

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	9
Report No	HP/20/25

Committee: Housing and Property

Date: 21 May 2025

Report Title: Service Performance Monitoring Report – Q4 2024/25

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The report details relevant performance monitoring information for the Housing and Property Service as follows:-

- Corporate Indicators;
- Contribution to the Performance Plan; and
- Service Plan for FY2023/24 Progress

1.2 The content and structure is intended to:-

- assist Member scrutiny and performance management;
- inform decision making to aid continuous improvement; and
- provide transparency and accessibility

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **scrutinise and note** the Service's performance information.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.2 **Legal** - This report contributes to the Council's statutory duties to report performance and secure best value in terms of; Section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992, and Section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, respectively.

3.3 **Risk** - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Service Performance - Corporate Indicators

- 5.1 Service performance in relation to Absence, Complaints, FOIs, and Invoice Payments are set out in the following sub-sections.

5.2 Service Attendance Management

- 5.2.1 Staff absence is a nationally benchmarked indicator. Effective absence management supports staff, maintains productivity, and contributes to the Council's benchmarked performance.
- 5.2.2 Reducing absence rates through a strong a consistent approach to attendance management is a particular focus for the service. Mandatory online and face-to-face training is available for managers and Attendance Support Officers continue to play a vital role in assisting both managers and employees. Managers are undertaking employee review and development (ERD) meetings with staff to identify any training and wellbeing requirements. The Employee Assistance Programme also provides staff and their families with access to a confidential counselling service and many other wellbeing services including legal and financial information, life coaching and health information.

Housing and Property

Average number working days per employee lost through sickness absence

Average Days Lost	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
Housing and Property	2.93	2.43	4.60	4.39	4.49	3.27	3.85	4.63
Highland Council	2.48	2.08	3.35	3.48	3.24	2.54	3.42	3.95

- 5.2.3 The long and short term trends in the charts shows that absence has continued to increase since 2023/24 within the service.

- 5.2.4 The upwards trend in FTE Days Lost for long and short-term absences has continued into Q4, with a significant increase in the number of employees absent due to viral illnesses.
- 5.2.5 Although the increase in viral illnesses is as expected in Q4, we are also seeing an increase in the number of viral illnesses throughout the year.
- 5.2.6 Across the Council, the People and Place clusters appear to be most affected by the increase in viral illnesses, with less of an increase in the Corporate cluster. This is likely to be attributed to the front line nature of many of the People and Place cluster staff and, particularly in the Place cluster, the outside nature of these roles. A further factor may be that a number of posts in the Corporate cluster lend themselves to homeworking, which increases the likelihood that employees continue to work whilst recuperating at home.
- 5.2.7 Mental health related absences continue to appear within the top 3 long term absence reasons for all Clusters. It should be noted that employees often require multiple treatments and ongoing support which may extend periods of absence. Additionally, there continues to be long NHS waiting lists to access appropriate mental health services.
- 5.2.8 As a way of supporting stress/debility issues the occupational health, safety and wellbeing team have been hosting drop-in online sessions for staff who require wellbeing, mental health and stress management support.
- 5.2.9 There has also been a focus on recruiting and training an additional 21 mental health representatives, bringing the total in the council to 91 reps. A new mental health and wellbeing helpline was launched in September, which provides easier access to the following mental health support services: EAP; NHS 24; Samaritans and mental health representatives.
- 5.2.10 Musculoskeletal reasons also continue to appear in the top three absence reasons for the service and managers are mindful of the largely manual workforce and the impact of those jobs on employee health and wellbeing. Therefore, occupational health and physiotherapy referrals are progressed as and when required. This is particularly important based on the aging workforce and the requirement to ensure staff receive the appropriate risk assessments, training and PPE to undertake their roles safely.
- 5.2.11 Attendance Support Officers also continue to play a vital role in assisting both managers and employees.

5.3 Service Complaints Response Times

Monitoring complaints provides important feedback which can facilitate decision making and service design. Services are responsible for responding to complaints which are issued on their behalf by the Customer and Resolution Improvement Team ('CRIT').

Performance for complaints during Q4 2024/25 against a corporate target of 80% was as follows:-

Complaints - Housing and Property

Number of closed complaints and the % compliant with the legislative timescale

Frontline Resolution within 5 days

	Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25	
Housing and Property	30	90 %	37	68 %	43	63 %	38	66 %	37	65 %	33	76 %	32	84 %	42	83 %
Highland Council	159	92 %	132	78 %	150	80 %	189	76 %	219	84 %	196	78 %	155	88 %	183	87 %

Investigation Resolution within 20 days

	Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25	
Housing and Property	24	67 %	30	53 %	4	50 %	23	57 %	15	53 %	11	55 %	25	28 %	12	42 %
Highland Council	97	63 %	85	49 %	67	48 %	98	46 %	86	47 %	101	57 %	90	42 %	71	51 %

Escalated Resolution within 20 days

	Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25	
Housing and Property	8	50 %	12	33 %	8	50 %	13	31 %	16	19 %	7	29 %	9	22 %	13	46 %
Highland Council	32	50 %	32	41 %	28	57 %	34	35 %	47	32 %	28	50 %	26	46 %	34	44 %

5.4 Front line complaint handling within the service has met the corporate target of over 80% for the past two quarters, which maintains the improving picture in relation to front line complaints across the service. Investigation complaint performance has improved since the preceding quarter, and whilst still below the Council average, demonstrates the targeted action being taken by service management teams to improve performance. This will continue to be a focus for the teams into 2025/26.

