

**Highland Council**

**6 September 2012**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Corporate Performance Report 2011-12  
incorporating Statutory Performance Indicators**  
Report by the Chief Executive

**Summary**

This report provides an assessment of Council performance against the Corporate Plan and the final year of the Strengthening the Highlands programme. It covers the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. Very good progress is reported with 93% of the commitments (111 out of the total 120) being either completed, progressing well, are on target or performance is being maintained. For 6 commitments (5%) there is mixed performance and there are 3 commitments which have not been met (2%). The incorporated Statutory Performance Indicator report shows that compared with last year, but subject to external audit, the Highland Council has improved performance by 5% or more in 2011/12 on 27 indicators, with 10 indicators showing a decline of 5% or more.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 An annual report of Corporate Performance is prepared each autumn, normally covering performance for the previous financial year. The report is based on performance against the Council's commitments and corporate performance indicators which are set out in the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan was agreed at Council in October 2008. It was revised following amendments to the Council's Programme made at the Council meetings in October 2010 and February 2011.
- 1.2 The Council's Programme 'Working Together for the Highlands' includes a commitment that: 'The Council will continue to measure its progress openly, report on it publicly and listen to its communities, to ensure we are delivering services that provide best value for Council Taxpayers.' This annual performance report contributes to this commitment. It is scrutinised also by Audit Scotland.

**2. Council Performance April 2011 to end March 2012**

- 2.1 In total there are 120 commitments. Appendix 1 describes performance for each commitment. An overview by theme is provided in the table below. For ease of reference the following symbols have been used to provide an assessment of performance:

- ✓ Progressing well or on target
- = Performance is being maintained
- M Mixed performance - positive and negative movement in indicators
- ✗ Commitment not met (no significant progress)
- C Completed

Where a ✓ and a C been used this refers to commitments completed in 2011/12.

Theme	✓ Good Progress	C Completed	= Main□ained	M Mixed performance	✗ Commitment not met	Totals
1	14	2	1	2	0	19
2	16	5	1	2	0	24
3	24	4	4	2	1	35
4	15	8	4	0	1	28
5	10	3	0	0	1	14
Totals	79	22	10	6	3	120

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

By the end of the four year programme 111 of the 120 commitments (93%) are either complete, progressing well or performance is being maintained. Very good progress is reflected across all five themes of the programme and detailed information is provided in appendix 1 of this report. Key commitments delivered include:

- Exceeding the target to build 6000 new homes with 6803 completed including 2298 affordable homes and 619 homes suitable for older people and those with disabilities. (cp3.03, cp2.05)
- Investment in Highland Schools with four new primary schools open or nearing completion and the refurbishment/extension of several other schools. Funding was also secured for a replacement Wick High School. (cp1.01, cp1.09)
- Investment of £95.9m to maintain our road network and lifeline bridges between 2007/8 and 2011/12. (cp3.20)
- Exceeding target to improve council housing with 4621 receiving energy efficiency improvements, 2309 with new kitchens and 835 with new bathrooms. (cp2.09)
- The Council has created integrated services for adults with health and social care needs and for children with NHS Highland. (cp1.02, cp2.04, cp2.06&07)
- Creation of High Life Highland to deliver community learning and leisure services. (cp2.24)
- Overall carbon emissions have reduced from the Council's operations by 13% from the 2007/8 base-line to end 2011/12. (cp4.01a)
- The installed capacity of renewable equipment for Council Buildings increased to 10183 Kw by 2011/12 exceeding the target of 8000Kw. (cp4.08)
- A programme of alternative weekly collection of municipal waste has been introduced, increased recycling and reduction in waste disposed in landfilled. (cp4.12, cp4.13a&b, cp4.14)
- All Highland Schools have achieved Eco School status of bronze or greater. (cp1.16)
- The Council has exceeded the efficiency targets set in every year of the programme with over £13m of efficiency savings achieved in 2011/12. (cp5.01a)
- The Council has consistently maintained satisfaction levels with Council services at above 80%, with 83% achieved in 2011/12. (cp5.01a)
- The Council successfully deliver modernised working conditions and a single status workforce by 2010. (cp5.10)
- A new scheme in place for community councils. (cp2.20)
- Additional investment in kinship care. (cp1.04)

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

There are 6 commitments where mixed performance is recorded 5% (10% in 2010/11). These are summarised below, on the basis of exceptions reporting, and are cross-referenced to Appendix 1. Performance in some areas is affected by economic circumstances and constraints on funding.

- Integrated Children's Services: Reports submitted to the Children's Reporter within timescale (cp1.02)
- Looked after Children (LAC): Educational Attainment and those Looked After at Home. (cp1.03)
- Support for Adults: Development of personal plans. (cp2.07)
- Homelessness Services: SPIs for decisions notifications and people assessed requiring permanent accommodation. (cp2.10)
- Economy: Business start-up rate, start-up businesses supported achieving VAT+ status and insufficient improvement in timescales for processing non-householder planning applications. (cp3.01)
- Transport: Community transport schemes. (cp3.21)

### 2.4 Commitments not met

There are 3 commitments (2%) which are not being met (3% in 2010/11) in relation to:

- The number of trainees and apprentices employed by the Council was 206 in 2009/10 with the target met. However the number has fallen since then to 149 in 2010/11 and 159 in 2011/12. There are currently 684 full and part time Council employees aged 16-24. (cp3.15)
- Both carbon emissions and energy consumption have increased for street lighting. Since 2007/08 total emissions from street lighting have increased by 7%; but the network has increased by 8%. (cp4.01b)
- A decline to 82.5% from 85% for all enquiries dealt with at first point of contact. No increase from 55% in the proportion of core services that are delivered at the first point of contact through the Service Centre (target 90%). (cp5.06)

## 3 **Statutory Performance Indicators 2011/12**

3.1 The Council is required to make a return for Statutory Performance Indicators (SPI) by 30<sup>th</sup> September each year to Audit Scotland. Appendix 2 gives the value for each SPI and, where possible, compares it to the value in the previous financial year. Some source data and contextual information is also included.

3.2 Compared with last year, but subject to external audit, the Highland Council has improved performance by 5% or more in 2011/12 on 27 indicators, with 10 indicators showing a decline of 5% or more. The table below illustrates the movement in performance indicators over the last two years.

<b>The following key has been used where:</b>		2010/11 vs 2009/10	2011/12 vs 2010/11
✓	performance has improved by 5% or more.	22	27
X	performance has declined by 5% or more.	4	10
—	there is no significant change in performance	23	19
	the indicator is new / changed / unreliable/no comparison is possible / for contextual purposes only.	2	3

3.3 In line with Audit Scotland reporting, only those indicators moving by more than 5%

are highlighted. This is a recognised statistical technique used to ensure that any difference between the variables is real and not due to natural variation which is inevitable but not significant. These will be considered more fully in Strategic Committees.

- 3.4 Appendix 3 details costs for various aspects of service delivery and these local indicators are identified by the Highland Council. With only 3 of the 25 headline SPIs measuring cost (Refuse Collection & Disposal, Council Tax and Benefits Administration), the performance indicators that are shown at Appendix 3 are therefore predominantly cost indicators. The table below illustrates the movement in local performance indicators over the last two years.

<b>The following key has been used where:</b>		2010/11 vs 2009/10	2011/12 vs 2010/11
✓	performance has improved by 5% or more.	13	17
X	performance has declined by 5% or more.	10	17
—	there is no significant change in performance	25	13
	the indicator is new / changed / unreliable/ no comparison is possible / for contextual purposes only.	6	5

- 3.5 Following an Internal audit review of the SPIs, data for three indicators have been assessed as unreliable by Internal Audit based on Audit Scotland guidance. These relate to Sport and Leisure Management and Libraries (SPi10, LPi12, LPi14) and have arisen because the Council has integrated community and school facilities and data but data for the indicators is required only for community use.
- 3.6 There are two indicators where the data are currently provisional. These are SPi17 on house letting (where further information is required) and SPi9 on home care (where the totals are taken from the 2011/12 H1 Home Care return for the Scottish Government and will not be fully validated until November 2012).
- 3.7 Work is on-going at a national level through SOLACE to develop a national set of cost indicators which can be benchmarked. Once this work is complete the Council's current set of local performance indicators will be reviewed to ensure alignment with national requirements.

#### **4. Next steps**

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to report on its performance to the public. A newspaper supplement will be produced later this year containing a range of performance information drawn from this report and the results of the public performance survey reported separately to this meeting. In addition a report on the Single Outcome Agreement including partnership performance will be submitted to Council on 25 October 2012.
- 4.2 In addition to this annual corporate performance report progress on corporate plan indicators is monitored through Service quarterly performance reviews (QPR) undertaken by the Chief Executive.
- 4.3 The performance framework for the new council programme 'Working together for the Highlands' is under development and will be reported to the Council meeting in October 2012.

## **5. Resource, Legal and Risk Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this performance report.
- 5.2 Legal implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting.
- 5.3 Audit Scotland produces an annual Assurance and Improvement Plan for the Council which assesses, with other scrutiny bodies, the risk of non achievement of Council commitments. As reported separately to this meeting there are no significant scrutiny risks identified for the Council.
- 5.4 **Equalities and Climate Change Implications**  
This report identifies the progress made with the Council's commitments on equalities and climate change.

## **6. Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- Agree that the achievement of 93% overall has been a very positive result for Council performance for the period 01 April 2011 to end 31 March 2012 and for the programme overall.
- Agree the submission to Audit Scotland of the 2011/12 Statutory Performance Indicator report.
- Note a further performance report will be submitted on the Single Outcome Agreement at 25 October 2012 Council.
- Note that a newspaper supplement, drawing on this assessment of performance and other performance information, will be produced to report performance to the public.
- Note that areas for improvement for SPi will be dealt with through Strategic Committees.

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Author: Evelyn Johnston, Strategic Performance Manager

Date: 22.8.12

Appendix 1: Annual Performance Report 2011-12

Appendix 2 & 3 – Statutory Performance Indicator Report 2011/12

## **1. What we will do for Children and Families**

- 1.01 We will work with the Scottish Government to develop an ambitious 10 year capital programme to provide modern schools for Highland's children and we will ensure the completion, on time, of the current 5 year programme of three new and five refurbished schools.** ✓

Progress in 2011/12 includes:

Primary Schools – the new school at Lochaline was occupied in April 2012 and Aviemore opened in August 2012; Ben Wyvis Primary is due to open in October 2012; the extension/refurbishment at Aldourie Primary was completed in July 2012; design work is progressing on two new primary schools and a Gaelic primary School in Fort William which are due to open in August 2015; two new primary schools in Wick will also open in 2015.

