

Highland Council

8 September 2011

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Corporate Performance Report 2010-11
incorporating Statutory Performance Indicators**
Report by the Chief Executive

Summary

This report provides an assessment of Council performance against the Corporate Plan and the Strengthening the Highlands programme. It covers the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011. Good progress is reported with 87% of the commitments (100 out of the total 115) being either completed, progressing well, are on target or performance is being maintained. For 11 commitments (10%) there is mixed performance and there are 4 commitments which have not been met (3%). 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 2010/11 on 22 indicators, with 4 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, agreed at Council in October 2008 plus amendments agreed to the Strengthening the Highlands programme at Council in October 2010 and February 2011.
- 1.2 The Council's Programme contains a commitment that: "The Council will continuously review 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". The annual performance report contributes to this commitment.

2. Council Performance April 2010 to end March 2011

- 2.1 In total there are 115 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 2010/11.

Theme	✓ Good Progress	C Completed	= Maintained	M Mixed performance	✗ Commitment not met	Totals
1	14	2	3	1	0	20
2	14	4	4	0	1	23
3	23	2	5	4	0	34
4	19	2	0	2	3	26
5	6	2	0	4	0	12
Totals	76	12	12	11	4	115

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

100 of the 115 commitments are either complete, progressing well or performance is being maintained 87% (88% in 2009/10).

2.3 Mixed performance - positive and negative movement in indicators

There are 11 commitments where mixed performance is recorded 10% (11% in 2009/10). 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.

What we will do for Children and Families

- Participation levels at festivals supported by the Council remain high and there are an increasing the number of people participating in arts, sport and cultural activities. However the number of events delivered through a year round programme has dropped to 36 in 2010/11 compared to 160 in 2009/10. This is in the context of funding being committed in advance for projects in future years which are counted only in the year of award. There are also reduced resources and fewer funding rounds. (cp1.11)

What we will do for the Economy

- Support for business start ups through the Business Gateway and good progress has been made in relation to Nigg Yard. However while the business rate up rate has increased it is slightly below the target of 4.6 per 1,000 per population at 4.4 in 2010/11 compared to 3.9 in 2009/10. In addition the % of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has declined to 46.8% in 2010/11 (52.5% in 2009/10). (cp3.01)
- In relation to the provision and use of broadband the support of community projects is being hampered by the need for match funding for LEADER. (cp3.08)
- In relation to local development plans and planning applications; the % of householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has declined to 75.9% compared to 76.3% in 2009/10 and a target of 90%. (cp3.10)
- During 2010/11 the Council supported 216 people into work through its Highland Opportunity Ltd. loans programmes. This is a reduction from 306 in 2009/10 but reflects a grant programme withdrawn for 2010/11. The number of clients, including parents and lone parents directly supported by the employability team into work, education or training during 2010/11 was 93, a reduction from activity in 2009/10 but reflective of the revised and more difficult to reach client group introduced in 2010/11 (cp3.14)

What we will do for the Environment

- The Council's carbon emissions have reduced from Council buildings, business

travel, fleet, internal waste, street lighting and water by 6.3% however this is against a 9% target to 2010/11. Performance for fleet and buildings was hampered by two successive very cold winter periods. (cp4.01a)

- The cost of street light reduced to £1.63m in 2010/11 compared to £1.72m in 2009/10. While there have been slight reduction in energy use and carbon emissions these have not met the 2% reduction target (cp4.01b)

What we will do to make Highland Council more effective and efficient

- While the Council received a positive BV2 report. However two indicators do not show sufficient progress in 2010/11. Response times within target for complaints and enquiries handling while improving are not achieving the improvement targets set. Compliance with the required response times for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests has declined further to 82% (1011 requests) in 2010/11 against 85% (928 requests) in 2009/10 and a 2006/7 baseline of 88% (505 requests). There continues to be a trend of increasing levels of FOI requests. (cp5.03)
- For all enquiries the Council achieved 92.5% dealt with at first point of contact in 2010/11, above the 85% minimum target set. However for core services this figure is the same as previous years at 55% dealt with at first point of contact and this is below the target set of 90% by 2010/11. (cp5.06)
- During 2010/11 55% of buildings were suitable for current use compared to 59.7% in 2006/7. The percentage of operational accommodation in a satisfactory condition was 59.8% in 2010/11 compared to 54.5% in 2007/8. Public caller building accessible to people with disabilities was 91.1% in 2010/11 compared to a baseline of 61.3% in 2006/7. (cp5.08)
- The indicators for non-teaching staff absence reduced in 2010/11 to 10.5 days compared to 11.6 days in 2009/10 and this is on target. Teacher's sickness absence while reducing to 6.4 days in 2010/11 (7.3 days in 2009/10) did not meet the target of 6.2 days set for 2010/11. 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%. (cp5.09)

2.4 Commitments not met

There are 4 commitments (3%) which are not being met (0% in 2009/10) in relation to:

What we will do for communities and Older People

- The proportion of people in Highland describing themselves as well disposed to Gaelic declined slightly to 36.2% in 2010/11 compared to 38% in 2009/10 (baseline 41% in 2007/8). The number of pupils who have Gaelic speaking parents/carers (including learner parents) decreased from 49.5% in 2009/10 to 41% in 2010/11. A new Gaelic Language Plan will review how performance will be measured in future. (cp2.17)

What we will do for the Environment

- In 2010/11 the amount of residual waste disposed to landfill out-with Highland increased by 1522 tonnes to 70,559 tonnes compared to the previous year; although this is below the 73,839 tonnes of baseline year 2006/7. (cp4.12)
- Waste recycling was maintained during 2010/11 at 34% (34.6% in 2009/10), however the target of 40% by 2010 has not been achieved. The rate (by tonnes) will increase as alternate weekly collections are rolled out and embedded. (cp4.13a)
- The amount of municipal waste collected that is land filled continues to reduce from a baseline of 73.9% in 2006/7 to 65.7% in 2010/11. The target of 60% has

not been met. (cp4.14)

3 Statutory Performance Indicators 2010/11

- 3.1 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 2010/11 on 22 indicators, with 4 indicators showing a decline of 5% or more. The table below illustrates the movement in performance indicators over the last two years.

The following key has been used where:		2009/10 vs 2008/09	2010/11 vs 2009/10
✓	performance has improved by 5% or more.	13	22
X	performance has declined by 5% or more.	14	4
—	there is no significant change in performance	21	23
	the indicator is new / changed / no comparison is possible / provided for contextual purposes only.	3	2

- 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.
- 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 2 are therefore predominantly cost indicators. The table below illustrates the movement in local performance indicators over the last two years.

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

- 3.5 Responsibility for Statutory Performance Indicator returns currently sits with Finance Service and this report marks the transfer of responsibility for SPI Returns to the Policy & Performance Team, Chief Executive's Service. This will enable the integration of performance reporting in this and future years.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to report on its performance to the public. A newspaper supplement will be produced 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 5 October 2011.

4.2 In addition to this annual corporate performance report progress on corporate plan indicators is monitored through quarterly performance reviews (QPR) undertaken by the Chief Executive. The Council has migrated performance information onto an electronic Performance and Risk Management System, this includes greater accessible through web browsing facilities. Quarterly Performance Reports are now delivered through the electronic system. Members will be briefed on how to view reports in the system later this year.

5. Equalities and Strategic Environmental Assessment

5.1 Equality and Strategic assessments are not required for performance reports as the programmes, plans and strategies they report performance on have been subject to assessments.

