

Agenda Item	14
Report No	HC/7/23

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 9 March 2023

Report Title: **Annual Report 2021/22- Statutory Performance Indicators, Benchmarking and Best Value**

Report By: Interim Chief Executive

1. Purpose/ Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides performance information on the Council's Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for 2021/22. The SPIs are locally determined and are drawn from local performance indicators (LPI) and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators used in the Council's Corporate Plan.

1.2 Of the Council's 100 SPIs, performance against target for 2021/22 can be calculated for 92 of the indicators:

- 63 were performing on target or within the performance threshold;
- 29 indicator targets had not been achieved;
- Of the 27 indicator targets not achieved, 15 SPIs showed some improvement
- 2 indicators did not have a set target for 2021/22.

The data is not yet available to report performance for the final 6 indicators.

1.3 There are 34 SPIs that the Council considers to be Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These provide a high-level overview of the Council's performance overall and have been selected considering their weighting in terms of evidencing effective service delivery of key Council functions. Performance data against the target is available for 28 of these KPIs, with provisional or previous year's data supplementing.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Scrutinise the performance of the Council's SPIs for 2021/22 outlined in Appendices 1 – 3 of this report;
- ii. Note the Audit Direction on public performance reporting and the Council's approach to compliance in Appendix 4 of this report;
- iii. Scrutinise the Best Value Qualitative Report summarised in Appendix 5 of this report. Full details will be published separately on the Council's website;
- iv. Note the External Audit opinion on the Council's delivery of Best Value in relation to the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) and associated BVAR Improvement Plan as outlined at section 6 of this report.

3. Implications

3.1 Resources

There are no resource implications as a result of this performance report. The report however does contain a number of cost indicators which can support service improvement towards monitoring and reducing costs.

3.2 Legal

Implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting and demonstrating Best Value.

3.3 Risk: There is a risk of data being misinterpreted. For example, spend on services may be increased in response to political and public priorities increasing the overall unit cost per annum whereas the national benchmark assumes that the lowest cost per unit demonstrates better performance. The cost of roads maintenance per km is an example of this.

3.4 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

A number of performance indicators are useful in supporting improvement activity around equalities including “women managers in top 5% of earners”, and the “gender pay gap”. There are also indicators related to poverty, such as Housing indicators on energy efficiency and rent arrears. It is worth noting that the rural nature of Highland means the unit cost of service delivery is often higher and this presents a further challenge to achieving continuous improvement, especially given budgetary constraints.

3.5 Climate Change/ Carbon Clever

There are a number of indicators which relate to Climate Change, including: asset management, street lighting electricity costs, waste recycling, Council carbon emissions, and two LGBF indicators on climate change.

3.6 Gaelic

There are no implications arising from this report.

4. Background

4.1 The Council is required to report on its Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) within 12 months of the end of the financial year they refer to. To achieve this the Council must report against the requirements of the Audit Direction set out by the Accounts Commission in relation to Statutory Public Performance Reporting (PPR). The Council self-determines how this is achieved. The agreed approach uses some of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework data (LGBF) along with relevant local indicators.

4.2 There are 34 KPIs which were agreed in order to achieve a balanced strategic view of performance across the Council. The Council’s Corporate Plan sets out its strategic and operational priorities along with relevant LGBF indicators and targets to monitor progress. These LGBF indicators along with locally determined indicators are now the focus of the Council’s SPI reporting. The SPI indicator set is detailed at **Appendix 1**.

4.3 For transparency, **Appendix 2** of this report provides data on the Council’s performance for all LGBF indicators. Also included is the Council’s benchmarking

position for 2021/22, the previous reporting year, and the national average, minimum, and maximum values for 2021/22.

- 4.4 The indicators selected and their respective targets frame the Council's ambition to be a high performing Council; evidence the sustainability of the Council and its effective use of resources through cost indicators; and connect the Council to its communities through understanding public satisfaction with Council Services. This means the Council will measure performance and report on it publicly with a focus on the Council's values of being ambitious, sustainable and connected. The Council will also continue to inform and listen to our citizens and customers to ensure that the Council is delivering services that provide Best Value for our citizens. This report is also scrutinised by our external auditors, Audit Scotland.
- 4.5 Members should note that good progress continues to be made in driving improvement in performance management across the Council. The Council's External Auditors Annual Report was considered by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 28 November 2022. This report provided feedback on progress since the Council's Best Value Audit Report (BVAR) and this external audit opinion now forms part of how the Council meets Public Performance Reporting requirements. The Council receives annual reports detailing progress on delivery of the BVAR Improvement Plan with the most recent on 22 September 2022. The outcome of these reports is discussed in more detail in section 6 of this report.
- 4.6 The Audit Direction and the Council's planned approach to meeting this is set out in **Appendix 4**. This report provides quantitative data to demonstrate the Council's progress to meet the Audit Direction. The Council also provides a wide range of information on its performance through:
- Service performance reports to Strategic Committees
 - Annual Corporate Performance Report
 - The Council's website, social media; and press releases.

A supplementary report, Performance Examples and Case Studies – 2021/22, provides examples on how the Council fulfilled each of the audit direction statements during the year with a greater focus on qualitative evidence. In order to demonstrate Best Value, qualitative evidence is as important as quantitative data, and the supplementary report provides important evidence in demonstrating Best Value to the Council's external auditors. A summary of the information provided is included at **Appendix 5**.

- 4.7 The Council's progress to meet the Audit Direction is monitored by the External Auditor with an assessment published in the annual external audit report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee normally in September each year.
- 4.8 Almost all SPIs have a performance target. These have either been set by Members through the Corporate Plan or have been established by Council officers. The type of target varies by indicator and may relate to an indicator's position in national benchmarking or be determined based on seeking improved local trends. An assessment of performance against the target is set out at **Appendix 1**.

5. Statutory Performance Indicators 2021/22

- 5.1 A summary of the performance information set out in Appendix 2 is summarised in Table 1 below. This shows that 68% (63/92) of the indicators with full data available are performing on target (equal to or better than the target) or within the performance

threshold (below target but within an agreed level of tolerance). 29 indicators (32%) were not achieved, but of those, 15 showed some improvement. Further commentary and explanatory information in respect of these indicators is detailed at **Appendix 4**.