Secondary Schools – the extension at Plockton High was operational for the start of the August 2012 term; work on the extension to Kingussie High is due to start in September 2012 and be completed by August 2013; design work is underway on the third phase of the refurbishment of Lochaber High School which is due to be completed in 2015; the new Wick High School is programmed for completion in 2015.

- 1.02 We will continue to improve and better integrate services that enable us to 'get it right' for Highland's Children, including into employment.** M

As previously reported, the Getting it Right for Every Child practice model has been embedded to ensure that the authority sustains and consolidates implementation. The Council approved a lead organisation model for a fully integrated children's service in partnership with NHS Highland. HMIE inspection reports of child protection services reported 5 gradings of 'very good' and one of 'good'. There are two further indicators, the first is the percentage of reports submitted to the Children's Reporter within timescale to be 75% or better. In 2011/12 reports submitted within timescale was 59.5% compared to 57% in 2010/11 remaining below target. The second indicator is to reduce the number of referrals to Children's Reporter per 1,000 population aged 0-17. Long term trends are positive with 56 referrals per 1000 population in 2006/7, 33 in 2010/11 and 29 in 2011/12.

- 1.03 We will be good corporate parents of Highland's 'looked after' children and, by working with our partners, help them to reach their full potential as they move into adulthood, including into employment.** M

- Corporate Parenting: Inspection Reports in Fostering and Adoption Services continue to receive 'very good' grades.
- Looked after children educational attainment: Overall SVQ level 3 performance is broadly the same as most years, but does not continue the higher performance in the preceding two years. Performance in English

and Maths is better, but again not as good as the preceding years for children looked after at home.

- Looked after children, reducing the length of time in care: Over a period when the number of children away from home has increased, most indicators reflect they are spending less time in care, with greater proportions away from home for less than 6 months and less than 6 weeks. The number away for 2 – 5 years is broadly the same, but there has been an increase in the number away from home for more than 5 years.
- Looked after children reducing the number of placements away from home: The number of children who have had more than 6 placements has remained static, at a time when the number of children looked after away from home has increased. The number with 3 – 5 placements has increased, though broadly in line with the increase in numbers of Looked After Children.
- Increasing the percentage of looked after children at home: Over the last five years, there has been a gradual trend for fewer children to be looked after at home, from around 38% to 34% over the last five years, and with 32% being reached at the end of 2011/12.
- Reducing the number Looked after children in out of authority placements: There has been no reduction in numbers of children in out of authority placements, and higher than average figures were reached in two quarters of 2011/12.

**1.04 We will provide better support for foster carers, including kinship carers, by investing an additional £420,000 over two years from 2009-10. C**

The Council has committed this investment and the commitment was met in 2009/10.

**1.05 We will implement the Scottish Government's Early Years Framework, and continue support for wraparound childcare across Highland. ✓**

The number of Associated School Groups with wraparound childcare remains at to 28 in 2011/12 above the target set of 24.

**1.06 We will continue to raise levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy for pupils in pre-school, primary and secondary provision and maintain high levels of achievement in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and achieve the outcomes in a Curriculum for Excellence. ✓**

Data for secondary schools average tariff scores for 2011/12 will not be available until mid-September 2012 when it is published at a national level. Data for 2010/11 now available for average tariff scores (cumulative) within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework shows high levels of achievement above the national averages:

- S4 at 189 (baseline 181 in 2006/7, national comparator 183)
- S5 at 320 (baseline 294 in 2006/7, national comparator 305)
- S6 at 392 ( baseline 354 in 2006/7, national comparator 369)

In relation to at least maintaining levels for schools inspected receiving satisfactory or better HMIE inspections, for 2011/12 academic year 88.9% was achieved against a target of 90% compared to 94.7% in 2010/11 (baseline of 88% in 2006/07). With the removal of 5 – 14 data as a result of the implementation of a

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) there is no hard data for primary schools to use other than early results from Assessment for Excellence data and school reports. By August 2013 there will be sufficient data to report.

**1.07 Improve the quality of learning, teaching and leadership capacity in our schools and communities. ✓**

All schools now follow an agreed three year plan which focuses on key quality indicators covering achievement, curriculum, meeting learners' needs, learning experiences and self-evaluation. Each school reviews its plan annually and reports via a Standards and Quality Report. There is now specific CPD targeted at building leadership capacity.

**1.08 We will increase the number of young people leaving school moving into education, training or employment (including activity agreements) to 90% by end March 2012 and we will achieve 450 Activity Agreements by March 2014. ✓**

The proportion of school leavers entering further/higher education, training or employment is also available in October each year, the most recent figure is 89.4% for 2010/11 an improvement from 86.7% in 2009/10 and within tolerance of having achieved the target by March 2012. For care leavers the most recent data for 2010/11 shows 20.5% of care leavers with positive destinations (19.7% in 2009/10). The number of children and young people taking part in recognised leadership and achievement awards such as Duke of Edinburgh in 2011/12 increased to 2704 from a baseline of 767 in 2006/7. A new indicator has been added monitoring the number of activity agreements in place achieving 300 in the base year of 2011/12 against a target of 450 by 2014.

**1.09 We will place schools at the centre of our communities and will work to secure their long term future by developing community schools with a wide range of activities and services extending beyond the traditional school day. ✓**

The Council has identified a number of priority investments for school amalgamations that will be constructed within the next 3 to 10 years, subject to the appropriate government support for Capital borrowing being maintained at existing levels. The construction of the new Ben Wyvis Primary School commenced in May 2011 and will be available for occupation in October 2012.

The redevelopment of more than 50% of Lochaber High School was completed during 2010/11 with the Council committing to completing this development within the next 3 years. The design work for the £3.0M extension to Plockton High School progressed and construction work is complete with the new accommodation now occupied by the school.

The Scottish Government has committed to provide a 66% funding contribution towards the cost of a replacement Wick High School. This project, which will attempt to maximise the number of community facilities on a school campus, commenced during 2011. The design brief for the new school has been progressed in consultation with a wide range of community stakeholders and the detailed specification of accommodation and layout is now being progressed.



- 1.10 **We will continue to develop Gaelic medium education in pre-school and primary schools as well as expanding Gaelic medium education in the secondary sector and increase the number of Gaelic learners in our schools.** =
- The number of pre-school primary and secondary pupils speaking Gaelic was baselined in 2008/9 at 1802 and this is now 1783. In 2011/12 there was one Gaelic Medium (GM) Primary school, 2 GM Primary schools with English Medium (EM) classes and 18 EM Primary schools with GM classes. Of these, 18 schools had pupils in Gaelic nursery and there were pre-school pupils in a further 5 commissioned Gaelic playgroups/school. In 2011/12 16 Secondary schools provided Gaelic to pupils progressing from GM Primary education and/or Gaelic Learners. Of these, 12 Secondary schools provided classes for fluent Gaelic pupils of which 7 also taught subjects through the medium of Gaelic. Learner Gaelic classes were provided in 13 Secondary schools.
- 1.11 **We will continue to provide opportunities to enjoy the arts, sport and culture and enhance and promote the events, festivals and cultural programme of the Highlands** ✓
- Participation levels at festivals supported by the Council more than 3 years old remains high with 67% of seats sold in 2011/12 compared to 70% in 2010/11 with a target of 60% each year. A baseline was established in 2008/9 for the number of instances where people have participated in arts, sport and cultural activities at 3.44m this has increased in 2011/12 to 5.53m. The number of events supported through a year round programme has dropped to 20 in 2011/12 compared to 36 in 2010/11. This is in the context of reduced resources and fewer funding rounds. In addition funding is committed in advance for projects in future years which are counted in the year of award.
- 1.12 **We will give a high priority to Highland's children being healthy and active and implement the Highland Play Strategy.** ✓
- The cardiovascular fitness of primary 7 boys and girls (no. of shuttle runs over a set time) has been maintained in 2011/12 at 29 runs for girls (baseline 28 runs in 2006/7) and for boys 32 runs (baseline 34 in 2006/7). Currently 75% of targets within the Play Strategy have been delivered compared to a baseline of 20% in 2006/7 the target is under review. The use of the Outdoor Education Centre at Badaguish Centre has continued to increase from a baseline of 4020 users in 2007/8 to 10,640 in 2011/12, (9753 in 2010/11).
- 1.13 **We will support civic engagement of Highland's young people through pupil councils, the post of youth convener, developing Highland Youth Voice and representation in the Scottish Youth Parliament. We will work with community councils to lower the voting and candidate age to 16 years for community council elections.** ✓
- The requirement for all schools to have a pupil council was achieved in 2007/8 and continues to be sustained. The annual recruitment process for a youth convener was successfully completed. Consultation on lowering the voting age to 16 years for community council elections was completed in 2010/11. Elections continue to run smoothly for Highland Youth Voice (HYV); members continue to meet with Area Youth Forums.

- 1.14 **We will ensure a youth worker is active in every Associated School Group area.** C  
 The target to place active youth worker presence in each of the 29 school catchment areas was achieved in 2008/9.
- 1.15 **We will roll out a single smart card to all young people by 2013, giving access to leisure, libraries, arts and culture activities, youth information and school meals.** ✓  
 The High Life card uptake for 2011/12 has been maintained at 86% this compares to a baseline of 81% in 2007/8 and remains above the national average (72.4%) and the target.
- 1.16 **We will achieve Eco School status for all Highland Schools by 2012.** ✓  
 Very good progress continues to be made across the three indicators used. There has been an improvement in the number of schools achieving the bronze, silver and green flag award levels. Between 2006/7 and 2011/12 numbers increased for the bronze award from 20 schools to 152 (138 in 2010/11), for the silver award from 12 schools to 146 (136 in 2010/11) and for green flag status the most prestigious level from 8 schools to 81 (70 in 2010/11). Highland performance in gaining Bronze, Silver and Green Flags is broadly in-line with the National picture. All Highland schools have now achieved Eco School status of bronze or greater.
- 1.17 **We will focus on safe school transport, encouraging more healthy and environmental options such as “walk to school” pathways, safety support and safe cycle tracks.** ✓  
 Progress has been made in increasing the number of primary school children walking and cycling to school and this now stands at 60.9% in 2011/12 compared to 59% for 2010/11 (baseline 41% in 2006/7) variance in figures through falling school rolls. From a baseline of 20% in 2004/5 in 2011/12 there were 82% of schools with an agreed travel plan. The most recent Hands-Up Survey of modes of school travel across Scotland shows that 22.5% of pupils in Highland are driven to school with the national average being 22.4%, due to our rural nature this it is positive that we are in line with the national average. 38.8% of children walk to school in Highland, lower than the national average of 45.9%. The cycle to school figure in Highland (8.6 %) is three times that of the national average (3%).
- 1.18 **We will work with the Scottish Government and partners to reduce the numbers of fatal and serious road casualties and use 20mph speed limits to improve road safety for more vulnerable road users, particularly children & older people.** ✓  
 There has been a reduction in fatal/serious injury road traffic casualties from a baseline of 198 in 2006/7 to 109 in 2011/12 (116 in 2010/11). For children the figures have significantly reduced to 2 in 2011/12 from 10 in 2010/11. The figures for those slightly injured has also reduced to 501 in 2011/12 (subject to verification) compared to 503 in 2010/11 (this data is also reported in paragraph 2.11). In addition the number of young drivers participating in PASS Plus driver education is being maintained above 300 at 335 for 2011/12 (baseline 239 drivers in 2006/7 and 326 drivers in 2010/11). Data is expected at the end of September to report on the number of schools participating in accredited ‘risk reduction’

schemes (Junior Road Safety Officer scheme and for cycling proficiency).