6. Resource, Legal and Risk Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this performance report.

6.2 Legal implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting.

6.3 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. This includes a review of the progress made against the performance framework. The performance information in this report is used to demonstrate that the Council makes good use of its performance indicators and that it reports progress against them openly.

7. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the performance report for April 2010 to end March 2011
- Note that a newspaper supplement, drawing on this assessment of performance and other performance information, will be produced to report performance to the public.
- Agree the submission to Audit Scotland of the 2010/11 Statutory Performance Indicator report.
- Note a further performance report will be submitted on the Single Outcome Agreement at 5 October 2011 Council.

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

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Date: 30.8.11

Appendix 1: Annual Performance Report 2010-11

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 2010/11 includes:

- Progress was made on four new primary schools during 2010/11. Work commenced on the new school at Milton of Leys which was completed in July 2011. Contracts were awarded for the schools at Aviemore and Lochaline with both due to be completed in May 2012. Tenders were received for the new Ben Wyvis Primary (Conon Bridge/Maryburgh) which will open in August 2012.
- During 2010/11 extensions at Farr Primary (Inverness), Kilchuimen Primary and Roy Bridge Primary were completed along with the refurbishment of Milton Primary at Kildary. The extension and refurbishment of Aldourie Primary started and is due for completion in May 2012. An extension to the PPP School at Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (the Gaelic Primary School in Inverness) was also completed.
- Of the two remaining secondary schools scheduled for refurbishment, Phases 1 and 2 of the redevelopment of Lochaber High were completed at a total cost of £15,700,000, and the refurbishment works at Wick High were also completed. Work started at Plockton High and is due to be completed in April 2012. Although the refurbishment of the CLASP building at Thurso High School was completed previously, the remaining work to the entrance area will be carried out in 2012/13.
- Work started on the new pupil hostel at Ullapool High which will be completed in October 2011.

- 1.02 We will achieve full implementation of the Scottish Government's policy of "Getting it Right for Every Child" which will ensure that all children get the help they need when they need it, by 2009** ✓
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As previously reported, Getting it right for every child has been rolled out across all of Highland, and the practice model has been embedded to ensure that the authority sustains and consolidates implementation. This is being developed further in the proposals for a fully integrated children's service. HMle inspection reports of child protection services involved 5 gradings of 'very good' and one of 'good'.

- 1.03 We will be better corporate parents of Highland's "looked after" children and, by working with our partners, we will help them to reach their full potential as they move into adulthood, by improving their educational outcomes, reducing reliance on out of authority placements and supporting them as they move into appropriate accommodation and into further or higher education, training or employment.** ✓

There is a large indicator set for this commitment. The number of looked after children (LAC) has increased slightly and in quarter 4 of 2010/11 there were 481 compared to 479 in 2009/10. For children being looked after the number of placements each child experiences has reduced, especially among those experiencing 6 or more placements from a baseline of 59 in 2008/9 to 46 in 2010/11. The percentage of LAC looked after at home has not increased and remains at 36% in 2010/11. For Out of Authority Placements while there has been a reduction to 37 in 2010/11 from 44 in 2008/9 this remains a budget pressure. Note reporting of this is now to every JCCYP meeting and the indicator has been refined to show both numbers of purchased care placements and number remote from Highland. Inspection reports for Adoption Services and Foster Care show the very high standards have been maintained. Data for the educational attainment of looked after children will not be available until the end of September 2011.

- 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.** ✓

The Council has committed this investment. The target for increasing the proportion of looked-after-children with a kinship carer continues to improve year on year with 17.7% with kinship carers in 2010/11 compared to the baseline of 12.4% in 2007/8.

- 1.05 We will deliver and support a sustainable network of quality wraparound childcare and educational services for young children and their families by 2011.** ✓

The number of Associated School Groups with wraparound childcare rose to 28 above the target of 24 set for 2010/11.

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 2010/11 will not be available until early to mid September 2011 when it is made available at a national level.

Session 2010/11 marked the end of collated 5-14 data and the development of pupil profiles in line with priorities of Curriculum for Excellence. These profiles summarise young learners' achievements to date and encourage them to take responsibility for their future learning by identifying agreed next steps. Monitoring the proportion of Service and HMIE reports evaluating the Quality Indicators Improvement through Self-Evaluation (Schools) and Improving Services (Community Learning & Development) as good or very good was base lined in 2008/09 at 44.8% out turn for 2010/11 is a slight decline to 42%. In relation to at least maintaining levels for schools inspected receiving satisfactory or better HMIE inspections, following changed methodology the target has been amended to 90% and data re-profiling shows good progress at 94.7% in 2010/11 compared to the baseline of 88% in 2006/07 and 90.9% in 2009/10.

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

The result of the first validated self assessment support by HMIE resulted in an action plan which is being integrated into the 2011/12 Service Plan. Agreed actions will be monitored and progress through quarterly performance reporting and reported annually.

1.08 We will increase the number of young people leaving school moving into education, training or employment (including activity agreements) to 95% by end March 2011 and we will, with our partners, review the target for 2011/12. =

Indicators for the a) number of care leavers in education, training and employment at 18 years and b) the proportion of school leavers entering further/higher education, training or employment will not be available for school year 2010/11 until October 2011. The number of children and young people taking part in recognised leadership and achievement awards such as Duke of Edinburgh in 2010/11 declined to 1641 against 1876 in 2009/10 and a baseline of 767 in 2006/7. There has been an increase in the number of young people completing Youth Achievement Awards and Dynamic Youth Awards; however due to change in management fewer young people are actively working on their award. However more awards were gained in the period and the Council's conversion rate is now above the UK and Scottish average.

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 Milton of Leys Primary School commenced in July 2010 and will be available for occupation in August 2011.

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 will commence by summer 2011.

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, should commence during 2011 and be occupied by August 2014. The design brief for the new school was progressed in consultation with a wide range of community stakeholders.

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 this been declined slightly to 1756.

In 2010/11 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 nursery and there were pre-school pupils in a further 5 commissioned playgroups/school. In 2010/11 there were 16 Secondary schools offering 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 6 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 **M**

The number of events supported through a year round programme has dropped to 36 in 2010/11 compared to 160 in 2009/10. 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. Participation levels at festivals supported by the Council more than 3 years old remains high with 70% of seats sold in 2010/11 compared to 80% in 2009/10 with a target of 60%. A baseline was established in 2008/9 for the number of people participating in arts, sport and cultural activities at 3.44m this has increased in 2010/11 to 4.91m.

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) shows a slight decline in 2010/11 to 29 runs compared to 32 in 2009/10 for girls (baseline 28 runs in 2006/7). For boys there has been an improvement from 32 runs in 2009/10 to 37 in 2010/11. Currently 75% of targets within the Play Strategy have been delivered compared to a baseline of 20% in 2006/7 and this has achieved the target set to 2010/11. The use of the Outdoor Education Centre at Badaguish Centre has continues to increase from a baseline of 4020 users in 2007/8 to 9753 in 2010/11 (8944 in 2009/10). The Highland Council in partnership with NHS Highland continues to place a high priority of the development of health improvement initiatives through the evolving 'Your Choice to Healthy Living Implementation Plan'. This overarching plan supports a range of health and wellbeing topics including healthy weight, substance misuse, sexual health, personal safety and wellbeing. In Highland schools the partnership provides advice, guidance, expertise, training and resources to embed health and wellbeing approaches as part of Curriculum for Excellence. The partnership also continues to support the development of health promoting environments in Highland communities for healthy living, learning and working. The partnership also continues to focus on increasing access to culture and leisure opportunities through expanding and increasing uptake of High Life and Young Scot cards.

