

Agenda Item	7.b
Report No	RES/05/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Corporate Resources

Date: 19 March 2026

Report Title: Corporate Service – Performance Monitoring Q3 2025/26

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the Q3 2025/26 performance monitoring position for the Corporate Cluster (Performance & Governance, ICT & Digital Transformation and Resources & Finance).
- 1.2 This report provides the following performance information:
- Corporate Indicators.
 - Contribution to the Performance Plan.
 - Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) out with the Performance Plan.
 - Service Plan progress.
 - Service updates out with the Corporate Indicators or Service Plan.

Additional performance information such as longer-term trend analysis and comparisons against Highland Council's family group average as well as the national picture is available via the [Local Government Benchmarking Data](#) if required.

- 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 information for the Corporate Cluster.
 - ii. **Note** the change to absence reporting to align with Chief Officer structure.
 - iii. **Note** the changes to presentation of Corporate Cluster data in sections 6-8 in order to more clearly show alignment between Performance Indicators and Performance Plan commitments.
 - iv. **Note** the inclusion of SPI's out with the Performance Plan to further support transparency and scrutiny of performance reporting.

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 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.

4.4 Corporate Charging Policy

4.4.1 This policy, approved by Members of this Committee in December 2024, has been reviewed by the Chief Officer – Revenues & Commercialisation and no changes are required at this stage. It will continue to be reviewed annually.

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 Corporate Cluster Sickness Absence

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. From Q2 and Q3 2025/2026 onwards figures are shown split by Chief Officer to reflect the new organisational structure.

Average number working days per employee lost through sickness absence

Average Days Lost	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27	Q1 27/28
Business Solutions	2.27	3.19						
Corporate Finance	1.67	1.87						
Legal and Corporate Governance	2.11	2.15						
HR and Communication	3.50	2.08						
Revenues and Commercialisation	2.75	3.08						
Highland Council	3.02	4.09						

Within the Corporate cluster, the median of all absences is 2.15 days. The median across all staff within the Corporate Cluster is 0 days. The average (mean) number of working days lost through absence is 2.47 days, compared to a Council average of 4.09 days.

Median denotes the value at the midpoint of the number of days lost, so there is an equal probability of falling above or below it. It can give a more accurate illustration of the length of absence most staff record, as a small number of long-term absences can significantly increase the mean, particularly in smaller services.

Absence data split by previous organisational structure are shown for reference.

Average Days Lost	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26
ICT Services	1.80	2.32	2.43	2.22	2.18	2.08
Performance & Governance	2.08	1.09	2.82	2.18	2.19	2.61
Resources & Finance	1.99	2.32	2.59	2.94	2.44	2.17
Highland Council	3.48	3.24	2.54	3.42	3.95	3.55

5.3 Council-wide Sickness Absence

5.3.1 The average (mean) days absence across the whole organisation for Q3 2025/26 is 4.09 days.

The median of all sickness absences is 3 days. The median including staff with no sickness absence is 0 days.

Sickness absence data by Cluster and Chief Officer services out with the Corporate Cluster is reported to the appropriate Strategic Committees.

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 Complaints and Information Team (CIT).

5.4.2

Service Complaints - Corporate Services Cluster

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

Frontline Resolution within 5 days

	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
ICT Services	1	100 %	0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
Performance & Governance	4	100 %	26	100 %	17	35 %	0		2	100 %	0		1	100 %	1	100 %
Resources & Finance	23	70 %	15	80 %	3	100 %	19	89 %	25	76 %	29	93 %	21	95 %	19	95 %
Highland Council	189	76 %	219	84 %	196	78 %	155	88 %	183	87 %	177	92 %	223	90 %	200	85 %

Investigation Resolution within 20 days

	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
ICT Services	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
Performance & Governance	1	100 %	2	50 %	2	50 %	3	0 %	1	0 %	1	100 %	0		1	100 %
Resources & Finance	3	100 %	8	88 %	36	69 %	8	63 %	4	0 %	3	33 %	8	38 %	1	0 %
Highland Council	98	46 %	86	47 %	101	57 %	90	42 %	71	51 %	68	47 %	86	40 %	94	55 %

Escalated Resolution within 20 days

	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
ICT Services	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
Performance & Governance	0		0		1	100 %	0		1	100 %	1	0 %	0		1	100 %
Resources & Finance	1	100 %	3	67 %	3	67 %	2	50 %	0		3	0 %	4	75 %	3	67 %
Highland Council	34	35 %	47	32 %	28	50 %	26	46 %	34	44 %	30	33 %	27	26 %	22	27 %

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 and information to inform the final response. This can also involve more than one team from one or more Cluster.

5.5 Service Freedom of Information (FOI) Response Times

5.5.1 FOI requests are co-ordinated by CIT in collaboration with Service teams which collate the information relevant to the request.

5.5.2

Service Freedom of Information Requests - Corporate Service Cluster

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

% FOIs Compliant - ICT Services	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
		24	92 %	20	65 %	25	80 %	17	76 %	15	73 %	19	89 %	17	82 %	16

% FOIs Compliant - Performance & Governance	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
		51	80 %	44	77 %	51	88 %	53	81 %	52	75 %	55	93 %	53	89 %	54

% FOIs Compliant - Resources & Finance	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
		60	87 %	51	86 %	56	77 %	54	74 %	75	75 %	71	76 %	70	71 %	61

% FOIs Compliant - Highland Council	Q4 23/24		Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26	
		549	77 %	512	81 %	481	76 %	570	73 %	617	71 %	577	81 %	601	77 %	581

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 Statutory Performance Indicator, the Council also monitors the number of invoices paid within 10 days of receipt. The targets for performance are 95% and 77% respectively for 30- and 10-days.

