

# The Highland Council

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| Agenda Item | 13        |
| Report No   | RES/30/25 |

**Committee:** Corporate Resources

**Date:** 28 August 2025

**Report Title:** Corporate Service – Performance Monitoring Q1 2025/26

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the Q1 2025/26 performance monitoring position for the Corporate Cluster (Performance & Governance, ICT & Digital Transformation and Resources & Finance).
- 1.2 This report provides performance information, the following information is provided:
  - Corporate Indicators;
  - Contribution to the Performance Plan;
  - Service Plan Progress;
  - Service updates out with the Corporate Indicators or Service Plan.
- 1.3 The content and structure are 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:
  - i. Scrutinise and **note** the performance and risk information for the Corporate Cluster.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** There are no resource implications arising as a direct consequence 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.

For the provision of welfare support, the Council has a legal duty to provide such services for specified groups, which, as detailed in the Welfare Budget, includes for example the outsourced services delivered by Citizens Advice. These duties are specified in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

3.3 **Risk:** There is a risk that the ongoing cost of living impacts on households will continue to place pressure on the Welfare Budget.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no immediate health and safety implications arising from 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.

5.1.1 As the Resources & Finance service is the SPI-owner for Sickness Absence, and Invoice Payments, the corporate position is also detailed below.

#### 5.2 Service Sickness Absence

5.2.1 The indicator for staff sickness absence is a nationally benchmarked indicator and it is important that all managers focus on effective attendance management to support staff, maintain productivity and business continuity, and contribute to the Council's overall benchmarked performance.

#### 5.2.2 Average number working days per employee lost through sickness absence

| Average Days Lost        | Q2<br>23/24 | Q3<br>23/24 | Q4<br>23/24 | Q1<br>24/25 | Q2<br>24/25 | Q3<br>24/25 | Q4<br>24/25 | Q1<br>25/26 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ICT Services             | 2.14        | 1.93        | 1.80        | 2.32        | 2.43        | 2.22        | 2.18        | 2.08        |
| Performance & Governance | 1.75        | 2.06        | 2.08        | 1.09        | 2.82        | 2.18        | 2.19        | 2.61        |
| Resources & Finance      | 2.91        | 2.24        | 1.99        | 2.32        | 2.59        | 2.94        | 2.44        | 2.17        |
| Highland Council         | 2.08        | 3.35        | 3.48        | 3.24        | 2.54        | 3.42        | 3.95        | 3.55        |

- 5.2.3 Absence monitoring is ongoing across the Cluster and managers continue to be advised by Attendance Officers within the People section to ensure that employees receive appropriate supports and absences are suitably managed.

### 5.3 **Corporate Sickness Absence – Corporate Cluster**

- 5.3.1 There has been a slight increase in the Corporate Cluster's average number of days absence in Q1 which recorded 2.27 average days' absence, compared to 2.29 in Q4 of 2024/25.
- 5.3.2 Viral illnesses (Covid, cold, flu, sore throat) continue to be a significant cause of short-term absence.
- 5.3.3 Mental health issues, including stress, depression and anxiety, are major causes of both short- and long-term absence. The majority of this is non-work related. To focus on supporting these staff, the occupational health, safety and wellbeing team have recruited an additional 21 mental health representatives, bringing the total in the Council to 91 reps, as well as the mental health helpline and Viva Engage channel. The team has seen some notable successes in supporting individuals, but it is difficult to quantify how this impacts sickness absence statistics. Mental health can require long or multiple periods of treatment and waiting lists for NHS mental health services can be lengthy.
- 5.3.4 The occupational health, safety and wellbeing team are also reviewing their existing wellbeing strategy and taking this opportunity to focus more on prevention. Trade union colleagues will be consulted as part of this review. In addition to supporting those already experiencing sickness absence, we are exploring providing proactive free health checks, health and fitness advice, and an increase in the number of counselling sessions available for staff who might benefit.

### 5.4 **Service Complaints Response Times**

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

## 5.4.2

### Service Complaints - Corporate Services Cluster

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

##### Frontline Resolution within 5 days

|                          | Q2 23/24 |       | Q3 23/24 |       | Q4 23/24 |       | Q1 24/25 |       | Q2 24/25 |       | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |       | Q1 25/26 |      |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------|-------|----------|------|
| ICT Services             | 0        |       | 0        |       | 1        | 100 % | 0        |       | 0        |       | 0        |      | 0        |       | 0        |      |
| Performance & Governance | 2        | 100 % | 2        | 100 % | 4        | 100 % | 26       | 100 % | 17       | 35 %  | 0        |      | 2        | 100 % | 0        |      |
| Resources & Finance      | 16       | 81 %  | 18       | 89 %  | 23       | 70 %  | 15       | 80 %  | 3        | 100 % | 19       | 89 % | 25       | 76 %  | 29       | 93 % |
| Highland Council         | 132      | 78 %  | 150      | 80 %  | 189      | 76 %  | 219      | 84 %  | 196      | 78 %  | 155      | 88 % | 183      | 87 %  | 177      | 92 % |

##### Investigation Resolution within 20 days

|                          | Q2 23/24 |      | Q3 23/24 |       | Q4 23/24 |       | Q1 24/25 |      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |       |
|--------------------------|----------|------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|-------|
| ICT Services             | 0        |      | 0        |       | 0        |       | 0        |      | 0        |      | 0        |      | 0        |      | 0        |       |
| Performance & Governance | 1        | 0 %  | 1        | 100 % | 1        | 100 % | 2        | 50 % | 2        | 50 % | 3        | 0 %  | 1        | 0 %  | 1        | 100 % |
| Resources & Finance      | 7        | 71 % | 2        | 100 % | 3        | 100 % | 8        | 88 % | 36       | 69 % | 8        | 63 % | 4        | 0 %  | 3        | 33 %  |
| Highland Council         | 85       | 49 % | 67       | 48 %  | 98       | 46 %  | 86       | 47 % | 101      | 57 % | 90       | 42 % | 71       | 51 % | 68       | 47 %  |

##### Escalated Resolution within 20 days

|                          | Q2 23/24 |       | Q3 23/24 |       | Q4 23/24 |       | Q1 24/25 |      | Q2 24/25 |       | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |       | Q1 25/26 |      |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------|-------|----------|------|
| ICT Services             | 0        |       | 0        |       | 0        |       | 0        |      | 0        |       | 0        |      | 0        |       | 0        |      |
| Performance & Governance | 0        |       | 1        | 100 % | 0        |       | 0        |      | 1        | 100 % | 0        |      | 1        | 100 % | 1        | 0 %  |
| Resources & Finance      | 1        | 100 % | 3        | 67 %  | 1        | 100 % | 3        | 67 % | 3        | 67 %  | 2        | 50 % | 0        |       | 3        | 0 %  |
| Highland Council         | 32       | 41 %  | 28       | 57 %  | 34       | 35 %  | 47       | 32 % | 28       | 50 %  | 26       | 46 % | 34       | 44 %  | 30       | 33 % |

- 5.4.3 Officers continue to take steps to resolve complaints within the target completion timescales recognising that some complaints can require significant work to obtain data, information required to inform the final response.

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

- 5.5.1 FOI requests are co-ordinated by the Customer Resolution and Improvement Team (CRIT) in collaboration with Service teams which collate the information relevant to the request.

## 5.5.2

|  |
|--|
| <b>Service Freedom of Information Requests - Corporate Service Cluster</b> |
|--|

**% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale**

| % FOIs Compliant -<br>ICT Services | Q2 23/24 |      | Q3 23/24 |      | Q4 23/24 |      | Q1 24/25 |      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |
|------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|                                    | 8        | 88 % | 13       | 92 % | 24       | 92 % | 20       | 65 % | 25       | 80 % | 17       | 76 % | 15       | 73 % | 19       | 89 % |

| % FOIs Compliant -<br>Performance &<br>Governance | Q2 23/24 |      | Q3 23/24 |      | Q4 23/24 |      | Q1 24/25 |      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |
|---|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|   | 29       | 86 % | 26       | 92 % | 51       | 80 % | 44       | 77 % | 51       | 88 % | 53       | 81 % | 52       | 75 % | 55       | 93 % |

| % FOIs Compliant -<br>Resources &<br>Finance | Q2 23/24 |      | Q3 23/24 |      | Q4 23/24 |      | Q1 24/25 |      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |
|--|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|  | 32       | 84 % | 34       | 88 % | 60       | 87 % | 51       | 86 % | 56       | 77 % | 54       | 74 % | 75       | 75 % | 71       | 76 % |

| % FOIs Compliant -<br>Highland Council | Q2 23/24 |      | Q3 23/24 |      | Q4 23/24 |      | Q1 24/25 |      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |
|--|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|  | 333      | 88 % | 338      | 89 % | 548      | 77 % | 511      | 81 % | 479      | 76 % | 568      | 73 % | 616      | 71 % | 577      | 81 % |

5.5.3 All teams within the Corporate Services Cluster continue to take steps to monitor performance and to identify further improvement actions.

## 5.6 Corporate Cluster Invoice Payment Times

5.6.1 These indicators measure the Council's efficiency at paying invoices within 30 days and 10 days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid. While 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 targets for performance are 95% and 75% respectively for 30- and 10-days.

