish Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP). A fully developed plan will be put together in line with a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy so that it will comply with the emerging Scottish Government policy. This will maximise the opportunities for the Highlands from SEEP.</li> </ul>	M
62	<p><b>Grid Connections</b></p> <p><b>We will work with the Scottish Government to lobby the UK Government to reduce grid access charges which impact negatively on renewable energy production in the Highlands</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to work closely with Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to ensure that the renewable energy resources of the Highlands are fully accessible to energy markets out with Scotland. We also continue to engage with the transmission and distribution grid network owners, and associated supply chain in the Highlands, to ensure that the area fully benefits from the areas renewable energy resource</li> </ul>	✓

63	<p><b>Housing Debt</b>  <b><i>We will take a fresh look at how we can continue to press UK and Scottish Government to write off the Council's historic housing debt</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to use every opportunity to lobby the UK Government on the issue of housing debt.</li> <li>• In 2016/17 we researched approaches to tackle housing debt across the UK and Europe, and are using this to inform our lobbying approach</li> </ul>	✓
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## 4. Inverness City – the Capital of the Highlands

64	<p><b><i>City/Region Deal - Progress the City/Region deal to lever in additional infrastructure investment, improve connectivity and enhance the skills of our young people across the Highlands</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City-Region deal has been approved with the formal signing on 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017. This deal sets out areas where the Scottish and UK Government will commit funding to, which will be combined with funding from the Council and public sector partners. Funding will be released for projects as they are approved. Projects being progressed through the City-Region deal include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Science Skills Academy and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Digital Creativity (STEMD) hubs;</li> <li>○ University of Highlands and Islands School of Health and Life Sciences;</li> <li>○ Northern Innovation Hub;</li> <li>○ Innovative assisted living scheme;</li> <li>○ Inverness Castle;</li> <li>○ Affordable Housing rent to buy programme;</li> <li>○ Land remediation;</li> <li>○ East link road and Longman interchange;</li> <li>○ Joint Digital Highland Action Plan (under development)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>For more details please visit: <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/cityregiondeal">www.highland.gov.uk/cityregiondeal</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are six projects being delivered in Highland through Scotland's cities strategy. The Open Data, City Wi-Fi, Smart Mobility, and Smart Waste projects are on target to be completed by the end of 2017. Proposals are being finalised for two more projects in 2017. An "Internet of Things" project which will involve a series of smart devices working together to monitor various activities, and a Smart Parking project aimed at improving payment options and providing data for Open Data purposes.</li> <li>• Progress has been made in preparing the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan. We have received feedback from the Main Issues report, and this is being considered in preparing the proposed plan, which is being consulted on from May 2017. We intend to submit the plan to Scottish Government in early 2018, with adoption in 2018/19.</li> <li>• A decision by the Caithness Committee in August 2016 triggered the preparation of a modified proposed local development plan for Caithness and Sutherland. This was consulted on between September and November 2016. This was agreed by local committees in February 2017 and submitted to Scottish Government in 2017. The Examination stage is expected to continue until autumn 2017, with adoption in early 2018.</li> </ul>	✓
65	<p><b><i>Infrastructure for Growth – to continue to grow, Inverness needs to address infrastructure constraints to enable the delivery of new housing, business and recreational facilities.</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inverness West Link: Construction of Stage 1 and the Canal Parks Enhancement started in May 2016. This work is on target to be opened by December 2017. This section provides the link from the Southern Distributor and Dores Road through to the A82 linking in at the new roundabout near Tomnachurich swing bridge. Stage 2 will provide the second swing bridge across the canal, a new roundabout and relocated tie in to General Booth Road. This cannot commence until the golf course moves from its existing location. This is on target and stage 2 is due to commence in Spring 2019. The Inverness West Link is on target to be completed by</li> </ul>	✓

