

Agenda Item	4
Report No	HCW-07-26

The Highland Council

Committee: Health, Social Care & Wellbeing

Date: 27 May 2026

Report Title: Delivery Plan Monitoring & Progress Update – Person Centred Solutions Q4 25/26

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Delivery Plan 2024-2027 consists of 57 projects/programmes, managed through 6 Portfolio Boards. Each project is reported to a relevant committee for consideration and scrutiny in terms of the Portfolio Reporting Cycle agreed at Council on 15 May 2025. Exceptions to this general rule may apply when for example circumstances merit a standalone project/programme report to either committee or council. If exceptions apply this report will signpost to where the relevant reporting can be found.
- 1.2 This report provides financial, performance, risk and general information on the following Delivery Plan projects/Programme:
- Kinship & Foster Carers
 - Developing the Workforce
 - Improving Transition Outcomes
 - Mosaic Implementation (formerly Replacement Case Management System)
 - Digital Options
- 1.3 The content and structure of the report is intended to:
- assist Member scrutiny and performance management
 - inform decision making and aid continuous improvement, and
 - provide transparency and accessibility

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Scrutinise** and **note** the Delivery Project updates provided in this report.
- Note** and **Agree** the proposed changes to the workstream headings set out in paragraph 5.5.

3. Implications

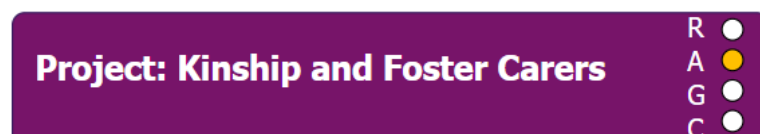
- 3.1 **Resource** - There are no resource implications arising as a direct result of this report. Any resource implications (if any) for delivery plan projects or programmes are detailed in the Financials sections of each of the project updates provided below.
- 3.2 **Legal** - This report contributes 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 risk implications arising as a direct result of this report. Project/Programme risks are identified via the Council risk management process and monitored through the Portfolio Boards and are reported by exception only in the relevant sections on Risk below for each project and at Section 12 for overall Portfolio Risks.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Impacts

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

5. Kinship & Foster Carers

5.1 Overall RAG



The aim of this workstream is to ensure children will achieve more sustainable family-based care through the development of a kinship team to identify, assess and support Kinship carers across Highland and to support recruitment of foster carers. This will increase the proportion of children in kinship care, and more foster carers will ensure Highland children remain with Highland families.

5.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

MILESTONES		CURRENT STATUS
<i>Starts Apr24 / Completes Jan25</i>	Kinship: Establish Kinship team	M12 24/25 Completed
<i>Starts Dec25 / Completes Jan26</i>	Kinship: Establish a Kinship Project Team with the aim of increasing the number of Kinship Carers	M10 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Sep25 / Completes Oct25</i>	Foster Carers: Audit of service processes to be completed	M7 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Dec25 / Completes Jan26</i>	Foster Carers: Establish a Fostering Project Team with the aim of increasing the number of Foster Carers	M10 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Sep25 / Completes Mar26</i>	Kinship: Team full operational	M12 25/26 Some Slippage
<i>Starts Dec25 / Completes Mar26</i>	Kinship: Develop a Kinship Model	M12 25/26 Some Slippage
<i>Starts Jan26 / Completes Jun26</i>	Kinship: Develop Communications strategy/methods for family based care	M12 25/26 On Target
<i>Starts Dec25 / Completes Dec26</i>	Kinship: Kinship Team mid way evaluation	M12 25/26 On Target
<i>Starts Dec25 / Completes Jun26</i>	Foster Carers: Appoint Foster Carer Recruitment and Retention Officer	M12 25/26 On Target
<i>Starts Nov25 / Completes Dec26</i>	Foster Carers: Implementation of recommendations	M12 25/26 On Target

Kinship

A bespoke kinship team has now been established within Childrens Services. A Highland wide service undertaking Family finding and assessment began on 19 January 2026 and has supported children and their carers across Highland since then.

Kinship placements are at a high risk of breakdown due to the complexities of relationships and the potential needs of the children, as seen by 2 kinship placement breakdowns in 2026. The Kinship model being developed in conjunction with Kinship carers identifies the need for intensive and flexible support to Kinship carers therefore 5 FTE support work staff will be recruited to the Kinship Team across Highland and it is expected there will be a full team compliment by July 2026. The team will be fully operational at this point.

A full evaluation of the service will be carried out at the end of 2026 to ensure that the Kinship team is meeting the needs of children and carers across Highland.

Kinship placements accounted for 28% of our total looked after away from home population in April 2026 an increase from 26.99% in October 2025 which has remained on an upward trend.