5.6.2

Service Invoice Payment Times - Corporate Service Cluster

Invoice Payment within 30 days	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26
ICT Services	99.2 %	76.7 %	86.9 %	81.0 %	84.0 %	92.0 %	94.2 %	97.0 %
Performance & Governance	94.8 %	97.5 %	97.3 %	96.5 %	88.3 %	93.0 %	95.4 %	96.5 %
Resources & Finance	98.5 %	79.9 %	88.3 %	96.4 %	93.3 %	96.9 %	95.4 %	94.3 %
Highland Council	93.6 %	87.7 %	91.4 %	92.9 %	92.9 %	93.0 %	94.8 %	94.3 %

Invoice Payment less than 10 days	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26
ICT Services	91.0 %	41.7 %	60.0 %	54.8 %	48.7 %	49.1 %	56.5 %	78.8 %
Performance & Governance	79.3 %	81.3 %	79.8 %	82.6 %	56.9 %	83.6 %	82.1 %	85.4 %
Resources & Finance	79.3 %	43.6 %	53.7 %	68.0 %	57.7 %	75.6 %	78.1 %	75.5 %
Highland Council	69.7 %	57.0 %	68.5 %	63.8 %	63.3 %	64.7 %	72.5 %	72.3 %

5.6.3 For this 30-day measure, Resources & Finance was on a par with the Highland Council performance figure, and both Performance & Governance and ICT Services were better than the reported Council performance at 96.5% and 97% respectively. This performance also exceeds the 95% performance target. ICT Service's performance at 97% is a material improvement on Q3 2024/25 (81.0%), thus demonstrating the value of performance information and management and the ongoing work within teams for further improvement.

5.6.4 During Q3, for the 10-day measure, performance improved on the Q3 position for 2024/25, for all within the Corporate cluster. The individual service performance exceeds the Highland Council performance. Officers continue to review processes with the aim of achieving further improvements across Clusters.

5.7 Council Invoice Payments – SPI Owner

5.7.1 The Council-wide Q3 performance for payments within 30 Days was 94.3% for invoice processing, compared with 92.9% for the same period in 2024/25. For invoice payments less than 10 days, Q3 performance was 72.3%, which is a significant improvement on the Q3 position in 2024/25 at 63.8%. Council-wide performance is provided in **Appendix 1** to this report.

5.7.2 Building on positive performance, the Revenues & Commercialisation section will continue to work with Chief Officers to identify further steps that may be taken to improve performance at the various stages in the overall process.

6. Contribution to the Performance Plan

All Performance Plan elements, including relevant Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs), under the Corporate Cluster have been included in the Strategic Outcomes below.

6.1

Corporate Cluster: Contribution to the Performance Plan								
Strategic Priority 1 Fair & Caring Highland	Period	Data	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
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	2.0	annual update August
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	10.0	annual update August
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	60	annual update July
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		
Culture and heritage events promoted through press and social media CP1.12	Q1 25/26	Completed	Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q1 25/26
Highland AR App used to promote Highland heritage and culture CP1.12	Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q1 23/24
Strategic Priority 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities	Period	Data	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Work with partners to support campaigns to keep public spaces clean and safe CP2.07	Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 24/25
% of procurement spend on local enterprises CP2.11 ECON04	FY 22/23	49.10 %	FY 23/24	51.80 %	FY 24/25	42.00 %	30.80 %	annual update Dec

Strategic Priority 5 A Resilient and Sustainable Council	Period	Data	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Council Tax - Annual % received CP5.10 CORP07	FY 22/23	96.71 %	FY 23/24	95.89 %	FY 24/25	95.65 %		annual update
Sickness Days Lost per Employee CP5.01	FY 22/23	8.58	FY 23/24	11.39	FY 24/25	13.17	12.50	annual update August
Identify and agree Corporate Training priorities: Managers mandatory CP5.01	Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q4 23/24
Identify and agree Corporate Training priorities: improve ERD recording CP5.01	Q1 25/26	On Target	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	No Significant Progress		Due to complete Q4 24/25
Identify and agree Corporate Training priorities: achieve compliance with training CP5.01	Q1 25/26	On Target	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 25/26
ERDs being completed - DCE CP5.01	Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q1 24/25
ERDs being completed - PGV CP5.01	Q1 25/26	On Target	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	Completed		Closed Q3 25/26
ERDs being completed - RSF CP5.01	Q1 25/26	On Target	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	Completed		Closed Q3 25/26
Finance element of new HR system [OneCouncil] implemented CP5.01	Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			Completed Q1 24/25
No. new Modern Apprenticeships/Paid Placements and Youth Traineeships CP5.02	FY 22/23	148	FY 23/24	177	FY 24/25	146	125	
% of indicators in OHS Strategy with green rating CP5.01	FY 22/23	90 %	FY 23/24	60 %	FY 24/25	80 %	90 %	
ICT Strategy implemented CP5.04	Q1 25/26	On Target	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	On Target		Due to complete 2027
Digital Strategy implemented CP5.04	Q1 25/26	On Target	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	On Target		Due to complete Q1 27/28

The Council's ERD performance data has moved to align with Chief Officer structures. A new recording process has also been piloted and will be implemented in the 2026/27 financial year. As such, the current open ERD actions reported by the old service structure will be closed and new indicators developed.

7. Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) Outwith the Performance Plan

Corporate Service Cluster: SPIs						
SPIs not monitored in Performance 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	£ 31.48		annual update August
Cost Procurement Sectn % Net Rev Budget	FY 23/24	% 0.092	FY 24/25	% 0.087		annual update July
Cost NDR collection/ chargeable property	FY 23/24	£ 13.24	FY 24/25	£ 12.74		annual update August
% income sundry debtors collected during yr	FY 23/24	86.77 %	FY 24/25	87.51 %		annual update
% NDR collected by year end	FY 23/24	94.67 %	FY 24/25	97.30 %		annual update
Trading Standards - business advice - 14 days	FY 23/24	69.15 %	FY 24/25	80.20 %		annual update June
Accident Injury Rate	FY 23/24	155	FY 24/25	162		annual update June
Cost of Accounting - % Net Rev Budget + HRA	FY 23/24	0.26 %	FY 24/25	0.29 %		annual update August
Overall Council Tax collection level - 5 years	FY 23/24	97.10 %	FY 24/25	97.00 %		annual update
Sickness THC - Non Teachers - Avg working days lost CORP06b	FY 23/24	12.71	FY 24/25	14.48		annual update August
Women managers in top 2% of earners	FY 23/24	53.6 %	FY 24/25	49.1 %		annual update August

Improved reporting and awareness are reflected in the increased Accident Injury Rate. As part of the new system introduced at the end of 2024, we have significantly improved our reporting and are capturing RIDDORS and incident data that would not have previously been captured. In addition, we have carried out extensive training and campaigns to improve accident reporting, resulting in higher rates of reported incidents. We anticipate this number will reduce as we use this improved data to analyse trends and put in place interventions that aims to reduce the recurrences of incidents.