1.13 We will support civic engagement of Highland's young people through pupil councils, the post of youth convener, developing Youth Voice and representation in the Scottish Youth Parliament and working 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 has been completed. 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 and that a review is completed on leisure, recreation and development opportunities available to young people. ✓
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The target to place active youth worker presence in each of the 29 school catchment areas was achieved in 2008/9. A review of leisure, recreation and development opportunities for young people was completed and reported to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in March 2010.

1.15 We will roll out a single smart card to all young people by 2011, giving access to leisure, libraries, arts and culture activities, youth information and school meals. ✓

The High Life card uptake for 2010/11 is 86% slightly below 2009/10 at 89% this compares to a baseline of 81% in 2007/8 and remains above the national average (80%) and the target.

1.16 We will achieve Eco School status for all Highland Schools by 2011. ✓

Very good progress continues to be made across the three indicators evidencing progress on this

commitment. There has been an improvement in the number of schools achieving the bronze, silver and green flag award levels. Between 2006/7 and 2010/11 numbers increased for the bronze award 20 schools to 138 (123 in 2009/10), for the silver award 12 schools to 136 (106 in 2009/10) and for green flag status the most prestigious level 8 schools to 70 (42 in 2009/10). Highland performance in gaining Bronze, Silver and Green Flags is broadly in-line with the National picture. Two hundred and one schools out of two hundred and sixteen [93%] have now gained an Eco Award

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 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 2010/11 there were 80% of schools with an agreed travel plan. The annual Hands-Up Survey of modes of school travel across Scotland show that fewer pupils in Highland (20.5%) are driven to school than the national average (22.9%). 36.2% of children walk to school in Highland, lower than the national average of 45.8%. The cycle to school figure in Highland (7.6 %) is three times that of the national average (2.8%).

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.



The number of schools participating in accredited ‘risk reduction’ schemes has increased from 60% in 2009/10 to 67% in 2010/11 (baseline 62% in 2006/7) for the Junior Road Safety Officer scheme and increased again slightly for cycling proficiency from 78% in 2009/10 to 79% in 2010/11 (baseline 60% in 2006/7). In addition the number of young drivers participating in PASS Plus driver education is being maintained above 300 at 326 for 2010/11 (baseline 239 drivers in 2006/7 and 363 drivers in 2009/10).

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 Scottish Government and Higher Education institutions to address the issue of supply of Gaelic medium teachers and seek funding for 2 new Gaelic Medium Primary Schools.



Progress on the supply of Gaelic medium teachers has to be undertaken in association with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government as it is a national issue. The Council is preparing a revised Gaelic Language Plan for 2012-16 and Bòrd na Gàidhlig is preparing a revised National Plan for Gaelic to run from 2012-17. Both Plans will specify action to tackle long term workforce planning to support the training and recruitment of the staff required to service the needs of Gaelic Medium Education. The Council has built, and further 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 Schools with an English Medium provision. The Council has 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 a Gaelic Primary School in Portree.

1.20 We will work with the UK and Scottish Governments to maintain the principle of providing accessible, affordable childcare to all.



There is ongoing liaison with the Scottish Government, and we have also supported the Scottish Government and COSLA nationally to promote the Early Years Framework.

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 at three locations are now being refurbished (Ach-an-eas, Grant House and Invernevis). For the other two (Duthac House and Urray House), the Council is in competitive dialogue with bidders to deliver care homes placements by 2013. The preferred bidder will be considered at Housing & Social Work Committee in autumn 2011.

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 there is good progress across the indicators for this commitment.

- Data for 2009-10 customer contact with CAB providers shows an improvement in contact from 30,947 in 2009/10 to 34,598 customers in 2010/11, this however remains below the 2007/8 baseline of 38,139. There has been an increase in the number of customers contacting the Council for money advice with 2074 customers in 2010/11 compared to 1863 the previous year and a baseline of 479 in 2006/7.
- The financial benefit to customers receiving advice remains high with £6.59m achieved for CAB customers in 2010/11 compared to £4.53m in 2009/10. Following an exceptional result in 2009/10 £1.38m figures achieved for Council customers have returned to trend at £426,862 for 2010/11 compared to £402,110 in 2008/9.
- The target to maintain uptake of free school meals at 77% of eligibility has again been exceeded in 2010/11 at 84.3% compared to 80.3% in 2009/10 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 6262 for 2010/11 compared to 5193 in 2009/10 and a baseline of 3913 in 2006/7.
- In relation to benefit claims the average number of days to process new claims and changes in circumstances has significantly improved again in 2010/11 at 13 days compared to 34 days in 2008/9 and 19 days in 2009/10.

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



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

2.04 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.



The Council has been proactive throughout 2010/11 in working with NHS Highland to support people to move swiftly and safely out of hospital and back into their own communities. Actions include:

- Reconfiguring community-based services on a nine-district model;
- A faster allocation of resources and more localised solutions by introducing devolved budgets and decision-making;
- A major redesign of the care at home service to support people at home effectively;
- Adopting a reablement approach to provide a more intensive response for those who are most in need;
- Local investment to support community capacity-building, supporting older people to remain at home for longer and be physically and mentally active, with £130k invested in local community-run initiatives;
- Providing self directed care options to enable people to have greater choice and flexibility about how their care is provided.

In 2010/11 work was done to access the 'Reshaping Care for Older People Change Fund' from 2011/12 which offers an investment of £3.4m for a return of £10.2m (3:1) in the form of both revenue release and shifts in the balance of care across both the Council and NHS. Financial indicators are being developed further to measure the shift in the balance of care for future reporting.

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



A further 152 completions during 2010/11 bring the completion of houses suitable for older people and those with disabilities to 542 with 101 on site. This amends figures reported last year giving a completion total of 618. On the basis of the reported completions, added to the number of units on site at 31 March 2011, 643 new houses have been secured which are suitable for older people and those with disabilities which.

2.06 We will increase the number of older people (and others in care) who can be supported in their own homes by providing an additional £1m in each year from 2008-9 to 2010-11 and by investing £4.7m annually in aids, adaptations and telecare. =

There are six indicators evidencing progress in the delivery of this commitment. Four are making good progress and two show declining performance.

- Those getting home care at weekends has increased to 1143 in 2010/11 from 1127 in 2009/10 (amended from 1159) with a 1093 baseline in 2006/7.
- Those receiving evening or overnight care have also increased again this year from a baseline of 396 in 2006/7 to 564 in 2010/11 (520 in 2009/10).
- 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 19.2% in 2010/11 (18.6% in 2009/10).
- The number of older people receiving intensive care at home of between 10 and 20 hours has declined slightly in 2010/11 to 334 compared with 339 in 2009/10 and a baseline of 309 in 2008/9.
- The numbers of older people receiving enhanced telecare services has also increased from a baseline of 125 in 2008/9 to 321 in 2010/11 (285 in 2009/10).
- The number of respite bed nights has decreased to 9994 in 2010/11 compared to 10433 in 2009/10. However this has increased significantly from 6379 in 2007/8 and continues to exceed the target set.