***We will also represent the interests of the Highlands by working with partners, including the UK and Scottish Governments, to promote services for children and families***

**1.19 We will work with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Higher Education institutions to address the issue of supply of Gaelic medium teachers and continue to seek funding for 2 new Gaelic Medium Primary Schools.**



Progress on the supply of Gaelic medium teachers is being addressed in association with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government, as it is a national issue. The Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 and Bòrd na Gàidhlig's National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17 both specify action to tackle long term workforce planning to support the recruitment and training of the staff required to service the needs of Gaelic Medium Education.

The Council has extended Bun Sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis – Scotland's first purpose built all Gaelic Primary School; and has, following consultation exercises, converted both Sleat and Staffin Primary Schools to Gaelic Medium Primary Schools with an English Medium provision. The Council also identified funding for a Gaelic Primary School in Fort William within its future capital programme; and discussions continue with the Scottish Government on funding for new schools, including the Gaelic Primary Schools in Fort William and Portree.

## **2. What we will do for Communities and Older People**

**2.01 Ensure sustainable, quality social care services for older people in the five communities involved in the care homes project.**



Care homes are being refurbished in Fort William, Grantown and Inverness, and the Council has identified a preferred provider to build and operate new care homes in Muir of Ord and Tain.

**2.02 We will work with partners and all levels of Government to alleviate poverty by increasing benefit uptake, advising more people how to maximise their income through advice on welfare rights and benefits, encouraging use of free or concessionary priced services, and providing specialist money advice.**



There is generally good progress across the indicators for this commitment.

- Contact with CAB providers shows an increase in contact from 34,598 customers in 2010/11 to 43,606 in 2011/12. There has been an increase in the number of customers contacting the Council for money advice from 2074 customers in 2010/11 to 2665 in 2011/12 (baseline of 479 in 2006/7).
- The financial benefit to customers receiving advice remains high with £6.52m achieved for CAB customers in 2011/12 compared to £6.59m in 2010/11 (baseline £4.28m in 2008/9). In 2011/12 a figure of £1.73m was achieved for Council customers compared to £1.76m in 2010/11 and a

baseline of £402k in 2008/09.

- The target to maintain uptake of free school meals at 77% of eligibility has again been exceeded at 87% in 2011/12 compared to 84.3% in 2010/11 and a baseline of 77.6% in 2006/07.
- The uptake of High Life leisure budget cards continues to improve with the number of cards issued now standing at 7189 in 2011/12 compared to 6262 for 2010/11 (baseline of 3913 in 2006/7).
- For benefit claims the average number of days to process new claims improved from 29 days in 2010/11 to 20 days in 2011/12. The average number of days to process changes in circumstances also improved from 9 days in 2010/11 to 7 days in 2011/12. The indicators have changed slightly as definitions and control of the data now stands with the Department of Work and Pensions.

**2.03 We will commit a further £100k to promote benefit uptake across the Highlands from 2009-10. C**

The additional £100k was allocated and reported to Resources Committee on 18 February 2009 this commitment has been met.

**2.04 We will work alongside NHS Highland to reduce the length of time that people are delayed in hospital, and to shift the balance of care to community services including better integrated services. ✓**

There is a continuing shift in the balance of care, and a reduction in the length of time that older people are spending in hospital following an unplanned admission. This has reduced from 5.6 weeks to 4.5 weeks over the last 2 years. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of older people admitted to care establishments. A number of developments contributed to this, including continuing increases in the number of enhanced telecare packages, and further investment of £1m in care at home services, initiating reablement provision, and increasing access to services in the evenings and weekends. New community-based organisations were also assisted to develop local support services in a number of communities, with significant developments in Fort William, Ardnamurchan and Tongue.

**2.05 We will secure an increase of 600 houses suitable for older people and people with disabilities. ✓ C**

A further 131 completions during 2011/12 brings the completion of houses suitable for older people and those with disabilities to 619 with a further 54 on site.

**2.06 We will increase the support to community based organisations that provide social, learning and health promoting activities for older people =**

Data has still to be verified regarding the majority of indicators. Data regarding enhanced telecare services confirms continued increases in take up, which is 200% higher over the last three years.

- The % of older people receiving intensive care at home of between 10 and 20 hours has improved again from 15.4% in 2006/7 to 20.3% in 2011/12 compared to 19.2% in 2010/11.
- The number of older people receiving intensive care at home of between

10 and 20 hours has been maintained in 2011/12 at 334 compared with 337 in 2010/11 and a baseline of 309 in 2008/9.

- The numbers of older people receiving enhanced telecare services has increased from a baseline of 125 in 2008/9 to 332 in 2011/12 compared to 321 in 2010/11.
- The number of respite bed nights has decreased slightly to 9935 in 2011/12 compared to 9975 in 2010/11; baseline is 6379 in 2007/8.
- The number of respite day hours for adults aged 65+ was 62,250 hours in 2011/12 compared to a baseline of 29,586 in 2006/7 and 78,857 in 2010/11.
- Additional resources continue to be invested in community-based services for older people. In 2011/12, this included a further £1m for care at home services, plus the start of the programme of an additional £1m for reablement services within care at home, and further transferred expenditure to community groups. Expenditure on residential and nursing care for older people reduced by £0.208m over the year.
- The new, single performance framework for adult social care services in Highland includes a number of dedicated measures to monitor the delivery of reablement services.

**2.07 We will provide services to adults who need support that maximises their independence, help promote and retain their dignity, and enable them to contribute to decisions about their care. M**

The number of people who are using self-directed services (SDS) to access services has increased to 235 in 2011/12 compared to 197 in 2010/11 and a baseline of 149 in 2008/9, and spend has increased to £3.07m. There has been slow progress with the development of personal plans, which have been trialled in one area (Lochaber) during 2011/12, and this has not yet been rolled out. Data was not available for the following: grading of 4 or above in all inspections of LA care services.

**2.08a We will work with the Scottish Govt and our partners, especially NHS Highland, to meet the health and care needs of our population and reduce inequalities in health. This will include reducing alcohol and drug misuse, suicide prevention, smoking cessation, reducing obesity and tackling poverty with particular emphasis on changing attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and supporting those in need with better prevention and treatment services. ✓**

Overall there is good progress is being made as evidenced by the following:

- In relation to monitoring High Life membership.
  - The total membership in Highland Council run and supported leisure centres (including pools) increased to 57,055 in 2011/12 compared to 50,552 in 2010/11.
  - The total of membership for all inclusive membership at the same facilities rose to 44,753 in 2011/12 compared to 39,694 in 2010/11.
- Monitoring in 2011/12 in relation to underage sales of tobacco products has provided one incident of illegal sale in 23 test transactions conducted. Two Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) were issued.
- The review of the Drug & Alcohol Strategy was completed in 2011/12, and

a local delivery plan has now been finalised. This will lead to greater integrated services, as part of the lead agency arrangements.

**2.08b We will ensure that adults who may be at risk of harm are better supported and protected.** ✓

The number of adult with a Support & Protection Plan was 8 in 2011/12 establishing a baseline for future monitoring. The Inter-agency Adult Support and Protection Procedures were fully implemented and 136 staff completed the prescribed training for Council Officers. During 2011/12, there were 171 adult support and protection referrals. These included 119 adults aged 16-64 and 52 adults aged 65 and over, including a mix of client categories. The number of ASP assessments undertaken and Risk and Protection Plans implemented was 46. In terms of legal interventions, two Banning Orders were applied for, with one of these being successful. Work has begun, and is now well underway, to address issues relating to data recording and to ensure improvements in data collection thus enabling more effective reporting and monitoring.

**2.09 We will improve Council houses by investing £28m to improve energy efficiency in 4000 houses and £9m to replace 1200 kitchens and 600 bathrooms over the next 4 years from 2008-9. We will set out a plan to ensure that all Council owned houses meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.** ✓

Good progress is being made against this commitment. The implementation of the Standard Delivery plan to achieve full compliance with Scottish Housing Quality Standards is on target. The number of council houses meeting the energy efficiency standard has also increased from a baseline in 2007/8 of 1849 to 6470 in 2011/12 compared to 5086 in 2010/11. The programme of refurbishing kitchens and bathroom continues with a further 261 kitchens and 210 bathrooms replaced during 2011/12 (totals cumulatively now stand at 2309 kitchens and 835 bathrooms from a 2007/8 baseline).

**2.10 We will work with the Scottish Government and partners to prevent and reduce homelessness and provide responsive services to homeless people.** M

Overall the performance for this commitment is mixed with very good progress on the following:

- The number of households assessed during 2011/12 was 1375 compared to 2229 in 2010/11. This significant improvement reflects the work of prevention teams in successfully reducing the number of presentations.
- For homeless cases reassessed within 12 months has reduced further to 3.4% in 2011/12 from 4.4% in 2010/11.
- There was no use of unsuitable temporary accommodation in 2011/12 compared to 4 in 2010/11 and 14 in 2008/9. #
- The number of young tenants who sustained a tenancy for more than 6 months in 2011/12 increased to 98% compared to 91.4% in 2010/11.
- The number of people assessed as requiring permanent accommodation reduced from 65.9% in 2010/11 to 61.4% in 2011/12. This figure should be viewed in the context of reduced numbers of homelessness cases overall and the continuing progress towards meeting the “2012” target on homelessness.