5.5 Service Freedom of Information ('FOI') Response Times

FOI requests are co-ordinated by the Customer Resolution Team in collaboration with the Service teams which may hold information relevant to the request.

The performance for FOI response times during Q4 2024/25 against a corporate target of 90% was as follows:-

Freedom of Information Requests - Housing and Property

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

% FOIs Compliant - Housing and Property	Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25	
	41	88 %	40	90 %	44	91 %	60	63 %	53	70 %	42	71 %	50	78 %	54	70 %

% FOIs Compliant - Highland Council	Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25	
	399	84 %	333	88 %	338	89 %	548	77 %	511	81 %	479	76 %	568	73 %	616	71 %

Tables display the number of FOIs closed within the quarter and % of those that were compliant with the legislative timescale (20 working days) for the service and the Highland Council overall.
The Scottish Information Commissioner requires the Council to achieve a minimum compliance rate of 90%.

5.6 FOI performance across Housing and Property has remained steadily around 70% over the course of the last year. Work continues to ensure delivery against the 90% corporate target.

5.7 Service Invoice Payment Times

Payment of invoices within 30 days of receipt is a Council Statutory Performance Indicator. The Council also monitors the number of invoices paid within 10 days of receipt.

The performance for invoice payment times within 10 and 30 days during Q4 2024/25 against a target of 77% and 95%, respectively, was as follows:-

Housing and Property - Invoice Payments

Invoice Payment within 30 days	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
Housing and Property	93.0 %	97.5 %	94.8 %	91.2 %	85.8 %	94.4 %	93.9 %	94.4 %
Highland Council	95.1 %	96.7 %	95.6 %	93.6 %	87.7 %	91.4 %	92.9 %	92.9 %

Invoice Payment less than 10 days	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
Housing and Property	55.4 %	72.3 %	56.0 %	49.0 %	31.0 %	64.0 %	52.5 %	55.0 %
Highland Council	72.8 %	80.9 %	75.3 %	69.7 %	57.0 %	68.5 %	63.8 %	63.3 %

The service performs in line with the corporate average for payments within 30 days but continues to track below the average for payments within 10 days. Action is being taken within service management teams to focus on improving the pace of invoice processing and payment.

6 Service Contribution to the Performance Plan

- 6.1 The following summarises performance against the housing and property performance indicators in the Council's Performance Plan. It should be noted that some data is not yet available for 2024/25 and for others, these have not yet been ragged as this relates to Highland's comparative performance nationally which is not yet available.

7 Service Plan Progress

- 7.1 The following outlines the service performance against the service plan.

7.2

Housing and Building Maintenance Q4 24/25						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/Update Date
% Tennants satisfied with opportunities in decision-making process	FY 23/24	81.9 %	FY 24/25	81.9 %	90.0 %	
Ave time taken to complete non-emergency repairs Highland Wide [days] Qtr	Q3 24/25	7.1	Q4 24/25	7.7		
Ave time to complete emergency repairs [hours] Highland Wide Qtr	Q3 24/25	4.8	Q4 24/25	3.5		
Gypsy/Traveller sites: Compliance with revised standards	Q3 24/25	94 %	Q4 24/25	100 %	100 %	
Review of housing support arrangements	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25			Completed Q4 23/24
Scottish Govt and SHR deadlines for reporting met	FY 23/24	100 %	FY 24/25	100 %	100 %	

7.3

Property and Facilities Management Q4 24/25						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/Update Date
% Energy reduction projects completed p.a. as planned	FY 23/24	100 %	FY 24/25		90 %	
% of planned GF Capital improvement programmes completed	FY 23/24	95 %	FY 24/25		90 %	
% of planned GF Revenue improvement programmes completed	FY 23/24	111 %	FY 24/25		90 %	
Develop corporate property asset management plan	Q3 22/23	On Target	Q4 22/23	On Target		Transferred to Delivery Plan
No. site condition survey completed per annum	FY 23/24	72	FY 24/25	50		
Improve Asset Condition: Progress of condition surveys completed Qtr [reporting starts 23/24]	Q3 24/25	76 %	Q4 24/25	78 %	90 %	
Renewable Energy generated per annum	FY 23/24		FY 24/25			

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 7 May 2025

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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None