Table 1 – Summary of SPI performance

Performance against target		Number of SPIs
G	Performance is “On Target”	49
A	Performance is “Some Slippage”	14
R	Performance is “No Significant Progress”	29
	The indicator is new/ changed/ verified data awaited/ no data available	8

5.2 The present suite of SPIs will be reviewed during the summer of 2023 to reflect the new Council Programme which contains a number of new commitments and to reflect on the financial implications of the 2023/4 budget. This will ensure the SPIs are aligned to Council priorities and the numbers being measured and monitored are realistic. In addition, where targets were not in place for 2021/22 but have subsequently been approved, these will also be included. For example, primary literacy and numeracy, targets for which have subsequently been approved at Education Committee (increase by 8% and 7% respectively).

5.3 The emerging trends from the LGBF data reports that Covid continued to impact upon the following:

- Adult Social Care – home care and residential care, adult care quality ratings, delayed hospital discharges, hospital re-admissions;
- Children’s Services – educational attainment, pupil attendance, early years quality ratings, Child Protection re-registrations and placement stability;
- Corporate – staff absence, council tax collection and support services;
- Culture and Leisure – usage levels and digital shift;
- Economic Development & Planning – claimant count (working age & 16-25), employment support and business start-ups, planning applications and processing times;
- Housing – housing quality, housing management and rent arrears;
- Environment – recycling and street cleanliness.

These trends are the same as reported last year and the local information reported for Highland is very similar to the national picture.

5.4 In addition to Covid still affecting parts of the Council and its activities, there are other factors affecting the level of demand for Council services and the context they were delivered in. These include:

- increased demand for welfare services including applications for the new fuel poverty scheme set up during the year;
- increased levels of vulnerability and exacerbated inequalities;
- shut down and/ or slowdown in economic activity impacting on businesses;
- effects from other sectors including NHS hospitals and supplier and contractor engagement.

5.5 SPIs are subject to internal audit programmed on a seven-year cycle with the last audit for 2014/15 and therefore an audit was planned for 2022/23. This audit will be undertaken shortly. Furthermore, sampling and regular scrutiny of SPIs is carried out

annually by the Corporate Performance Team along with existing scrutiny processes through Strategic Committees including the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Statutory Duties of Best Value and Public Performance Reporting

- 6.1 The Audit Direction outlined in **Appendix 4** requires the Council to assess how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment. Internal and External Audit assessments of the Council's Best Value duty (and how these are responded to) now need to form part of the Council's Public Performance Reporting (PPR).

The Council also has a statutory duty to report on its performance to the public. To assess how well we meet this duty, the Council's external auditors review the information from this report as well as the results of the Annual Corporate Performance Report, which was considered by Council on 22/09/22. The development of the performance pages on the Council website provides an important source of this and other information for Members, the public, staff and external audit at www.highland.gov.uk/performance

- 6.2 The Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) Improvement Plan was approved by Council on 12 March 2020 following publication of the Council's BVAR in January 2020 by the Accounts Commission. Annual updates on progress delivering the Improvement Plan are provided to Council with the most recent update on 22 September 2022. Progress continues to be monitored through the Council's Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS) which showed that for the 27 improvement actions being monitored:

- 17 had been completed;
- 3 were on target;
- 6 actions had some slippage;
- 1 action had no significant progress.

- 6.3 The [Council's Annual External Audit Report 2021/22](#) assessed the Council's progress in delivering Best Value and provided an external opinion on the Council's progress in delivering the Best Value Improvement Plan. The key messages from the draft external audit report were presented to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 28 September 2022 and overall the audit concluded that the Council continued to make good progress against the BVAR action plan. The report acknowledged that by the end of the financial year 80% (20/27) of actions were either complete or on target. It also recognised that the Council faces challenges in demonstrating its financial sustainability as well as its ability to build up reserves to meet unplanned costs.

7. Other Key Factors Influencing Performance

- 7.1 The performance indicators provide a complex picture of how the Council is performing and in scrutinising the information, the following should be considered:
- Improvements (cost reduction) are seen in many of the Council's local and national benchmark cost indicators. It should be noted that any improvement in performance may be due to improved efficiency, or due to budget reductions.
 - Cost benchmark indicators generally focus on the lowest spend being ranked highest nationally. Therefore, any decisions by the Council to increase investment in services e.g. roads maintenance, is presented negatively as the result is an increase in unit cost.

- Local and national performance indicators continue to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose. There will be a review of the Council's locally defined performance indicators in 2023. There is continuous engagement on the national benchmark indicators through membership of a national steering group and themed events each year.
- Overall, as outlined in the BVAR, more analytical use of the data is needed by Services to understand the factors that link performance and resources, identifying opportunities where self-assessment, service redesign and benchmarking can support learning and improvement activity. This will provide greater clarity on the impact of Council budget decisions, and this is also a requirement for Service Plan development.
- A Business Intelligence (BI) Vision was developed and was approved by Council on 22 September 2022. This is now being implemented by officers in order that the anticipated benefits including using BI to support decision making and drive improvements in service delivery.

7.2 Service Plans were presented to the Strategic Committees in September 2022 and there is regular quarterly reporting on performance to Strategic Committees with new integrated finance and performance reports. The new Business Partner (BP) model for performance has been embedded and the BPs will continue to work and support the ECOs and their Management Teams.

Designation: Interim Chief Executive

Date: 27 February 2023

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References:

Statutory Performance Indicator Report 2021/22

Performance	
G	Performance is "On Target"
A	Performance is "Some Slippage"
R	Performance is "No Significant Progress"
	The indicator is new / changed / verified data awaited/ no data yet available

Indicators shown in bold are Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

Children's Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
School Meals – gross cost per meal provided	£3.99	£6.77	£4.18	£3.59	R
School Transport – cost per pupil transported	£1,347.33	£1,459.00	£1,545.00	£1,301.55	R
The number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council – residential	84	70	65	76	G
The average number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council out with Highland	30	28	24	24	G
Looked After Children in kinship care (%)	20.5%	22.7%	19.1%	25.0%	R
Number of persistent young offenders with 5+ referrals	6	3	8	9	G
Number of offence-based referrals to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	388	255	314	447	G
Average time between child accommodated to permanence decision (months)	7.0	8.7	6.5	9.0	G
Average time between decision for permanence via adoption to matching decision (months)	18.9	18.3	18.1	13.7	R
Average time between Child's Plan meeting decision to receipt of Child's adoption Permanence report (weeks)	35.9	39.6	49.1	12.0	R
Number of Foster Carers	119	120	125	179	R
CHN4 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children	62%	64%	67%	67%	G
CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children	34%	34%	33%	39%	R
CHN6 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	37%	48%	51%	44%	G

Children's Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
CHN7 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	15%	19%	19%	18%	G
CHN9 – Looked After Children in the community	83.1%	85.4%	83.7%	88.46%	R
CHN11 – Pupils entering positive destinations	92.5%	94.3%		96.5%	
CHN13a % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Literacy		49.5%	59.3%		
CHN13b % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Numeracy		60.1%	68.8%		
CHN17 – Children meeting developmental milestones	87.8%	86.3%		86.6%	
CHN18 – Funded early years provision which is graded good/better	90.4%	91.1%	90.0%	96.0	R
CHN22 – Child protection re-registrations within 18 months	7.7%	9.3%		6.4%	
CORP6a – Sickness absence days per teacher	6.9	3.3	5.6	4.2	R

CHN9: Highland data is provisional, national benchmarking data is not yet available. Adjustment to 2019/20 data from 83.3% to 83.1%; 2020/21 data from 85.3% to 85.4%

CHN11: data for 2021/22 is not yet available.