However the following SPIs do not show an improvement:

- % of decisions notifications issued within 28 days of initial presentation has decreased from 61% in 2010/11 to 54% in 2011/12, recent performance indicates an improving situation.
- The proportion of households treated as priority need increased to 87.1% in 2011/12 compared to 86.1% in 2010/11 and a baseline of 71% in 2006/7.

**2.11 We will work with partners, especially the police and the Scottish Government, to improve community safety by working to reduce: crime and fear of crime; anti-social behaviour; alcohol and drug related crime; reconviction rates; and violence against women and hate crimes. We will work also to improve levels of safe driving.** ✓

Overall there is good progress across the majority of indicators as follows:

- % of residents who rate the area within 15 minutes walk of their home as fairly safe or very safe has increased to 96.1% compared to 92.9% in 2010/11 the overall trend remains high and positive.
- Data and trends on the number of persistent young offenders have been established with good progress evidenced from a baseline of 38 in 2006/7 to 11 in 2011/12.
- From a baseline of 74.2% the number of sex offenders requiring review who receive the review within national standards has achieved 97% in 2011/12.
- The number of racist crimes increased from 67 in 2010/11 to 79 in 2011/12, the number of racist incidents also increased in 2011/12 to 106 (96 in 2010/11). The number of other hate crimes increased from 15 in 2010/11 to 17 in 2011/12. With a new system developed to encourage the reporting of hate incidents, an increase in these and crimes was anticipated. A full report on hate crimes will be presented to the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee later this year.
- From a baseline of 85% in 2008/9 for responding to noise complaints within 1 day, 94% was achieved during 2011/12 exceeding the target of 90% set.
- Staff in residential units were a priority group for training on awareness of violence against women in the Violence Against Women Strategy which came to an end last year. The Council is now developing a programme for schools based staff on the 'Safe not Scared' programme developed by Angus Council.
- In relation to Community Payback Work Orders (CPO) the Unpaid Work Officers in each area have been in contact with Community Councils and a wide range of other organisations have been contacted in order to promote and publicise the CPO with unpaid work. This has included the dissemination of leaflets bookmarks and posters in a diverse range of places (e.g., public libraries, doctors surgeries, local neighbourhood notice boards) which was an action in the Community Payback visibility strategy
- Twenty social workers were trained to deliver the Respect Domestic Violence Prevention programme which has been operational since September 2011. This has involved social workers working closely with

Women's Aid organisations to ensure women are safe during the delivery of the programme.

- There has been a reduction in fatal/serious injury road traffic casualties from a baseline of 198 in 2006/7 to 109 in 2011/12 (116 in 2010/11). For children the figures have significantly reduced to 2 in 2011/2 from 10 in 2010/11. The figures for those slightly injured has reduced again to 501 in 2011/12 (subject to verification) compared to 503 in 2010/11.
- A new set of community safety questions was asked in the Annual Public Performance Survey to align with national question sets. Therefore while the citizen's panel is no longer asked how concerned they are with speeding (72.4% said they were in 2010/11) in the 2011/12 survey 81% indicated they had concerns over road safety generally.
- A new indicator for monitoring the number of incidents of doorstep selling crime reported or detected has been established with a baseline of 209 incidents in 2011/12.
- A new indicator to monitor the percentage of Trading Standards staff that have advanced training in internet investigation has baselined at 64% in 2011/12.
- RAPEX (the EU rapid alert system for dangerous products) monitoring was conducted on all notifications alerted, with two notifications requiring further action by Trading Standards; in both instances the service was satisfied that the traders involved had taken appropriate steps to ensure unsafe goods could not be supplied to the public.
- The setting up a pilot 'No Cold Call' area is currently at the consultation stage between the MoD and its community, it is hoped that MoD activity will allow this to progress to enable the pilot to be up and running by November 2012, at which point a full report of the pilot can be prepared.

**2.12 We will deliver the Highland Archive Strategy and work to sustain a network of local archive facilities, by working with partners where appropriate.** ✓

Following the completion of development work including the Highland Archive Centre monitoring of visitor number to archive centres across Highland reveals a positive picture with 20,562 visits in 2011/12 compared to 14,281 in 2010/11 and a baseline of 10,274 in 2009/10.

**2.13 We will encourage use of the Council owned Highland Museum and Art Gallery in Inverness, the Highland Folk Museum, and support a range of community run museums across the Highlands with advice, training and grant aid** ✓

- The number of visits/usages of Council funded or part funded museums per 1,000 population continues to improve at 3336 in 2011/12 compared to 2364 in 2010/11 (baseline of 1074 in 2006/7). The figures include accessing on-line resources; for those visiting museums in person the figure is 1410 in 2011/12 up from 1199 in 2010/11.
- The numbers participating in the annual Archaeology Fortnight has remained above target at 6038 in 2011/12 compared to 6500 in 2010/11 (baseline of 4340 in 2006/7).



**2.14 We endorse the 'Year of Homecoming' in 2009 and will develop a Highland strategy to ensure we play a major role in the celebrations. C**

Work on this commitment was completed in 2009/10.

**2.15 With our partners we will develop an Events and Festivals Strategy and will continue to support a range of initiatives such as Am Baile, the Feis Movement, the Blas Festival and the Royal National Mod. ✓**

- Positive feedback from customers at the Blas Festival has increased to 94%, well above the target range of 70-80% in 2011/12 compared to the baseline of 87% in 2008/9.
- Funding level for the Feis movement was £71,667 in 2011/12 dipping below the £89K target.
- The Council signed a Service Delivery Contract with An Comunn Gàidhealach in May 2010. This provides for the presence of the Royal National Mod in the Highland Council area in 2014, 2017 and 2020.
- A baseline for dwell time (average visit duration) on the Am Baile website was established at 2.6 minutes in 2008/9 this increased to 3.1 minutes in 2011/12 and has stabilised at 2.7 minutes in 2011/12. It is recognised that the site needs further development to keep pace with user needs and current technology. Discussion on creating a new web presence for the Am Baile content and improving user experience is at an advanced stage.
- The number of winter festivals increased to 7 in 2011/12 compared to 6 in 2010/11 and 4 in previous years.

**2.16 With our partners we will provide opportunities for Life Long Learning. ✓**

A partnership agreement with UHI and HIE is in place to widen community access to UHI Learning Opportunities.

- There were 1231 learning classes provided in 2011/12 compared to the baseline of 817 in 2010/11 (445 in 2009/10).
- 64.7% of national target for replenishing library stock was achieved in 2011/12 (64% in 2010/11).
- Children and teenage stock replenishing achieved 84.7% in 2011/12 compared to 83.7% in 2010/11 against the national target.
- The percentage of library borrowers as a % of the resident population dipped slightly in 2011/12 to 19.4% compared to 20.5% in 2010/11.
- The number of times Access Point terminals were used decreased from 913 times per 1,000 population in 2007/8 to 673 in 2011/12 (750 in 2010/11). There increasing use of Internet accessible personal devices together with price reductions, WIFI, and broadband advances are affecting use of/the need for this service.
- The Highland Literacy partnership is being maintained and opportunities for adult literacy learners have increased to 2474 in 2011/12 compared to 2439 in 2010/11 this is a new aggregate indicator which includes all activity for adult learners including English tuition (ESOL). A new indicator to ensure 10% of adult literacy learners' move to positive destinations has achieved 33% in 2011/12 compared to 10% baseline in 2010/11.

- 2.17 **We will implement the Gaelic Language Plan and will review it annually. We commit ourselves to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic and English languages and we recognise the diversity of indigenous language and dialects within the Highlands.** ✓

Following internal approval of the Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 a new indicator has been developed to gauge public perceptions of the Council's role in strengthening the profile of the Gaelic language. The proportion of people in Highland who feel that the Council has strengthened the profile of the Gaelic Language is 75%. This establishes a positive baseline from which to measure the progress of delivering the Gaelic Language Plan. The number of pupils who have Gaelic speaking parents/carers (including learner parents) decreased from 41% in 2010/11 to 37.5% in 2011/12 (49.5% in 2009/10). The Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 has been approved internally and implementation has commenced. Formal statutory approval is awaited from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

- 2.18 **We will support the development of sporting activities and in particular we will encourage the development and growth of shinty.** ✓

There has been good progress made across the three indicators for this commitment. Both indicators encouraging young people to play shinty have significantly improved with the highest levels of participation in boys and girls shinty recorded. During 2011/12 there were 2540 boys and 1457 girls playing shinty compared to 2517 boys and 1083 girls in 2010/12, the baselines for 2006/7 were 1288 boys and 418 girls. The number of volunteers completing accredited Sports Leadership Awards continues to increase with a total of 3023 qualified to end of 2011/12 (2197 in 2010/11) compared to the baseline of 228 in 2006/7.

- 2.19 **We will continue to strengthen the Compact with the Third Sector, recognising its value for Highland communities.** ✓

The compact, which sets out the conduct for working relationships between the third sector and public bodies was agreed with representatives of the Third sector, the Council, HIE and NHS in 2010. In 2011 the Council hosted a successful consultation event on the operation of the Compact. Our latest survey results show continuing high levels of volunteering in the Highlands, with an increase in 2011/12 to 38% of the adult population reporting they volunteer in some capacity (36% in 2010/11). An increased proportion 64% say they volunteer in more than one activity (57% in 2010/11) with an increased proportion 58% volunteering at least once a week (56% in 2010/11). Work is progressing to develop a joint approach to supporting community development and volunteering with community planning partners.

- 2.20 **We will support the roll out and transition to the new Community Council Scheme and provide support for Community Council elections in 2011.** ✓  
C

Work on putting a new Scheme for Community Councils in place has been completed. The Council successfully delivered elections in May 2011 and May 2012. Work is on-going to ensure that there is appropriate training support in place for Community Councils.

**2.21 We will use the national standards of community engagement.**

Standards of community engagement integrated into sections 5.01, 5.03 & 5.07 and reported in theme 5 of this report.

***We will also represent the interests of the Highlands by working with partners, including the UK and Scottish Governments, to promote services for communities and older people***

**2.22 We will work with our local authority partners to campaign for fair and equitable fuel prices across the Highlands and Islands, and promote alternative renewable fuels to replace hydrocarbon based fuels. We will support the development of a strategic network of rural filling stations across the Highlands.**



Members agreed the Council's response to the UK Government's consultation on the Rural Fuel Duty Rebate Pilot Scheme at the TECS Committee on 11 August 2011, which supported the introduction of the Rural Fuel Duty Rebate Pilot Scheme.

