The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	CP/05/26

Committee: **Communities and Place**

Date: **29 January 2026**

Report Title: **Performance Reporting for Q3 October 2025 to December 2025**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

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

- Corporate Indicators;
- Contribution to the Performance Plan;
- Statutory Performance Indicators; and
- Service Plan 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:-

     i. **Scrutinise** and **note** the Service's performance information;
     ii. **Note** the changes to presentation of the Communities and Place Service data in sections 6 in order to more clearly show alignment with Performance Plan commitments; and
     iii. **Note** the inclusion of Statutory Performance Indicators outwith the Performance Plan to further support transparency and scrutiny of performance reporting.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - Any resource implications are detailed in the 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** - Risk implications associated with projects are detailed in the report. Project/Programme risks are identified via the council risk management process and monitored through the Portfolio Boards.

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 for Gaelic arising from 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 and update 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 Absence data for Q3 2025/26 was not available within the timeline for drafting this report. Q3 2025/26 Absence data will be provided in the next Service Performance report at Q4 2025/26.

5.2.2 Staff absence is a nationally benchmarked indicator. Effective absence management supports staff, maintains productivity, and contributes to the Council's benchmarked performance.

5.2.3 Reducing absence rates through a strong and 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.

5.2.4 Mental health related absences continue to appear within the top three long term absence reasons for all Clusters. Stress related absences, including non-work-related stress is the most common reason for absence within the service and some managers requested additional support and training on how to support staff dealing with stress. This additional support is being explored and will be rolled out across the services. The mental health and wellbeing helpline is available to employees which provides easy access to the following mental health support services: EAP; NHS 24; Samaritans and mental health representatives. 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. 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.

5.2.5 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.

5.3 **Service Complaints Response Times**

5.3.1 Complaints data for Q3 2025/26 was not available within the timeline for drafting this report. Q3 2025/26 Complaints data will be provided in the next Service Performance report at Q4 2025/26.

5.4 **Service Freedom of Information ('FOI') Response Times**

5.4.1 FOI data for Q3 2025/26 was not available within the timeline for drafting this report. Q3 2025/26 FOI data will be provided in the next Service Performance report at Q4 2025/26.

5.5 **Service Invoice Payment Times**

5.5.1 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 Quarter 3 against a target of 77% and 95%, respectively, was as follows:-

	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26
Invoice Payment within 30 days								
Communities and Place	96.9 %	80.8 %	88.2 %	87.9 %	88.7 %	88.2 %	94.4 %	91.2 %
Highland Council	93.6 %	87.7 %	91.4 %	92.9 %	92.9 %	93.0 %	94.8 %	94.3 %

	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26
Invoice Payment less than 10 days								
Communities and Place	86.0 %	49.7 %	66.7 %	52.1 %	46.5 %	53.4 %	64.9 %	70.0 %
Highland Council	69.7 %	57.0 %	68.5 %	63.8 %	63.3 %	64.7 %	72.5 %	72.3 %

Performance against the 10-day invoice target continues to improve and is low just under the Council average. Performance against the 30-day target has reduced slightly in the latest period.

6 Service Contribution to the Performance Plan

6.1 The following outlines Communities and Place performance indicators that contribute to the Council's Performance Plan. Overall, progress against the Performance Plan Performance Indicators and Actions are on target.

6.2

Communities & Place: Contribution to the Performance Plan

Strategic Priority 1 Fair & Caring Highland	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Reduce Highland Suicide rate - 5 Yr Avg || CP1.04	CY 2024		CY 2025			
No. HC workforce trained in supporting people with mental health and wellbeing concerns || CP1.07	FY 23/24	390	FY 24/25	370		

PIs/Actions in the performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Street Cleanliness Score || CP2.07 || ENV3c	FY 23/24	96.36 %	FY 24/25	95.91 %		annual update December

PIs/Actions in the performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Continue partnership with ILM || CP4.06	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	On Target		Target is ongoing
% Household waste recycled || CP4.06 || ENV6a	FY 23/24	36.0 %	FY 24/25	42.5 %		annual update September
Increase areas identified for food growing and ecological benefit || CP4.11	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 24/25

PIs/Actions in the performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
ERDs being completed - CPL || CP5.01	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 24/25
The 'My Council' project || CP5.03	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			To be completed Q4 23/24
Supporting and engaging with Community Councils || CP5.05	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	Not Updated		Target is ongoing
Involved Communities: Area Place Plans for each Council area || CP2.04/CP3.07/CP4.03/CP5.06	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26