CHN13a&b: no data to report for 2019/20, data not collected due to COVID.

CHN13a: no target set for 2021/22, however Education Stretch Aim targets of 67% for 2022/23 and 69% for 2023/24 have been adopted.

CHN13b: no target set for 2021/22, however Education Stretch Aim targets of 75% for 2022/23 and 77% for 2023/24 have been adopted.

CHN17: data for 2021/22 is not yet available. Adjustment to 2019/20 data from 87.6% to 87.8%

CHN22: data for 2021/22 not yet available. Adjustment to 2019/20 data from 7.3% to 7.7%

The number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council - residential: data for 2021/22 is provisional.

Children's Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target
School Leavers – Highest Attaining 20% Complementary Tariff Score	1,247		1,302	1,310	A
School Leavers – Lowest Attaining 20% Complementary Tariff Score	128		139	144	A
School Leavers – Middle Attaining 60% Complementary Tariff Score	591		656	664	A

School Leaver – Complementary Tariff Measures: no data to report for 2019/20 due to COVID impact on assessment process. Data for 2021/22 is due to be reported in February 2023

Children's Services	2016-2017	2018-2019	2020-2021	18/19 Target	Performance against target
CHN19a – School attendance rate (per 100 pupils)	93.4%	92.8%	91.5%	92.6%	R
CHN19b – School attendance rate (per 100 looked after children)	85.5%	85.7%	86.9%	86.5%	G
CHN20a – School exclusion rate (per 1000 pupils)	22.7	20.6	12.8	20.0	G
CHN20b – School exclusion rate (per 1000 looked after children)	243.9	189.3	102.0	165.4	G

CHN19a&b CHN20a&b: data is reported every 2 years for these indicators. No targets set in 20/21 SPI report.

Adult Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Criminal Justice – Offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Supervision) seen within 5 working days	69.0%	42.3%	46.1%	69.2%	R
Criminal Justice Social Work reports submitted to court by due date	93.0%	92.8%	95.0%	93.0%	G
Criminal Justice – Offenders on new Community Payback Orders (unpaid work) first placement within 7 working days	65.6%	39.4%	47.4%	62.2%	R
Criminal Justice – Community Payback Order (Unpaid Work) Beneficiaries	100%	100%	100%	100%	G
Criminal Justice – Level 3 MAPPA cases reviewed once every 6 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	G
Criminal Justice – Level 2 MAPPA cases reviewed once every 12 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	G
SW2 – Direct payments spend on adults (18+)	6.4%	6.6%	7.5%	7.7%	A
SW3a – Adults (65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home	54.4%	55.6%	55.8%	61.0%	R

SW2: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 6.3% to 6.4%, 2020/21 data from 5.6% to 6.6%

SW3a: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 54.4% to 54.3%

Adult Services	2017-18	2019-20	2021-22	19/20 Target	Performance against target
SW4b – Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	85.7%	78.0%	84.3%	83.6%	G

SW4b: data is reported every 2 years for this indicator

Cultural and Leisure Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Museums – Visits/ usage virtual or in person per 1,000 population	2,562	1,475	4,802	2,278	G
Museums – Visits/ usage in person per 1,000 population	1,361	157	650	960	R
Library Usage – Visits per 1,000 population (in person and virtual)	15,884	9,549	10,817	8,500	G
Library Usage – Virtual visits per 1,000 population	6,533	9,329	9,166	6,778	G
High Life Highland reliance on Council funding	50%	49%	51%	50%	G
High Life Highland customer engagements	8,893,094	4,865,324	6,323,817	7,303,598	R
Highland population with a High Life Highland card	40%	31.8%	36.7%	31.8%	G
C&L1a – Net cost per attendance to sport facilities	£1.80	£24.99	£6.73	£3.77	R
C&L2a – Net cost per visit to libraries	£1.33	£1.19	£1.53	£2.18	G
C&L3a – Net cost per museum visit	£1.64	£2.75	£1.29	£4.34	G

Road Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Cost of electricity per street lighting unit	£32.59	£31.58	£30.36	£34.29	G
Cost of maintenance per street lighting unit	£12.67	£12.51	£13.72	£14.56	G
Traffic light failures completed in 3 hours	96.2%	91.0%	93.0%	94.1%	A
Street light failures completed in 7 days	69%	55%	62.0%	66.7%	A
Street lighting energy consumption (kWh)	11,878,227	10,904,332	10,035,100	11,800,000	G
Road network to be considered for maintenance	37.8%	39.1%	36.7%	38.4%	G
Average Bridge Stock Condition Indicator	79.0	79.0	78.8	80.0	A

Environmental Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Net cost of Waste collection per premises (ENV1a)	£73.55	£83.66	£90.50	£77.30	R
Net cost per Waste disposal per premises (ENV2a)	£104.16	£97.68	£100.11	£124.82	G
Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (ENV3a)	£8,269	£6,775	£8,805	£9,285	G

Environmental Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
ENV3c – Street Cleanliness Score	95.7%	95.0%	93.7%	95.0%	R
ENV6a – Household waste that is recycled (calendar year)	41.3%	35.7%	37.3%	42.0%	R
Adults satisfied – refuse collection (ENV7a)	87.8%	89.1%		83.7%	
Adults satisfied – street cleaning (ENV7b)	66.2%	66.9%		60.0%	
Trading Standards – Business advice requested completed within 14 days	85.3%	85.1%	86.3%	87.8%	A
High risk food businesses inspected for food hygiene	91%	13%		95%	
High risk private water supplies inspected and sampled (Data for calendar year)	71%	17%	42%	95%	R
Council carbon emissions (tonnes CO₂e)	40,622	35,408	33,766	50,595	G

ENV1a: adjustment to 2019/20 data from £72.60 to £73.55

ENV2a: adjustment to 2019/20 data from £103.62 to £104.16, 20/21 data from £96.24 to £97.68

ENV3a: adjustment to 2019/20 data from £8,184 to £8,269

ENV7a; and ENV7b: 2021/22 data is not yet available. This indicator is calculated using data from the Scottish Household Survey, publication of the survey results has been delayed until April/May 2023.