8. Remaining Service Plan Items - Progress

The dashboards have been updated to remove elements that were previously reported as complete or archived, as well as elements that appear in multiple plans (i.e. in the Performance Plan or as an SPI).

8.1 ICT & Digital Transformation

8.1.1

Digital: Maximising the use of new processes and technology Q3 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

8.1.2

ICT: Provision of robust, secure and sustainable in-house ICT service Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
ICT % customers satisfied - monthly	M9 25/26	97.3 %	M10 25/26	95.6 %	95.0 %	
ICT % service contacts resolved within 24 hrs - monthly	M9 25/26	46.6 %	M10 25/26	51.5 %	56.0 %	
ICT Avg wait time [seconds] for Service Desk contacts - monthly	M9 25/26	59	M10 25/26	36	60	
% windows devices functional and receiving all security updates	Q2 25/26	97	Q3 25/26	92	100	
ICT User Satisfaction % customers satisfied - Annual	FY 24/25	89.29 %	FY 25/26	80.00 %	90.00 %	

As explained in previous quarterly performance reports, the target of 100% compliance for Windows devices receiving all updates is challenging but is still the correct target to aim for. Compliance over 90% is considered to be good, however, compared to industry standards.

Please note that the 25/26 data for the “ICT User Satisfaction - % customers satisfied” performance indicator was received in February 2026 and so is shown in the table. Customer satisfaction has dipped compared to the previous year and a separate report on the agenda for this Committee meeting provides full details of the results of the survey.

8.1.3

ICT: Provision of robust, secure and sustainable in-house ICT service Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Update and test cyber incident response plan	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	Completed		Completed Q3 25/26
Implement new network model to support move to SWAN2	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26

8.2 Performance and Governance

8.2.1

Legal & Governance: Provide High-Quality Legal Advice and representation Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Monitor Guardianship applications within 30 days	Q2 25/26	100 %	Q3 25/26	94 %	90 %	

8.2.2

Legal & Governance: Tackle Unfair & Unsafe Trading Practices and Assist Business Growth Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice and Citizen Advice per 1000 population ENV5a	FY 23/24	£ 8,755	FY 24/25	£ 8,749	£ 10,924	annual update November
Trading Standards - business advice - 14 days	FY 23/24	69.15 %	FY 24/25	80.20 %	79.0 %	annual update June

8.2.3

Communications & Resilience: Internal & External Communications Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Monitor and report Business Continuity training uptake and plan completion	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	Completed		Due to Complete Mar 26
Report debrief learning in Resilience Group action plans	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	On Target		Review Q4 23/24
Report on and increase overall engagement stats for social media	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	On Target		Reported and published regularly

8.2.4

Corporate Performance, Audit & Information Governance: Information Governance Q3 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	Q2 25/26	38 %	Q3 25/26	38 %		
Increase completion of Information Management Training: Staff	Q2 25/26	47 %	Q3 25/26	49 %		

8.2.5

Legal & Governance: Elections Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Digital Accessibility Project	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26

8.2.6

Legal & Governance: Effective Governance Arrangements Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Issue Committee papers 10 days prior to meetings	Q2 25/26	84 %	Q3 25/26	85 %		Data expected quarterly

8.3 Resources and Finance

8.3.1

Financial Management Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Support the Council in achieving and sustaining a financially sustainable position	Q2 25/26	On Target	Q3 25/26	Not Updated		Due to complete March 27
Council fulfils its obligations as Accountable Body to Government for the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport	Q2 25/26	Completed	Q3 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26

8.3.2

Joint Procurement Strategy Q3 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	65 %	95 %	
% contracts with carbon reduction clause included	FY 23/24	77 %	FY 24/25	68 %	75 %	
% Contract Spend - collaborative contracts [exc. frameworks]	FY 23/24	1 %	FY 24/25	0 %	10 %	
% Contract Spend - Cat. A or B frameworks	FY 23/24	7 %	FY 24/25	4 %	10 %	
Council Spend with Highland Small & Medium sized businesses	FY 23/24	33 %	FY 24/25	29 %	30 %	
% contracts with fair work practices included	FY 23/24	77 %	FY 24/25	80 %	95 %	
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	68.6 %	80.0 %	

A detailed Procurement report was presented to this Committee in November 2025 covering a range of related-areas including performance. The report can be found at this link [Annual Procurement Report Nov 25](#).

8.3.3

People Q3 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Support, monitor and report on completion rates of ERDs/Induction Training/Mandatory Courses	Q2 25/26	Some Slippage	Q3 25/26	No Significant Progress		Review quarterly

The Learning and Development Team is carrying out focused work on increasing compliance with mandatory training, with a 12-month Mandatory Training Improvement Programme in place. Progress on this Programme will be reported to future Committees.

A new Mandatory Training dashboard has been developed using Power BI. This include monthly forecasting, RAG status indicators and be grouped by cluster and service and feedback will be sought to improve further.

Mandatory training has been clarified, with clear definitions of mandatory and role-specific requirements and a matrix of required courses, durations and refresh cycles in place. Mandatory training is now assigned to new joiners with a set completion window and automated reminders and escalations. Next steps include enabling reminders to existing staff when training expires and providing better visibility of training status.

9. ICT, Strategic Improvement & Digital Services

9.1 The table in section 9.2 shows the performance for the in-house ICT Service Desk and support teams for Q3 2025/26.

Key points to take from this data are:

- Although customer satisfaction has largely remained consistent, there was a dip in November 2025.
- November and December 2025 were challenging months for the team with several KPIs only meeting the red target.