## 5.6.2

|  |
|--|
| <b>Service Invoice Payment Times - Corporate Service Cluster</b> |
|--|

| Invoice Payment within 30 days | Q2 23/24 | Q3 23/24 | Q4 23/24 | Q1 24/25 | Q2 24/25 | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ICT Services                   | 98.9 %   | 99.1 %   | 99.2 %   | 76.7 %   | 86.9 %   | 81.0 %   | 84.0 %   | 92.0 %   |
| Performance & Governance       | 95.4 %   | 98.1 %   | 94.8 %   | 97.5 %   | 97.3 %   | 96.5 %   | 88.3 %   | 93.0 %   |
| Resources & Finance            | 99.5 %   | 98.1 %   | 98.5 %   | 79.9 %   | 88.3 %   | 96.4 %   | 93.3 %   | 96.9 %   |
| Highland Council               | 96.7 %   | 95.6 %   | 93.6 %   | 87.7 %   | 91.4 %   | 92.9 %   | 92.9 %   | 93.0 %   |

| Invoice Payment less than 10 days | Q2 23/24 | Q3 23/24 | Q4 23/24 | Q1 24/25 | Q2 24/25 | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ICT Services                      | 86.8 %   | 95.6 %   | 91.0 %   | 41.7 %   | 60.0 %   | 54.8 %   | 48.7 %   | 49.1 %   |
| Performance & Governance          | 90.8 %   | 83.2 %   | 79.3 %   | 81.3 %   | 79.8 %   | 82.6 %   | 56.9 %   | 83.6 %   |
| Resources & Finance               | 98.4 %   | 91.2 %   | 79.3 %   | 43.6 %   | 53.7 %   | 68.0 %   | 57.7 %   | 75.6 %   |
| Highland Council                  | 80.9 %   | 75.3 %   | 69.7 %   | 57.0 %   | 68.5 %   | 63.8 %   | 63.3 %   | 64.7 %   |

5.6.3 For this 30-day measure, for services in the Corporate cluster, Resources & Finance was slightly ahead of the reported corporate performance at 96.9%. This performance also exceeds the 95% performance target. Performance & Governance and ICT have also both improved on the performance from Q4 2024/25 which were 88.3% and 84% respectively demonstrating the value of performance information and the ongoing work within teams for further improvement.

5.6.4 During Q1, for the 10-day measure, performance improved on the Q1 position for 2024/25, with Performance & Governance performing above the 10-day corporate target of 77%.

## 5.7 Council Invoice Payments – SPI Owner

5.7.1 The Council's Q1 performance for payments within 30 Days was 93.0% for invoice processing, compared with 87.7% for the same period in 2024/25 and the 95% corporate target. For invoice payments less than 10 days, Q1 performance was 64.7%, which is a significant improvement on the Q1 in 2024/25 which was 57.0%. A table of performance by Service is provided in **Appendix 1** to this report.

5.7.2 Following a comprehensive review, steps are being taken to improve performance at the various stages in the overall process, with the aim of continually improving performance for both measures.

## 6. Contribution to the Performance Plan

### 6.1 ICT & Digital Transformation:

| PIs/Actions in the Performance Plan    | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data      |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| ERDs being completed - DCE    CP5.01   | Q3 24/25 |           | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |           |
| Digital Strategy implemented    CP5.04 | Q3 24/25 | On Target | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | On Target |
| ICT Strategy implemented    CP5.04     | Q3 24/25 | On Target | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | On Target |

### 6.2 Performance & Governance:

| PIs/Actions in the Performance Plan  | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data        |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|----------|-------------|
| Culture and heritage events promoted through press and social media    CP1.12          | Q3 24/25 | On Target | Q4 24/25 | On Target     | Q1 25/26 | Completed   |
| Highland AR App used to promote Highland heritage and culture    CP1.12                | Q3 24/25 |           | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |             |
| No. Gaelic culture reports promoted through press releases and social media    CP1.12  | FY 22/23 | 44        | FY 23/24 | 73            | FY 24/25 | 41          |
| Work with partners to support campaigns to keep public spaces clean and safe    CP2.07 | Q3 24/25 | On Target | Q4 24/25 | Completed     | Q1 25/26 |             |
| ERDs being completed - PGV    CP5.01   | Q3 24/25 | On Target | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | Not Updated |

### 6.3 Resources & Finance:

| PIs/Actions in the Performance Plan  | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data      |
|--|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|-----------|
| Avg days to process Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reductions - Changes of Circumstance    CP1.02 | FY 22/23 | 1.9           | FY 23/24 | 1.6           | FY 24/25 | 1.5       |
| Avg days to process Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reductions - New Claims    CP1.02              | FY 22/23 | 11.0          | FY 23/24 | 10.0          | FY 24/25 | 10.6      |
| No. newly enrolled and upskilled via THC Modern Apprenticeships per year    CP1.03               | FY 22/23 | 64            | FY 23/24 | 100           | FY 24/25 | 81        |
| % of procurement spend on local enterprises    CP2.11    ECON04                                  | FY 22/23 | 49.10 %       | FY 23/24 | 51.80 %       | FY 24/25 |           |
| % of indicators in OHS Strategy with green rating    CP5.01                                      | FY 22/23 | 90 %          | FY 23/24 | 60 %          | FY 24/25 | 80 %      |
| ERDs being completed - RSF    CP5.01   | Q3 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | On Target |
| Finance element of new HR system [OneCouncil] implemented    CP5.01                              | Q3 24/25 |               | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |           |
| Identify and agree Corporate Training priorities: achieve compliance with training    CP5.01     | Q3 24/25 | On Target     | Q4 24/25 | On Target     | Q1 25/26 | On Target |
| Identify and agree Corporate Training priorities: improve ERD recording    CP5.01                | Q3 24/25 | On Target     | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | On Target |
| Identify and agree Corporate Training priorities: Managers mandatory    CP5.01                   | Q3 24/25 |               | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |           |
| Sickness Days Lost per Employee    CP5.01  | FY 22/23 | 8.58          | FY 23/24 | 11.39         | FY 24/25 | 13.17     |
| Council Tax - Annual % received    CP5.10    CORP07  | FY 22/23 | 96.71 %       | FY 23/24 | 95.89 %       | FY 24/25 | 95.65 %   |

- 6.4 As reported to this Committee on 5 June 25, the time to process Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction claims for 24/25 moved slightly from 10 days to 10.6 days. The stretching target is an ambitious 10 days and Members are advised that Highland Council is 2nd equal in Scotland for speed of new claims processing (and 1st equal in Scotland for change in circumstances processing). The % of indicators in the OHS strategy with a green rating, 24/25 performance has seen an increase of 20% to 80%, compared to prior year. This positive improvement reflects a multi approach to improvements during 24/25.

## 7. Service Plan Progress

### 7.1 ICT & Digital Transformation

#### 7.1.1

| Digital: Maximising the use of new processes and technology Q1 25/26    |             |           |             |           |              |                          |
|---|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                             | Period      | Data      | Period      | Data      | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date  |
| Biennial Digital Maturity Assessment                                    | 2021 - 2023 | 2.50      | 2023 - 2025 | 2.59      | 3.00         | level 5/5 by 2027        |
| Digital Strategy implemented    CP5.04                                  | Q4 24/25    | On Target | Q1 25/26    | On Target |              | Due to complete Q1 27/28 |
| Implementation of Digital Foundations to support digital transformation | Q4 24/25    | Completed | Q1 25/26    |           |              | Completed Q4 24/25       |

#### 7.1.2

| Strategic Improvement Q1 25/26   |          |      |          |      |              |   |
|--|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|---|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date                 |
| Corporate programmes and projects with evidence of full lifecycle management                       | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed - 100% achieved by March 2024 |
| Ensure Strategic Improvement Board is operating consistently to the terms of reference             | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24                      |
| Establish full lifecycle management process for the corporate portfolio of programmes and projects | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q1 24/25                      |
| Implement new team structure and align to corporate priority programmes and projects               | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q3 23/24                      |

#### 7.1.3

| ICT: Provision of robust, secure and sustainable in-house ICT service Q1 25/26 |          |           |          |           |              |                         |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                                    | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data      | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| ICT % customers satisfied - monthly  | M3 25/26 | 98.1 %    | M4 25/26 | 98.9 %    | 95.0 %       |                         |
| ICT % service contacts resolved within 24 hrs - monthly                        | M3 25/26 | 55.0 %    | M4 25/26 | 58.8 %    | 56.0 %       |                         |
| ICT Avg wait time [seconds] for Service Desk contacts - monthly                | M3 25/26 | 25        | M4 25/26 | 23        | 60           |                         |
| ICT User Satisfaction [SOCITM] - Annual  | FY 23/24 | 5.43      | FY 24/25 |           |              | Completed               |
| % windows devices functional and receiving all security updates                | Q4 24/25 | 90        | Q1 25/26 | 77        | 100          |                         |
| ICT Strategy implemented    CP5.04   | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | On Target |              | Due to complete 2027    |
| Consolidate the in-house ICT Service   | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |           |              | Completed Q3 23/24      |
| Reduce the reliance on the Data Centre   | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | Completed |              | Completed Q1 25/26      |
| Start a rolling refresh programme for Windows devices and software             | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |           |              | Completed Q2 24/25      |
| ICT User Satisfaction % customers satisfied - Annual                           | FY 23/24 | 78.57 %   | FY 24/25 | 89.29 %   |              |                         |



The PI relating to Windows device updates, as reported previously to this Committee, is an average for the quarter. The target is 100%, but compliance over 90% is considered to be good. The drop in the compliance figure for Q1 is disappointing but is largely due to a significant change in the way devices are managed with a move to a new Microsoft platform. During that period of change, compliance and measurement was impacted. It is expected that the figure will improve for Q2. Despite the drop in the compliance rate, there is no indication that our overall security has been compromised. In fact, we set ourselves a high standard for security updates and implement critical updates as quickly as possible.