2.07 We will work with NHS Highland and other stakeholders (users, carers and voluntary organisations) to produce an integrated community care plan for: older people; people with physical and learning difficulties; people with complex needs; those with substance misuse, the health of homeless people and people with mental health difficulties. We will support them to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and ensure that both service users and carers can exercise more choice and control. C

Work on this commitment has been completed

2.08 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, 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:

- Alcohol related crime figures increased to 1288 in 2010/11 compared to 1001 per 10,000 population in 2009/10 compared (1661 baseline in 2006/7) the overall trend remains within target.
- Drug related crime has also dropped again in 2010/11 to 1696 per 10,000 population compared to 1747 in 2009/10 from a baseline of 2160 in 2006/7.
- The number of drug related deaths in 2009/10 has reduced to 14 following a significant rise to 20 in 2008/9, data for 2010/11 is awaited.
- The Council achieved a silver award under the Healthy Working Lives scheme in 2009/10 and this target has been achieved.
- Two new indicators have been put in place to monitor membership.
 - The total membership in Highland Council run and supported leisure centres (including pools) was 50,552 in 2010/11.
 - The total of membership for all inclusive membership at the same facilities was 39,694. This establishes new baselines for future monitoring.
- Suicide prevention training is in place for professional Social Work staff with a total of 39 staff now trained (35 in 2009/10).

2.09 We will improve Council houses by investing £20m to improve energy efficiency in 3000 houses and £7m to replace 1000 kitchens and 500 bathrooms over the next 3 years from 2008-9. We will set out a plan to ensure that all Council owned houses meet the Scottish Housing Quality ✓

Standard

Good progress is being made against this commitment. From a baseline of 3% in 2007/8 there were 32.1% of council houses meeting all the criteria of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in 2010/11 (25.8% in 2009/10). The number of council houses meeting the energy efficiency standard has also increased from a baseline in 2007/8 of 1849 to 5251 in 2010/11 compared to 4251 in 2009/10 up from 2121 in 2008/9 and exceeding the target set of 3000 by March 2011. The programme of refurbishing kitchens and bathroom continues with a further 600 kitchens and 200 bathrooms replaced during 2010/11 (totals cumulatively now stand at 2048 kitchens and 625 bathrooms).

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

Overall the performance for this commitment is being maintained as follows:

- % of decisions notifications issued within 28 days of initial presentation has been increased to 66% in 2010/11 compared to 57% in 2009/10.
- For homeless cases reassessed within 12 months there has reduced from 5.3% in 2009/10 to 4.4% in 2010/11.
- The use of unsuitable temporary accommodation reduced further to 4 in 2010/11 compared to 14 in 2008/9 and 8 in 2009/10.
- The proportion of households treated as priority need increased to 86.1% in 2010/11 compared to 81.4% in 2009/10
- The number of young tenants who sustained a tenancy for more than 6 months in 2010/11 increased slightly to 91.4% compared to 89.9% in 2009/10.

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 declined slightly in 2010/11 to 92.9% compared to 96.1% in 2009/10 the overall trend remains high and positive.
- Data and trends on the number of persistent young offenders has been established with good progress evidence from a baseline of 38 in 2006/7 to 12 in 2010/11 (15 in 2009/10).
- From a baseline of 74.2% the number of sex offenders requiring review who receive the review within national standards has achieved 100% in 2010/11 compared to 91% in 2009/10 and 83% in 2008/9.
- There has been a decrease in the number of reported hate crimes and incidents in 2010/11 to 67 compared to 75 in 2009/10 and 89 in 2008/9. There remains an expectation that figures may increase until a confidence level in reporting is reached.
- From a baseline of 85% in 2008/9 for responding to noise complaints within 1 day during 2010/11 95% was achieved exceeding the target of 90% set and maintaining the figure achieved in 2009/10.
- There is a significant lag in national reporting, figures for 2007/8 are awaited for reconviction rates. Data for 2006/7 revealed a 43% reconviction rate.
- The training programme on awareness of violence against women for staff of residential units has risen to 8 staff trained.
- There has been a reduction in fatal/serious injury road traffic casualties from a baseline of 198 in 2006/7 to 116 in 2010/11. For children the figures

have a slight increase from 9 in 2009/10 to 10 in 2010/11 (5 in 2008/9). The figures for those slightly injured have reduced significantly to 503 in 2010/11 compared to 670 the previous year.

- There has been a further reduction in the number of households reporting concerns with speeding in 2010/11 to 72.4% compared with 74% in 2008/9.

2.12 We will deliver the Highland Archive Strategy which will see a state of the art Archive, Family History and Registrars Centre as the hub of a network of local archive facilities, by working with partners where appropriate. ✓

The new Highland Archive and Registration Centre opened to the public in Inverness on 26 October 2009. In the areas, the Lochaber Archive Centre was completed in 2007, and following on from this, a new Skye & Lochalsh Archive Centre was opened in December 2009.

2.13 We will develop and 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 2364 in 2010/11 compared with a baseline of 1074 in 2006/7 (1817 in 2009/10). The number of winter festivals increased to 6 in 2010/11 compared to 4 in previous years. While the numbers participating in the annual Archaeology Fortnight has recovered and is now at its highest level of participation at 6500 compared to 6148 in 2009/10 against a 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 increase to 92% well above the target range of 70-80% in 2010/11 compared to 88% for 2009/10 (87% in 2008/9). Funding levels for the Feis movement were maintained at just above £89K. The Council signed a Service Delivery Contract with An Comunn Gàidhealach in May 2010. This provides for the presence of the Mod in the Highland Council area in 2010, 2014, 2017 and 2020. The 2010 Royal National Mod (RNM) took place in the Caithness area, the events and competitions were based in the towns of Thurso and Wick. This was the first time that a RNM was held in the Caithness area, and it was considered a success. A baseline for dwell time on the Am Baile website was established at 14.52 minutes in 2008/9 this has achieved 18.0 minutes in 2010/11 compared to 19.8 minutes in 2009/10, the overall trends remains positive.

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 817 learning classes provided in 2010/11 compared to the baseline of 445 in 2009/10.
- 64% of national target for replenishing library stock was achieved in 2010/11.
- Children and teenage stock replenishing achieved 83.7% in 2010/11 against the national target; this improves on the 75.7% achieved the previous year.
- The percentage of library borrowers as a % of the resident population was 20.5% in 2010/11 a slight fluctuation from 21% in 2009/10.

- The number of times Access Point terminals were used decreased from 913 times per 1,000 population in 2007/8 to 750 in 2010/11). There has been a significant rise in the use of Internet accessible personal devices together with price reductions, WIFI, and broadband advances.
- The Highland Literacy partnership is being maintained and opportunities for adult literacy learners have increased to 1285 in 2010/11 compared to 1013 in 2009/10. A new indicator to ensure 10% of adult literacy learners' move to positive destinations has been achieved for 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. ✘

The proportion of people in Highland describing themselves as well disposed to Gaelic declined slightly to 36.2% in 2010/11 compared to 38% in 2009/10 (baseline 41% in 2007/8). The number of pupils who have Gaelic speaking parents/carers (including learner parents) decreased from 49.5% in 2009/10 to 41% in 2010/11. The Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 is under development and is expected to be considered by Full Council around March 2012; prior to approval by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This will review how performance will be measured in future.

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 2010/11 there were 2517 boys and 1083 girls playing shinty compared to 1494 boys and 679 girls in 2009/10, 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 2197 qualified to end of 2010/11 (additional 391 qualified during the year) compared to the baseline of 228 in 2006/7.