Much of the drop in performance was directly related to planned major infrastructure changes that are required to ensure the Council has secure and resilient ICT, as outlined in the ICT Strategy. Unfortunately, changes of this scale can have a temporary impact on end users to some extent, but the team will follow standard practice of analysing lessons learnt from the changes to minimise disruption in future.

On further analysis, the dip in performance was due to a combination of factors:

- Printers - the move to full cloud printing across the Council was temporarily paused due to the significant number of incidents raised relating mainly to login issues.
- Microsoft Office – an update to school devices caused major issues.
- Data centre – migration to new data centre services, an essential element of ICT Strategy implementation, did impact on end users. When issues occurred, they were identified and resolved quickly but there was still impact.
- Sickness levels over the winter impacted on team capacity.

An assessment of team capacity and structure is also underway with the aim of providing more resilience.

9.2 Members are advised that delivery of the ICT Strategy is progressing well – to plan and within existing agreed budgets. The Strategy aims to provide improved service, improved resilience and improved innovation in ICT. High level deliverables include:

- SWAN2 Migration – now complete.
- Data centre rationalisation
- New data centre private cloud – will be completed in March 2026.
- Local area network redesign
- Modern management of user devices
- Cloud printing
- Cybersecurity improvements

Governance of the ICT Strategy delivery is through a cross-Service board chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

9.3

Measure	Target Performance			Actual Performance					
	Red	Amber	Green	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25
% Satisfied customers	85%	85-95%	95%	98.92%	97.19%	98.54%	97.84%	94.29%	97.31%
% Service Desk calls abandoned	10%	10-5%	5%	2.88%	4.88%	4.50%	4.81%	11.84%	9.43%
Average Service Desk wait time	120s	120-60s	60s	23s	45s	45s	36s	71s	59s
% Incidents resolved within 24 hours	50%	50-56%	56%	58.78%	63.60%	52.10%	56.86%	47.07%	46.59%
% Incidents resolved within 7 days	70%	70-80%	80%	77.52%	85.57%	77.83%	79.14%	69.36%	69.12%
% Incidents resolved within 28 days	90%	90-95%	95%	93.40%	94.85%	97.21%	95.50%	95.92%	92.40%
Number of Active Incidents	N/A	N/A	N/A	325	537	537	479	710	621
Number of Active Requests	N/A	N/A	N/A	1466	1818	1778	1788	1972	1530
Number of incidents opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	1404	2469	2833	2135	2823	2072
Number of incidents closed	N/A	N/A	N/A	1606	2253	2833	2200	2598	2170
Number of requests opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	2126	3016	2978	2505	2316	1638
Number of requests closed	N/A	N/A	N/A	2067	2513	2854	2363	2072	1620
Number of Chromebook repairs opened	N/A	N/A	N/A	92	357	585	332	566	389
Number of Chromebook repairs closed	N/A	N/A	N/A	500	379	469	419	413	236

9.4 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 December 2025.

9.5

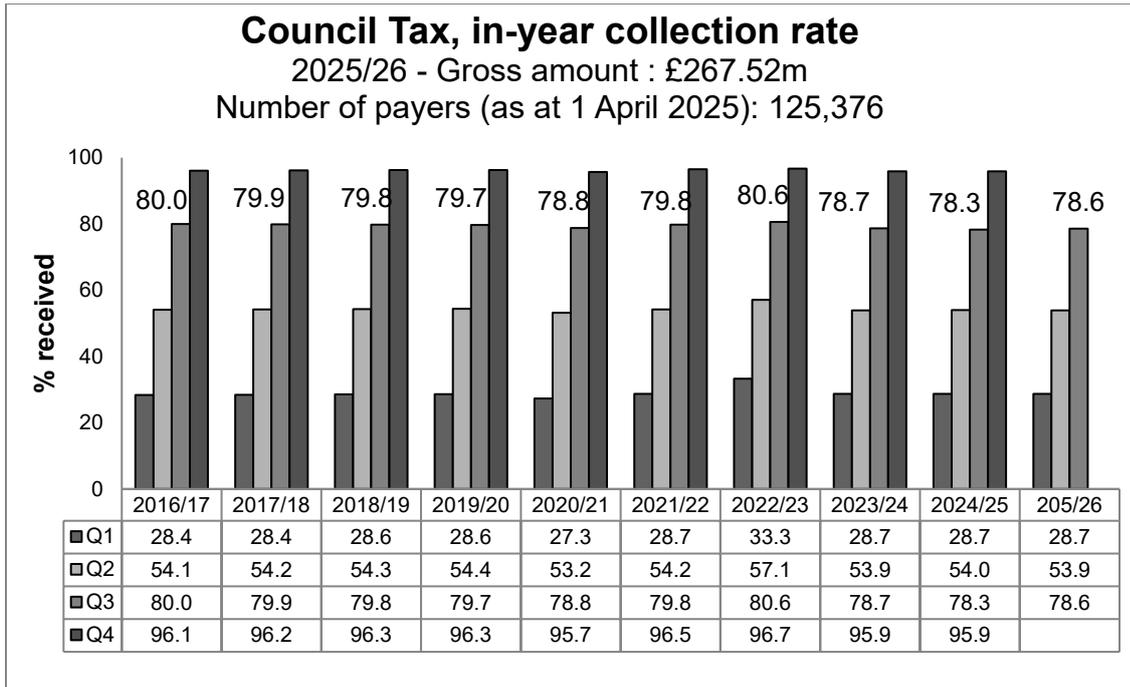
S.No`	SLA	Target Performance Level	Oct'25 SLA	Nov'25 SLA	Dec'25 SLA	Service Points	RAG
KPI 01	Severity 1 Incident resolution	n	0	0	0	0	↑
KPI 02	Severity 2 Incident resolution	n	2	0	0	0	↑
KPI 03	Severity 3 Incident resolution	95%	100%	100%	100%	0	↑
KPI 04	Severity 4 Incident resolution	95%	100%	100%	100%	0	↑
KPI 05	Number of Severity 1 Incidents - Rolling Three months	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	↑

10. Resources and Finance

10.1 Council Tax In-Year Collection Rate

- 10.1.1 A collection rate of 78.6% is reported for Q3 2025/26 which is slightly higher (0.3%) than the same collection rate as Q3 2024/25.
- 10.1.2 Council Tax contributes around 20.1% 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 76.7% of council tax bill payments (Q3), which is higher than the performance for the comparable period last year, which was at 76.1%, representing 85.6% of Council Tax receipts. Direct Debit continues to be the Council's preferred payment method as it is secure and efficient, and convenient for taxpayers.
- 10.1.3 Direct debit payments and the value of receipts support collections performance, reduce bank charges resulting in cost avoidance, and enable the Council to better predict future income levels, which are important for treasury management and financial planning purposes.

