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| Agenda Item | 14. |
| Report No | EDU/20/26 |

The Highland Council

Committee: Education

Date: 3 June 2026

Report Title: Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report – Q4 2025/26

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with the Q4 2025/26 performance monitoring position for the Education Service.

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.

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 Education Service.

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.
- 3.3 **Risk:** Risk implications will be kept under regular review and any risks identified reported to future Committees.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no immediate health and safety implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic:** There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Impacts

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

5. Service Performance - Corporate Indicators

- 5.1 Service performance in relation to Absence, Complaints, FOIs, and Invoice Payments are set out in the following sub-sections.

5.2 Service Sickness Absence

- 5.2.1 Staff Absence data for Q4 2025/26 is shown below: -

Service Sickness Absence - Education and Learning

Average number working days per employee lost through sickness absence

| 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 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Education (Non-Teaching) | 2.08 | 4.21 | 4.82 | 3.88 | 2.67 | 4.00 | 4.55 | 4.00 |
| Education (Teaching) | 0.98 | 2.65 | 2.80 | 2.38 | 1.47 | 2.70 | 3.40 | 2.62 |
| Highland Council | 2.08 | 3.35 | 3.48 | 3.24 | 2.54 | 3.42 | 3.95 | 3.55 |

| 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 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Education (Non-Teaching) | 2.90 | 4.45 | 4.44 | | | | | |
| Education (Teaching) | 1.73 | 3.41 | 3.40 | | | | | |
| Highland Council | 3.02 | 4.09 | 3.97 | | | | | |

5.2.2 Attendance management training has been provided to the Area Quality Improvement Managers and Education Support Officers who line manage Head Teachers and provide support to schools. There is also online training available to Head Teachers and tailored twilight sessions have also been provided. This will be repeated at the start of the new session to ensure all newly appointed Head Teachers receive the training required to manage absence within their school. There is also a monthly focussed meeting with the Strategic Lead who holds responsibility for workforce and the Education Attendance Support Officer to consider actions required to resolve longer term cases.

5.3 Service Complaints Response Times

5.3.1 Monitoring complaints provides important feedback which can facilitate decision making and service design. Each Service is responsible for responding to complaints which are issued on their behalf by the Complaints and Information Team (CIT).

5.3.2

Service Complaints - Education and Learning

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 | |
|------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Education and Learning | 52 | 96 % | 14 | 93 % | 12 | 92 % | 12 | 92 % | 21 | 90 % | 7 | 86 % | 9 | 78 % | 7 | 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 | |
|------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Education and Learning | 30 | 57 % | 23 | 65 % | 24 | 83 % | 29 | 69 % | 25 | 56 % | 35 | 40 % | 52 | 71 % | 53 | 62 % |
| 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 | |
|------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Education and Learning | 3 | 33 % | 2 | 50 % | 2 | 50 % | 2 | 50 % | 1 | 0 % | 1 | 0 % | 2 | 0 % | 3 | 0 % |
| Highland Council | 47 | 32 % | 28 | 50 % | 26 | 46 % | 34 | 44 % | 30 | 33 % | 27 | 26 % | 22 | 27 % | 31 | 23 % |

5.4 Service Freedom of Information (FOI) Response Times

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

5.4.2 The performance for FOI response times during Q4 against a corporate target of 90% was as follows:

Service Freedom of Information Requests - Education and Learning

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

| % FOIs Compliant - Education and Learning | Q1 24/25 | | Q2 24/25 | | Q3 24/25 | | Q4 24/25 | | Q1 25/26 | | Q2 25/26 | | Q3 25/26 | | Q4 25/26 | |
|---|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| | 46 | 87 % | 41 | 56 % | 90 | 70 % | 74 | 57 % | 65 | 83 % | 70 | 67 % | 55 | 67 % | 69 | 52 % |

| % 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 | 65 % |

Tables display the number of FOIs closed within the quarter and % of those that were compliant with the legislative timescale (20 working days) for the service and the Highland Council overall.
The Scottish Information Commissioner requires the Council to achieve a minimum compliance rate of 90%.

5.4.3 The Service is continuing to work to meet the corporate target. It is of note that the service receives a high number of FOIs that are complex and often require significant amounts of data to be collated. This impacts on the team's ability to respond within the timescales, especially when requests relate to information that is held at school level. In recognition of the need to improve performance, an officer has recently been appointed to have oversight of FOIs relating to workforce issues which represent a significant proportion of those received.

5.5 Service Invoice Payment Times

5.5.1 These indicators measure the Council's efficiency at paying invoices within 30 days and 10 days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid. While payment of invoices within 30 days of receipt is a Council Statutory Performance Indicator, the Council also monitors the number of invoices paid within 10 days of receipt.

The targets for performance are 95% and 77% respectively for 30- and 10-days.