March 26 - **229** children placed in kinship

March 26 – **163** kinship carer households

Fostering

CAN Digital completed a review of the Highland Council Fostering and Adoption Service in November 2025. Several recommendations from this review will be implemented to support and consolidate the improvement of the Fostering & Adoption Service.

Two FTE Recruitment & Retention officer posts to support foster carers across Highland will be recruited to by June 2026 as part of these recommendations to ensure that Foster Carers receive information, training and support in a timeously manner.

A separate detailed report on investment and improvement of the Foster Care Service is provided later on the agenda to this meeting of the Health Social Care & Wellbeing Committee.

5.3 Financial Summary

i) Savings

£	Children's Services: Family First Approach: Savings FY 24-28	£ 200,000
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Planning is underway for an exit strategy for the four workstreams which are funded via the Families First Approach. In addition, significant scrutiny has taken place across commissioned and non-commissioned services to identify savings.

ii) Investment

£	Families First: Investment: EMR	£ 1,199,141
£	Families First: Investment: Revenue	£ 250,000

In FY2025/2026 the Families First workstream spent £1,199,141 of the £2M approved Earmarked Balance.

5.4 Key Risks

KEY RISKS ASSESSED / RESPONSE	CURRENT RISK RATING	RESPONSE
Home in Highland: Savings Targets Not Achieved	15	Treat

5.5 Forward Plan

The Fostering Service is working towards implementing the recommendations made by CAN Digital. Evidence has been gathered from other local authorities who have engaged with CAN Digital. This evidence clearly supports the claims made by CAN Digital in terms of the increased activity levels surrounding fostering enquiries. The Service needs to ensure it has the resources in place in order to respond to an increased level of enquiries and is developing the workforce to achieve this.

Going forward the Children’s Service Budget Recovery Plan and the Families First Delivery Plan workstream will be aligned within the Delivery Plan as follows: -

- The “Families First” Workstream will be renamed “Improving Children’s Care & Support”
- “Home in Highland” project renamed “Residential Care” focussing on Children’s Houses and Placements.
- “Kinship & Foster Carers” project renamed “Family Based Care” focussing on Fostering, Adoption & Kinship Care.
- A new project created named “Children’s Disability Support” focussing on Self Directed Support (SDS) and Resource Allocation System (RAS) Model.

6. Developing the Workforce

The *Developing the Workforce* project within Health and Social Care, is a core enabling strand of the Delivery Plan, supporting the Council’s ability to deliver statutory responsibilities and priority outcomes in the context of sustained workforce pressures, demographic change, and financial constraint. Previous reports, particularly in relation to children’s service social work, highlighted challenges including recruitment and retention, skills availability, succession planning, and the need to adapt workforce models to support integrated and community led service delivery.

6.1 Overall RAG

Project: Developing the Workforce	R	○
	A	○
	G	●
	C	○

Current Status

Good progress has been made across the key workstreams of Child Health, Children’s Social Work and Mental Health Officers. There has been a focus on:

- **Workforce planning and intelligence** – Improved use of workforce data to support planning enabling clearer identification of pressure points, risk areas and future skills requirements.
- **Recruitment and retention** – Continued development of targeted recruitment approaches, including values-based recruitment, enhanced use of “grow your own” scheme, post graduate training programmes and linking with higher education training providers.
- **Learning and development** – Further emphasis on upskilling the existing workforce, supporting career progression, and building leadership and management capacity. This reflects previous committee direction to focus on workforce sustainability rather than short-term mitigation alone.
- **New and flexible roles** – Progress in exploring alternative workforce models, including widening role scopes, developing blended roles across services, and supporting multidisciplinary working where appropriate.

- **Partnership working** – Strengthened collaboration with Education and Learning developing early opportunities at school careers fairs.

6.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

MILESTONES		CURRENT STATUS
<i>Project commences Jan25</i>	Developing the Workforce: Project Commences	M10 24/25 Completed
<i>Starts Dec24 / Completes Jan25</i>	Developing the Workforce: Strategic Steering Group in place	M12 24/25 Completed
<i>Starts Jul25 / Completes Jan26</i>	Developing the Workforce: Finalise common HSC succession planning framework.	M8 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Jul25 / Completes Jan26</i>	Developing the Workforce: Finalise common HSC induction framework	M5 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Sep25/ Completes Jun26</i>	Developing the Workforce: Draft Child Health Workforce Strategy	M12 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Sep25/ Completes Jun26</i>	Developing the Workforce: Draft Social Work Workforce Strategy.	M12 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Sep25/ Completes Jun26</i>	Developing the Workforce: Draft Mental Health Officer Workforce Strategy	M12 25/26 On Target
<i>Starts Jan27 / Completes Jun27</i>	Developing the Workforce: Project Completion, move to BAU	

6.3 Financial Summary

There are no Delivery Plan financial elements directly associated with this project.