Members of the TECS Committee have also highlighted the problems associated with the introduction of bio-fuels in the Highlands and Islands in relation to transport by sea and the requirement for improved storage, which could impact on the viability of rural filling stations.

The Council has acquired four electric vehicles, 2 vans and 2 cars. The cars will be used as "pool" cars and will provide staff with the opportunity to experience driving an electric vehicle first hand.

**2.23 We will seek the support of the Scottish and UK Governments for the removal of the remaining discount on Council Tax for Second Homes.**



In March 2012 the Local Government Finance (Unoccupied Properties etc.)(Scotland) Bill was introduced into the Scottish Parliament and the draft Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings)(Scotland) Regulations published in July 2012 come into force on 1 April 2013. This extra levy is not intended to apply to Second Homes, which will continue to be charged on the present basis. The change, nevertheless, should be a welcome one in the Highland context with the additional income arising from extra Council Tax on unoccupied properties being made available for spending locally. This may include investment in affordable housing at the Council's discretion.

**2.24 We will transfer the delivery of Community Learning and Leisure to an Arm's Length Organisation (ALO).**



**C**

High Life Highland (HLH) was successfully established for the delivery of community learning and leisure.

**3. What we will do for the Economy**

**3.01 We will work with the Scottish Government, the business community, HIE and the third sector to promote sustainable business growth through the development and promotion of business gateway and other Council support.**

**M**

- The business start-up rate has declined slightly in 2011/12 to 4.3 per 1,000 per population in 2011/12 compared to 4.4 in 2010/11 against a target of 4.6.
- Support for business start-ups through the Business Gateway has been maintained in 2011/12 at 244 at businesses supported in 2011/12 compared to 243 in 2010/11 (baseline of 167 business start-ups).
- Against a target of 7, the number of businesses going into account management from Business Gateway to HIE was 9 in 2011/12.
- A new indicator monitoring the number of existing businesses receiving advice, information or training from Business Gateway has made good progress. 474 businesses supported in 2011/12 against a target of 500.
- Against a new target of 20% of start-up businesses supported achieving VAT+ status, 4.1% was achieved during 2011/12.
- The % of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has increased to 54.8% in 2011/12 from 46.8% in 2010/11 and against a 2006/7 baseline of 47.4%. This is against a target of 80%
- Work in relation to the Nigg Yard and Master Plan is complete. Vacant and Derelict Land Funding has been used to remediate part of the Nigg Energy Park site. The Nigg Skills Academy was launched in March 2012 is already training new entrants to the industry.

**3.02 We will work with the Scottish Government, HIE and the private sector to promote national key sectors namely: energy, food and drink, life sciences, financial services, tourism and creative industries through engagement in strategy development and a range of initiatives.** ✓

We have continued to work with HIE's sector teams across a wide range of activity including support for the Nigg Yard, and support for the development of two other enterprise areas at Scrabster for renewables and Inverness campus for life sciences. We have worked with HIE on tourism for example looking at destination management organisations. The Highland Economic Forum is continuing to develop its sector work notably in ICT. The Film Unit continues to work with HIE's creative industries team with 33% of enquiries converted to projects.

**3.03 We will work with the Scottish Government, local partners and the private sector to enable 6,000 new houses, with appropriate amenities to be built in the Highlands by 2012, with 2,100 of these affordable houses for rent and low cost home ownership of which 600 will be for older people and people with disabilities.** ✓  
C

Key indicators for this commitment are growth in the population and new house builds. It is estimated that the population increased from 215,310 in 2006/7 to 222,370 in 2011/12. Overall cumulative house completion figures are making good progress having now reached 6803 in 2011/12 (5746 in 2010/11) above the 6000 target set for 2012. The cumulative total for affordable homes completed rose to 2298 in 2011/12 from 1962 in 2010/11, achieving and exceeding the target of 2100 by 2011/12. Work on Supplementary Guidance for Developer contributions has been on-going and will be presented to Planning, Environment and Development committee in November 2012.

- 3.04 **We will complete the business case for committing to a new programme of building over 700 council houses.** ✓  
C
- Work on this commitment was completed in 2011/12 and this is reflected in the new Council programme.
- 3.05 **We will develop Highland tourism – our most significant industry - in partnership with the business sector, VisitScotland, EventScotland and HIE. We will focus on opportunities such as Gaelic, green tourism, events and activities. We will improve the Council’s own services for visitors.** ✓
- The Council has a Partnership Agreement with Visit Scotland. The value of spend from tourism increased from £699m in 2010/11 to £748m in 2011/12. A new indicator to monitor the number of consumer complaints received that relate to tourism has been baselined in 2011/12 at 157 a low figure given the value of spend.
- 3.06 **We will recognise and support the importance of the Cairngorm National Park to the Highland environment and economy.** ✓
- Visitor numbers to the park were 1,473,000 in 2010 down from 1,495,263 in 2009; data for 2011 will not be available until late September 2012. The economic value of tourism has been maintained in the park and in 2010 was £185.4M. Council is working with the Cairngorms Business Partnership to support local businesses.
- 3.07 **We will work with HIE, Scottish Development International and statutory infrastructure providers to make the Highlands one of the most attractive places to do business in Scotland.** ✓
- The 2008/11 Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF) programme officially ended 31 March 2011. A further 12.38 hectares were removed from the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) for 2011/12 and future years. The percentage of Pre-application enquiries responded to within 4 weeks was 100% in 2011/12. The Council continues to promote and pursue inward investment opportunities with HIE and SDI as they arise.
- 3.08 **We will work with the Scottish Government, HIE and the private sector to extend and improve the provision and use of high speed broadband services for our businesses and communities.** ✓
- The Pathfinder North network continues to provide high capacity broadband links to schools, libraries and other council buildings throughout the Highlands and Islands. The current project ends on 20 March 2014. The Highland Council is currently leading the re-procurement project and is considering the scope of the new procurement in light of Partner requirements and national broadband developments and represents Pathfinder North at the HIE BDUK project board. There is a reciprocal arrangement with HIE to ensure close cooperation between the projects. HIE’s BDUK project is currently out to tender with a contractor likely to be appointed in autumn 2012. HIE has secured a further £120m from Scottish Government to develop superfast broadband in the Highland and Islands. HIE and Business Gateway are also working on a business engagement programme to ensure take-up of new services as they are introduced. During 2011/12 four community broadband schemes were supported.

- 3.09 **We will complete the Highland Development Plan and 3 Aquaculture Framework Plans by 2012.** ✓  
 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan has been amended and strengthened following a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the consultation process. The Coastal Development Strategy has been published and work is underway to produce the third Aquaculture Framework Plan (Eddrachillis Bay) by December 2012.
- 3.10 **We will prepare three new Local Development Plans which will provide detailed planning guidance and will ensure full community participation in their preparation.** =  
 The Highland-wide local Development Plan was adopted by Council in April 2012. The Main Issues report for the Inner Moray Firth Local development plan was issued for consultation in April 2012. The indicator monitoring the % of house-holder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has improved to 81.5% in 2011/12 from 75.9% in 2010/11, just below target.
- 3.11 **We recognise the world class skills of the workforce at Dounreay and will work in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency and the Scottish and UK Governments to safeguard and enhance the social and economic environments of Caithness & North Sutherland during the Dounreay decommissioning.** ✓  
 A prioritised Action Plan for 2011-2014 is in place for Caithness and North Sutherland Area and this continues to be developed through the Regeneration Partnership. Following successful completion of the competition to become new Parent Body Organisation at Dounreay the new MD of Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd has now joined the Partnership's Executive Board. A recent study found that the area economy is less dependent upon Dounreay work than it was five years ago. In relation to maintaining jobs in the area businesses committed to creating or retaining 156.5 fte jobs, well above the annual target of 100. The level of public services is being maintained, with confirmed capital investments in new schools in Wick and a new Council office in Wick.
- 3.12 **We will pursue initiatives to support sustainable procurement, including the procurement of local products and services by the Council and others.** ✓  
 External spending with businesses during 2010/11 (most recent data available) for amounts of £1000 or more totalled £263m with £152m going to SMEs. A total of £120m was spent in 2010/11 with Highland businesses (£105.7m in 2009/10) of which £93m was with SMEs in Highland (£89.9M in 2009/10). A total of £111M was spent with large companies of which £27m was spent with large Highland companies (£15m in 2009/10). Data is not available for payments below £1000. Data for 2011/12 is due December 2012. An action plan on supporting local food was completed and implemented during 2011/12.
- 3.13 **We will work with Community Land Scotland, HIE and the Scottish Government to ensure support for communities in the formation of local trust groups to buy, manage or have a stake in land, property or other assets on behalf of their community.** ✓  
 Key indicators for this commitment are:

- Increase the number of communities confident to hold assets, the baseline for this measure is 45 communities in 2007/8 during 2011/12 this increased to 61 (57 in 2009/10).
- Web-based guidance for internal and external use was completed during 2011/12.
- The number of community led projects and plans supported via LEADER increased to 362 in 2011/12 compared to 237 in 2010/11.
- From a baseline of 122 in 2009/10 for communities engaged in community based economic development was 128 in 2011/12.
- Work is on-going with Community Land Scotland and the Scottish Government to facilitate an increase in land ownership.

**3.14 We will work with the Scottish and UK Governments and partners to prevent and reduce poverty by supporting more people towards sustained employment.** ✓

During 2011/12 the Council supported 180 people into work through its Highland Opportunity Ltd. loans programmes. This is a reduction from previous years and reflects a grant programme withdrawn in 2010/11. A new measure has been established to monitor the number of clients assisted towards employment which baselined at 171 for 2011/12 (9 month figure).

**3.15 We will work with employers, further education colleges, Skills Development Scotland and HIE to increase the training and apprenticeship opportunities across the Highlands and maintain the number employed by the Council at 200 into 2011-12.** X

The number of trainees and apprentices employed by the Council was 206 in 2009/10 with the target met. However the number has fallen since then to 149 in 2010/11 and 159 in 2011/12. There are currently 684 full and part time Council employees aged 16-24.

**3.16 We will continue to decentralise Council jobs throughout the Highlands and will work with partners to identify opportunities for further dispersal of public sector jobs.** ✓

The % of jobs located outwith Council Headquarters is increased to 97% in 2011/12 compared to 96.6% in 2010/11 the target of 96.2% by 2010/11 continues to be exceeded.

**3.17a We will work with the UHI to explore closer relationships with secondary schools to expand course options for senior pupils and ensure the development of its academic research capability as the basis of economic development.** ✓

The Council continues to work with UHI to develop university levels courses which will be delivered in schools and which will provide first year credit points at university.