7 Statutory Performance Indicators

7.1 The following outlines Communities and Place Statutory Performance Indicators outwith the Performance Plan.

7.2 **Statutory Performance Indicators**

Communities & Place: SPIs						
SPIs not monitored in Performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Net Cost of Waste Collection per Premise || ENV1a	FY 23/24	£ 97.86	FY 24/25			annual update November
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise || ENV2a	FY 23/24	£ 108.49	FY 24/25			annual update November
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1000 popn || ENV3a	FY 23/24	£ 10,845	FY 24/25			annual update November
% adults satisfied - refuse collection || ENV7a	FY 23/24	91.0 %	FY 24/25	87.0 %		annual update December
% adults satisfied - street cleaning || ENV7b	FY 23/24	64.0 %	FY 24/25	62.0 %		annual update December
95% of high risk private water supplies are inspected and sampled	FY 23/24	57 %	FY 24/25	77 %		annual update August

8 Service Plan Progress

8.1 The following summarises progress against the indicators and actions for the Communities and Place service plan. Data is not yet available for 2024/25 for a small number of indicators.

8.2

Community Development and Involvement Approaches Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Agreement of new Allotments policy	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 23/24
Involved Communities: Area Place Plans for each Council area || CP2.04/CP3.07/CP4.03/CP5.06	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26
Develop and implement a new integrated impact assessment tool	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q1 24/25
Develop a marketing approach to promote and increase civil ceremonies offering	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26
Development of Community Benefits Policy Procured and Voluntary Benefits	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 24/25
External Annual Examination by National Records of Scotland	CY 2024		CY 2025		98 %	annual update November
Implementation of new SPSO Child Friendly Complaints process – UNCRC	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 24/25
Review of the Community Council Scheme	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26
Undertake Review of Customer Services process/operations and implement changes	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 24/25

8.3

Bereavement Services, Transforming Services for Significant Life Events Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
Bereavement: Progressing Lean review of burials	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 24/25
Delivery of Burial Ground Projects	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	On Target		Targets set in project plan
Develop an approach for refurbishment /modernisation of Inverness crematorium	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 23/24

8.4

Environmental Health Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
95% of high risk private water supplies are inspected and sampled	FY 23/24	57 %	FY 24/25	77 %	95 %	annual update August
Business case to review resources re sampling private water supplies	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 23/24
Develop revised PI for food safety based on risk of premises	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q3 23/24

8.5

Transforming our Approach to Community Spaces Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
Review playpark strategy	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q3 23/24
Develop community volunteering policy	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	Not Updated		Due to complete Q3 23/24
Progress the workstreams in the Amenities Review	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 23/24

8.6

Fleet Rationalisation [Sustainable Business Travel] Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
Continue low emission approach for provision of heavy fleet	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q1 24/25
Design Sustainable Business Travel Approach and Action Plan	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 23/24
Reduce size of light fleet	FY 23/24		FY 24/25			

8.7

Waste Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Street Cleanliness Score || CP2.07 || ENV3c	FY 23/24	96.36 %	FY 24/25	95.91 %	95.00 %	annual update December
% Household waste recycled || CP4.06 || ENV6a	FY 23/24	36.0 %	FY 24/25	42.5 %		annual update September
Deliver RIF Project – Implementation [phased]	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	Completed		Completed Q3 25/26
Deliver the Lochaber Waste Transfer Station Project	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26
Delivery Bulky Waste Shredders	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	Completed		Completed Q3 25/26
Net Cost of Waste Collection per Premise || ENV1a	FY 23/24	£ 97.86	FY 24/25			annual update November
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise || ENV2a	FY 23/24	£ 108.49	FY 24/25			annual update November
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1000 popn || ENV3a	FY 23/24	£ 10,845	FY 24/25			annual update November
% adults satisfied - refuse collection || ENV7a	FY 23/24	91.0 %	FY 24/25	87.0 %	86.7 %	annual update December
% adults satisfied - street cleaning || ENV7b	FY 23/24	64.0 %	FY 24/25	62.0 %	57.0 %	annual update December
Undertake feasibility assessment into Energy from Waste Plant	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q3 23/24

8.8   Overall, progress against the Service Plan Performance Indicators and actions is very positive. There has been slippage for the following:-

- A draft framework to support Community Volunteering is in place. Work is being progressed to engage with community groups to receive feedback and input and shape the framework.

- Environmental Health have undertaken additional recruitment to provide further resources to meet the private water supply statutory duties. Work has continued in 2025/26 to further improve the performance for sampling of high-risk private water supplies and on the associated risk assessment process that must be done for each supply.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 8 January 2026

Author: Sophie Stuart, Portfolio Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None