6.4 Key Risks

KEY RISKS ASSESSED / RESPONSE	CURRENT RISK RATING	RESPONSE
Developing the Workforce: Legislative Requirements	9	Tolerate

6.5 Forward Plan

Moving forwarding into 2026/27 there will be the consolidation of the discrete elements of the project into the development of a strategic improvement plan for the Workforce across all Health and Social Care, maximizing the opportunities across the services to ensure the continued move towards locality based whole family support for Highland.

7. Improving Transition Outcomes

7.1 Overall RAG

Project: Improving Transition Outcomes

R ●
A ●
G ●
C ●

In December 2025, the People Centred Solutions Portfolio Board approved the realignment of the two existing Adult Social Care (ASC) projects in the Delivery Plan. These will now be replaced by the four NHSH project themes under Track 2 of the NHSH Financial Plan. Going forward, progress will be reported against the following four themes:

- Community Led Local Care Models
- Care Pathway Redesign
- Service Rebalancing
- Technology and Workforce Transformation

Each of these themes includes specific elements designed to improve outcomes for young people transitioning from Children’s to Adult Services. While these projects are not exclusively focused on this cohort, their needs are considered an important aspect of the service design and implementation, ensuring that young adults’ transition-related requirements are met alongside the broader goals of the programme.

Additionally, two recent audits of the transitions process within The Highland Council and NHS Highland have been completed. The recommendations from these audits have been reviewed and will be incorporated into future initiatives under the Programme, addressing any identified gaps.

The workstream is currently reported as red due to underperformance in ASC savings delivery and the significant adjustments required to align the previous programme with the financial plan.

7.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

Measures of Success and Milestones are still to be developed for these new themes, but existing Milestones have been mapped into them as follows:

Project Theme	Existing Delivery Plan Milestones
Community Led Local Care Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility, Choice and Control (SDS) Implemented in 5 areas in Highland
Care Pathway Redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Commissioning Framework developed and approved
Service Rebalancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Lives – Commissioning Process Complete • Lochaber Project – complete initial stakeholder engagement
Technology & Workforce Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Service Business Case approval

7.3 Financial Summary

i) Savings

£ Operating Model:Adult Social Care: Savings FY 25-26	£ 2,600,000
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The year-end savings figure from NHH is confirmed to be £2.6m (non-recurring).

ii) Investment

£ Adult Social Care: Investment: EMR	£ 2,010,709
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At the Council meeting on 5 March 2026, Councillors agreed additional In-Year 2025/26 Deficit Support – recognising the in-year and legacy financial pressures and overspends in the current financial year, over and above the budgeted quantum agreed by the Council. At the meeting, the Council agreed to a further additional one-off funding of up to £5.0m for 2025/26. This in recognition of the forecast headline overspend in the NHH ASC budget of £26m.

Councillors also agreed a further £7m of one-off funding to support cost recovery, change and transformation. This has been added to the Transformation Reserve in 2026/2027.

7.4 Key Risks

KEY RISKS ASSESSED / RESPONSE	CURRENT RISK RATING	RESPONSE
Improving Transition Outcomes: Insufficient Alternative Providers	9	Tolerate
Improving Transition Outcomes: Not realising the Benefits of the Programme	12	Tolerate

Each project within the ASC Transformation Programme is being developed with consideration for the needs of younger adults transitioning from Children's to Adult Services.

7.5 Forward Plan

The following key initiatives make up the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, with elements that consider the needs of younger adults as they transition from Children's Services to Adult Services:

- Lochaber Project
- Digital Projects
- Local Care Models and Self-Directed Support (SDS) Project
- Handyperson and Care and Repair Scheme
- Shared Lives Service

Each project will incorporate considerations for the needs of younger adults in transition, ensuring their requirements are addressed as part of the overall service development.

The Lochaber Project

This project aims to design, develop, and implement a sustainable and affordable Adult Social Care operating model for the Lochaber District. While focused on creating a viable care model for the district, the needs of younger adults transitioning from Children’s Services will be considered to ensure the model is inclusive and adaptable.

Digital Projects

This initiative explores the use of the Vocala (Alexa) device, in collaboration with independent support providers and the NHS Learning Disabilities service. While the primary focus is on understanding how the technology can enhance care packages, younger adults' transition-related needs will be integrated into the testing, ensuring that solutions for this cohort are part of the broader digital care strategy.

Local Care Models and SDS

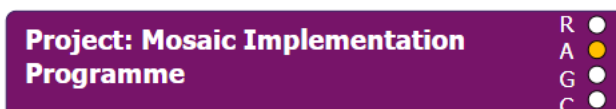
This project focuses on developing community-led care models with an emphasis on Self-Directed Support (SDS). While the main focus is on independent care for all supported individuals, the specific needs of younger adults transitioning to adulthood are factored into the shift towards greater autonomy and independence.