As covered in a separate report to this Committee, the annual User Satisfaction survey is now being carried out in-house rather than via SOCITM. The previous SOCITM PI is therefore shown as completed and a new PI has been created.

#### 7.1.4

| ICT: Provision of robust, secure and sustainable in-house ICT service Q1 25/26     |          |               |          |               |              |                          |
|--|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data          | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date  |
| Continue to review value for money of ICT service                                  | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q3 23/24       |
| Full ICT team recruited  | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q4 23/24       |
| Cybersecurity protection implement first phase of ICT Strategy                     | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q4 23/24       |
| Set up cyber incident support contract   | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q2 23/24       |
| Update and test cyber incident response plan                                       | Q4 24/25 | On Target     | Q1 25/26 | Some Slippage |              | Due to complete Q2 25/26 |
| Implement printer rationalisation and introduce cloud printing                     | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q3 24/25       |
| Roll out new corporate telephony to support new ways of working                    | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q1 24/25       |
| Implement new network model to support move to SWAN2                               | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | Some Slippage |              | Due to complete Q2 25/26 |
| Further develop partnership working and engagement with NHS[H] re ICT requirements | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q1 24/25       |

## 7.2 Performance and Governance

#### 7.2.1

| Legal & Governance: Provide High-Quality Legal Advice and representation Q1 25/26 |          |      |          |       |              |                         |
|---|----------|------|----------|-------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                                       | Period   | Data | Period   | Data  | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Monitor Guardianship applications within 30 days                                  | Q4 24/25 | 93 % | Q1 25/26 | 100 % | 90 %         |                         |
| Short Term Lets Licensing Regime  | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |       |              | Completed Q3 23/24      |



7.2.2

| Legal & Governance: Tackle Unfair & Unsafe Trading Practices and Assist Business Growth Q1 25/26 |          |         |          |         |              |                         |
|--|----------|---------|----------|---------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data    | Period   | Data    | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Develop new Trading Standards Performance Indicator  | Q4 24/25 |         | Q1 25/26 |         |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |
| Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice and Citizen Advice per 1000 population    ENV5a          | FY 23/24 | £ 8,755 | FY 24/25 |         | £ 10,811     | annual update November  |
| Trading Standards - business advice - 14 days  | FY 23/24 | 69.15 % | FY 24/25 | 80.20 % | 79.0 %       | annual update June      |

7.2.3

| Communications & Resilience: Internal & External Communications Q1 25/26               |          |               |          |               |              |                                  |
|--|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data          | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date          |
| Culture and heritage events promoted through press and social media    CP1.12          | Q4 24/25 | On Target     | Q1 25/26 | Completed     |              | Completed Q1 25/26               |
| Highland AR App used to promote Highland heritage and culture    CP1.12                | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q1 23/24               |
| Work with partners to support campaigns to keep public spaces clean and safe    CP2.07 | Q4 24/25 | Completed     | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q4 24/25               |
| Monitor and report Business Continuity training uptake and plan completion             | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | Some Slippage |              | Due to Complete Mar 26           |
| Report debrief learning in Resilience Group action plans                               | Q4 24/25 | On Target     | Q1 25/26 | On Target     |              | Review Q4 23/24                  |
| Report on and increase overall engagement stats for social media                       | Q4 24/25 | On Target     | Q1 25/26 | On Target     |              | Reported and published regularly |
| Rolling programme of face-to-face and Teams staff engagement                           | Q4 24/25 | Completed     | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q4 24/25               |

7.2.4

| Corporate Performance, Audit & Information Governance: Information Governance Q1 25/26 |          |      |          |      |              |                         |
|--|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Increase completion of Information Management Training: Elected Members                | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 | 38 % |              |                         |
| Increase completion of Information Management Training: Staff                          | Q4 24/25 | 43 % | Q1 25/26 | 44 % |              |                         |

7.2.5

| Corporate Performance, Audit & Information Governance: Risk Management Q1 25/26 |          |      |          |      |              |                         |
|---|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                                     | Period   | Data | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Review and improve Risk Management approach                                     | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |

7.2.6

| Corporate Performance, Audit & Information Governance: Performance Reporting Q1 25/26 |          |           |          |      |              |                         |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan   | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Corporate Plan progress reported to Council   | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q2 23/24      |
| PSIF Programme reported to Audit Committee  | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |
| Review Best Value Improvement Plan  | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |
| Review Public Performance reporting Framework   | Q4 24/25 | Completed | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 24/25      |
| Robust and Consistent Quarterly Performance Reporting                                 | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q3 23/24      |
| Statutory Performance Indicators reported to Council annually                         | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |

7.2.7

| Corporate Performance, Audit & Information Governance: Audit & Fraud Q1 25/26 |          |      |          |      |              |                        |
|---|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                                   | Period   | Data | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| Corporate fraud investigations reported to Audit Committee annually           | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q2 23/24     |

7.2.8

| Legal & Governance: Elections Q1 25/26                                      |          |               |          |               |              |                        |
|---|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                                 | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data          | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| Digital Accessibility Project   | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | Some Slippage |              | Review Q4 23/24        |
| High performance standards for Returning Officer                            | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q3 23/24     |
| Polling Station Review  | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q3 23/24     |
| Support work of Electoral Commission reviewing Parliamentary Election forms | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |               |              | Completed Q1 23/24     |

7.2.9

| Legal & Governance: Effective Governance Arrangements Q1 25/26 |          |      |          |      |              |                         |
|--|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                    | Period   | Data | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/Update Date  |
| Develop improved process for Code of Corporate Governance      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |
| Review arrangements for managing Council business              | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q3 23/24      |
| Issue Committee papers 10 days prior to meetings               | Q4 24/25 | 78 % | Q1 25/26 | 91 % |              | Data expected quarterly |

## 7.3 Resources and Finance

7.3.1

| Maximising Income Collections Due to the Council Q1 25/26   |          |           |          |         |              |                        |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|---------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                 | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data    | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| Council Tax - Annual % received    CP5.10    CORP07         | FY 23/24 | 95.89 %   | FY 24/25 | 95.65 % |              |                        |
| Overall Council Tax collection level - 5 years              | FY 23/24 | 97.10 %   | FY 24/25 | 97.00 % |              |                        |
| Cost NDR collection/chargeable property                     | FY 23/24 | £ 13.24   | FY 24/25 |         | £ 14.45      | annual update August   |
| % NDR collected by year end                                 | FY 23/24 | 94.67 %   | FY 24/25 | 97.30 % | 97.95 %      |                        |
| % income sundry debtors collected during yr                 | FY 23/24 | 86.77 %   | FY 24/25 | 87.51 % | 84.50 %      |                        |
| Implement a Corporate Revenues Income Maximisation Strategy | Q4 24/25 | Completed | Q1 25/26 |         |              |                        |

7.3.2

| Social and Economic Empowerment Q1 25/26   |          |         |          |      |              |                        |
|--|----------|---------|----------|------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data    | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| Benefits Admin costs - Gross cost per Case   | FY 23/24 | £ 28.99 | FY 24/25 |      | £ 37.90      | annual update August   |
| Avg days to process Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reductions - New Claims    CP1.02              | FY 23/24 | 10.0    | FY 24/25 | 10.6 | 10.0         | annual update August   |
| Avg days to process Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reductions - Changes of Circumstance    CP1.02 | FY 23/24 | 1.6     | FY 24/25 | 1.5  | 2.0          | annual update August   |

## 7.3.3

| Financial Q1 25/26  |          |           |          |           |              |                                 |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan   | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data      | Target Value | Completion/Update Date          |
| Cost of Accounting - % Net Rev Budget + HRA   | FY 23/24 | 0.23 %    | FY 24/25 |           | 0.24 %       | annual update August            |
| Review and develop budget management good practice across the Council   | Q4 24/25 | Completed | Q1 25/26 |           |              | Review March 2025               |
| Support the Council develop and agree its capital investment programme  | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |           |              | Completed Q2 24/25              |
| Develop and implement a multi-year financial planning approach for revenue and capital budgets                        | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |           |              | Completed Q4 23/24              |
| Support the Council in achieving and sustaining a financially sustainable position                                    | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | On Target |              | Due to complete March 27        |
| Council fulfils its obligations as Accountable Body to Government for the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | On Target |              | Assessment annually each autumn |
| Ensure the Council's lease arrangements comply with Accounting Standards for 24/25                                    | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | Completed |              | Completed Q1 25/26              |

