

Agenda Item	12
Report No	CP/14/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 21 May 2026

Report Title: Performance Reporting for Q4 January 2026 – March 2026

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 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 service performance information;
- ii. **Note** the change to absence reporting to align with Chief Officer Structure.
- iii. **Note** the change to Freedom of Information reporting to align with Chief Officer structure.

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

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no 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 Staff absence is a nationally benchmarked indicator. Effective absence management supports staff, maintains productivity, and contributes to the Council's benchmarked performance.

5.2.2 Absence data is now reported by Chief Officer service area. This is available from quarter 2 2025/26 and detailed in the table below. Quarter 1 data, and previous data trends are provided for comparator purposes in the second table.

The Absence data up to and including Q4 25/26 is shown below: -

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
Enterprise and Investment			0.82					
Facilities and Fleet Management	3.32	4.36	4.77					
Housing and Communities	3.06	4.83	4.48					
Operations and Maintenance	5.50	5.32	5.35					
Property and Assets	1.53	1.29	1.86					
Highland Council	3.02	4.09	3.97					

Average Days Lost	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26
Communities and Place	4.27	4.38	4.31	4.21	4.41	4.99	5.14	4.80
Highland Council	2.08	3.35	3.48	3.24	2.54	3.42	3.95	3.55

- 5.2.3 For Operations and Maintenance, Facilities and Fleet Management and Housing and Communities, absence levels have varied over the last year. The pattern of absence is higher amongst these services, which will in part be related to the largely manual workforce.
- 5.2.4 Short term absence amongst these service areas reduced between quarters three and four during 2025/26, however long-term absence has increased over the year. Long-term absence represents a disproportionate level of FTE days lost compared to the number of employees affected. The main reasons for absence amongst these staff groups varies – viral is common across the three service areas, with musculoskeletal common amongst Facilities and Operations and stress amongst Facilities and Housing and Communities.
- 5.2.5 Reducing absence rates through a strong and consistent approach to attendance management is a particular focus for the Cluster. Mandatory online and face-to-face training is available for managers. 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.
- 5.2.6 The causes of absence are being proactively addressed through a coordinated and preventative approach including the effective use of return-to-work interviews, enhanced Occupational Health input and the recruitment of additional Attendance Support Officers enables timely intervention and supports informed decision-making to promote attendance and reduce avoidable absence.
- 5.2.7 This approach is further strengthened through employee access to an internal physiotherapy service, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), mentally healthy workplace training, attendance management training and Employee Review and Development (ERD) meetings. Stress risk assessments covering both work and non-work-related factors together with a focus on courageous conversations and positive workplace culture support managers to have regular, meaningful discussions about health, safety and wellbeing with their teams.

5.2.8 As detailed within the Place Cluster Workforce Planning report at item 10, key proactive intervention measures include:-

- Recruitment of three additional Attendance Support Officers to increase capacity and provide targeted support to managers in managing attendance.
- Mandatory and earlier referrals to Occupational Health for stress-related absence to ensure timely medical advice and appropriate intervention.
- Consistent use of structured return-to-work meetings to identify required support, reasonable adjustments and return arrangements.
- Increased promotion and consistent use of the Occupational Health physiotherapy service to support early intervention for musculoskeletal conditions, reduce the likelihood of absence escalating into long-term cases and support earlier and sustainable returns to work.
- Formal attendance management review meetings undertaken in line with policy to address short-term absence patterns and progress long-term cases.
- Enhanced training and ongoing support for line managers to strengthen confidence, consistency and capability in managing attendance.
- Completion and regular review of stress risk assessments to identify and mitigate workplace factors contributing to absence.
- Targeted management support to address workload pressures and role clarity, reducing the risk of escalation of stress-related absence.
- Continued promotion and utilisation of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), providing confidential access to counselling and mental health and wellbeing support at an early stage.

5.3 Service Complaints Response Times

5.3.1 The Complaints data up to and including Q4 25/26 is shown below: -

Service Complaints - Communities and Place

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

Frontline Resolution within 5 days

	Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26	
Communities and Place	61	85 %	105	87 %	56	86 %	52	88 %	63	95 %	93	94 %	74	82 %	69	86 %
Highland Council	219	84 %	196	78 %	155	88 %	183	87 %	174	91 %	223	90 %	200	85 %	262	82 %

Investigation Resolution within 20 days

	Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26	
Communities and Place	7	43 %	10	50 %	4	25 %	4	50 %	2	100 %	2	100 %	2	50 %	8	50 %
Highland Council	86	47 %	101	57 %	90	42 %	71	51 %	68	47 %	86	40 %	94	55 %	110	51 %

Escalated Resolution within 20 days

	Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26	
Communities and Place	7	57 %	7	57 %	8	75 %	8	63 %	7	71 %	7	29 %	5	20 %	4	50 %
Highland Council	47	32 %	28	50 %	26	46 %	34	44 %	30	33 %	27	26 %	22	27 %	31	23 %

5.3.2 Complaints performance remains strong across the Communities and Place service area. Service teams continue to work on sustaining performance at this level.