10.1.4



10.1.5 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 as 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.

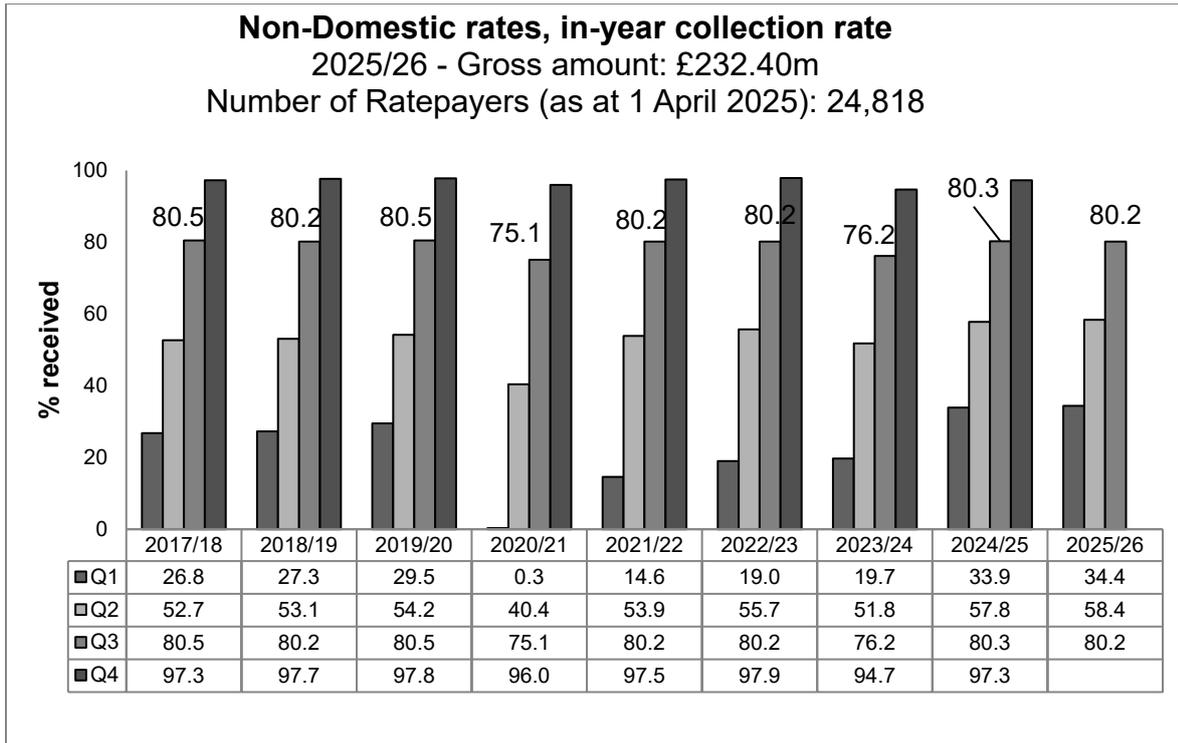
10.2 **Non-Domestic Rates In-Year Collection Rate**

10.2.1 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 20.5% of the Council’s general fund.

10.2.2 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.

10.2.3 The collection rate for Q3 of 80.2% shows a slight decrease (0.1%) when compared with the same period in the previous year of 80.3%. The Non-Domestic Rates team continue to identify potential entitlement to relief and to progress recovery in accordance with legislative timescales.

10.2.4

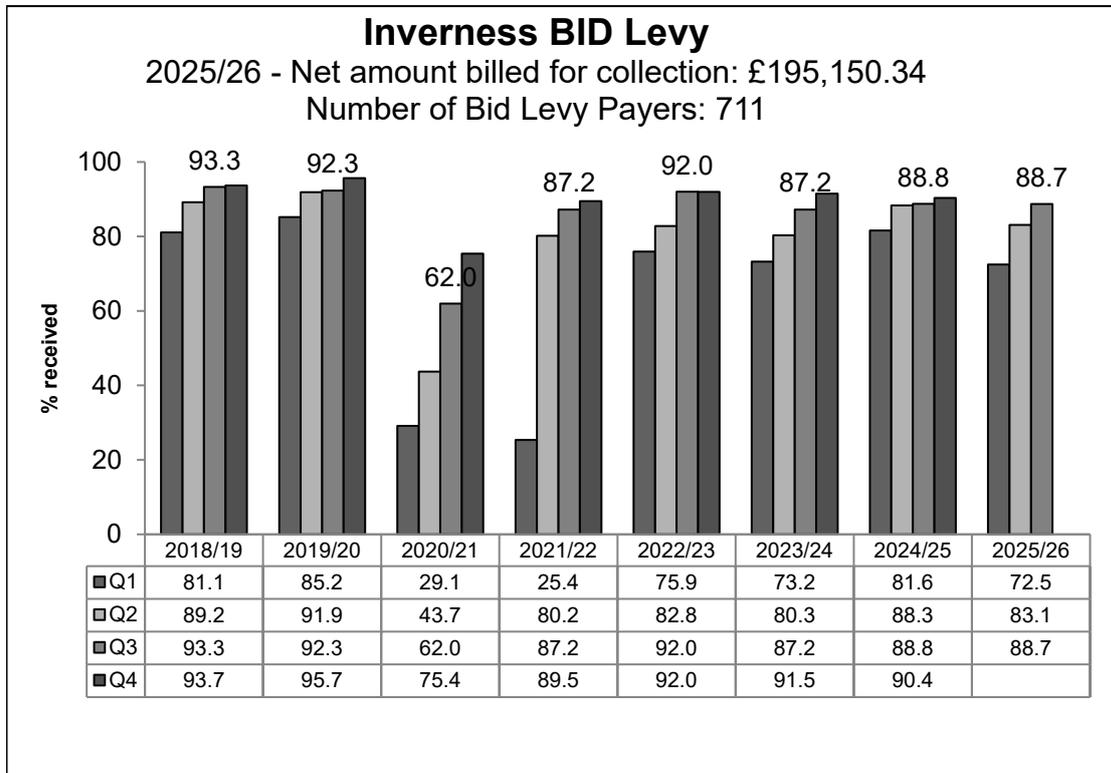


11. Business Improvement Districts (BID)

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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 commences 1st December each year.