## 7.3.4

| Joint Procurement Strategy Q1 25/26  |          |               |          |             |              |                        |
|--|----------|---------------|----------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                                      | Period   | Data          | Period   | Data        | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| % contracts with community benefits clause included                              | FY 23/24 | 92 %          | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| % contracts with carbon reduction clause included                                | FY 23/24 | 77 %          | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| % Contract Spend - collaborative contracts [exc. frameworks]                     | FY 23/24 | 1 %           | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| % Contract Spend - Cat. A or B frameworks  | FY 23/24 | 7 %           | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| Council Spend with Highland Small & Medium sized businesses                      | FY 23/24 | 33 %          | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| % contracts with fair work practices included                                    | FY 23/24 | 77 %          | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| Efficiency savings - cashable [% of addressable spend]                           | FY 23/24 | £ 853,000     | FY 24/25 | £ 1,979,000 |              |                        |
| % Spend covered by contract  | FY 23/24 | 74.4 %        | FY 24/25 |             |              |                        |
| Cost Procurement Sectn % Net Rev Budget  | FY 23/24 | % 0.092       | FY 24/25 |             | % 0.097      | annual update July     |
| % of procurement spend on local enterprises    CP2.11    ECON04                  | FY 23/24 | 51.80 %       | FY 24/25 |             |              | annual update Dec      |
| Progress key actions within the Procurement & Community Wealth Building Thematic | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |             |              | Completed Q3 24/25     |
| Review and reissue of Delegated Procurement Training                             | Q4 24/25 |               | Q1 25/26 |             |              | Completed Q3 24/25     |
| Development of Supplier Relationship Management Model [superseded]               | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | Completed   |              | Action suspended       |
| Implementation / Roll-out of Contract Module within Technology One [superseded]  | Q4 24/25 | Some Slippage | Q1 25/26 | Completed   |              | Action suspended       |

### 7.3.5

| People Q1 25/26  |          |           |          |           |              |                         |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan  | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data      | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Accident Injury Rate   | FY 23/24 | 155       | FY 24/25 |           | 144          | annual update June      |
| Sickness THC - Non Teachers - Avg working days lost    CORP06b                               | FY 23/24 | 12.71     | FY 24/25 | 14.48     |              | annual update August    |
| Sickness Days Lost per Employee    CP5.01  | FY 23/24 | 11.39     | FY 24/25 | 13.17     | 12.50        | annual update August    |
| Women managers in top 2% of earners  | FY 23/24 | 53.6 %    | FY 24/25 | 49.1 %    | 47.6 %       | annual update August    |
| Support, monitor and report on completion rates of ERDs/Induction Training/Mandatory Courses | Q4 24/25 | On Target | Q1 25/26 | On Target |              | Review quarterly        |

### 7.3.6

| People and Finance Systems Programme Q1 25/26   |          |           |          |      |              |                         |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan   | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Replacement of the current financial system   | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q1 24/25      |
| Implement a new pensions payroll module within the existing pensions ICT system   | Q4 24/25 | Completed | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 24/25      |
| Implement a new software solution to support: management of leases / implementation of IFRS 16 accounting rules changes | Q4 24/25 |           | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q1 24/25      |

### 7.3.7

| Pensions Q1 25/26  |          |      |          |      |              |                         |
|--|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan                        | Period   | Data | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Conclude the triennial Pension Fund Actuarial Valuation at 31/3/23 | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |
| Implement a new pension scheme members self-serve portal           | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 23/24      |
| Implement the revised Pensions staffing structure                  | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q2 24/25      |

### 7.3.8

| Efficiencies and Improvement in Service Delivery Q1 25/26 |          |           |          |      |              |                         |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan               | Period   | Data      | Period   | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Implement Revenues & Business Support Development Plan    | Q4 24/25 | Completed | Q1 25/26 |      |              | Completed Q4 24/25      |

## 8. ICT & Digital Transformation

### 8.1 ICT, Strategic Improvement & Digital Services

- 8.1.1 The ICT service has one annual performance indicator relating to user satisfaction. This is measured by a survey issued to all ICT users each year, previously sent by the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM). 2024/25 was the first year the survey was run in-house rather than via SOCITM. This reduced the cost of the activity and also allowed the questions to be more tailored to our circumstances. However, this has meant the survey went out later in the year than usual.

A separate report to this meeting provides more detail.

- 8.1.2 For the most recent survey, the methodology for scoring the results has changed. SOCITM provided a score out of 7, whereas the latest survey is scored on a “% satisfied” basis. For comparison purposes, scores for previous years have been converted to percentages in the table below.

| <b>SOCITM User Satisfaction Scores (out of 7)</b> |                       |                           |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Year</b>                                       | <b>Score (SOCITM)</b> | <b>Score (Percentage)</b> |
| 2022-23   | 5.00                  | 71%                       |
| 2023-24   | 5.43                  | 78%                       |
| 2024-25   | N/A                   | 89%                       |

- 8.1.3 The table below shows the performance on the in-house ICT Service Desk for Q1 2025/26.

Key points to take from this data are:

- Customer satisfaction remains high.
- Drop in performance for the resolution of incidents within 24 hour and 7 day time periods. This was caused by a combination of issues with RingCentral telephony and the SEEMiS education management system that affected a lot of users.
- New staff vacancies on the Service Desk did impact the ability to resolve incidents offline. Resources were focussed on dealing with inbound calls. These vacancies were due to Service Desk staff being successful applying for higher grade specialist posts within other ICT teams and continues the process of “growing our own talent”.

#### 8.1.4

| Measure                              | Target Performance |         |       | Actual Performance |        |        |        |        |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Description                          | Red                | Amber   | Green | Jan-25             | Feb-25 | Mar-25 | Apr-25 | May-25 | Jun-25 |
| % Satisfied customers                | 85%                | 85-95%  | 95%   | 97.27%             | 96.59% | 96.05% | 98.01% | 96.34% | 98.11% |
| % Service Desk calls abandoned       | 10%                | 10-5%   | 5%    | 6.99%              | 4.15%  | 4.40%  | 5.06%  | 4.00%  | 3.19%  |
| Average Service Desk wait time       | 120s               | 120-60s | 60s   | 37s                | 28s    | 29s    | 31s    | 31s    | 25s    |
| % Incidents resolved within 24 hours | 50%                | 50-56%  | 56%   | 62.52%             | 57.57% | 58.18% | 67.96% | 57.31% | 55.00% |
| % Incidents resolved within 7 days   | 70%                | 70-80%  | 80%   | 82.57%             | 78.51% | 83.34% | 83.55% | 82.64% | 78.00% |
| % Incidents resolved within 28 days  | 90%                | 90-95%  | 95%   | 94.42%             | 95.62% | 96.09% | 96.33% | 96.16% | 96.20% |
| Number of Active Incidents           | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 519                | 469    | 414    | 469    | 549    | 520    |
| Number of Active Requests            | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 1906               | 1797   | 1881   | 1697   | 1577   | 1606   |
| Number of incidents opened           | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 2773               | 2132   | 2301   | 1823   | 2466   | 2399   |
| Number of incidents closed           | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 2668               | 2192   | 2377   | 1769   | 2420   | 2415   |
| Number of requests opened            | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 2310               | 2102   | 2473   | 2151   | 2402   | 2308   |
| Number of requests closed            | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 2045               | 2019   | 2306   | 2202   | 2403   | 2179   |
| Number of Chromebook repairs opened  | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 423                | 391    | 582    | 254    | 469    | 504    |
| Number of Chromebook repairs closed  | N/A                | N/A     | N/A   | 539                | 555    | 514    | 321    | 366    | 716    |

#### 8.1.5

The Wipro contract performance is measured by a set of KPIs as shown in the table below. These KPIs have been measured from April 2022 – the point at which the majority of service transitioned in-house. The measures are largely technical and relate to management of infrastructure in the data centre. Figures are given for the 3 months up to June 2025. All Wipro KPIs met the targets for that period.

## 8.1.6

| S.No`  | SLA  | Target Performance Level | Apr'25 SLA | May'25 SLA | June'25 SLA | Service Points | RAG |
|--------|--|--------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-----|
| KPI 01 | Severity 1 Incident resolution                               | n                        | 0          | 0          | 0           | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 02 | Severity 2 Incident resolution                               | n                        | 0          | 1          | 1           | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 03 | Severity 3 Incident resolution                               | 95%                      | 100.00%    | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 04 | Severity 4 Incident resolution                               | 95%                      | 100.00%    | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 05 | Number of Severity 1 Incidents - <b>Rolling Three months</b> | 3                        | 0          | 0          | 0           | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI-06 | Wintel Server software release                               | 5                        | 0          | 0          | 0           | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI-07 | Wintel Database system software release                      | 1                        | 0          | 0          | 0           | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI-08 | Infrastructure availability                                  | 99.90%                   | 100%       | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI-09 | Server Patching  | 100.00%                  | 100%       | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI-10 | System Backups   | 100%                     | 100%       | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI-11 | Core Infrastructure software                                 | 100%                     | 100%       | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 12 | Catalogue Implementation including IMACs                     | 95%                      | 100%       | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 13 | IMAC Request – Impact Assessment                             | 95%                      | NA         | NA         | NA          | -              | -   |
| KPI 14 | Asset Register Accuracy                                      | 4                        | 100%       | 100%       | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |
| KPI 15 | Vulnerability scans, health checks and penetration testing   | 100%                     | NA         | NA         | 100%        | 0              | ↑   |