Shared Lives

The commissioning of a Shared Lives service for Highland is progressing well. This service will provide family-based care for individuals with complex needs including those younger adults transitioning from Children’s Services to ensure that the service meets their needs alongside the broader supported population.

8. Mosaic Implementation Programme (Formerly Replacement Case Management System)

8.1 Overall RAG



This programme has been renamed since entering the next phase and it is now called “Mosaic Implementation Programme”.

A series of case management workshops to determine how elements of Mosaic are configured, have begun and will continue until June 2026. The process for reviewing the Mosaic implementation plan is ongoing. Sufficient progress has been made to permit an indicative high level Mosaic implementation plan to be provided to Board. The Board has approved the new PID, jointly developed with the supplier, based on adding an additional objective regarding post go live support.

While significant progress has been made and the workshops are running to schedule, due to the full plan awaiting approval and the ongoing effort to put in place suitable data migration/reporting resource, the RAG status is Amber.

8.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

MILESTONES		CURRENT STATUS
<i>Starts Jun24 / Completes Dec25</i>	Mosaic Implementation Programme: Funding secured & tender documentation completed	M11 24/25 Completed
<i>Starts Feb25 / Completes Apr25</i>	Mosaic Implementation Programme: Conclusion of tender publishing period	M1 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts May25 / Completes Sep25</i>	Mosaic Implementation Programme: Tender evaluation process	M7 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Jul25 / Completes Oct25</i>	Mosaic Implementation Programme: Contract drafted and Award Notice Issued	M9 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Mar26 / Completes Apr26</i>	Mosaic Implementation Programme: Discovery and System Implementation Planning	M2 26/27 Some Slippage

8.3 Financial Summary

There are no Delivery Plan financial elements directly associated with this project.

8.4 Key Risks

KEY RISKS ASSESSED / RESPONSE	CURRENT RISK RATING	RESPONSE
Case Management System Replacement Programme Budget V2	12	Tolerate
Case Management Replacement Resourcing v2	12	Tolerate

Key risks associated with this project are currently being reviewed as the programme enters a new phase. Any Key Risks identified will be assessed and scored in line with the Council Corporate Risk Management Framework and will be set up in PRMS for ongoing monitoring by the relevant project Teams and the Portfolio Board.

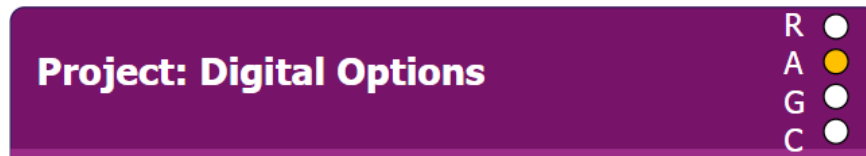
8.5 Forward Plan

Over this coming period the programme will continue to hold almost 30 case management workshops with Council and NHS Highland stakeholders. The gathered information will be used to help build key parts of the Adult, Children, Justice and Mental Health components of Mosaic. The finance workshops will begin from July where input will be taken from the relevant service representatives which will be used to create the finance parts of the system. This input is invaluable as it helps ensure that the system is configured to best suit the needs of the services and over 900 practitioners, managers and other staff who will use the application across the two organisations.

Planning for the implementation of the core part of the system will be completed and preparatory steps for the migration of data from the existing system to Mosaic will be begin.

9. Digital Options

9.1 Overall RAG



The project was RAG'd as amber due to the delay the final decision regarding Ampliwork. The decision has since been taken not to progress with the Ampliwork technology at this point in time.

9.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

MILESTONES		CURRENT STATUS
<i>Starts Aug25 / Completes Nov25</i>	Balance Care & Accommodation: Vocala - Complete Business Case	M7 25/26 Completed
<i>Starts Aug25 / Completes Dec25</i>	Balance Care & Accommodation: Ampliwork - Agreed funding	M12 25/26 No Significant Progress

9.3 Financial Summary

There are no Delivery Plan financial elements directly associated with this project.

9.4 Key Risks

KEY RISKS ASSESSED / RESPONSE	CURRENT RISK RATING	RESPONSE
Digital Options: Missing quick wins	9	Tolerate
Digital Options: Not solving our most important challenges	9	Tolerate
Digital Options: Insufficient financial impact	9	Tolerate

9.5 Forward Plan

Going forward, the Digital Options project will be absorbed into the Adult Social Care Workstream.

In particular, the Vocala project will be tracked and reported under the Technology & Workforce Transformation project. Any residual risks and measures of success will be transferred over.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 12 May 2026

Authors: Dianne Henderson, Strategic Lead, Care and Support
Jane Park, Strategic Lead, Child Health
Ian Kyle, Head of Performance & Improvement
Lynnsey Urquhart, Programme Manager, Adult Social Care
Brian Scobie, Portfolio Manager

Background Papers: N/A
Appendices: N/A