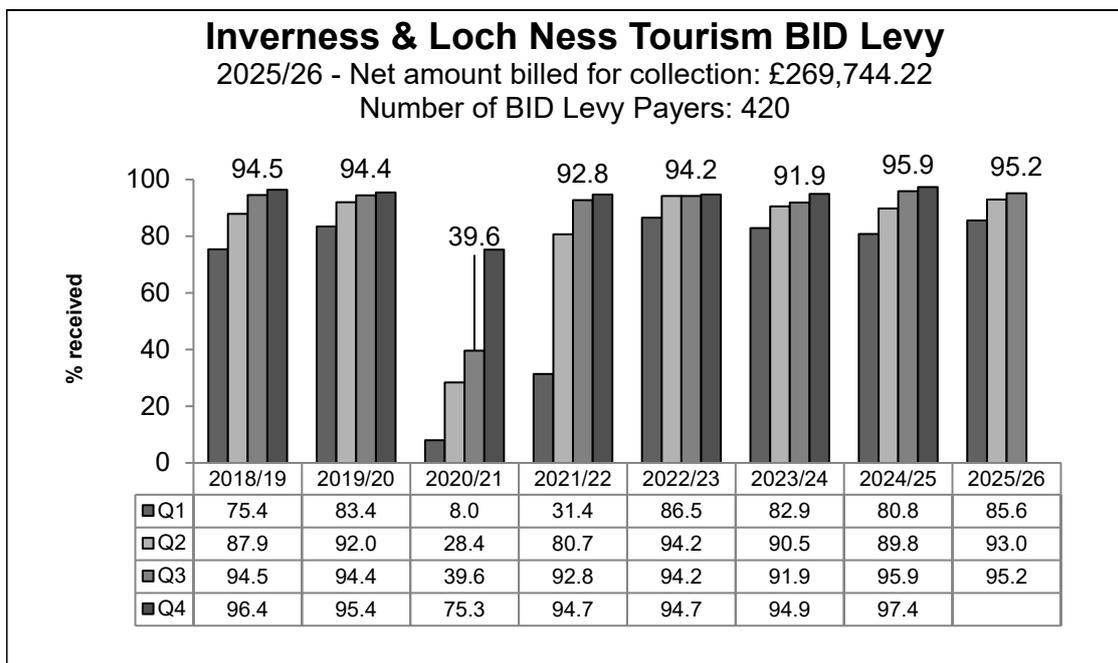
12. Inverness BID Levy

12.1 The Q3 performance is just slightly lower when compared with the previous year (0.1%). The Revenues Team continue to pursue the outstanding sums with the aim of maximising collections.



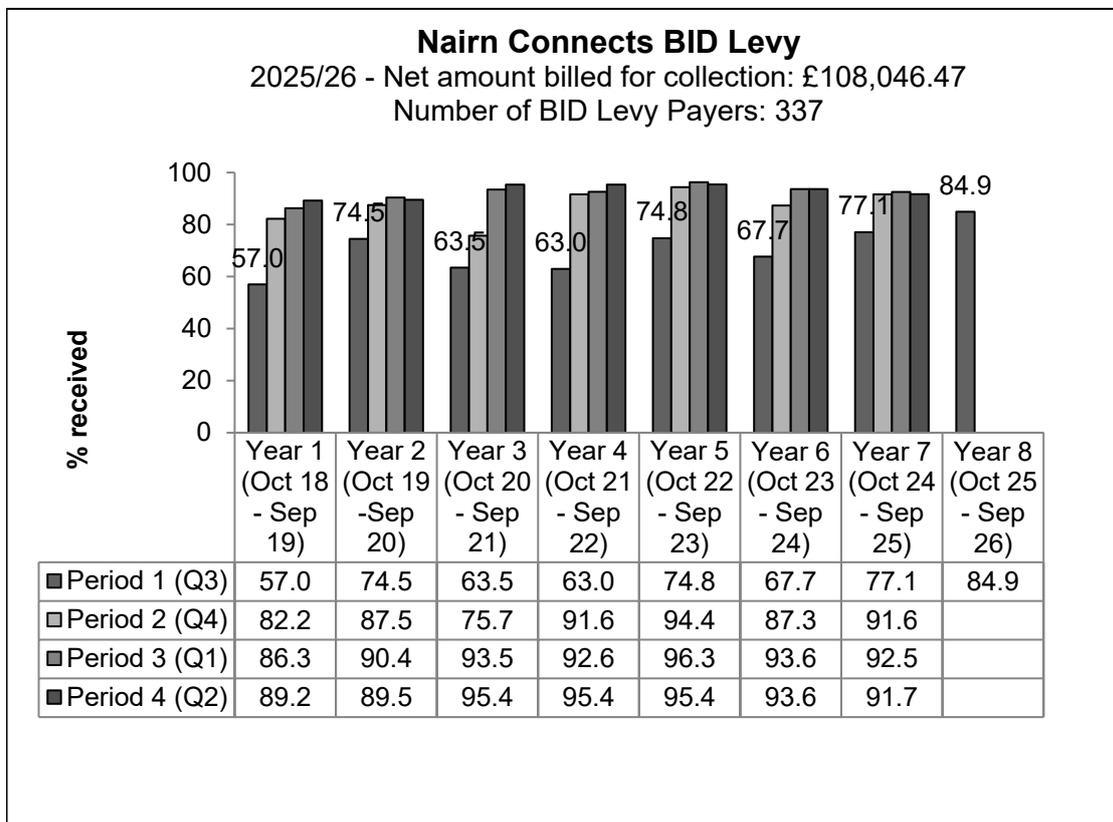
12.2 Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID Levy

By the end of Q3, 95.2% of the BID levies have been paid which is down on the high performance in Q3 2025/26, but still showing strongly compared to other years for the Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID. Recovery action continues as planned to maximise incomes.