## 9. Resources and Finance

### 9.1 Council Tax In-Year Collection Rate

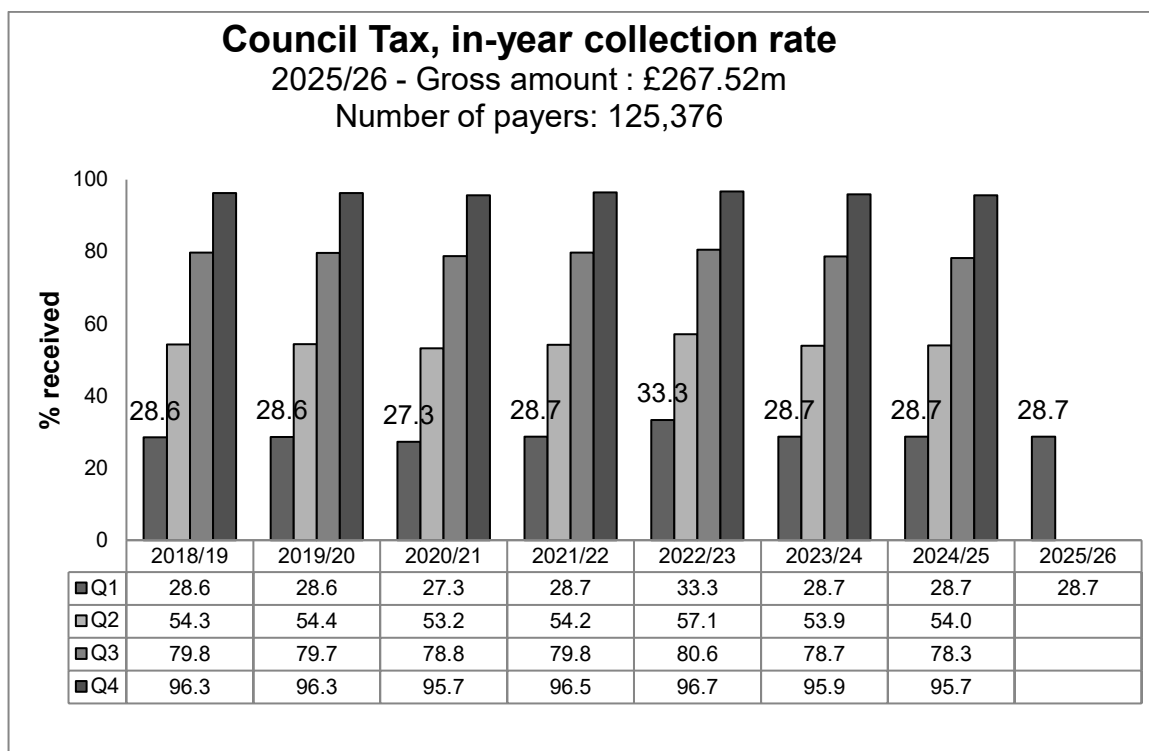
9.1.1 A collection rate of 28.7% is reported for Q1 2025/26 which is the same collection rate as Q1 2024/25.

9.1.2 Council Tax contributes around 20.5% of the Council's General Fund and is used to bridge the difference between the block grant and the Council's estimated expenditure. There is therefore a sharp focus on council tax collections' performance and actions to mitigate performance fluctuations. For example, Direct Debits now make up 77.2% of council tax bill payments (Q1), which is higher than the performance for the comparable period last year, which was at 76.8%, representing 80.5% of Council Tax receipts. Direct Debit continues to be the Council's preferred payment method as it is secure and efficient, and convenient for customers.

9.1.3 Direct debit payments and the value of receipts supports collections performance, reduces bank charges resulting in financial savings, and enables the Council to better predict future income levels, which are important for treasury management and financial planning purposes.



#### 9.1.4



9.1.5 During 2024/25, the Service Delivery and Recovery teams recovered £1.445m in excess of the council tax budget resulting in additional revenues to the General Fund. The Revenues Team continues to focus on recovering unpaid sums in respect of the current and prior years and is working closely with the Council's appointed Sheriff Officers to focus on those debts where Summary Warrants have been granted.

9.1.6 The number of Council Tax payers included in the above bar chart shows the position as at 1 April 2025. As new builds come onto the market and are made available for ownership, private rented and social housing, and properties transfer between Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, there is a natural movement in the tax base and number of Council Tax payers throughout the year. The annual billing position is therefore used year on year to provide trend data and to develop business intelligence. Having such rich data, helps to inform improved performance and decision making.

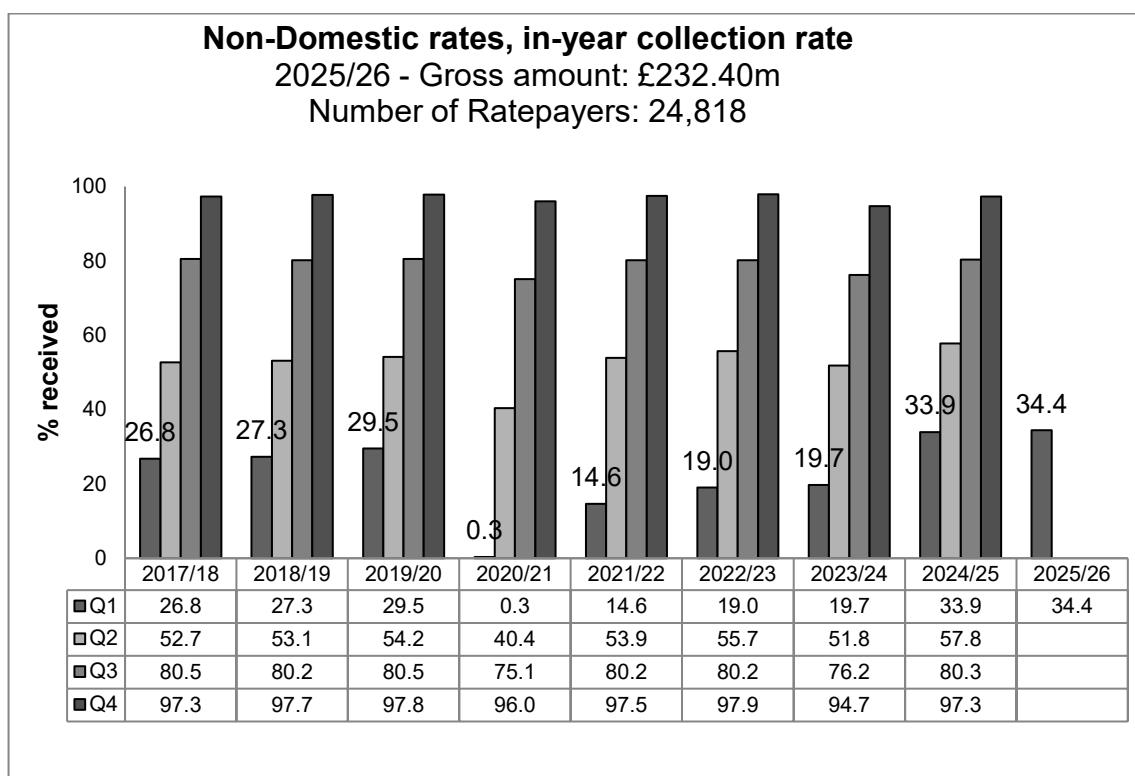
## 9.2 Non-Domestic Rates In-Year Collection Rate

9.2.1 The Council's total revenue funding provided by the Scottish Government is made up of 3 components: General Revenue Grant (GRG); Distributable Non-Domestic Rate Income (NDRI); and specific ring-fenced grants. NDR contributes around 20.9% of the Council's general fund.

9.2.2 Economic volatility is very quickly evident from fluctuations in Non-Domestic Rates income and underlines the importance of understanding and acting upon the trend information detailed in the table below. Keeping abreast and responding to external influences continue to be an important focus for the Revenues Team.

9.2.3 The collection rate for Q1 of 34.4% shows an improvement when compared with the same period in the previous year of 33.9% and exceeds Q1 performance for prior years. The Non-Domestic Rates team continue to identify potential entitlement to relief and to progress recovery in accordance with legislative timescales.