High risk food businesses inspected for food hygiene: Officers are reviewing the reporting of food safety interventions with the aim of providing performance data for the 2022/23 period.

Council carbon emissions: adjustment to figure reported for FY20/21 from 32,404 to 35,408 due to change in heating fuel calculations

Business and Development Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Number of natural and cultural consultations responded to annually by Historic Environment and Forestry Teams.	1,531	1,813	1,828	1,412	G
Businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway Services	1,643	15,319	2,208	1,600	G
Avg time [wks] per planning application – all Local Developments			13.1	13.0	A
Avg time [wks] per planning application – all Majors			56.7	36.0	R
Avg time [wks] per planning application – Other Consents			9.9	10.0	G
ECON5 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	11.96	7.35	8.49	11.19	R
ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	82%	84%	83%	86%	A

Businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway services: methodology clarified and target revised to average performance of previous 3 year prior to 2020/21 (COVID year).

Avg time planning application indicators: new indicators

ECON8: query with Improvement Service regarding the measures being used.

Housing Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Average time to complete emergency housing repairs (hours) SHR11	6.0	8.5	5.8	5.0	R
Average time taken to re-let homes (days)	31.9	44.2	35.5	36.0	G
Homelessness – case duration (weeks)	43	56	50	37	R
HSN1b – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	4.6%	5.4%	5.5%	5.0%	R
Average number of new affordable homes built (rolling average from 2017/18)	414	377	437	450	A
Average time to complete medical adaptations (days) SHR23	40.0	44.2	45.6	63.30	G

Corporate Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Creditors – unit cost per creditor invoice issued	£1.66	£2.28	£1.59	£2.21	G
Cost of Accounting (% of net revenue budget + housing revenue account)	0.28%	0.27%	0.28%	0.29%	G
Non-Domestic Rates collected by year end	97.8%	96.0%	97.5%	97.8%	A
Cost of Non-Domestic Rates collection per chargeable property	£17.65	£17.78	£17.93	£25.27	G
Overall Council Tax collection level (previous 5 years)	97.2%	97.1%	97.2%	95.7%	G
Income sundry debtors collected during year	88.6%	83.8%	83.8%	81.5%	G
Sickness – Days lost per employee (all staff)	8.8	5.5	7.4	9.3	G
Payroll – cost per payslip produced	£2.35	£2.47	£2.33	£2.53	G
Pensions – cost per member	£30.11	£28.72	£31.96	£24.01	R
Avg Days to Process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Claims – Changes of Circumstance	2.0	1.7	1.8	3.3	G
Avg Days to Process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Claims – New Claims	10.9	9.1	9.4	17.6	G
Benefits Administration costs – Gross cost per case	£38.75	£38.64	£41.99	£38.96	R

Corporate Services	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Target	Performance against target
Cost of Procurement Section as a proportion of net revenue budget	0.104%	0.104%	0.109%	0.108%	A
Women managers in top 2% of earners	39.1%	41.6%	39.6%	39.6%	G
Cost of Internal Audit (per £m net expenditure)	£722.30	£775.56	£708.57	£920.51	G
Accident injury rate	209	150	125	191	G
CORP6b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	9.7	6.4	8.2	10.1	G
CORP7 – Council Tax received Annual percentage received	96.3%	95.7%	96.5%	94.8%	G
ECON4 – % of Procurement Spend on Local Enterprises	47.3%	47.0%	49.8%	36.2%	G
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability	67.5%	67.5%	75.9%	80.8%	R

Creditors – unit cost per creditor invoice issued: provisional target is CIPFA Scottish AVG for 2020/21

Pensions – cost per member: provisional target is CIPFA Scottish AVG for 2020/21

Cost of Internal Audit (per £m net expenditure): provisional target is CIPFA Scottish AVG for 2020/21

Accident Injury Rate: adjustment to 2020/21 data from 140 to 150.

Local Government Benchmark Report 2021/22

Where the target is “Scot Av.” This means that the Council’s target is the Scottish average.

Where the target is “Fam Av.” This means that the Council’s target is family group average.

The rank position of indicators is as published by the Improvement Service. This may be subject to change as data is reviewed by local authorities.

Quartiles: First quartile (rank 1-8); second quartile (rank 9-16); third quartile (rank 17-24); and fourth quartile (rank 24-32).

FY – Financial Year **CY** – Calendar Year **AY** – Academic Year

Children’s Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CHN1 – Cost per primary school pupil	18th	20th	£6,423	£6,330	£10,343	£5,748
CHN2 – Cost per secondary school pupil	22nd	20th	£8,063	£7,905	£13,005	£7,046
CHN3 – Cost per pre-school education registration	6 th	6th	£8,747	£10,291	£15,516	£7,922
CHN8a – Gross cost per bed/week Children’s Residential Units	27th					
CHN8b – Cost of Looked After Children (per child per week) – community	7th					
CHN10 – Adults satisfied with schools [3 year rolled averages]	15th					
CHN17 – Children meeting developmental milestones	11th					
CHN18 – Funded early years provision which is graded good/better	17 th	16th	90.0%	89.4%	73.9%	100.0%
CHN21 – Participation rate for 16–19-year-olds	16 th	19th	92.7%	92.4%	89.4%	97.0%
CHN22 – Child protection re-registrations within 18 months	22nd					
CHN24 – Children living in poverty (after housing costs)	18th					

CHN1: adjustment to 20/21 rank from 20th to 18th.

CHN2: adjustment to 20/21 rank from 21st to 22nd.

CHN3: adjustment to 20/21 rank from 5th to 6th.

CHN8a/b; CHN10; CHN17; CHN22; and CHN24: 2021-22 data is not yet available.