2.19 We will develop a compact with the third sector (voluntary, charity and community organisations and social enterprises) in the Highlands setting out how we will support the sector and work together. ✓
C

The compact is in place. Our latest survey results show that there are high levels of volunteering in the Highlands, with a slight increase in 2010/11 to 36.3% of the adult population reporting they volunteer in some capacity, an increased proportion 57.3% (49% in 2009/10) say they volunteer in more than one activity and an increased proportion 55.6% (54% in 2009/10) volunteering at least once a week. In addition, as part of the development of an Older People's Strategy, Highland Council and NHS Highland have jointly commissioned strategies to support community development and volunteering.

2.20 We will agree a new Scheme for Community Councils by 2010 and continue to provide financial and practical support to them. ✓

Work on putting a new Scheme for Community Councils in place has been completed. The Council will support the elections in 2011. Work is on-going to ensure that there is appropriate training support in place for Community Councils, following elections in November 2011. This will include topics such as planning and licensing.

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

The Standards of Community Engagement continue to be shared with the public at Ward Forums to ensure that the Council's engagement meets the needs of communities. Through the Council's Public Performance Survey community views on how well the Council is 'listening to local people' is scored and a positive net score is sought. The baseline was established in 2006/7 at -2 and stood at -1 in 2009/10; there has been significant improvement in 2010/11 survey with a net score of 11.

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 As a member of the Hydro Carbon Fuels Working Group 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. ✓

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. The Council strongly supports the introduction of the Rural Fuel Duty Rebate Pilot Scheme, however the scheme needs to encourage local fuel retailers to participate. The current proposal, which involves the repayment

of the 5 pence per litre in arrears, is likely to put a number of businesses at financial risk and they may not be prepared to participate in the scheme. The scheme should be revised to remove the financial risk from the local fuel retailers with the objective of encouraging local fuel retailers to participate in the scheme.

The Council also wishes to reiterate its position that a 5 pence per litre is too low to make a real impact and that a percentage reduction should be introduced to protect against future increases. The Council also supports the extension of the scheme to the remote areas of the mainland highlands where the population is low and the impact of high fuel prices is comparable with the island communities.

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.

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 July 2011 the Scottish Government issued a discussion paper in which they state their intention now is to introduce legislation providing for an increased Council Tax levy (up to 100% extra) on Long-term Empty properties. This extra levy is not, however, intended to apply to Second Homes, which will continue to be charged on the present basis. The change, nevertheless, would be a welcome one in the Highland context with the additional income arising being made available locally for investment in affordable housing.

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 including more local businesses and social enterprises through the development and promotion of Business Gateway by 2009 and other Council support. M

The business start up rate has increased to 4.4 per 1,000 per population in 2010/11 compared to 3.9 in 2009/10 against a target of 4.6. Support for business start ups through the Business Gateway has improved to 243 businesses supported compared to the 2009/10 baseline of 167 business start ups. The % of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has declined to 46.8% in 2010/11 (52.5% in 2009/10) against a 2006/7 baseline of 47.4%. Good progress has been made in relation to Nigg Yard with a Master Plan in place. A Strategic Environmental Assessment has also been completed and appropriate assessment is in place.

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. ✓

There is effective strategy development across a range of activities engaging with key partners including HIE. The Council has renewed its Partnership Agreement with VisitScotland for 2011-12, again maintaining the allocation for marketing activity despite funding reductions. Work continues with businesses and Destination Management Organisations on the actions from the Tourism Action Plan. The Highlands & Islands Film Commission has been dissolved and the Council's film unit work now relates to only the Highlands. Work is focussed on making the Highlands a more "film friendly" location with marketing activity increasingly carried out in partnership with the new body Creative Scotland.

The Highland Economic Forum has reviewed its strategy and action plan to reflect the continued challenges of the economic climate and reductions in public sector budgets in the area. New working groups are being set up across a number of key themes including infrastructure and procurement, broadband, energy, tourism, and inward investment.

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 between 2007-8 and 2010-11, with 2,000 of these affordable houses for rent and low cost home ownership of which 600 will be for older people and people with disabilities. =

Key indicators for this commitment are growth in the population and new house builds. Population estimates show an increase from 2006/7 of 215,310 to 221,630 in 2010/11. Overall cumulative completion figures are making good progress having now reached 5746 in 2010/11 just below the 6000 target set by 2010/11. The cumulative total for affordable homes completed rose to 2073 (!

post committee ! Figure amended to 1962 original included on-site) in 2010/11 exceeding the target of 2000 by 2010/11. Further work is on-going to prepare Supplementary Guidance for developers on Developer Contributions. Clearly these figures have been affected by the recession and the reduction in house completions. These fell by 35% from 1845 to 1203 between 2007/8 and 2010/11 and provide context for the achievement of the affordable homes targets.

- 3.04 We will work with the Scottish Government to explore new funding models for building and securing additional Council Houses to help to address the high demand in many parts of the Highlands** ✓
- The Council has undertaken an options appraisal on new council house building, including detailed assessment of a "Highland Equity Release Model" undertaken in partnership with the Scottish Government. At this stage the preferred option is to undertake a new build programme funded through prudential borrowing, subject to an annual assessment of the impact on rents and other HRA implications. The Council has also successfully participated in the first round of the National Housing Trust initiative, and will continue to consider a further application in future
- 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 investment from tourism increased from £665m in 2009/10 to £699m in 2010/11 very close to the £700k target set. Following the end of the Highland & Islands partnership a new baseline for the % of location enquiries for film and television converted into projects has been established in 2010/11 at 30%.
- 3.06 We will recognise and support the importance of the Cairngorm National Park to the Highland economy.** ✓
- Visitor numbers to the park have increased from a 2006 baseline of 1,458,870 to 1,495,263 in 2009, data for 2010 will not be available until late September 2011. The Council is working with the Cairngorms business Partnership to support local businesses and the LEADER programmes of the Council and the Park Authority are jointly funding projects.
- 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. The Council advanced a total of 17 projects which helped deliver a range of outputs from affordable housing to serviced commercial plots. In turn this will result in 16.53 hectares being removed from the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) this year or in future years. One large project (21.52 hectares) in private ownership did not proceed sufficiently to be removed from the SVDLS due to the current economic climate.
- 3.08 We will work with the Scottish Govt, HIE and the private sector to support the provision and use of high speed broadband services for our businesses and communities.** M
- The Pathfinder north network continues to provide high capacity broadband links to schools, libraries and other council buildings throughout the Highlands and Islands. In Highland, there are currently 433 premises connected and service availability levels remain high. The current project ends on 20 March 2014. Highland Council is currently leading the Re-procurement project's Design Stage and is considering the scope of the new procurement with regards to community and business access 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 Summer 2012. In terms of community projects the main issue is one of match funding for LEADER but three projects are currently being brought forward.
- 3.09 We will prepare a new Highland Development Plan and a Coastal Development Strategy by 2009, and will prepare 3 Aquaculture Framework Plans by 2011, which will enhance the conditions for balanced and sustainable economic growth for Highland communities.** ✓
- 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 May 2012.
- 3.10 We will prepare 3 new Local Development Plans which will provide detailed planning guidance and will ensure full community participation in their preparation.** M

Sutherland and West Highlands and Islands Local Plan have been adopted. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan is now the subject of an Examination by Scottish Government Reporters, and is expected to report back in December 2011. Work has also started on the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

The indicator monitoring the % of house-holder planning applications dealt with within 2 months has declined to 75.9% compared to 76.3% in 2009/10 and a target of 90%.

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. Skills Development Scotland have now become a formal member of the Partnership's Executive Board. In relation to maintaining jobs in the area 267.5 jobs were created and 57 jobs retained in 2010/11. This is well above the annual target of 100. The level of public services is being maintained, with projected capital investments in schools in Wick and a new Council office in Wick.