## 9.2.4



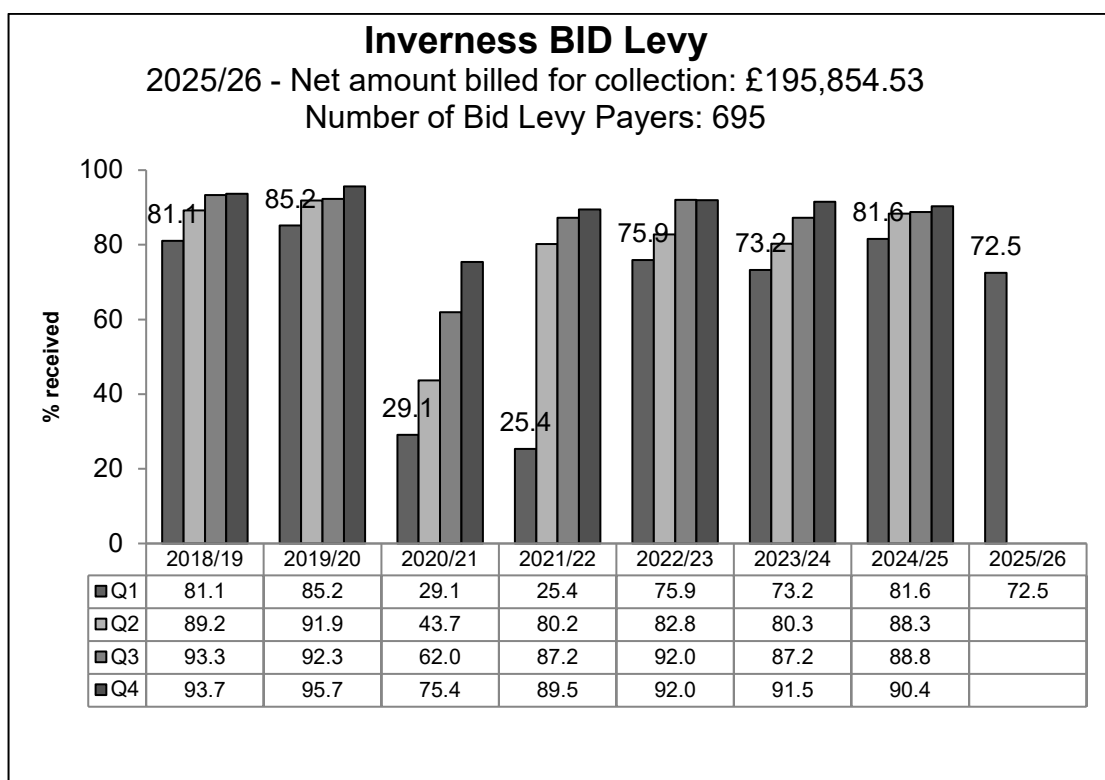
## 10. Business Improvement Districts (BID)

10.1 The Revenues Team is responsible for managing the administration and collection of the 5 BIDs currently operating within Highland and for the recovery of the associated annual administrative costs from each BID. Officers continue to progress billing and recovery of each BID in accordance with planned annual schedules.

10.2 When monitoring collection performance for each BID, Members will wish to note that billing for the Inverness, Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism and Dornoch BID levies was undertaken in line with financial years, i.e. April-June is Q1. The Nairn BID billing year commences in October and the Dornoch BID billing year commences March each financial year. For the Fort William BID, the billing year commenced 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

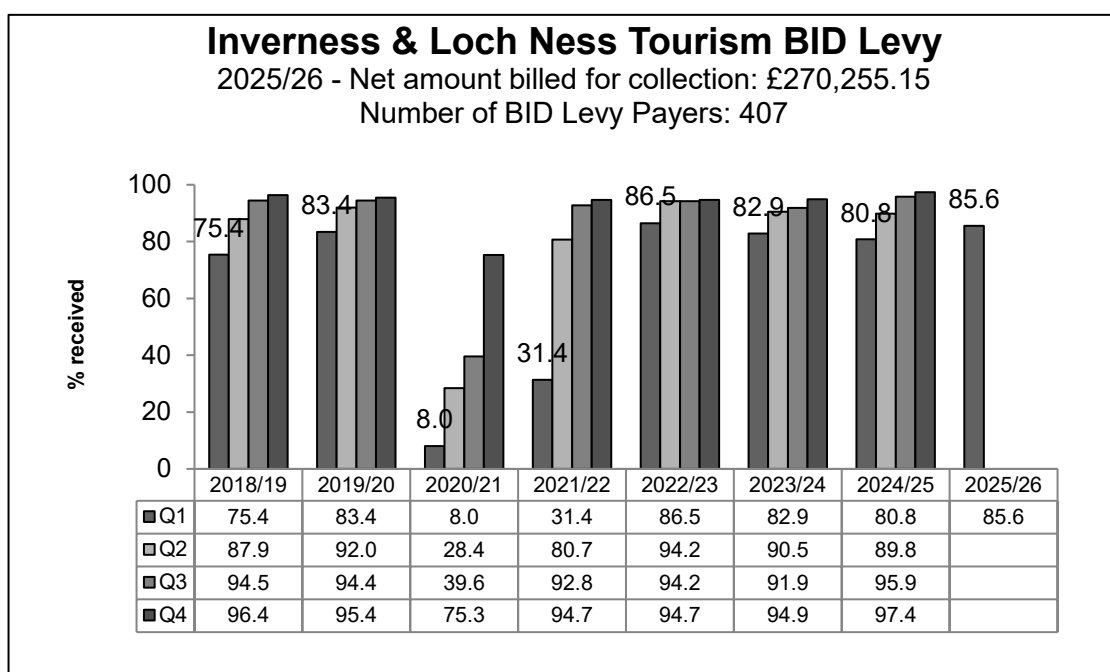
## 11. Inverness BID Levy

11.1 There is decrease in Q1 performance compared with the previous year. The Revenues Team continue to pursue the outstanding sum with the aim of maximising collections. Inverness BID has recorded its satisfaction with this level of performance.



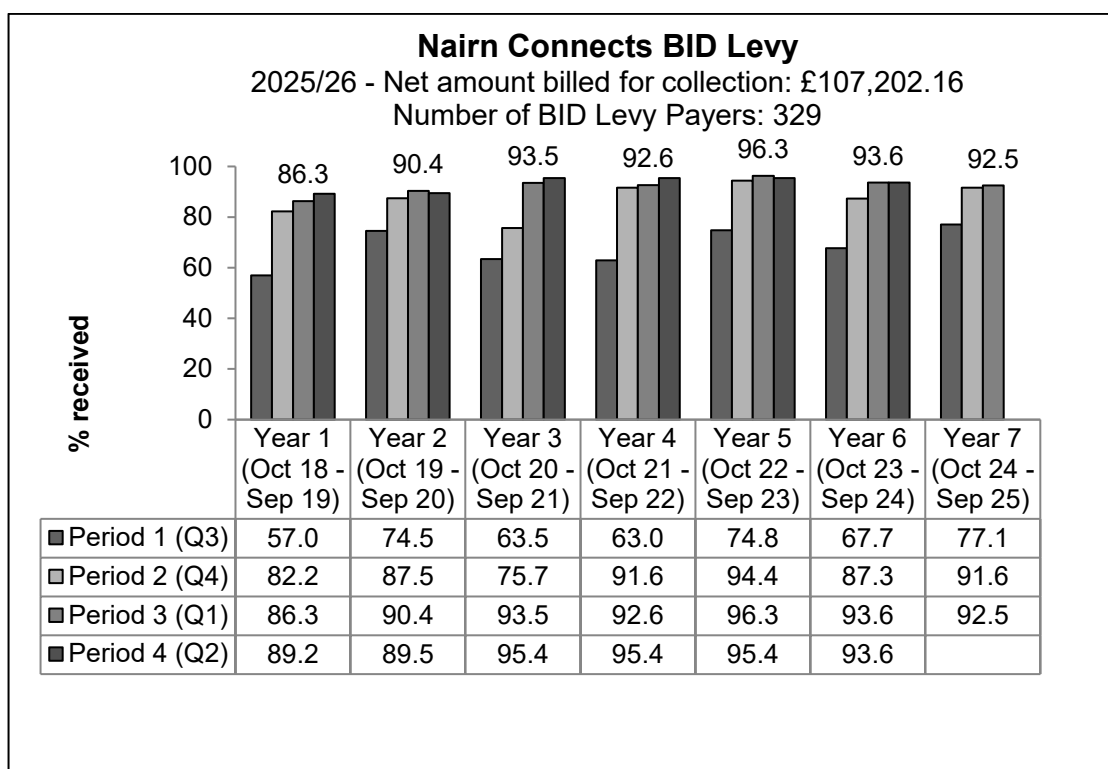
## 11.2 Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID Levy

By the end of Q1, 85.6% of the BID levies have been paid which is a significant improvement on the 80.8% for the same period in 2024/25. Recovery action continues as planned to maximise incomes.



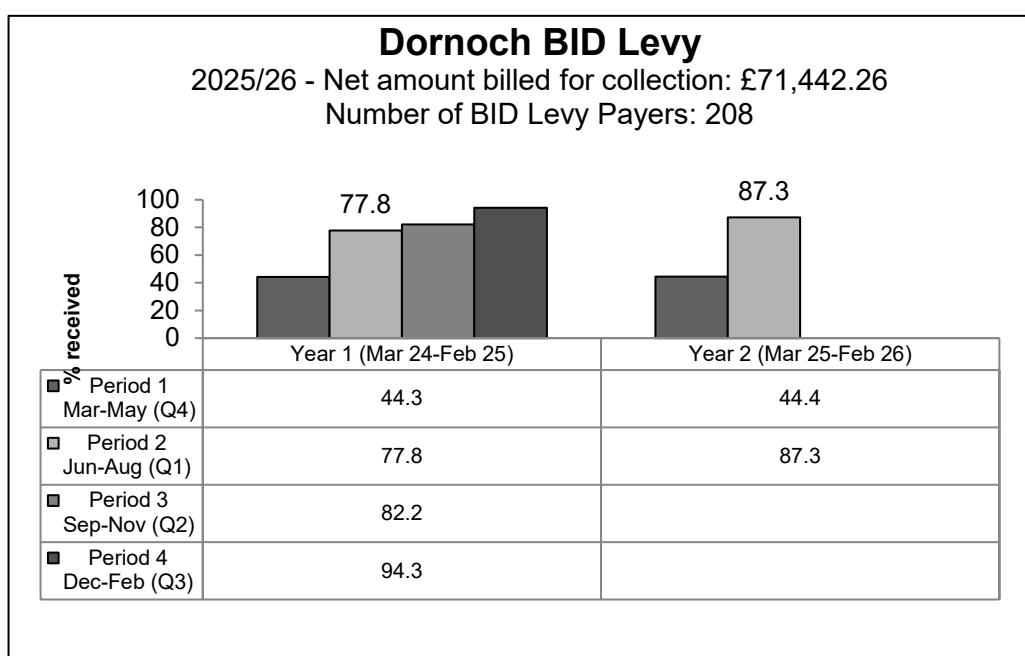
## 11.3 Nairn Connects BID Levy

The Nairn Connects billing year commences 1 October each year. Performance in Period 3 (Q1) shows a collection rate of 92.5%, which is slightly lower than the same period last year.