**3.17b We will support the development of a new, high quality Inverness campus as an essential part of the UHI network** ✓

Good progress was made towards detailed permission for the Inverness Campus during 2011/12. Planning permission was granted to HIE for the campus infrastructure works and development started on site in 2011-12. Planning

permission was also granted for the Inverness College UHI main building which will be the anchor development on the site.

- 3.18 We will work with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig – Scotland’s Gaelic College – to develop partnership projects which will support the Council’s objectives for Gaelic** ✓
- A partnership agreement with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is in place and has been implemented. The number of Education, Culture and Sport Service staff with Gaelic language training needs identified in PDPs has increased to 64 in 2011/12 compared to 47 in 2010/11.
- 3.19 We will continue implementation of the Council’s Memorandum of Understanding with Nova Scotia to ensure collaboration on a range of mutually beneficial language and cultural projects** ✓
- A review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council and the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia has been commenced. Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 commits the Council to revising the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council and the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia to develop mutually beneficial educational, cultural, and economic links. A meeting took place in Strathcarron in July 2012, between Council officials and the Executive Director of Gaelic Affairs from Nova Scotia to explore imaginative and innovative ways of implementing the MoU and to take measures with partners, to strengthen relations with Nova Scotia. Further actions on revising the MoU will be agreed at meetings with the Executive Director, scheduled to take place around the Royal National Mod in Dunoon in October 2012.
- 3.20 We will invest £54 million over the next three years to maintain the quality of our road network and carry out improvements to our lifeline roads and bridges.** ✓
- There is good progress for the majority of indicators:
- Expenditure on upgrading roads has recently been boosted with the success in obtaining £500,000 European funding to assist with lifeline road projects.
  - A programme is in place for the replacement of major and lifeline bridges.
  - Expenditure on maintaining our road network and lifeline bridges totalled £95.883m between 2007/8 and 2011/12.
  - The proportion of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment was 32% in 2011/12 compared to 33.2% in 2010/11; both figures are below the target figure of 34%.
  - The number of council and private bridges which fail to meet the European standard of 40 tonnes has lowered slightly to 30.4% in 2011/12 compared to 30.5% in 2010/11; the target is 26%.
- 3.21 We will work with the bus operators to enhance, develop and promote the bus network in both rural and urban areas, improving the quality, frequency and accessibility of buses.** M
- The number of community transport schemes supported decreased to 19 in 2011/12 compared to 22 in 2010/11. There continues to be regular meetings with



the main bus operators and Real Time Information systems have been introduced in the Inverness and Aviemore areas.

**3.22 We will promote the development of an integrated transport network. =**

Work is on-going to link and integrate timetables across all modes of transport. The number of lifeline ferry slipways to remote communities which have modern standards and safe layout remains at 5 during 2011/12 with improvement works to be carried out at Sconser to accommodate the new Hybrid Ferry.

**3.23 By 2009, we will implement an agreed £6m programme of traffic management and streetscape improvement measures in Inverness City Centre and will consider other arrangements which will reduce traffic congestion and improve the quality of the environment. C**

This commitment was completed in financial year 2010/11.

**3.24 We recognise the multi-cultural society we live in and welcome migrants and their families settling in our communities and will increase English Language tuition to assist their integration. ✓**

Good progress is being made under this commitment with one indicator improving and two sustained as follows:

- The number of new learners supported with English Language tuition increased to 1219 in 2011/12 compared to 1154 in 2010/11 and a baseline of 758 in 2006/7 and against a target of 1090.
- A new measure to monitoring the proportion of ESOL learners attending classes achieving accreditation, achievement of specified goals (including completion of courses), or progression to positive destinations was baselined in 2011/12 at 89.3% well above the annual target set of 75%.
- The levels of community acceptance of new residents increased to 86% in 2011/12 (85% in 2010/11) baseline 82% in 2006/7. Respondents reported that they were accepting of people coming to live in the Highland to some or a great extent.

**3.25 We will work through the Highlands and Islands European Partnership and the Scottish and UK Governments to secure the maximum benefit for the Highlands from the European funding programmes for the region and play a full part in key European organisations. ✓**

In 2011 more EU funding was attracted for Council projects, amounting to £2,219,592 compared to £1,599,000 in 2010. The annual report to Resources Committee also noted the continued success in the delivery of the Highland LEADER Programme, good external audit results and effective networking in the European groups the Council participates in.

One notable highlight in 2011 was the hosting of the General Assembly of Euromontana, a multi sectoral association with an interest in the socio- economic development of mountain areas. The event focussed on sustainable tourism and resulted in the Council being invited to lead on work for Euromontana in liaison with the European Commission on the development of a European sustainable tourism policy.

The Council's priorities for engaging with Europe shifted in 2011 with greater focus being given to preparing for the 2014-20 funding period. This work will include the development of a regional plan for the Highlands & Islands on the utilisation of European regional development funds and the co-ordination of lobbying activity with regions with a similar GDP within the UK and across the European Union. A commitment remains to ensure the efficient delivery of current Council projects; to capitalise on remaining monies and to assist the Government in successful delivery and closure of the 2006-13 Structural Fund Programmes.

**We will also represent the interests of the Highlands by working with partners, including the UK and Scottish Governments, to develop our economy:**

- 3.26 **We will work with the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland to deliver key trunk road improvements on the A82, A9, Nairn By Pass, A96 and the new trunk link road between the A96 and the A9 which will provide access to the UHI campus site.** ✓

Regular meetings being held with the Minister for Housing and Transport, to monitor progress on Scottish Transport Projects Review (STPR) projects. The Scottish Government have commissioned design work on the A96 corridor from Nairn through to Inverness. The 3.2km extension to the dual carriageway on the A9 at Crubenmore has been completed. The Scottish Government has allocated £500k to carry out a study to identify potential sections for improvements on the A82. The funding to carry out the detailed design to improve the north hairpin at the Berriedale Braes has been confirmed with contributions from Transport Scotland, NDA, HITRANS and the Council.

- 3.27 **We will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and British Waterways and other key stakeholders to examine and agree solutions for completing the link road between the A9/A96 and the A82 trunk roads, including crossing the River Ness and the Caledonian Canal.** ✓

The Options Appraisal has been completed and the Council has selected the preferred option which will now be taken forward to the detailed design stage. Work is also being undertaken with all relevant stakeholders to examine the options for enhancing the recreational and sporting facilities in the areas around the Bught and Torvean.

- 3.28 **We will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and other local Agencies to promote local improvements to the trunk road network at locations including Berriedale Braes and Torgoyle Bridge.** ✓

The Geotechnical, Design and Construction Assessment into the improvements to the north hairpin at the Berriedale Braes has established that the ground conditions are reasonably favourable for the two options considered. Funding has now been confirmed, through contributions from Transport Scotland, NDA, HITRANS and the Council to carry out detailed design to get the scheme to a "shovel ready" position.

- 3.29 **Work with Highlands and Islands Airports, HIE and partners to attract new** =

**and enhanced air services into the Highlands at all airports. We will continue to work to safeguard Inverness to Gatwick flights, campaign to reinstate the Inverness to Heathrow flights and develop Wick Airport.**

At Inverness there has been an expansion of charter leisure services to Europe as well as new links to Manchester, Southampton and Birmingham by Flybe. The Council and HIE supported Highland and Islands Airports in their efforts to secure an Inverness to Schiphol flight operated by Flybe. This route will provide new opportunities for accessing long haul flights to the Far East and Australasia. In May 2011 Flybe announced that with the help of the Council and other public agencies they will operate a scheduled service from Inverness to Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam which is a key European hub from 5 September 2011.

**3.30 We will work with partners to improve local, national and freight rail services including shorter journey times. =**

Lobbying for additional services will continue, and we are supporting the campaign for a new freight transfer facility at Fort William.

**3.31 We will continue to engage with Scottish Water and others to ensure that lack of infrastructure does not hold up housing and other developments C**

Work on this commitment was completed in 2009/10.

**3.32 We will press for the UK Government to write off the council's housing debt and seek the support of the Scottish Government to make the case for debt write off. ✓**

There has been various correspondence and a number of meetings held with Scottish and UK Government Ministers at which housing debt was discussed, and the case made for debt write-off. Meetings have been held with the former Labour and current Coalition UK Governments. The UK Treasury position remains that writing-off all housing debt nationally would be unaffordable.

**3.33 We will monitor any further temporary closures of Post Offices in the Highlands and support communities contesting any further reduction in the network to 2012. ✓**

During 2011/12 there were two unplanned closures the lowest number since monitoring begun. However, this is a lobbying commitment which means that the Council cannot stop temporary or permanent closures. The Council has taken a positive action to help sustain the Post Office network through the new payment strategy. As part of this implementation, customers who wish to pay by cash or cheque have been redirected to post offices, pay points and payzones. This approach not only means that customers will always have a local payment facility at their nearest Post Office but also that the footfall to Post Offices should increase providing the opportunity to give the post office additional business. This should help make them more viable and less prone to temporary and permanent closure.

**3.34 We will continue to seek a strategic shift in the ownership of marine resources by working with the Scottish Government and pressing the UK Government to conduct a full review of the Crown Estates. ✓**

The Council continues to work with the Scottish Government and other partners

towards the devolution of the management of the Crown Estate (CE) in Scotland to the lowest appropriate level. The Council is currently working with Community Land Scotland on the potential for rolling out management agreements with the Crown Estate Commissioners. Council continues to work with the Scottish and UK Governments to affect a full review of the management of the Crown Estate in Scotland. The opportunity to devolve the management and administration of the CE in Scotland via the Scotland Bill has been missed. However the Council will play an important role in the CE's Scottish Stakeholders Liaison Group and the Inter Ministerial Strategic Group established following the recent Scottish Affairs Committee report on the Crown Estate in Scotland.