5.5.2

Service Invoice Payment Times - Education & Learning

| 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 |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Education and Learning | 89.2 % | 82.7 % | 90.0 % | 90.7 % | 91.2 % | 86.6 % | 91.3 % | 92.7 % |
| 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 |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Education and Learning | 68.7 % | 63.7 % | 71.8 % | 72.7 % | 71.2 % | 68.6 % | 74.1 % | 76.1 % |
| Highland Council | 57.0 % | 68.5 % | 63.8 % | 63.3 % | 64.7 % | 72.5 % | 72.3 % | 69.6 % |

6. Contribution to the Performance Plan

6.1 Performance Plan elements, including relevant Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs), under the Education Service have been included in the Strategic Outcomes below.

Information for the most recent Academic Year is not generally available until the national Insights data is published.

6.2

| Education & Learning: Contribution to the Performance Plan | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Strategic Priority 1 Fair & Caring Highland | Period | Data | Period | Data | Period | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children CP1.01 CHN04 | AY 22/23 | 64.0 % | AY 23/24 | 63.5 % | AY 24/25 | 63.0 % | 65.0 % | annual update February |
| SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children CP1.01 CHN05 | AY 22/23 | 31.0 % | AY 23/24 | 32.0 % | AY 24/25 | 31.0 % | 33.0 % | annual update February |
| School Leavers - Highest attaining 20% - Complementary Tariff Score CP1.01 | AY 22/23 | 1,251 | AY 23/24 | 1,238 | AY 24/25 | 1,179 | 1,237 | annual update February |
| School Leavers - Lowest attaining 20% - Complementary Tariff Score CP1.01 | AY 22/23 | 121 | AY 23/24 | 110 | AY 24/25 | 92 | 116 | annual update February |
| School Leavers - Middle attaining 60% - Complementary Tariff Score CP1.01 | AY 22/23 | 575 | AY 23/24 | 565 | AY 24/25 | 545 | 581 | annual update February |
| SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds CP1.02 CHN06 | AY 22/23 | 42.0 % | AY 23/24 | 40.0 % | AY 24/25 | 33.0 % | 40.0 % | annual update February |
| SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds CP1.02 CHN07 | AY 22/23 | 13.0 % | AY 23/24 | 12.0 % | AY 24/25 | 11.0 % | 12.0 % | annual update February |
| Pupils entering positive destinations CP1.03 CHN11 | AY 22/23 | 95.27 % | AY 23/24 | 96.50 % | AY 24/25 | 93.50 % | 95.67 % | annual update April |
| % Gaelic Learner Secondary Pupils CP1.11 | AY 23/24 | 15.18 % | AY 24/25 | 16.14 % | AY 25/26 | 14.35 % | | annual update January |
| % GM Nursery Pupils CP1.11 | AY 23/24 | 9.25 % | AY 24/25 | 9.89 % | AY 25/26 | 10.34 % | | annual update January |
| % GM Primary Pupils CP1.11 | AY 23/24 | 6.71 % | AY 24/25 | 6.82 % | AY 25/26 | 6.96 % | | annual update January |
| % Gaidhlig Secondary Pupils CP1.11 | AY 23/24 | 3.17 % | AY 24/25 | 3.60 % | AY 25/26 | 3.73 % | | annual update January |
| Strategic Priority 5 A Resilient and Sustainable Council | Period | Data | Period | Data | Period | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Service Re-design: Percentage of Unemployed People Assisted into work CP5.02 ECON01 | FY 23/24 | 5.22 % | FY 24/25 | 10.91 % | FY 25/26 | | 14.23 % | annual update October |
| No. new Modern Apprenticeships/Paid Placements and Youth Traineeships CP5.02 | FY 23/24 | 177 | FY 24/25 | 146 | FY 25/26 | 189 | 125 | |

7 Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) Outwith the Performance Plan

7.1 There is no new data for FY 2025/26 SPIs Outwith the Performance Plan at the time of writing the report. When new data is available it will be reported at the next committee.

8 Remaining Service Plan Items - Progress

8.1 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). Only data that not previously reported is shown in the table. When new data is available it will be reported at the next committee.

8.2

| Education | | | | | | |
|---|----------|---------------|----------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan | Period | Data | Period | Data | Target Value | Completion/ Update Date |
| Improve quality of ELC provision | Q3 25/26 | Some Slippage | Q4 25/26 | Completed | Completed | Completed Q4 25/26 |
| % School leavers with 1+ Lvl5 SQA Grade A-C | AY 23/24 | 83.9 % | AY 24/25 | 82.2 % | | annual update February |
| % School leavers with 1+ Lvl6 SQA Grade A-C | AY 23/24 | 55.2 % | AY 24/25 | 53.5 % | | annual update February |

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 20 May 2026

Author: Brian Scobie, Portfolio Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None