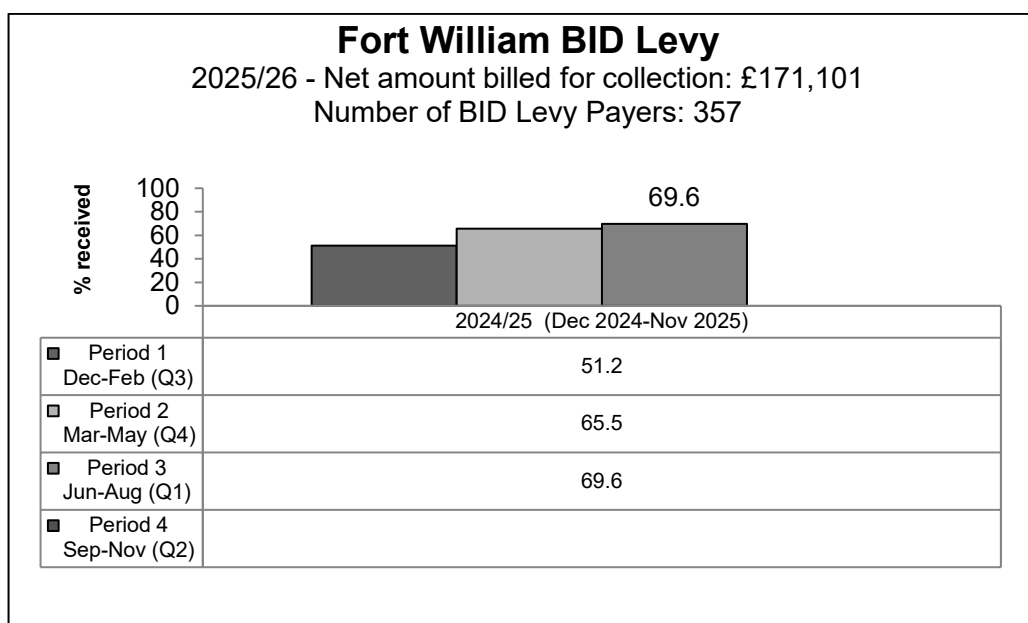
#### 11.4 Dornoch BID Levy

BID bills were issued as planned on 20 February 2025 with an annual billing period of 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026. The collection rate as at 30/06/2025 was 87.3%. Recovery actions continue.



#### 11.5 Fort William BID Levy

Period 1 for the Fort William BID completed at the end of February 2025. For Period 3, the figures below reflect the position at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The collection rate for these 2 months of Period 3 is 69.6% of the BID levies have been paid. BID bills were issued as planned on 1 December 2024 with an annual billing period of 1 December 2024 to 30 November 2025. Recovery actions continue.



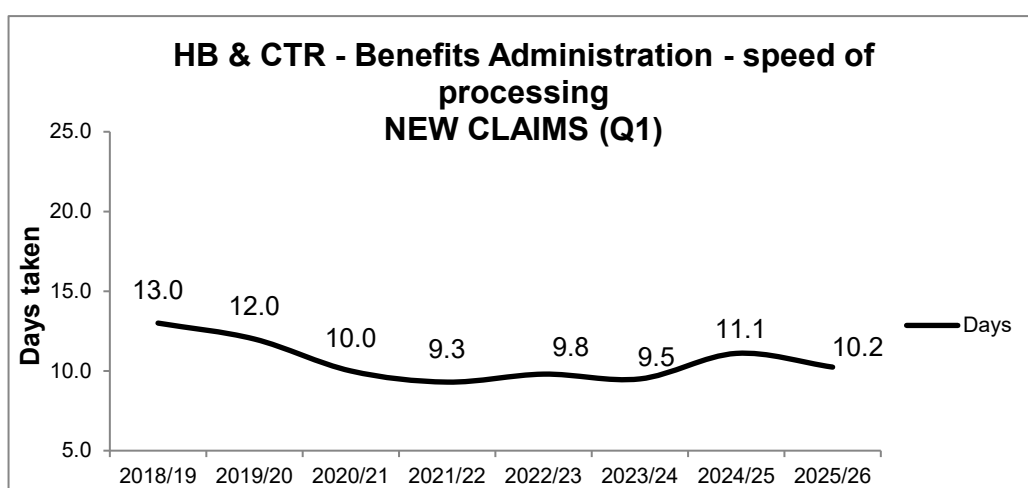
## 12. Single Grant Applications (SGA)

12.1 The Business Support team provides support for all Clusters, including the Community Development team, in the administrative process for Single Grant Applications (SGAs).

12.2 106 single grant applications were received during Q1, 2025/26 of which 100% were processed within the 5 days target. The comparable figures for Q1 2024/25 were 128 applications with a performance figure of 99.2%, demonstrating the continued high performance.

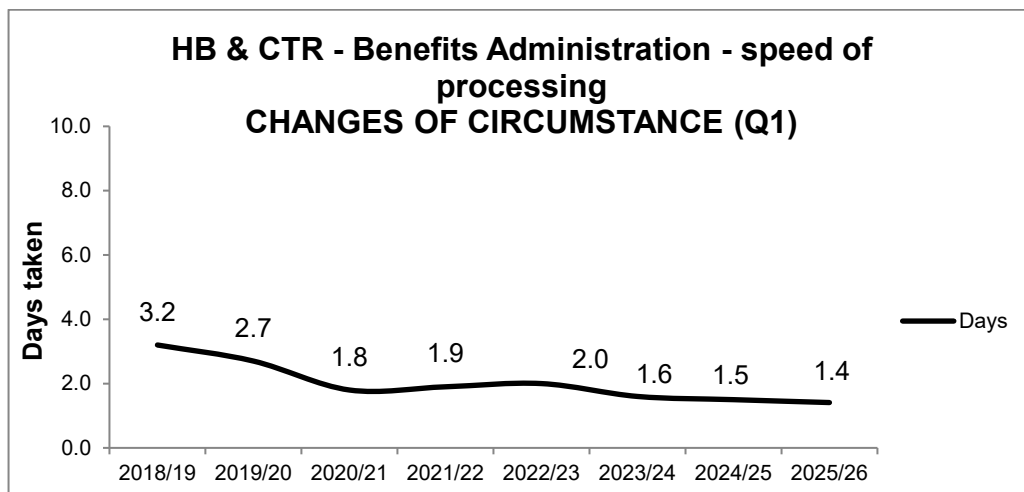
| Single Grant Applications  |         |         |         |          |       |               |
|--|---------|---------|---------|----------|-------|---------------|
| Percentage logged, acknowledged & distributed within 5 days target |         |         |         |          |       |               |
| 2019/20  | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/ 24 | 24/25 | 25/26 to date |
| 98.9%  | 99.2%   | 97.1%   | 97.8%   | 99.8%    | 99.4% | 100%          |

## 12.3 Speed of processing performance: Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction



- 12.4 This performance is 10.2 days for Q1, compared to 11.1 days in the same period in the prior year, reflecting an improvement. This reflects the improvement and process review work within this area, with several changes having been implemented to remove non-value-added work with the aim of delivering improvements.

12.5



- 12.6 Performance of 1.4 days for Q1 2025/26 demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring the right amount of benefit is paid to the right people, at the right time, while also effectively managing increasing volumes of work. The volumes behind these statistics have seen a notable increase in case volumes.
- 12.7 96.25% of all Q1 benefit claims received relate to Changes in Circumstances. Prompt processing of Changes in Circumstances supports the Welfare Budget, and in particular, the Housing Benefit budget, as the overall value of benefit overpayments created are lower than would otherwise be the case, enabling more successful recovery of overpaid benefits and therefore a lower Bad Debt Provision.
- 12.8 The latest statistics published by the DWP for Housing Benefit relates to Q4, and reports that the Highland Council was ranked 4th equal for New Claims and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> equal (with Clackmannanshire, East Ayrshire and Stirling) for Changes in Circumstances in Scotland. For the DWP data, Change in Circumstances represent 96.2% of the caseload.
- 12.9 Officers continue to collaborate with UK Government, Scottish Government and CoSLA to develop and progress welfare-related matters.

### **13. Climate Change/Carbon Clever**

- 13.1 A framework agreement for second-hand and recycled domestic furniture and the provision of new goods supports delivery of the Scottish Welfare Fund as reported in the Welfare Budget. For the period April-June 2025, over 27.5 tonnes of waste were diverted from landfill, and 6.54 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e were avoided. (CO<sub>2</sub>e, or carbon dioxide equivalent, is a metric used to standardise the measurement of greenhouse gas emissions).