3.12 We will pursue initiatives to support the procurement of local products and services by the Council and others. ✓

External spending with businesses for amounts of £1000 or more totalled £265.2M with 2909 businesses. Data is not available for payments below £1000. A total of £105.7M was spent with 1208 Highland businesses, of which £89.9M with 1172 SMEs in Highland. A total of £128M was spent with large companies of which £15M was spent with 37 large Highland companies. This data related to 2009/10 with 2010/11 data due December 2011.

3.13 We will support 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 2010/11 this increased to 60 (57 in 2009/10).
- Work continues to produce web-based guidance for internal and external use. This is now expected by the end of May 2012.
- A target has been set to support 400 community led projects and plans via LEADER by 2010/11. The number of community projects increased to 237 in 2010/11 compared to 158 (cumulative) in 2009/10.
- From a baseline of 122 in 2009/10 for communities engaged in community based economic development, this has dropped to 112 in 2010/11.

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

During 2010/11 the Council supported 216 people into work through its Highland Opportunity Ltd. loans programmes. This is a reduction from 306 in 2009/10 but reflects a grant programme withdrawn for 2010/11. The number of clients, including parents and lone parents directly supported by the employability team into work, education or training during 2010/11 was 93 - a reduction from activity in 2009/10 but reflective of the revised and more difficult to reach client group introduced in 2010/11.

3.15 We will work with employers, further education colleges and other partners to increase the training and apprenticeship opportunities across the Highlands, with a 33% increase in the number employed by the Council by 2010-11 (a rise to 200). =

There are two indicators for this commitment. The number of trainees and apprentices employed by the Council met and exceeded its target by 2009/10 of 200 apprentices reporting 206. Monitoring is continuing with 149 in 2010/11 and it is anticipated to increase toward 200 again in 2011/12. The number of apprentices taken on by other employers supported by the Council's Employment Grant Scheme (subject to ESF support) was 19 in 2009/10. The grant scheme was stopped in 2010/11 and has been reviewed and will be re-launched in a new form later on this year with ESF match funding.

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 96.6% compared to 95.2% in 2009/10 the target of 96.2% by 2010/11 has been exceeded.

- 3.17 We will work with the UHI and HIE to support the award of full University Title to include research degree awarding powers and ensure the development of its academic research capability as the basis of economic development. We will support the development of a new, high quality Inverness campus as an essential part of the UHI network.** ✓

The University of the Highlands and Islands was granted full university status by the Privy Council in February 2011. Outline planning permission for the Inverness Campus was issued following the conclusion of a Section 75 agreement in March 2011. Matters specified in conditions of application are being progressed to enable infrastructure works to commence on site in autumn 2011.

- 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 47 in 2010/11 compared to 36 in 2009/10.

- 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 on how to progress activity on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council and the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia is underway. The first draft of the Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 states that the Council will explore imaginative and innovative ways of implementing the MoU and will make use of video-conferencing and other communications methods to strengthen relations with Nova Scotia.

- 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 now totals £75.497m since 2007/8.
- The proportion of the road network being considered for maintenance treatment was 33.2% in 2010/11 remaining within target.
- The number of council and private bridges which fail to meet the European standard of 40 tonnes has lowered slightly to 30.5% in 2010/11 from 31.1% in 2009/10; the target is 26%.
- A further 48 features were added which address the needs of disabled and vulnerable people using footpaths and roads, the target is a minimum of 25 per annum.

- 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.** =

There is reliance on data being provided by all the bus operators and it is becoming increasingly difficult to collect reliable information from all operators due to the large number of service providers. Indicators under review for future reporting. The number of community transport schemes supported increased from 17 in 2007/8 to 22 in 2008/9, and remains at 22 in 2010/11. There are 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 2010/11 with Sconser included in the new capital programme

- 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

The £6m programme of traffic management and streetscape improvement measures is now complete. The Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee have approved the implementation of 20mph speed limits in key City Centre Streets in order to improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists and to enhance the pedestrian friendly environment. Traffic volumes in core Inverness City streets have been reduced, for example Union Street has reduced by 52% from

the levels recorded prior to scheme implementation in 2007. A bi-annual report on current traffic levels is due by the end of September 2011. Figures for the use of public transport in and around Inverness are awaited following a review of data collection to ensure there is confidence in the information provided.

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 was sustained at 1154 in 2010/11 compared to a baseline of 758 in 2006/7 and a target of 1090.
- Inward migrant families supported, who have limited English was sustain above the target at 302 in 2010/11 compared to 394 in 2009/10.
- The levels of community acceptance of new residents increased to 85% in 2010/11 compared to the last survey year of 82% in 2008/9. 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. ✓

During 2010, the Council submitted five applications seeking European funding from the Highlands & Islands Structural Funds Programmes (one to the European Social Fund (ESF) and four to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Of the four ERDF applications three were successful, and the single ESF project was also approved. These applications had a total value of £ 5.56m, requiring £3.776m of Council funding, matched with £1.599m of EU funding and £185k of partner funding. This represents a funding intervention rate of 32% from the Structural Funds and partner funds.

Other notable applications include:

- A 'fast track' application seeking ESF Funding in support of Activity Agreements which will support young people to enter into training for the labour market.
- ESF programme application by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) addressing employability and led by the Council.

The Council's priorities for engaging with Europe remain the same as last year. EU engagement remains positive with the Council being invited to host the 2011 General Assembly of Euromontana (the multi sectoral association of bodies with an interest in development in mountain areas. The Council has taken the lead in forging a UK network of regions seeking to benefit from regional funding post 2014.

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 Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change 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. They have awarded the contract for a 3.2km extension to the dual carriageway on the A9 at Crubenmore. The Scottish Government has also announced that £500k has been allocated to carry out a study to identify potential sections for improvements on the A82. The Geotechnical, Design and Construction Assessment into the improvements to the north hairpin at the Berriedale Braes has established that the ground conditions are reasonable favourable for the two options considered.

3.27 We will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and British Waterways 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. ✓

£21.5m (gross) allocated within Council's capital programme which includes £5 million contributions from developers. Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Stage 1 assessment complete and technical options for crossing the River Ness and the Caledonian Canal are being prepared in consultation with SEPA and Historic Scotland. Following a public consultation which presented a number of technically feasible routes, a detailed Options Appraisal is being carried out.

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.

- 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. At the present time there are no strategic constraints affecting the development of housing and other developments throughout the Highland area. Scottish Water continues to monitor local circumstances to ensure operational issues are addressed where required.
- 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.** =
- The Council's Administration continues to lobby the UK Government on the issue of housing debt. In the absence of any commitment from the UK Government we are continuing to progress initiatives such as Council House Building and the National Housing Trust model in order to increase housing supply.
- 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 2011.** ✓
- During 2010/11 there were 4 unplanned closures for just a few days to allow relocation or refurbishment, 1 for closed just under 3 months, 1 was closed and replaced by an outreach service but there were 3 permanent closures. 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 constructively with Crown Estate Commissioners (CEC) to ensure that tangible community benefits arise from the expected growth in the off-shore renewable energy sector around the Highlands. Part of this process is working towards the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CEC, which Highland Council is leading on for Highlands & Islands local authority partners. The draft MOU has not yet been agreed by all parties. Council is also working with the Scottish and UK Governments to affect a review of the management of the Crown Estate in Scotland. The Council has recently submitted evidence to the UK Scottish Affairs Committee on the Crown Estate and will provide oral evidence during the autumn. The Council will also provide written and oral evidence to the Scottish Governments Scotland Bill Committee in September.