Children’s Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	AY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CHN4 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children	23 ^d	20th	67.0%	69.0%	60.0%	90.0%
CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children	26 th	26th	33.0%	40.0%	27.0%	69.0%

Children's Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	AY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CHN6 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	14 th	14 th	51.0%	52.0%	25.0%	79.0%
CHN7 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	17 th	14 th	19.0%	23.0%	10.0%	47.0%
CHN9 – Percentage of Looked After Children in the community	21 st		83.7%			
CHN11 – Pupils entering positive destinations	27 th					
CHN12a – Overall Average Total Tariff (S4-S6)	23 rd	26 th	896	981	758	1448
CHN12b – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived 20%)	17 th	16 th	648	702	472	1064
CHN12c – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 2	27 th	28 th	677	827	649	1239
CHN12d – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 3	17 th	26 th	913	965	820	1250
CHN12e – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 4	30 th	27 th	999	1113	953	1483
CHN12f – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5	29 th	22 nd	1177	1316	764	1584
CHN13a - % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Literacy	32 nd	32 nd	59.3%	70.5%	59.3%	85.8%
CHN13b - % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Numeracy	32 nd	32 nd	68.8%	78.0%	68.8%	89.6%
CHN14a – Literacy Attainment Gap [P1/4/7]	25 th	27 th	28.0%	21.3%	38.4%	9.6%
CHN14b – Numeracy Attainment Gap [P1/4/7]	27 th	28 th	26.3%	17.8%	33.7%	13.1%
CHN23 – Looked After Children with more than one placement last year (Aug-July)	30 th					

CHN7: adjustment to Highland rank for 2020/21 from 18th to 17th

CHN9: 2021/22 Highland data is provisional, national benchmarking data is not yet available.

CHN11: 2021/22 data is not yet available.

CHN23: 2020/21 data is not yet available.

Children's Services	Highland			Scotland (AY 2019-21)		
	Rank AY 17-19	Rank AY 19-21	AY 19-21	Average	Min	Max
CHN19a – School attendance rate (per 100 pupils)	21 st	24 th	91.5%	92.0%	89.8%	95.5%
CHN19b – School attendance rate (per 100 looked after children)	23 rd	22 nd	86.9%	87.9%	83.0%	93.0%
CHN20a – School exclusion rate (per 1000 pupils)	18 th	17 th	12.8	11.9	23.7	1.2

Children's Services	Highland			Scotland (AY 2019-21)		
	Rank AY 17-19	Rank AY 19-21	AY 19-21	Average	Min	Max
CHN20b – School exclusion rate (per 1000 looked after children)	21st	20th	102.0	77.8	454.6	31.7

Adult Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
SW1 – Adult Home Care costs per hour (aged 65+)	26 th	24 th	£33	£29	£76	£16
SW2 – Direct payments spend on adults (aged 18+)	10 th	10 th	7.5%	8.2%	1.7%	28.2%
SW3a – Adults (aged 65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home	28 th	30 th	55.8%	62.3%	49.0%	75.3%
SW5 – Residential costs per week for adults (aged 65+)	14 th	17 th	£625	£649	£2,780	£260
SW6 – Readmissions to hospital within 28 days of discharge (per 1,000 discharge)	15 th	18 th	113	110	146	72
SW7 – Proportion of care services graded good or better	20 th	13 th	80%	76%	71%	92%
SW8 – Number of days people spend in hospital when ready for discharge (per 1,000 population, aged 75+)	30 th	28 th	1,019	748	1,388	153

SW2: adjustment to Highland rank for 2020/21 from 14th to 10th.

SW5: change to the definition of the indicator and values reported, now uses Gross Expenditure.

Adult Services	Highland			Scotland (2021-23)		
	Rank 19-21	Rank 21-23	2021-23	Average	Min	Max
SW4b – Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	24 th	4 th	84.3%	78.1%	63.1%	93.6%
SW4c – Adults supported to live independently or who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible	13 th	4 th	86.5%	78.8%	70.4%	90.2%
SW4d – Adults supported at home who agree that they have had a say in how their help, care, or support was provided	16 th	15 th	72.1%	70.6%	60.6%	80.6%
SW4e – Carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role	21 st	19 th	28.7%	29.7%	23.8%	44.6%

Culture and Leisure Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
C&L1a – Net cost per visit to leisure facilities	10 th	22 nd	£6.73	£6.44	£19.41	£0.97
C&L2a – Net cost per visit to libraries	5 th	4 th	£1.53	£2.90	£22.55	£0.51
C&L3a – Net cost per museum visit	8 th	5 th	£1.29	£4.75	£47.29	£0.00
C&L4a – Net cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population	2 nd	4 th	£7,028	£20,315	£48,103	£3,770
C&L5a – Adults satisfied with libraries (3 year rolled averages)	22 nd					
C&L5b – Adults satisfied with parks & open spaces (3-year average)	30 th					
C&L5c – Adults satisfied with museums & galleries (3-year average)	26 th					
C&L5d – Adults satisfied with leisure facilities (3-year average)	15 th					

C&L4a: Highland data should be £7,191. The Improvement Service agree with this and will rectify in a later publication.

C&L5a; C&L5b; C&L5c; C&L5d: 2021/22 data is not yet available.

Environmental Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
ENV1a – Net cost of waste collection per premises	28 th	30 th	£90.50	£70.15	£129.99	£33.87
ENV2a – Net cost per waste disposal per premises	11 th	15 th	£100.11	£100.33	£211.29	£43.91
ENV3a – Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	3 rd	6 th	£8,805	£14,860	£23,009	£6,949
ENV3c – Street cleanliness score	8 th	7 th	93.7%	89.7%	98.1%	82.2%
ENV4a – Cost of roads per kilometre	6 th	7 th	£7,001	£11,117	£69,557	£3,006
ENV4b – Road network condition – A Class roads	20 th	17 th	26.3%	27.6%	36.8%	14.8%
ENV4c – Road network condition – B Class roads	27 th	26 th	35.8%	33.6%	56.6%	17.0%
ENV4d – Road network condition – C Class roads	26 th	25 th	37.9%	33.2%	55.4%	15.4%
ENV4e – Road network condition – U Class roads	26 th	23 rd	41.3%	36.7%	56.6%	23.4%
ENV5a – Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice, and Citizen Advice per 1,000 population	23 rd	23 rd	£8,426	£5,932	£12,943	£1,281
ENV5b – Cost of Environmental Health per 1,000 population	26 th	25 th	£19,844	£15,032	£41,892	£8,126
ENV6a – Percentage of household waste that is recycled (Data for calendar year)	25 th	26 th	37.3%	42.7%	16.9%	58.1%

Environmental Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
ENV7a – Adults satisfied with refuse collection	2nd					
ENV7b – Adults satisfied with street cleaning	12th					

ENV2a: change to Highland rank for 2020/21 from 12th to 11th.

ENV5b: change to Highland rank for 2020/21 from 4th to 26th (error in figure originally reported for 2020/21)

ENV7a and ENV7b: 2021/22 data is not yet available.