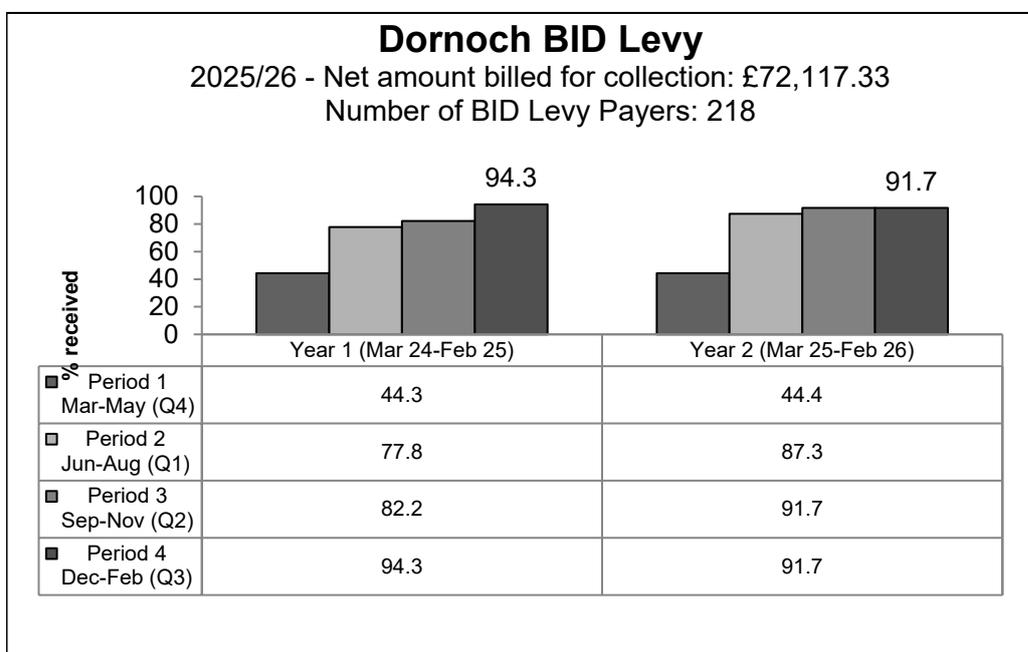
12.3 Nairn Connects BID Levy

The Nairn Connects billing year commences 1 October each year. Performance in Period 1 (Q3) shows a collection rate of 84.9%, which is considerably higher than the same period last year. Recoveries continue as scheduled.



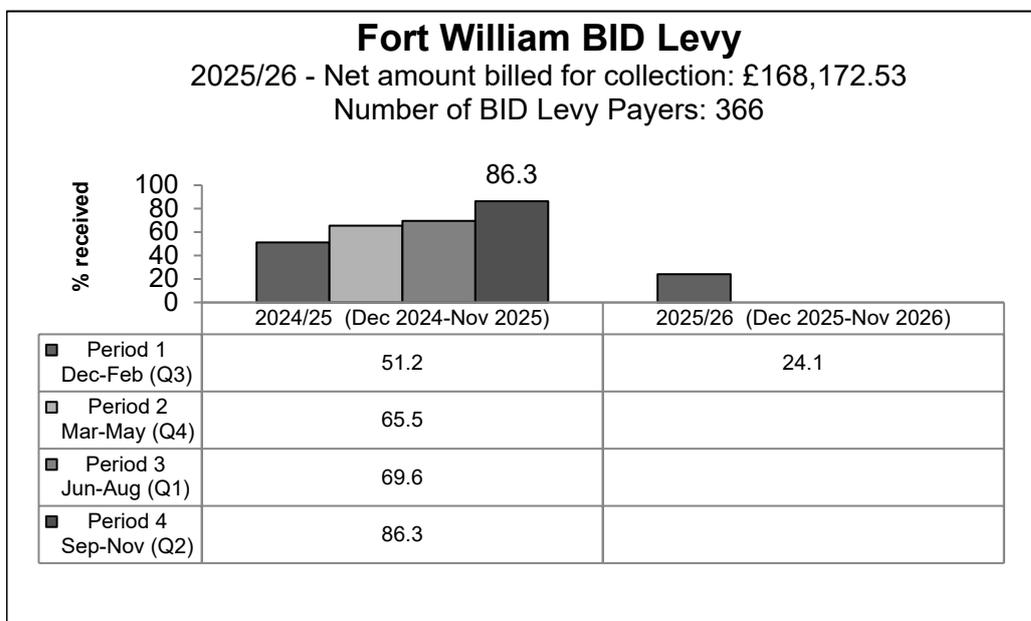
12.4 Dornoch BID Levy

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 reflects the position as at 31/12/2025 (91.7%). Recovery actions continue.



12.5 Fort William BID Levy

For Period 1, the figures below reflect the position at 31/12/2025. The collection rate of 24.1% reflect 1 months of Period 1. BID bills were issued as planned on 1 December 2025 with an annual billing period of 1 December 2025 to 30 November 2026. Recovery actions continue as scheduled.