4. What we will do for our Environment

- 4.01a We will produce and implement a climate change strategy for the Highlands which will reduce our impact on the environment and adapt our services to cope with the impact of climate change.** **M**
- The Council's strategy is set out in the Carbon Management Plan and draft Adaptation Plan. The Council's carbon emissions have reduced from Council buildings, business travel, fleet, internal waste, street lighting and water by 6.3% against a 9% target to 2010/11. Performance for fleet and buildings was hampered by two successive winter periods. The Council is registered for the UK Carbon Reduction Commitment energy efficiency scheme. For adaptation, the draft strategy has completed public consultation with implementation planned from September 2011. Performance is scrutinised at Climate Change Working Group. Self Assessment against the requirements of the Scottish Local Authority Climate declaration is 35/35 at the end of 2010/11.
- 4.01b Introduce a programme across the Highlands to reduce energy use in street lighting.** **M**
- There are three indicator allocated to this new commitment from 4.01a above. These are showing mixed performance with a reduction in the cost of street light to £1.63m in 2010/11 compared to £1.72m in 2009/10. While there have been slight reduction in energy use and carbon emissions these have not met the 2% reduction target. Energy use for street lighting was 16.73 Gigawatts(Gw) in 2010/11 compared to 16.75Gw the previous year. Carbon emission reduced slightly at 7,192 tonnes in 2010/11 compared to 7,202 tonnes the previous year. Trials are taking place to evaluate the options for reducing energy use/costs; these include using white light and dimming, switching off street lights overnight, and switching off every second light.
- 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. We will ensure their continued importance in supporting sustainable rural communities - and coastal communities who depend on the marine environment - and we will support projects which seek to enhance the value of primary products from the Highlands, notably the local food sector.** ✓
- The Council is working with primary sector partners (for example: Highland Birchwoods, FCS, Inshore Fisheries Groups and the Scottish Government) to help ensure the continued importance of the farming, forestry and fishing sectors in the Highlands. In addition to projects supported in these fields the Council addresses all strategic consultations and is a member of the Highland Regional Projects Assessment Committee which is responsible for approval of rural priorities projects arising from the Scottish Rural Development Programme. The Council is also a member of the local Inshore Fisheries Advisory Groups established in the Highlands. Although the availability of project funds is limited compared to recent years the Council has been able to support projects designed to:
- Promote local food and local food networks via its agreed Local Food Strategy
 - Add value to agricultural and crofting products in the Highlands via SOIL Association and SRDP
 - Re-establish healthy fish stocks around the Moray Firth, which support coastal communities
 - Increase the value of these sectors by 0.1% of GDP annually.
- 4.03 We wish to see by 2010, a total of 1280 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.** ✓
- The installed capacity of renewables has increased from a 2006/7 baseline of 506MW to 1297.41 MW in 2010/11. The Council has prepared draft planning guidance for onshore wind energy to help steer development. The Crown Estate leases in the Pentland Firth are being taken forward by their respective developers and other leases are being brought forward around Highland coastline. Some wave and tidal devices are in testing e.g. at EMEC. The Council engaged with developers and stakeholders in visioning for onshore implications of marine renewables and published an Action Plan. Offshore wind developers are preparing their proposals. SSE is preparing proposals for grid upgrades and HVDC infrastructure.
- 4.04 We will increase the number of communities assisted by the Council and partners to secure community benefit from renewable energy developments and work with them** ✓

to promote greater community control and ownership of renewable energy projects.
 During 2010/11 a further 21 communities were assisted bringing the total number to 71 from a baseline of 24 in 2007/8. The Council's Community Benefit Working Group developed a set of proposals around a three tier system of distributing community benefit from on-shore wind farms. The CBWG also confirmed the target of £5000 per MW installed for community benefit payments. In terms of offshore wind-farms and benefits a two tier approach has been developed with further consideration to be given to marine and tidal developments in the Pentland Firth.

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 4.05 | We will use the Council's 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 2010/11 achieved the target of 100% by 2010/11, due to a change in legal requirements. The number of developments improved by the implementation of the Design Guidance was estimated at 12.5% for 2010/11, the same figure as the previous year. | |
| 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 | ✓ |
| | There are three indicators for this commitment with positive performance. From a 2007-8 baseline in 2010/11 there has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.84% reduction in energy use • 16.04% reduction in CO₂ emissions • At least £1.8m of energy costs avoided since 2005 | |
| 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 4000kW in 2010. | ✓ |
| | The installed capacity of renewable equipment for Council Buildings has increased a further 1500 kW to 6159 kW in 2010/11 (4659kW in 2009/10) from a baseline of 1225kW in 2006/7. Progress on installing renewables improved during 2010/11 with 316 council houses with renewable installed, this is against 57 in 2008/9 and an annual target of 200. | |
| 4.09 | We will build the Inverness South West Flood Relief Channel with construction works starting in 2009/10, subject to obtaining the statutory consents. | ✓ |
| | Phase 3 of the works completed in 2010/11. The contract for the final phase of this project is due to be awarded with completion by October 2012. | |
| 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. 11 small scale flood prevention initiatives were taken forwards during 2010/11. | |
| 4.11 | We will prepare a green travel plan for the Council and work with the Scottish Government to encourage and promote green travel plans for our public sector partners, and all businesses and developments across the Highlands. | C |
| | Work on this commitment has been completed with guidance available on-line for internal and external use. | |
| 4.12 | 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. | x |
| | In 2010/11 the amount of residual waste disposed to landfill out-with Highland increased by | |

1522 tonnes to 70,559 tonnes compared to the previous year; although this is below the 73,839 tonnes of baseline year 2006/7.

- 4.13a We will increase the amount of waste recycled in the Highlands to 40% by 2010, and put measures in place to reach 50% recycling by 2013.** x
- Waste recycling was maintained during 2010/11 at 34% (34.6% in 2009/10). The rate (by tonnes) will increase as alternate weekly collections are rolled out and embedded. Baseline is 26.1% in 2006/7, the target of 40% by 2010 has not been achieved.
- 4.13b Introduce a programme of alternate weekly collection of municipal refuse (non-recyclable) by April 2012.** ✓
- The roll out of alternate weekly waste collections is currently underway. The TECS Committee has agreed (11 August 2011) to extend the roll out programme to July 2012 to avoid the risk of implementing the programme in the Inverness area during January when there is a high probability of adverse weather.
- 4.14 We will limit the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill.** x
- The amount of municipal waste collected that is land filled continues to reduce from a baseline of 73.9% in 2006/7 to 65.7% in 2010/11. The target of 60% has not been met.
- 4.15 We will reduce paper use in our offices and recycle 50% by the end of 2009.** ✓
- New policies for waste minimisation and recycling paper in Council offices are in place. Key actions for implementing these policies included staff communication and the provision of recycling facilities in 30 out of 40 top consuming buildings. These facilities are in use; however recycled paper waste is not yet quantifiable. For reams of paper purchased there is a decrease from 101656 in 2008/9 to 75091 in 2010/11, however this data has still to be verified.
- 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) improved again in 2010/11 to 81% compared to a baseline of 71% in 2006/7 (78% in 2009/10).
 - From a 2008/9 baseline of 23 for the number of fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and littering, there were 68 notices issued in 2010/11.
 - The number of promotional events on litter picking this has significantly increased from 21 in 2008/9 with a further 123 delivered in 2010/11. The cumulative total is now 385 events.
- 4.17 We will work with our Local Access Forums to draw up and implement a system of Core Path Plans for the Highlands.** ✓
- Council recently received Scottish Government authorisation to adopt its draft Core Path Plans and this will be reported to the September PED Committee, when adoption will be sought. In order to monitor participation levels people counters are being installed on paths as part of a LEADER Core Path Implementation Programme 2010/2013 and community path projects are improving and linking core paths around the Highlands. To date, £314K worth of Core Path improvement projects have been authorised by the Council.
- 4.18 We will develop a policy for supporting allotments where there is demand.** ✓
- Good progress is being made with an Allotments Policy approved in December 2009. Open space has been adopted by the Planning, Environment and Development Committee. Monitoring of the number of allotments established commenced in 2009/10 with three new sites, a further two have been added in 2010/11, making a total of one in Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross, two in Inverness, Nairn & Badenoch and two in Ross, Skye and Lochaber.
- 4.19 The Council will work with the Highland Biodiversity Partnership and Local Biodiversity Groups to promote and enhance biodiversity within the Highlands and to implement the Scottish Government's strategy for biodiversity.** ✓