#### **4. What we will do for our Environment**

- 4.01a **We will reduce carbon emissions from the Council's operations by 12% by 2012 (from a 2007/8 base-line); covering emissions from buildings, business travel, internal waste, street lighting, fleet and water consumption.** ✓  
C
- Overall carbon emissions have reduced by 13% from the 2007/8 base-line to end 2011/12. This commitment is complete. The break-down of changes in emissions by sector over this period is shown below.
  - Reduction of 16% in emissions from buildings (against a 12% target);
  - Reduction of 27% in emissions from staff and member travel (against a 12% target);
  - Reduction of 13% in emissions from fleet (against a 5% target – the base-line is 2008/9);
  - Reduction of 9% emissions from internal waste (against a 20% target);
  - Increase of 7% in emissions from street lighting (against a 6% reductions target) – NB this is due to an extension in the network and a new method of calculating emissions in year.
  - Increase of 16% in emissions from water use in the top 100 buildings (against a target of 10% reduction). During this period the top 100 buildings have changed as more buildings have water meters installed so the comparison is qualified.
- 4.01b **Introduce a programme across the Highlands to reduce energy use in street lighting.** X
- Since 2007/08 total emissions from street lighting have increased by 7%. The street lighting network has increased from 47,321 lanterns in 2007/08 to 51,289 columns in 2011/12. This 8% increase in network size is due to new developments. Street lighting is on an un-metered supply and charged per lantern. In 2011/12, The UK overseeing body (UMSUG) which reviews the nationally agreed burning hours for un-metered street lighting increased the figures for the North of Scotland from 3912 hours to 4130 hours per lantern per year. Although the lights are operating in exactly the same way as previously, this increased multiple has a major effect on annual load figures resulting in a 5.6% rise in total Kwh reported which is out of Highland Council's control. Trials are being undertaken to evaluate the options for reducing energy costs in street lighting. These include using white light and dimming, switching off street lights overnight, and switching off every second light.

- 4.01c **Promote the Highland Climate Change Declaration and encourage 30 new organisations to share information and best practice, and to commit to reduce carbon emissions by 3% per year.** ✓
- In total there are 23 new organisations that have signed up to the Climate Change Declaration to share information and best practice, with nine new signatories added in 2011/12. In addition, through the Environment Forum work was progressed to broaden the Declaration to cover the Highlands and Islands to bring a further six public bodies into scope and to encourage more private business to participate.
- 4.01d **In adapting to the impacts of climate change we will map the opportunities and threats facing Highland and develop appropriate actions to build resilience to such impacts by 2012.** ✓  
C
- Work on mapping the opportunities and threats from climate change and identify actions was completed in 2011/12. The adaptation strategy was approved by the Council in April 2012. It includes an action plan to build resilience.
- 4.02 **We will continue to work with the Scottish Government, UK and EU partners to promote and enhance forestry, farming, fishing and crofting in the Highlands.** =
- Timber prices in the Highlands have held up well during the last year and farm output has also increased by a figure in the region of 2%. This is mainly due to the value of beef and grain produced locally. It is anticipated that when statistics are published, fishery landings will have increased by around 4% on the previous year. Anticipated increases in GDP values for the primary sectors during 11/12 will therefore be in the region of 2% – 4%. Work on putting in place at a minimum of 5 strategic projects linked to promoting the primary sector in the Highlands including the local food sector has been completed.
- 4.03 **We wish to see by 2012, a total of 1640 megawatts installed capacity in suitable locations in Highland with improved capacity of grid connections and as part of the implementation of the Council's Renewable Energy Strategy, support the potential for marine energy in the Pentland Firth.** ✓
- Good progress has been made although the target had not been reached by the end of March 2012. The installed capacity of renewables increased from a 2006/7 baseline of 506MW to 1330MW in 2011/12 (1297.41 MW in 2010/11). Good progress is being made towards completing a North Highland Vision.
- 4.04 **We will adopt and implement a new policy, following wide consultation, to ensure a greater degree and more equitable and widespread disbursement of community benefit, including community control and ownership, for Highland communities from renewable energy developments.** =
- During 2011/12 a further 3 communities were assisted bringing the total number to 74 from a baseline of 24 in 2007/8.
  - Work has been completed on the adoption and approval of a new policy

to ensure a more equitable and widespread disbursement of community benefit funds.

- Thus far discussions with developers have been positive but to date there are no funds accruing to the three levels of the fund. Therefore monies have not yet been disbursed to communities.
- From those communities working with Highland Council, there were none owning renewable energy installations in 2011/12.

- 4.05 **We will adopt updated Council sustainable design guidance and publish measurable commitments on energy saving by promoting higher standards of thermal and solar efficiency for new buildings.** ✓  
A baseline for monitoring major new developments are accompanied by a sustainable design statement was established at 75% for 2009/10 and during 2011/12 the target of 100% was achieved.
- 4.06 **We will ensure that all of our building projects, for both new and refurbished facilities, will comply with best practice in sustainability such that the Council is seen as an exemplar organisation in the field of sustainable design and facilities management.** C  
This objective has been achieved.
- 4.07 **As well as improving the energy efficiency of our Council housing stock, we will reduce the Council's energy use and carbon emissions by 15% by 2010-11 from our buildings, from a baseline of 2005, reducing or avoiding energy costs** C  
Completed in 2009/10 with on-going monitoring via 4.01 above.
- 4.08 **We will increase the use of renewable micro generation technology sources to provide energy in the Council estate, with appropriate integration of Wind Turbines, Biomass fuel boilers, combined heat and power (CHP) and solar energy, increasing the overall rating from 1800kW in 2008 to a minimum of 8000kW in 2012.** ✓  
C  
The installed capacity of renewable equipment for Council Buildings has increased a further 4024 Kw to 10183 Kw in 2011/12 (6159 kW in 2010/11) from a baseline of 1225kW in 2006/7. Progress on installing renewables in council houses shows a further 100 houses with renewables installed during 2011/12.
- 4.09 **We will complete the Inverness South West Flood Relief Channel by 2012-13.** ✓  
The contract for the final phase of this project has been awarded with completion due in 2012/13.
- 4.10 **We will allocate resources appropriately between winter maintenance to drainage and watercourse maintenance, as well as local small scale flood prevention schemes, in recognition of the effects of climate change, with a minimum of 10 small scale flood prevention schemes completed each year.** ✓  
Funding is allocated in the revenue budget to deal with these events, the magnitude of which can vary from year to year. 8 small scale flood prevention

initiatives were taken forwards during 2011/12 against a target of 10 per annum, however over the past 3 years 34 schemes have been delivered.

- |       |   |        |
|-------|---|--------|
| 4.11  | <p><b>We will develop 24 green travel plans for Council and partner sites, install active travel equipment and achieve the Cycle Friendly Employer Award for six sites by 2012.</b></p> <p>The targets for this commitment have been achieved in 2011/12 with 24 green travel plans for Council and partner sites developed and six Council sites receiving active travel equipment and consequently achieving Cycle Friendly Employer Awards (Dingwall main office, Kinmylies, Fort William main office, Harbour Road, Diriebught Road and Council Headquarters).</p>  | ✓<br>C |
| 4.12  | <p><b>We will develop sustainable options for waste treatment within the Highlands and put measures in place to reduce the amount of residual waste disposed of in landfill outside the Highlands by 26,500 tonnes by 2013.</b></p> <p>Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 the amount of residual waste disposed to landfill out-with Highland reduced by 5,883 tonnes to 64,676. The baseline is 73,839 tonnes in 2006/7 and to date the overall tonnage has reduced by 9,163 tonnes with the most significant drop in 2011/12.</p>  | =      |
| 4.13a | <p><b>We will increase the amount of waste recycled in the Highlands to 50% by 2013.</b></p> <p>Waste recycling continued to increase during 2011/12 to 39%.</p>  | =      |
| 4.13b | <p><b>Introduce a programme of alternate weekly collection of municipal waste by April 2012.</b></p> <p>The roll out of alternate weekly waste collections was completed by July 2012 in line with the revised target date as agreed by the TECS Committee on 11 August 2011. The target date was changed to avoid the risk of implementing the programme in the Inverness area during January when there is a high probability of adverse weather.</p>   | ✓      |
| 4.14  | <p><b>We will limit the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill.</b></p> <p>The amount of municipal waste collected that is land filled continues to reduce from a baseline of 73.9% in 2006/7 to 60.2% (65.7% in 2010/11) against a target of 60%.</p>   | ✓      |
| 4.15  | <p><b>We will purchase less paper for Council offices and provide recycling facilities in all offices by 2012.</b></p> <p>Waste reduction audits were successfully piloted in 4 schools through Eco Committees during 2011/12. The provision of recycling facilities in our top consuming buildings improved with a further 10 facilities provided, the cumulative total is now 48 offices with facilities. Paper purchased cannot be measured currently due to changes in supplier mid-year, new baseline year will be 2012/13 figures. The Procurement Team are working out the categories of paper being measured and will provide the data. The reduction of residual waste bins from schools and offices will be reported from 2012/13 as is linked to the completion of the alternative weekly bin collections.</p> | ✓      |

- 4.16 **We will give a high priority to community works, ensuring our communities are well looked after through grounds maintenance, litter picking, street cleaning, education and awareness and by the use of enforcement measures to support zero tolerance on littering and fly tipping.** ✓

All three indicators for this commitment show good progress as follows:

- The Cleanliness Index (sample of streets and land that meets the standards) remains high in 2011/12 at 78% compared to a baseline of 71% in 2006/7.
- From a 2008/9 baseline of 23 for the number of fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and littering, there were 46 notices issued in 2011/12.
- The number of promotional events on litter picking has increased from 21 in 2008/9 with a further 47 delivered in 2011/12, the cumulative total is now 432 events since 2008/9.

- 4.17 **We will work with our Local Access Forums to draw up and implement a system of Core Path Plans for the Highlands.** ✓

There are four indicators for this commitment all making good progress:

- A new measure to gauge participant satisfaction with ranger led events was has achieved 90% satisfaction rating against a target of maintaining 75% or above.
- With LEADER assistance people counters have been installed on key paths and data will be reported from 2012/13.
- During 2011/12 improvements were made to 153 km of core paths.
- The number of participants on ranger guided walks was maintained during 2011/12 at 13,266 compared to 13,292 in 2010/11 and 11,512 in 2009/10.

- 4.18 **We will continue to support allotments where there is demand, with 8 new allotment schemes supported by 2012.** ✓  
C

This target has been achieved, with a total 10 allotment sites established with Council support, including 5 within the last year. On-going support is being given to a further 9 groups aiming to establish sites.

- 4.19 **The Council will work with the Highland Biodiversity Partnership and Local Biodiversity Groups to promote and enhance biodiversity within the Highlands.** ✓

The Council's Highland Biodiversity Action Plan leads to work of the Partnership and the seven local Biodiversity Groups. The Council's Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan will be reported and updated in November 12. The Delivery Plan ensures that the importance of biodiversity is raised within the Council and ensures that biodiversity is a material consideration in the work of other Council services. The percentage of planning applications where biodiversity check-lists are completed was base-lined in 2010/11 at 10% during 2011/12 this increased to 20%. Biodiversity guidance was enhanced during 2011/12 with supplementary guidance on protected species, sustainable design and green networks.