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

Date: 18 August 2025

Authors: Hannah Kollef, Portfolio Manager  
Lucy Lallah, Business Management Analyst  
Sheila Armstrong, Chief Officer – Revenues & Commercialisation  
Stewart Fraser, Chief Officer – Legal & Corporate Governance  
Ruth Fry, Chief Officer – HR & Communications  
Brian Porter, Chief Officer – Corporate Finance  
Jon Shepherd, Chief Officer – Business Solutions  
Elaine Barrie, Head of People

Appendices: Appendix 1 - SPI Invoices  
Appendix 2 - Sickness Absence



**Appendix 1  
SPI Invoices**

| Invoice Payments <10 days |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |       |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
|                           | 21/22       | 22/23       | 23/24       |             |             |             |             | 24/25       |             |             |             |             | 25/26 |
| Service                   | Annual      | Annual      | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual      | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual      | Q1    |
| C&P                       | 76.4        | 75.9        | 81.2        | 90.6        | 89.2        | 86.0        | 86.9        | 49.7        | 66.7        | 52.1        | 46.5        | 54.3        | 53.5  |
| E&L                       | 71.0        | 74.3        | 76.9        | 72.8        | 77.3        | 76.3        | 76.0        | 68.7        | 63.7        | 71.8        | 72.7        | 69.7        | 71.2  |
| HW&SC                     | 78.4        | 88.5        | 93.5        | 90.0        | 93.0        | 89.0        | 91.4        | 86.2        | 90.8        | 91.9        | 85.3        | 88.6        | 87.6  |
| I&E                       | 76.7        | 82.2        | 86.9        | 85.7        | 86.1        | 82.5        | 85.3        | 70.7        | 77.0        | 81.2        | 78.9        | 76.8        | 78.1  |
| P&G                       | 81.3        | 86.9        | 93.4        | 90.8        | 83.2        | 79.3        | 86.4        | 81.3        | 79.8        | 82.6        | 56.9        | 75.9        | 83.6  |
| P&H                       | 62.8        | 48.2        | 55.4        | 72.3        | 56.0        | 49.0        | 59.6        | 31.0        | 64.0        | 52.5        | 55.0        | 52.8        | 54.0  |
| R&F                       | 84.9        | 92.0        | 91.1        | 98.4        | 91.2        | 79.3        | 94.5        | 43.6        | 53.7        | 68.0        | 57.7        | 55.4        | 75.6  |
| ICT                       | 69.9        | 91.1        | 95.2        | 86.8        | 95.6        | 91.0        | 92.1        | 41.7        | 60.0        | 54.8        | 48.7        | 51.3        | 49.1  |
| Capital                   | 70.7        | 68.9        | 70.5        | 71.2        | 71.4        | 80.1        | 72.6        | 52.3        | 64.8        | 67.3        | 69.5        | 63.5        | 66.2  |
| <b>THC</b>                | <b>69.3</b> | <b>70.7</b> | <b>72.8</b> | <b>80.9</b> | <b>75.3</b> | <b>69.7</b> | <b>75.1</b> | <b>57.0</b> | <b>68.5</b> | <b>63.8</b> | <b>63.3</b> | <b>63.3</b> | 64.7  |

| Invoice Payments <30 days |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                           | 21/22       | 22/23       | 23/24       |             |             |             |             | 24/25       |             |             |             |             | 25/26       |
| Service                   | Annual      | Annual      | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual      | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual      | Q1          |
| C&P                       | 94.9        | 96.9        | 97.5        | 98.4        | 98.6        | 96.9        | 97.9        | 80.8        | 88.2        | 87.9        | 88.7        | 86.4        | 88.2        |
| E&L                       | 91.8        | 90.8        | 93.4        | 88.8        | 92.3        | 92.1        | 91.8        | 89.2        | 82.7        | 90.0        | 90.7        | 88.6        | 91.2        |
| HW&SC                     | 94.9        | 97.2        | 98.6        | 97.9        | 98.5        | 97.5        | 98.1        | 96.4        | 95.8        | 97.5        | 97.2        | 96.8        | 97.0        |
| I&E                       | 96.1        | 97.0        | 97.8        | 97.7        | 96.8        | 95.1        | 96.8        | 90.3        | 93.5        | 95.9        | 94.8        | 93.6        | 93.3        |
| P&G                       | 97.1        | 96.6        | 98.5        | 95.4        | 98.1        | 94.8        | 96.9        | 97.5        | 97.3        | 96.5        | 88.3        | 95.2        | 93.3        |
| P&H                       | 93.1        | 93.6        | 93.0        | 97.5        | 94.8        | 91.2        | 94.4        | 85.8        | 94.4        | 93.9        | 94.4        | 92.9        | 94.3        |
| R&F                       | 98.3        | 98.4        | 98.8        | 99.5        | 98.1        | 98.5        | 99.2        | 79.9        | 88.3        | 96.4        | 93.3        | 89.1        | 96.9        |
| ICT                       | 95.5        | 96.8        | 98.8        | 98.9        | 99.1        | 99.2        | 99.0        | 76.7        | 86.9        | 81.0        | 84.0        | 82.3        | 92.0        |
| Capital                   | 93.2        | 92.8        | 95.4        | 94.1        | 93.0        | 95.6        | 94.7        | 87.4        | 92.3        | 94.6        | 93.2        | 92.0        | 93.5        |
| <b>THC</b>                | <b>93.8</b> | <b>94.6</b> | <b>95.1</b> | <b>96.7</b> | <b>95.6</b> | <b>93.6</b> | <b>95.3</b> | <b>87.7</b> | <b>91.4</b> | <b>92.9</b> | <b>92.9</b> | <b>91.4</b> | <b>93.0</b> |

**Appendix 2**

**Average number of working days per employee lost through Sickness Absence**

| Service                                  | 21/22       | 22/23       |             |             |             |             | 23/24       |             |             |             |              | 24/25       |             |             |             |              | 25/26       |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
|  | Annual      | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual      | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual       | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Annual       | Q1          |
| C&P                                      | 12.86       | 3.42        | 3.45        | 2.74        | 3.60        | 13.21       | 3.80        | 4.27        | 4.38        | 4.31        | 16.74        | 4.21        | 4.41        | 4.99        | 5.14        | 18.74        | 4.80        |
| E&L – non-teaching                       | 7.36        | 2.62        | 1.19        | 1.82        | 2.66        | 8.29        | 1.71        | 2.08        | 4.21        | 4.82        | 13.59        | 3.88        | 2.67        | 4.00        | 4.55        | 15.17        | 4.00        |
| E&L – teaching                           | 5.58        | 1.74        | 0.96        | 1.67        | 2.66        | 7.02        | 2.59        | 0.98        | 2.65        | 2.80        | 8.26         | 2.38        | 3.22        | 2.70        | 3.40        | 9.94         | 2.62        |
| H&SC                                     | 7.75        | 2.05        | 2.04        | 2.27        | 2.87        | 9.23        | 2.82        | 2.56        | 2.87        | 3.24        | 11.50        | 3.41        | 1.47        | 3.89        | 4.44        | 14.96        | 4.76        |
| I&E                                      | 2.59        | 1.67        | 1.76        | 1.55        | 2.95        | 7.93        | 2.85        | 2.11        | 2.03        | 1.59        | 8.58         | 2.32        | 1.81        | 2.33        | 2.91        | 9.38         | 2.54        |
| P&G                                      | 2.11        | 0.65        | 1.15        | 1.08        | 2.13        | 5.01        | 1.53        | 1.75        | 2.06        | 2.08        | 7.36         | 1.09        | 2.82        | 2.18        | 2.18        | 8.27         | 2.61        |
| P&H                                      | 8.56        | 2.67        | 1.75        | 2.11        | 3.48        | 10.02       | 2.93        | 2.43        | 4.60        | 4.39        | 14.34        | 4.49        | 3.27        | 3.85        | 4.63        | 16.24        | 4.45        |
| R&F                                      | 6.47        | 2.07        | 2.36        | 2.21        | 2.48        | 9.13        | 2.38        | 2.91        | 2.24        | 1.99        | 9.54         | 2.32        | 2.59        | 2.94        | 2.44        | 10.29        | 2.17        |
| ICT&DT                                   | 2.36        | 2.17        | 1.40        | 2.23        | 2.19        | 7.99        | 1.42        | 2.14        | 1.93        | 1.80        | 7.37         | 2.32        | 2.43        | 2.22        | 2.18        | 9.14         | 2.08        |
| <b>THC (non-teaching)</b>                | <b>8.17</b> | <b>2.45</b> | <b>1.89</b> | <b>2.03</b> | <b>2.97</b> | <b>9.35</b> | <b>2.44</b> | <b>2.54</b> | <b>3.65</b> | <b>3.76</b> | <b>12.71</b> | <b>3.60</b> | <b>2.98</b> | <b>3.71</b> | <b>4.16</b> | <b>14.48</b> | <b>3.90</b> |
| <b>THC all employees (inc. teachers)</b> | <b>7.39</b> | <b>2.24</b> | <b>1.61</b> | <b>1.92</b> | <b>2.88</b> | <b>8.65</b> | <b>2.48</b> | <b>2.08</b> | <b>3.35</b> | <b>3.48</b> | <b>11.39</b> | <b>3.24</b> | <b>2.54</b> | <b>3.42</b> | <b>3.95</b> | <b>13.17</b> | <b>3.55</b> |