The Highland Biodiversity Action Plan supports the work of seven groups running under a LEADER capacity building project. The number of participants on ranger guided walks increased during 2010/11 to 13,292 compared 11512 in 2009/10. Positive feedback on the experience of ranger guided walks remains high with 75% of participants reporting a positive experience. The number of people engaged in biodiversity projects has been maintained giving a 3 year cumulative total of 24 in 2010/11. In addition, 12 projects have been completed 6 projects are underway having received support from the Council's Landfill Communities Fund. A further 6 new projects currently await final decision. The percentage of planning applications where biodiversity check-lists are completed has now been base-lined in 2010/11 at 10%. A training programme is now being delivered to improve the understanding of biodiversity duties within the planning process and the use of the checklist prepared. Check list use will increase during the remainder of 2010/11.

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 proposed regulations including the Potentially Vulnerable Areas and the Local Plan Districts. Flood Orders are in place for River Ness downstream of Ness Bridge.
- 4.23 Highland Council will work for a review of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 with a view to improving the legislation.** ✓
- Having successfully campaigned with partner organisations for a review of the legislation governing land reform, the Council will shortly meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment to discuss the progression of the scheduled review of Parts 2 and 3 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The Council will also provide written and oral evidence to the Scottish Government Rural Affairs and Environment Committee when it meets to consider and make recommendations on the review. Council continues to liaise with land reform partners via Community Land Scotland and their development officer.
- 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.** ✓
- A successful campaign has been undertaken in partnership with the Islands Councils in relation to the retention of the Coastguard Stations in Stornaway and Lerwick. There has also been an active and ongoing campaign, in relation to the retention of the Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs).

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

- 5.01 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.

From a baseline in 2006/7 of 80% the Council has improved satisfaction levels with Council services to 85% in 2010/11. Against an efficiency target of £8m in 2010/11 £8.961m has been achieved. The Corporate Improvement Programme is progressing well and overall is on target. The Programme will continue to deliver savings in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to support the Council's future efficiency and budget targets. Effective financial stewardship has been demonstrated through achieving efficiency targets. The final external audit report on the Council's accounts for 2010/11 is due by 30th September 2011. Following piloting, self evaluation through the Public Services Improvement Framework is being rolled out across all Council Services. Good progress is made in following up the actions in the BV2 improvement plan and that this is included in the annual audit of performance.

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. Further review of governance arrangements underway to ensure that arrangements remain efficient and devolve decision making to the appropriate level within the Council.

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.

M

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. The Council consulted effectively on its budget in 2010/11. Response times within target for complaints and enquiries handling have improved to 65.2% in 2010/11 (60% in 2009/10) compared to 58% in 2008/9 and against a baseline of 71% in 2006/7 this indicator is not achieving the targets set. Compliance with the required response times for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests has declined further to 82% (1011 requests) in 2010/11 against 85% (928 requests) in 2009/10 and a 2006/7 baseline of 88% (505 requests). 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 are reported to committee on a 6 monthly cycle. The number of women manager in the top 2% of earners within the Council has increased from 27.6% in 2006/7 to 34.5% in 2010/11 (32.4% in 2009/10). Further improvement has been made for the top 5% earners where women represent 45.7% (40.8% in 2009/10) compared with 35.9% in 2006/7. Note 2009/10 figures have been adjusted following audit verification, the trend remains positive to that previously reported. A single equalities scheme is drafted for consultation, with implementation planned from April 2012. Work continues to improve the assessment of the impact of policies and practices on equality groups., in particular building on work to improve involvement and engagement with equality groups:

- A new Elected Member Equalities Working Group is established in order to provide stronger governance and leadership for equalities work. The working group provides opportunities for representatives of local equality groups to address the working group about their experiences and provide evidence to help identify how the Council can continuously improve its performance in this area.
- Following the creation of the Citizen's Panel in 2010, the Council's 2011 Public Performance Survey has continued with the approach of arranging alternative focus groups in order to hear the views of local equality groups .
- Additionally, the 2011 Public Performance Survey has asked a number of attitudinal questions regarding equality and discrimination.

Significant partnership activities during 2010/11 include:

- Ongoing development of a partnership [hate incident reporting campaign](#)
- Support for the development of an employee led disability equality network ([EDEN](#))

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) including the extension of opening hours for telephone contact.** M

For all enquiries the Council achieved 92.5% dealt with at first point of contact in 2010/11, above the 85% minimum target set. However for core services this figure is the same as previous years at 55% dealt with at first point of contact and this is below the target set of 90% by 2010/11.

- 5.07 We will continue to develop Ward 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.** ✓

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.** M

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 2010/11 55% of buildings were suitable for current use compared to 59.7% in 2006/7. The percentage of operational accommodation in a satisfactory condition was 59.8% in 2010/11 compared to 54% in 2007/8. Public caller building accessible to people with disabilities was 91.1% in 2010/11 compared to 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.** M

A well established joint consultative group (JCG) meets on a quarterly basis. The indicators within this commitment focus on sickness absence where non-teaching staff absence has reduced in 2010/11 to 10.5 days compared to 11.6 days in 2009/10 and this is on target. Teacher's sickness absence has also reduced to 6.4 days in 2010/11 compared to 7.3 days in 2009/10, this compares to a baseline of 6.2 days. This is a new method of calculation for the statutory performance indicator with limited trend evidence; however teachers' absence remains above the target set of 6.2 days for 2010/11. In relation to 'Revitalising Health and Safety Targets the number of Working days lost as a result of accidents has reduced again in 2010/11 to 838 (990 in 2009/10) compared to 1330 in 2006/7 (1136 in 2008/9), data is subject to audit verification. 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. 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%.

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

A new pay and grading structure was implemented in February 2009 appeals processes are underway during 2010/11. A set of modernised working terms and conditions was introduced on 1st September 2010 following extensive consultation and a collective agreement being reached with the trade unions. Work on this commitment has been completed.

- 5.11 We will agree an annual training and development programme for elected members and introduce role descriptions and performance development plans for councillors.** ✓

Role descriptions are in place for Elected Members. 53 Elected Members PDPs have been completed. A training Programme for 2011-2012 is agreed and underway. Following next year's local elections, PDPs will be completed 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 in a regular basis and in 2010/11 the annual performance report is moving from September to October to align with statutory performance reporting requirements. This has allowed for the integration of the annual return of Statutory Performance Indicators to Audit Scotland to be integrated into the annual performance report to Council.