Tackling Climate Change	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CLIM01 – CO ₂ emissions area wide per capita	1st					
CLIM02 – CO ₂ emissions area wide: emissions within scope of Local Authority per capita	29 th					

CLIM01 and CLIM02: data for 2021/22 is not yet available.

Economic Development	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
ECON1 – Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work		23rd	11.7%	19.6%	5.4%	115.5%
ECON2 – Cost per planning application	2 nd	1st	£2,548	£4,341	£8,526	£2,548
ECON3 – Average time (weeks) per planning application	27 th	22nd	13.6	11.7	20.6	6.0
ECON4 – % of Procurement Spend on Local Enterprises	2 nd	2nd	49.8%	29.9%	12.2%	52.0%
ECON5 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	26 th	28th	8.5	14.4	6.7	29.6
ECON6 – Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 pop.	13th	14th	£105,578	£119,486	£29,799	£383,934
ECON7 – Percentage earning less than the living wage	8 th	9th	14.4%	14.4%	32.6%	9.2%
ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	28 th	28th	83%	94%	65%	99%
ECON9 – Town centre vacancy rates	4 th	4th	4.8	11.4	20.7	2.3
ECON10 – Immediately available employment land	27 th	20th	18.9	27.2%	1.4%	100.0%

Economic Development	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
ECON11 – Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita	9th					
ECON12a – Claimant Count as a percentage of working age population	12 th	11th	2.9%	3.7%	5.4%	1.8%
ECON12b – Claimant Count as a percentage of 16-24 Population	13 th	8th	2.9%	3.7%	6.1%	1.7%

ECON01: Rank position for 20/21 published by Improvement Service is erroneous. The calculation of the measure did not use data submitted to SLAED by Highland.

ECON06: focus of this indicator has changed to “investment” rather than “cost”

ECON8: query with Improvement Service regarding the measures being used.

ECON09 and ECON10: data for Highland has been modelled by the Improvement Service for both indicators.

ECON11: 2021/22 data is not yet available.

Housing Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
HSN1b – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	4 th	5th	5.5%	8.7%	14.4%	3.8%
HSN2 – Rent lost through voids	8 th	7th	1.02%	1.63%	3.74%	0.53%
HSN3 – Houses meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standard	5 th	12th	71.8%	69.7%	13.9%	96.4%
HSN4b – Average days to complete non-emergency repairs	14 th	6th	7.5	9.2	17.0	4.9
HSN5 – Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient	24 th	22nd	76.3%	87.8%	23.3%	99.5%

When considering benchmarking positions, please note that only 26 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland provide Housing services.

Corporate Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CORP01 – Central Support Services as a proportion of running costs	22 nd	22nd	4.4%	4.1%	5.9%	1.2%
CORP03b – Women managers in top 5% of earners	15 th	28th	51%	59%	30%	63%
CORP03c – Gender Pay Gap	23 rd	21st	4.5%	3.5%	14.1%	-3.7%
CORP04 – Council Tax Collection cost per dwelling	19 th	23rd	£8.11	£6.60	£18.23	£1.53
CORP06a – Sickness absence days per teacher	6 th	16th	5.58	5.84	8.74	4.14
CORP06b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	1 st	1st	8.17	12.43	16.53	8.17

Corporate Services	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CORP07 – Council Tax – Annual percentage received	15 th	14 th	96.5%	95.7%	92.8%	97.7%
CORP08 – Invoices Payment within 30 days	15 th	16 th	93.8%	92.2%	82.5%	96.6%
CORP09 - % of Crisis Grant Decisions within 1 Day	8 th	21 st	94.0%	93.3%	64.5%	100.0%
CORP10 - % of Community Care Grant Decisions within 15 Days	8 th	10 th	97.8%	85.8%	56.0%	100.0%
CORP11 – Proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund Budget Spend	31 st	29 th	62.2%	115.2%	28.8%	197.7%
CORP12 – Proportion of Discretionary Housing Payments Funding Spent	10 th	11 th	97.3%	96.0%	68.2%	104.3%

CORP9-12: new indicators to the framework.

CORP11 – data reported for Highland is being queried - from local data sources it appears that the % spend for FY21/22 is 93% for Highland.

Corporate Assets	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability for use	31 st	29 th	75.9%	85.3%	67.9%	97.6%
CAST2 – Asset Management – Condition	29 th	28 th	84.7%	90.1%	54.9%	100.0%

Financial Sustainability	Highland			Scotland (21/22)		
	Rank 20/21	Rank 21/22	FY 21/22	Average	Min	Max
FINSUS01 – Total useable reserves as a percentage of council annual budgeted revenue	15 th	15 th	24.0%	24.4%	364.1%	5.3%
FINSUS02 – Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a percentage of council annual budgeted net revenue	4 th	13 th	3.0%	3.5%	0.4%	20.8%
FINSUS03 – Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (General Fund)	31 st	32 nd	11.6%	5.9%	11.6%	1.1%
FINSUS04 – Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (Housing Revenue Account)	25 th	26 th	41.0%	22.1%	41.0%	6.5%
FINSUS05 – Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	20 th	18 th	98.6%	98.3%	91.1%	100.7%

Initial Analysis of Areas for Improvement

The performance of all indicators currently showing no significant progress (red). Those indicators marked * are also Key Performance Indicators.

Children's Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
School Meals – gross cost per meal provided	The cost of school meals is returning to a figure closer to the pre-covid position in 2019/20. There have been pay awards and increases to living wage in the last two years which have affected this indicator and also some inflationary food pressures were starting to be felt. There was also a residual COVID effect.
School Transport – cost per pupil transported	This was the result of an increase in contractor costs.
Looked After Children in kinship care (%)	The number of looked after children in Kinship care has reduced. However, there has been an increase in the number of children living with Kinship carers who have a Kinship care order, this has increased from 95 to 113 in this period. The Service continues to try and increase the number of children who require to be looked after away from home who can be supported in Kinship care placements. There is funding proposed in the 2023/24 budget strategy that will assist with improving performance against this target.
Average time between decision for permanence via adoption to matching decision (months)	There has been a slight improvement in timescales for children to be matched with their permanent family. The difficulty with this indicator is that just one case can skew the figures. For example, an older child with additional needs or a sibling group might take longer to find the right family than it would take for a very young child with no significant identified needs. Family Finding is complex and we refer to the Adoption Register & Link Maker for children who we find hard to place and it can take some time to ensure we find the right family for the child. The target is also based on the 3 year rolling average, so an outlier year can skew it. The 21/22 target included the rate from 18/19, which was an unusually low 8.4, whereas since then the average has been steady around 18%.