***We will also represent the interests of the Highlands by working with partners, including the UK and Scottish Governments, to protect and enhance our environment:***

- 4.20 **We will oppose any proposal for new nuclear power generation in the Highland area. We will continue to support the above ground storage of intermediate level waste from Dounreay until a Scottish waste strategy is agreed and implemented and object to the use of Dounreay or any other site within the Highlands for a national nuclear waste repository.** ✓  
This is progressing well with no new nuclear generator in the Highlands and with capacity for storage to allow for on-going decommissioning has been supported through planning permission for a new Low Level Waste (LLW) facility.
- 4.21 **We actively support a GM-free Highland.** ✓  
This is being achieved with currently zero GM in the Highlands.
- 4.22 **We will work with the Scottish Government and SEPA to introduce the requirements set out the Flood Risk (Scotland) Act 2009 and continue to progress Flood Prevention Orders for areas where there is a history of flooding affecting residential properties.** ✓  
The new Flood Act is now in place with streamlined procedures. The Flood Act Regulations are under development, and the Council has responded to a number of consultations on the Flood Risk Management Act. The Council submitted a successful application for 80% capital grant in relation to the River Ness (Tidal Section) Flood Alleviation project and construction works are due to start in 2012/13.
- 4.23 **Highland Council will work for a review of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 with a view to improving the legislation.** ✓  
C  
Having successfully campaigned with partner organisations for a review of the legislation governing land reform, the Council continues to campaign on aspects of the legislation that have not been tackled. For example its application to rural communities only. A further review of the land reform legislation is now planned by the Scottish Government which has set up a review group for the purpose. The Council will therefore provide further evidence on this topic and will work with the Scottish Parliament for greater flexibility and increased uptake by communities. The Council continues to liaise with land reform partners via Community Land Scotland.
- 4.24 **We will continue to work with the Scottish and UK governments to seek effective control and monitoring of the movement of hazardous cargoes in the Minches and the Pentland Firth and work to retain the presence of Emergency Towing Vehicles and the Coastguard facilities in Stornoway and Lerwick.** ✓  
A successful campaign has been undertaken in partnership with the Islands Councils in relation to the retention of the Coastguard Stations in Stornoway and Lerwick. Following an long campaign in relation to the retention of the Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs), the ETV based in Stornoway was

withdrawn in March 2012, however the contract for the Northern Isles ETV has been extended to 2015 and will now cover both the Northern and Western Isles

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

- 5.01a **We will continue to pursue best value for our residents and service users, seeking efficiencies in the way we work and continuously review the Council's spending programmes. We will modernise our services to achieve an annual 2% efficiency savings target and deliver at least £17.629m million savings from the Corporate Improvement Programme 2010/11 to 2012/2013.** ✓

From a baseline in 2006/7 of 80% the Council has increased satisfaction levels with Council services to 83% in 2011/12. Against an efficiency target of £12.68m in 2011/12 the Council achieved £13.162m of efficiency savings. 'The Corporate Improvement Programme is progressing well and is on target to deliver £18.3m of savings by the end of 2012/13. The Programme will deliver further savings in future years to support the Council's future efficiency and budget targets. Following piloting, self-evaluation through the Public Services Improvement Framework is being rolled out across all Council Services and is making good progress with improvement plan monitored through quarterly performance reviews.

- 5.01b **We will bring the Council's budget in on target for the financial year 2011/12 and ensure that a balanced budget is achieved in 2012/13, and that preparations are put in place for sound financial management for future years.** ✓

Effective financial stewardship has been demonstrated through achieving efficiency targets. The final external audit report on the Council's accounts for 2011/12 is due by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Audit Scotland reported in the Assurance and Improvement Plan in March 2012 that they found that Council is proactive in responding to the current financial environment, has robust budgeting procedures in place and is proactively managing budget reductions.

- 5.01c **We will commit to no compulsory redundancies in the workforce wherever possible, by managing any reduction in staff numbers using redeployment, vacancy management, flexible working and targeted early severance, where appropriate.** ✓

During 2011/12 the Council managed a reduction in the workforce of 1263 staff, (including the transfer of 1049 staff to Highlife Highland), avoiding compulsory redundancies where possible by using redeployment, vacancy management, flexible working and targeted early severance.

- 5.02 **We commit the Council to the principle of appropriate additional decentralisation of political decision-making within the Council.** ✓

Access to decision making through web casting with all Council and Committee meetings now webcast and available through the council website. Pilot of City/

Area Committees underway with Inverness City Committee and new Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee commencing in August 2012. The outcome of this pilot will inform the decision on extending Area Committees to other parts of the Highlands in 2013.

- 5.03 **We will continuously review our performance to improve the way in which Council services are designed and delivered. We will do this by measuring our progress, reporting on it publicly and listening to our customers and communities.** ✓
- A Corporate Performance Framework is in place and set out in the Corporate Plan. In addition to the annual corporate performance report information is made available through the Council's website and the annual newspaper supplement each winter and through the Council Tax leaflet each March. The most recent BV2 audit of the Council was positive and no significant scrutiny risks were identified by audit and inspection bodies for 2011/12. Response times within target for complaints and enquiry handling in the new management system has been baselined at 75% achieved in 2011/12. Compliance with the required response times for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests has improved to 83% (1066 requests) in 2011/12, (82%, 1011 requests in 2010/11) against a 2006/7 baseline of 88% (505 requests). This is against a target of 80% within timescale. There continues to be a trend of increasing levels of FOI requests.
- 5.04 **We will fulfil all of the Council's duties to promote equalities and to tackle discrimination and disadvantage - as an employer, in providing public services, in community leadership and partnership working.** ✓
- The council's progress towards meeting the current public sector equality duties was reported to committee on a 6 monthly cycle. The number of women managers in the top 2% of earners within the Council has increased from 27.6% in 2006/7 to 33.3% in 2011/12 (34.5% in 2010/11). Further improvement has been made for the top 5% earners where women represent 54.1% in 2011/12 (45.7% in 2010/11) compared with 35.9% in 2006/7. A single equalities scheme, the Fairer Highland Plan, was published after approval by the Council in April 2012. It contains high level equality outcomes and an action plan. Work continued to improve the assessment of the impact of policies and practices on equality groups and notably through hearing evidence from equalities groups at the Member Working Group. This was recognised in 2012 as good practice nationally by the Improvement Service and Scottish Government. In 2011 the Citizen's Panel was surveyed on attitudes to equality and discrimination to identify where awareness raising should be targeted. In addition focus groups with a range of equalities groups were held to gauge views on Council performance and their views on community life in the Highlands.
- 5.05 **We will make Council decision-making more accessible by web casting Council meetings and by other means.** C
- Following a pilot in 2009 it was agreed to extend web casting to all strategic committees and this work has been completed.
- 5.06 **We will make it easier and more convenient to contact the Council (through telephone, internet and other technology).** X

The Council achieved 82.5% of all enquiries dealt with at first point of contact in 2011/12; this is below the 85% minimum target set for the first time. The measure of core services that can be delivered at the first point of contact through the Service Centre is 55% in 2011/12. This figure is below the target of 90% and has not increased from 2010/2011 figure.

- 5.07 **We will continue to develop Ward and City Forums for every council ward which will enable the public and community representatives to be informed of and to scrutinise Council activities and service delivery, including community planning.** ✓  
C

Work has been completed on a Ward Forum best practice guide for Ward Managers and this is being posted on the web for general use. All Ward Forums are engaging partners to improve joint working and improve shared services. The recent Best Value audit of the Council reflected very positively on the work of Ward Forum in engaging communities.

- 5.08 **We will develop our Asset Management Plan to ensure that the Council owns or occupies only the appropriate number of buildings and that these are fit for purpose.** ✓

The Council recognises the need for significant rationalisation of its asset base and has made good progress in declaring assets surplus although disposals are challenging in the current market. During 2011/12, 61.9% of buildings were suitable for current use compared to 55% in 2010/11 and 59.7% in 2006/7. The percentage of operational accommodation in a satisfactory condition was 60.5% in 2011/12 compared to 59.8% in 2010/11 and 54% in 2007/8. Public caller building accessible to people with disabilities was 92.7% in 2011/12 compared to 91.1% in 2010/11 and a baseline of 61.3% in 2006/7.

- 5.09 **We will value and consult with staff and trades unions through joint consultative committees between the Council and trades unions, as well as through other forums established to consult on corporate change programmes including the Corporate Improvement Programme and Pathway to Integration with Health.** ✓

- A well established joint consultative group (JCG) meets on a quarterly basis.
- Non-teaching staff absence has reduced in 2011/12 to 9.7 days compared to 10.5 days in 2010/11 and is on target.
- Teacher's sickness absence has also reduced to 6.3 days in 2011/12 (6.4 days in 2010/11) just above the target of 6.0 days.
- The number of Working days lost as a result of accidents has reduced again in 2011/12 to 467 compared to 838 in 2010/11 and a baseline of 1330 in 2006/7.
- The % of Council staff saying they have a personal development plan (PDP) which was base lined at 45% for 2007-09 through a bi-annual staff survey this figure increased to 59% for the period 2009-11. Next survey will be carried out in autumn 2012.
- The number of employees who consider the Council to be above average or one of the best employers was 31% for 2009-11 compared to 26% in 2007-09, the target for this indicator is to increase to 40%. Next survey

will be carried out in autumn 2012.

- The Safety Representatives Charter and Health & Safety Agreement were renewed during 2011/12.
- A target was set to train 30 trade union health & safety representative between 2011 and 2012, for 2011/12 there were 22 trained toward meeting the target.

**5.10 We will work with the trades unions to deliver modernised working conditions and a single status workforce by 2010. C**

Work on this commitment was completed in 2009/10.

**5.11 We will continue to agree an annual training and development programme and personal development plans for councillors. ✓**

Role descriptions are in place for Elected Members. An Induction and Development Programme for 2011-2012 is underway. Following the local election, PDPs will be available for all members of the new Council by March 2013.

**5.12 We will review the Council's programme and report progress against it each year. ✓**

Reports are submitted to Council on a regular basis and for 2011/12 the annual performance report is submitted in September 2012. This shows that 22 commitments are completed, 89 are on target or being maintained, 6 have mixed performance and 3 have not been met. The performance report also includes the annual return for Audit Scotland on statutory performance indicators. The performance framework for the new Council Programme 2012-17 will be considered by the Council at its meeting in October 2012.