	<p>Winter 2020/21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torvean Golf Course: The new 18 hole course, clubhouse and maintenance buildings are being built in two phases. The golf course works commenced in August 2016. Whilst this was slightly later than planned, the critical date when the course has established and becomes playable is still Spring 2019. This coincides with the relocation of the golf club to enable West Link Stage 2 to commence. The clubhouse and maintenance buildings will be constructed in 2018 for completion in Spring 2019.</li> <li>• Inshes Roundabout: Due to existing traffic issues, works were undertaken on two of the approaches to Inshes Roundabout to improve the flow of traffic. These works were completed by April 2016. By using road space better over Inshes overbridge, two lanes inbound could be provided which again would ease local traffic congestion. These works could commence in 2018. Included in our capital programme is the construction of Inshes junction. Transport Scotland is currently developing proposals for the East Link (A9-A96 link road), with three routes and options still under consideration. It's not practical to progress the detailed design of Inshes Junction until Transport Scotland have announced the preferred East Link option, anticipated late in 2017.</li> </ul>	
66	<p><b><i>City Promotion – We will progress the move of the Scottish Courts Service from Inverness Castle and turn the castle and surrounding area into a major visitor attraction for the city and region. We will also work with partners to enhance visitor experience by seeking to deliver further attractions for the city centre including the riverside arts trail</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service are moving from Inverness Castle to a new site in Inverness. This will free up the Castle from 2019 for refurbishment as a major visitor attraction. We will continue to consult with the public on the development of the site.</li> <li>• The Inverness Castle Viewing platform was completed and opened during April 2017</li> <li>• The first phase of refurbishment has been completed at the site, with environmental improvements such as upgrading paths and installing new seating.</li> <li>• The River Ness Arts projects are due to be completed in Summer 2018. The River Connections project is now complete. An artist has been appointed for the Gathering Place project and we are engaging with the public to identify the artwork design. Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Creative Scotland are fully committed to the project as funding partners.</li> <li>• We have a Service Level Agreement with Visit Inverness Loch Ness, the tourism Business Improvement District in place. As part of this, they include the riverside as one of the important features of the city in their marketing. As the River Ness Arts projects progress, more specific promotion of both the wider project and specific installations can occur.</li> </ul>	✓
67	<p><b><i>City Centre – We will work with our partners to deliver city centre Wi-Fi and other projects to deliver SMART Cities; as well as playing a full part in the Scottish Cities Alliance.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart cities projects have been developed under a number of themes including transport and open data. Work will continue on these projects in the future</li> <li>• The first phase of the Wi-Fi project in Inverness has been successfully implemented. This pilot project provides Wi-Fi in the Victorian Market and surrounding streets. The second project to provide Wi-Fi across the city centre will be completed by August 2017. Expanding the service to other key tourism centres in Highland in the future is also being considered.</li> <li>• We remain a valued partner of the Scottish Cities Alliance and have been influential in developing its activities, in particular, work to attract inward investment to Scotland's cities.</li> </ul>	✓
68	<p><b><i>Business Vibrancy - We will encourage new businesses to locate in the city centre, notably in creative industries and information technology. We will also progress the development of the Victorian Market as a major attraction.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An aim of the Inverness Townscape Heritage Project (2015-2020) is to bring vacant floor space back into use. Our team continue to work with owners to explore possible uses for properties on Academy Street and encourage building repair grant applications.</li> <li>• We have also been successful in securing a £1.2m grant from the Scottish Government for</li> </ul>	✓

	<p>the Midmills Creative Hub.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2016/17, we approved the action plan prepared by the Victorian Market Stakeholder Group. This action plan provides an opportunity for us to show leadership - ensuring that Inverness has a strong and vibrant future with the Victorian Market leading the way. It includes an agreement to employ a Market Manager, who will develop plans for the refurbishment of the Academy Street entrance project. This could be delivered in 2018/19.</li> </ul>	
69	<p><b><i>Health and Wellbeing – Working with our partners we will progress the delivery of a regional sports facilities for the Highlands in Inverness incorporating indoor cycling, tennis and athletics as part of our aim of promoting the Highlands as a great place to live, work and visit. We will also explore options for a transport schemes so that all of Highland can benefit from these facilities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design work on a regional sports facility for the Highlands in Inverness is on hold pending a review of the Council's capital programme.</li> </ul>	=
70	<p><b><i>Transport - Working with our partners we will develop public transport provision in the city and we will work with Abellio Scotrail to prepare and implement a masterplan for Inverness Railway Station. We also will aim to make Inverness one of the most family and visitor friendly cities in the UK through expanding 20mph zones throughout the residential areas of the city</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have worked with Abellio Scotrail and Nicol Russel Studios to prepare an Inverness Station Masterplan. This work concluded in March 2016, and has been used to inform the ongoing redevelopment project.</li> <li>In 2016/17 we introduced 20 mph zones in four areas in Inverness: Merkinch; Bruce Gardens; Raigmore Estate; and Wimberley Way. Also, a 20 mph scheme is currently being delivered in Inverness City Centre (2017/18).</li> <li>We reviewed of our development guidance on the requirement for roads within new developments to be designed for low speeds in 2016. Road Construction Consent (RCC) applications are already coming forward with the design principle of lower speeds. Approved RCC are being issued with the necessary requirement for speed limit signs and markings. The RCC process is under review.</li> </ul>	✓
71	<p><b><i>Social Equality - Working with our partners we will seek public sector infrastructure investment and training opportunities in our deprived communities to create jobs and improve quality of life</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The shared apprenticeship project is now complete with all apprentices now in full time apprentice posts.</li> <li>We work with the Scottish Government to attract infrastructure investment to deprived areas. An example of this the refurbishment of the Merkinch Welfare Hall to provide a sports facility and job club which was partly funded by the Scottish Government through regeneration capital grant funding.</li> </ul>	✓
72	<p><b><i>Education - We will work to develop the presence of the University of the Highlands and Islands within the city, to enhance options for the retention of young people within the City and Region and encourage sector growth in industries</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recognise the important role Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Digital Creativity (STEMD) related skills will play in the continuing economic development of the Highlands. The work of the Science Skills Academy will be crucial to this. We continue to work with partners to ensure a network STEMD related Learning Centres across the Highlands is complete by the end of the City Region Deal in 2026.</li> </ul>	✓