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

5.4.1 The FOI data up to and including Q4 is shown below: -

Service Freedom of Information Requests - Communities and Place

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

% FOIs Compliant - Communities and Place	Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26	
		103	89 %	82	79 %	92	79 %	96	79 %	92	82 %	95	86 %	97	71 %	91

% FOIs Compliant - Highland Council	Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26	
		512	81 %	481	76 %	570	73 %	617	71 %	577	81 %	601	77 %	581	73 %	578

5.4.2 Performance against FOI response times has improved between quarters 3 and 4 for the service area, in contrast to the corporate average.

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 30- and 10-days during Quarter 4 against a target of 95% and 77%, respectively, was as follows:-

Service Invoice Payment Times - Communities and Place

Invoice Payment within 30 days	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Communities and Place	80.8 %	88.2 %	87.9 %	88.7 %	88.2 %	94.4 %	91.2 %	94.4 %
Highland Council	87.7 %	91.4 %	92.9 %	92.9 %	93.0 %	94.8 %	94.3 %	95.2 %

Invoice Payment less than 10 days	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Communities and Place	49.7 %	66.7 %	52.1 %	46.5 %	53.4 %	64.9 %	70.0 %	69.5 %
Highland Council	57.0 %	68.5 %	63.8 %	63.3 %	64.7 %	72.5 %	72.3 %	69.6 %

5.5.2 Service performance against invoice payments remains strong.

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	17.0	CY 2025			
No. HC workforce trained in supporting people with mental health and wellbeing concerns CP1.07	FY 24/25	370	FY 25/26			

PIs/Actions in the performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Street Cleanliness Score CP2.07 ENV03c	FY 24/25	95.91 %	FY 25/26			annual update December

PIs/Actions in the performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Continue partnership with ILM CP4.06	Q3 25/26	On Target	Q4 25/26	On Target		Target is ongoing
% Household waste recycled CP4.06 ENV06	FY 24/25	42.5 %	FY 25/26			annual update September
Increase areas identified for food growing and ecological benefit CP4.11	Q3 25/26		Q4 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	Q3 25/26	Some Slippage	Q4 25/26	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 24/25
The 'My Council' project CP5.03	Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26			Completed Q1 25/26
Supporting and engaging with Community Councils CP5.05	Q3 25/26	On Target	Q4 25/26	On Target		Target is ongoing
Involved Communities: Area Place Plans for each Council area CP2.04/CP3.07/CP4.03/CP5.06	Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26			Completed Q2 25/26

7 SPI's Not Included in the Performance Plan

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

7.2

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 ENV01a	FY 24/25	£ 100.97	FY 25/26			annual update November
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise ENV02a	FY 24/25	£ 89.69	FY 25/26			annual update November
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1000 popn ENV03a	FY 24/25	£ 11,644	FY 25/26			annual update November
% adults satisfied - refuse collection ENV07a	FY 24/25	87.0 %	FY 25/26			annual update December
% adults satisfied - street cleaning ENV07b	FY 24/25	62.0 %	FY 25/26			annual update December
95% of high risk private water supplies are inspected and sampled	FY 24/25	77 %	FY 25/26			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 2025/26 for some indicators.

8.2

Bereavement Services, Transforming Services for Significant Life Events Q4 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/Update Date
Delivery of Burial Ground Projects	Q3 25/26	On Target	Q4 25/26	On Target		Targets set in project plan

8.3

Environmental Health Q4 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 24/25	77 %	FY 25/26		95 %	annual update August

8.4

Community Development and Involvement Approaches Q4 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/Update Date
External Annual Examination by National Records of Scotland	CY 2024	97 %	CY 2025		98 %	annual update November

8.5

Transforming our Approach to Community Spaces Q4 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/Update Date
Develop community volunteering policy	Q3 25/26	Some Slippage	Q4 25/26	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q3 23/24

8.6

Waste Q4 25/26						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/Update Date
Street Cleanliness Score CP2.07 ENV03c	FY 24/25	95.91 %	FY 25/26			annual update December
% Household waste recycled CP4.06 ENV06	FY 24/25	42.5 %	FY 25/26			annual update September
Net Cost of Waste Collection per Premise ENV01a	FY 24/25	£ 100.97	FY 25/26			annual update November
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise ENV02a	FY 24/25	£ 89.69	FY 25/26			annual update November
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1000 popn ENV03a	FY 24/25	£ 11,644	FY 25/26			annual update November
% adults satisfied - refuse collection ENV07a	FY 24/25	87.0 %	FY 25/26			annual update December
% adults satisfied - street cleaning ENV07b	FY 24/25	62.0 %	FY 25/26			annual update December

8.7

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: May 2026

Author: Andrew Mackinnon, Corporate Performance Officer
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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None