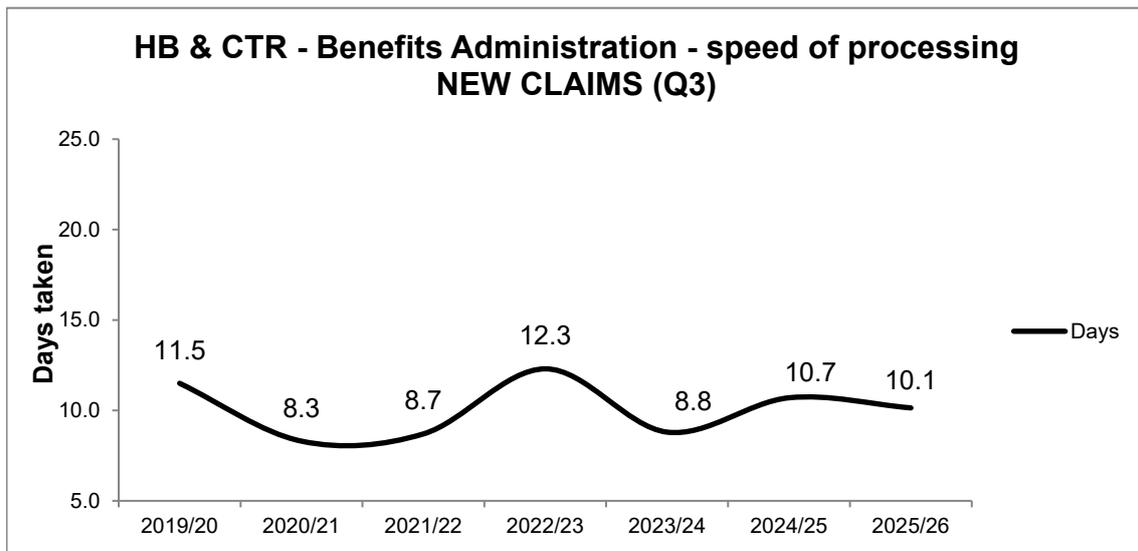


13. Single Grant Applications (SGA)

- 13.1 The Business Support team provides support for all Clusters, including the Community Development team, in the administrative process for SGAs.
- 13.2 107 SGAs were received during Q3, 2025/26 of which 99.1% were processed within the 5 days target. The comparable figures for Q2 2024/25 were 112 applications with a performance figure of 99.1%, demonstrating the continued high and improving performance.

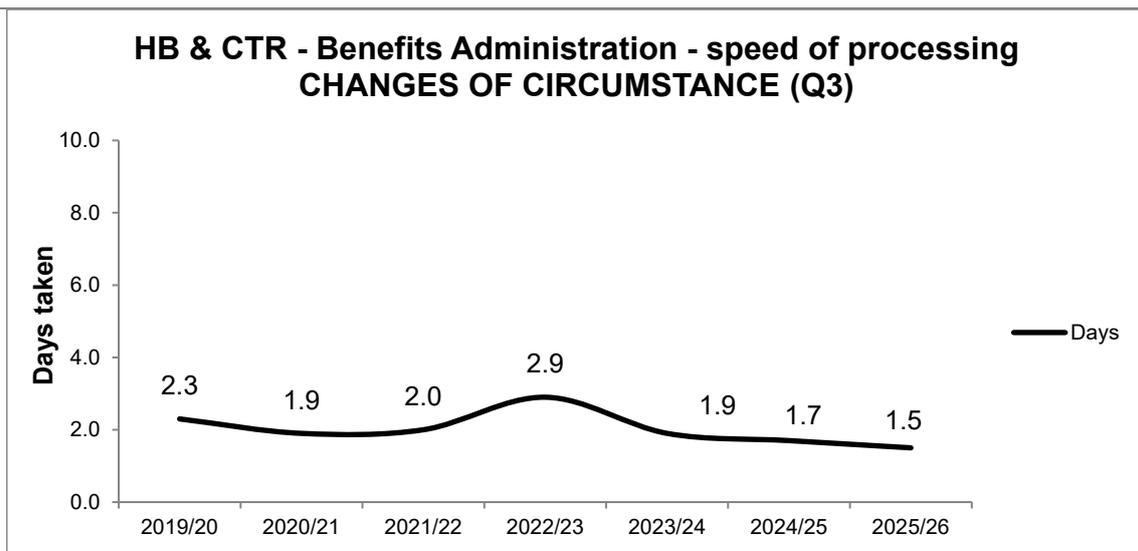
Single Grant Applications						
Percentage logged, acknowledged & distributed within 5 days target						
2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	24/25	25/26 to date
98.9%	99.2%	97.1%	97.8%	99.8%	99.4%	99.4%

13.3 Speed of processing performance: Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction



13.4 This performance of 10.1 days for Q3, compares with 10.7 days in the same period in the prior year, reflecting an improvement in performance.

13.5



13.6 Performance of 1.5 days for Q3 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.

13.7 95.3% of all Q3 benefit-related work are 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.

13.8 The latest statistics published by the DWP for Housing Benefit relates to Q2, and reports that the Highland Council was ranked 8th equal for New Claims and ranked 1st equal (with Orkney) for Changes in Circumstances in Scotland.

13.9 Officers continue to collaborate with UK Government, Scottish Government and CoSLA to develop and progress welfare-related matters.

14. Climate Change/Carbon Clever

14.1 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 October-December 2025, over 40.2 tonnes of waste were diverted from landfill, and 4.04 metric tonnes of CO₂e were avoided. (CO₂e, or carbon dioxide equivalent, is a metric used to standardise the measurement of greenhouse gas emissions).

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

Date: 27 February 2026

Authors: Hannah Kollef, Portfolio Manager
Lucy Lallah, Business Management Analyst
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Elaine Barrie, Head of People

Appendices: Appendix 1 – SPI Invoices

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	Q2	Q3
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	64.9	70.0
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	68.6	74.1
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	89.9	78.0
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	84.8	86.1
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	82.1	85.4
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	68.8	68.1
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	78.1	75.5
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	56.5	78.8
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	62.0	70.1
THC	69.3	70.7	72.8	80.9	75.3	69.7	75.1	57.0	68.5	63.8	63.3	63.3	64.7	72.5	72.3

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	Q2	Q3
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	94.4	91.2
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	86.6	91.3
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	97.4	96.8
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	95.5	97.0
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	95.5	96.5
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	96.8	95.9
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	95.4	94.3
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	94.2	97.0
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	92.6	93.7
THC	93.8	94.6	95.1	96.7	95.6	93.6	95.3	87.7	91.4	92.9	92.9	91.4	93.0	94.8	94.3