Children's Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
Average time between Child's Plan meeting decision to receipt of Child's adoption Permanence report (weeks)	Permanence timescales are not improving due to a number of factors. The Covid pandemic created significant delays for children. Staff vacancies and the capacity of family teams have also contributed to delays. These delays were highlighted in the recent inspection of the Fostering & Adoption service and a number of strategies have been introduced to reduce and improve timescales. These include regular meetings with senior managers to monitor timescales & cases, consultations, co-working of permanence cases (Lead professional & F&A social worker) and access by family teams to data collected of permanence planning and timescales where delays and improvement can be evidenced.
Number of Foster Carers	The target of 179 overall Foster Carers for 21/22 was not achievable, due in part to the high rate of foster carers retiring or leaving on a yearly basis. We also include prospective adopters in this group as children are placed with them under the fostering regulations, so when an adoption order is granted they are no longer foster carers and this is viewed as a positive as we have achieved the aim for permanence for that child. There has been an increase from 120 to 125 in the year 21/22. There has been a steady increase in the number of foster carers, year on year. The target needs to be reviewed to be a more realistic improvement aspiration.
CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children *	Results decreased across Highland, Family and Scottish Averages by 1%. Continued focus is required on SCQF level 6 results, ensuring young people are presented with a variety of learning options at this level, e.g. Highers or Foundation Apprenticeships, to support positive destinations. This is supported by the Raising Attainment Strategy which works with the Service Plan to implement improvement actions. Following Attainment meetings with all Secondary Head Teachers, aspirational course choices will be introduced to all schools. For Highland in S6 the awards gained by young people in Quintile 1 has improved over the last five years.
CHN9 – Looked After Children in the community	The Highland data is provisional. The national benchmarking data is not yet available which also means that the target is provisional based on 20/21 data. Current figure (83.7%) is positive – we're working towards increasing the children remaining in their community whenever possible in line with Family First. This is a work in progress. Our current ranking may change depending on the national

Children's Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
	benchmarking data, as our target is based on our goal of being in the top 16 Councils for this indicator.
CHN18 – Funded early years provision which is graded good/better	We have performed consistently above the Scottish Average and, until this year, the Family Average. Our target is an ambitious 96%,. Improvement in this area is being addressed through the current Service Plan, with the action: HTs and ELC Managers evaluate quality of ELC provision and implement change.
CORP6a – Sickness absence days per teacher	Absence levels have returned to that previously reported pre-Covid. 2020/21 levels were exceptionally low due to school closures/ covid lockdowns. There was also a change to the way absence hours were recorded which may have impacted on the absence figures.

Adult Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
Criminal Justice – Offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Supervision) seen within 5 working days	This indicator was positive in that the percentage increased from 20/21 figures. The target is based on a 3 year average, which includes pre-pandemic figures. There are a number of factors that contributed to not hitting our target, including the on-going pandemic which meant that Courts were not running as usual. Changes of Court scheduling in certain areas of the Highlands and issues receiving Court paperwork in a timely manner also contributed.
Criminal Justice – Offenders on new Community Payback Orders (unpaid work) first placement within 7 working days	Placements have improved but were not yet at pre-Covid levels as for a period of the financial year there were still squad number restrictions. This meant that individuals with an unpaid work requirement had to wait longer for a placement.
SW3a – Adults (65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home *	<p>As at March 2022, the overall number of people aged over 65 accessing care at home significantly reduced with the number of people and hours affected. The overall reduction for 21/22 is in excess of 1,300 hours per week. There is a significant amount of unmet need with a waiting list for care-at-home services.</p> <p>During the pandemic, care home placements were also impacted by COVID, and placement numbers reduce/ restricted and we also experienced some care home closures during the period. Recruitment and retention of care staff in the social care sector is particularly challenging.</p>

Culture and Leisure Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
High Life Highland customer engagements	Customer numbers increased in financial year 2021/22 compared with the previous year. While the operating environment continues to be challenging, the increase reflects the work which High Life Highland has done to recover following the pandemic and this recovery is continuing in 2022/23.
Museums - Visits/ usage in person per 1,000 population	The easing of Government Covid restrictions during the second Lockdown enabled museums to reopen at the end of April 2021. Thus, they lost a month's business and were shut during the usually busy Easter holiday period. However, although they were then able to reopen, many of the independent museums in Highland chose to either remain closed or to reduce opening hours. This was due to most being staffed by volunteers, and there was lower uptake while Covid was still prevalent. In addition, tourist numbers to the Highlands in 2021 were lower than in pre-Covid years. The reduced number of visitors from overseas was particularly marked.
Highland population with a High Life Highland card	The target to remain or improve upon previous year's performance was based on 19/20 performance, most of which was pre-covid. This year our figures have improved from 20/21 as we recover from Covid, however there was still some lingering effect from short-term lockdowns etc.

Environmental Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
Net cost of Waste collection per premises (ENV1a)	Subject to a successful Recycling Improvement Fund application, waste collection routes will be optimised as part of proposed collection service redesign. Any additional costs attributable to waste collection will contribute to a greater level of reduced residual waste treatment costs.
ENV3c – Street Cleanliness Score	Whilst the % performance target was slightly lower than planned, the aim of staying in LGBF quartile 1 was achieved.
ENV6a – Household waste that is recycled (calendar year) *	The submitted Recycling Improvement Fund application is to make service changes for improving the quality and quantity of collected household recycling.
High risk private water supplies inspected and sampled (Data for calendar year)	The team continues to prioritise the risk assessment of high-risk supplies which is taking a significant level of resource. Our Service has seen an increase in the size of

Environmental Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
	the private water supply register and these new supplies have required to be risk assessed. Furthermore, during the first six months of the year, there were restrictions on laboratory availability which reduced the capacity of our monitoring programme.

Business and Development Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
Avg time [wks] per planning application – all Majors *	<p>We determined 18 major applications in 21/22. 11 had processing agreements and 81.8% of these were determined within the agreed timescales. The average time taken to determine the remaining 7 applications without processing agreements increased from 27.8 weeks to 56.7 weeks.</p> <p>Planning performance overall was impacted through a significant and continued increase in application numbers. This coupled with the continued impact of the interim measures put in place at the time of the pandemic in 20/21 through staff redeployment, along with delays to information being submitted resulted in an increase in the number of undetermined applications during this time. This ripple effect of the pandemic has continued into 22/23 through the increase in time taken to determine planning applications. This reflects the cumulative impact of the increase in workload, with case officers not being able to process applications as quickly and as efficiently as they previously did. Measures have recently been implemented to provide additional staffing to address this.</p>
ECON5 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	<p>The number of Business Gateway start-ups in Highland supported in 21/22 did increase compared to 20/21. Covid was the overriding factor impacting the start-up numbers in 21/22. The vast majority of SMEs use bank finance, with financial uncertainty this became difficult to access. Along with mounting outgoings and inactivity meaning little or no cashflow, this did not convey confidence to potential start-ups. However, looking forward to 22/23 - the introduction of the Highland Council start-up grants has provided added encouragement to support new businesses in the Highland area, this factor will drive the number of start-up businesses back to pre-Covid levels by the year end.</p>

Housing Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
Average time to complete emergency housing repairs (hours) SHR11	Performance on emergency repairs has improved in the last year which reflects efforts to prioritise these repairs despite issues with contractor capacity and material supply in the construction industry.
Homelessness – case duration (weeks) *	The reduced case duration overall reflects the work done to implement the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Homeless presentations are out of Council control and therefore demand on services also fluctuates in ways that are dependent on external factors.
HSN1b – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due *	Performance for this indicator is down to external factors. The general cost of living crisis has had a disproportionate impact on lower income households, and this has created a pressure on people's ability to pay rent and therefore, nationally we are seeing an increase in rent arrears within the Social Rented Sector.

Corporate Services	Commentary and Improvement actions
Benefits Administration costs – Gross cost per case	This target has been reviewed to take account of increased costs from 22/23 onwards.
Pensions – cost per member	Costs are higher than last year due to increased computer costs from implementation of “i-connect” for the transfer of pension contributions data.
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability *	The increase in suitability rating is due to a full re-survey of the school estate, in accordance with the Scottish Executive's Core Facts template and methodology and following significant targeted investment. The total number of operational buildings has decreased as previously each individual building on a school site was assessed and had its own individual suitability rating, now (from 21/22) the school is assessed once as a whole educational establishment.

Public Performance Reporting: Approach to meeting the Audit Direction

The Audit Direction 2021 as issued by the Accounts Commission, outlines what performance information councils are expected to publish as part of their public performance reporting:

“Statutory Performance Indicator 1: Improving local services and local outcomes

- Its performance in improving local public services, both provided by itself and in conjunction with its partners and communities.
- Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.

The Commission expects the council to report such information to allow comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies (thus drawing upon information published by the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and from other benchmarking activities).

The Commission expects the council to, in agreeing its outcomes with its partners and communities, report on how it has engaged with, responded to and helped to empower its communities, including those who require greater support.

Statutory Performance Indicator 2: Demonstrating Best Value

- Its assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, including self-assessments and service review activity, and how it has responded to this assessment.
- Audit assessments (including those in the annual audit) of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.
- Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.

In satisfying the requirements set out in this schedule, the Commission expects the council to take cognisance of current statutory guidance on Best Value requirements, and in particular to ensure:

- Balance in reporting areas of improvement that have been achieved and not achieved.
- This is undertaken in a timely manner.
- Easy access to its performance information for all of its citizens and communities, with such information presented in an accessible style

How the Council will meet the audit direction is detailed on the next page.

Requirement		Approach/ Evidence for Reporting Year
		2021/22
SPI1	Performance in improving local public services, provided by the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPIs (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • Corporate Plan Annual Report • Performance Examples and Case Studies Report (strategic and area committee reports, press releases)
SPI1	Performance in improving local public services, provided by the Council in conjunction with partners and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPIs (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • Performance Examples and Case Studies Report (strategic and area committee reports, press releases)
SPI1	Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Examples and Case Studies Report (strategic and area committee reports, press releases, CPP, NHS Integration, Children's Services...)
SPI2	The Council's assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, including self-assessments and service review activity, and how it has responded to this assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BVAR Improvement Plan • Service Plans – covering report • External Audit Annual Report on BV
SPI2	Audit assessments of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BVAR Improvement Plan • Annual External Audit Report and Response/ Action Plan • Internal Audit reports relevant to BV
SPI2	Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Examples and Case Studies Report • Partnership Reports to Strategic and Area Committees

Best Value Qualitative Report - Performance Examples and Case Studies

A supplementary report, Performance Examples and Case Studies – 2021/22, provides qualitative evidence on how the Council fulfilled each of the 2021/22 audit direction statements.

Best Value Requirement	Performance Examples and Case Studies
<p>Performance in improving local public services, provided by the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Programme • Corporate Plan • Dial-a-Bus Service • Building and Refurbishing Schools • Trading Standards Responds to Covid Safe Air Scam • New Welfare Guide • Enhanced Business Start-up Programme Launched • New Active Travel Link Opened • New Homes Completed in 2021/22 • Comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results • COP26 • Gaelic • Eco-Schools Green Flag Award Status.
<p>Performance in improving local public services, provided by the Council in conjunction with partners and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highland's young people participate in Scottish Parliamentary Election • HI-BIKE Scheme Launched • My Future My Success • Returning Young People to Highland • Green/Eco Cities Hydrogen Challenge • Joint Transformational Programme with NHS Highland • Trading Standards and the Nationwide "Shut Out Scammers" Campaign • New Integrated Children's Services Plan • Environmental Health • Flow Country World Heritage Site BID • The Haven Centre • Growing our Future • Visitor Management Plan and Seasonal Access Rangers • GO-HI App Fort William • Rosebank Primary & Dalneigh Primary receive prestigious Rights Respecting School Award by UNICEF • Ground-breaking Housing Project Wins National Award.
<p>Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation The Old Man of Storr • Trainee Mental Health Officer Scheme • Teacher recruitment and probationer teachers • Council's ICT Transition Programme • Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-24 • Top Property Award for Merkinch Primary School and Family Centre • Public toilets, comfort schemes and waste collection • National Improvement Framework (NIF) annual reporting • Community payback scheme • Highland Council and Strategic Timber Transport Scheme Partnership Road Improvements • Inverness West Link Completion • Transformation – Redesign of The Highland Council

Best Value Requirement	Performance Examples and Case Studies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highland Council's BSL Education 1+2 pack being used by other local authorities • Digital Development in Schools • Nature Walks • Nursery mealtimes - project to improve experience • Partnership focus led by EDL staff supporting mental health and wellbeing.
<p>Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing PSIF in Highland – Responding to the 2020 BVAR Improvement Plan • The Promise • External Assessment from the National Registrars of Scotland • The impact of financial inclusion initiative • Education Attainment and the Alternative Certification Model.