

Agenda Item	16a
Report No	RES/28/26

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** Corporate Resources

**Date:** 4 June 2026

**Report Title:** Delivery Plan Budget Monitoring & Progress Update Q4 2025/26 – Corporate Solutions

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Delivery Plan 2024-27 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 14 May 2025. Exceptions to this 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:
- Corporate Solutions – specifically the following projects
    - Service Improvement Solutions – LIFT project
    - Data Foundations
    - Digital Foundations
    - Efficiencies from Procurement
    - Future operating model
    - Hybrid Working
    - Investors in People
    - 1% Efficiency Target
- 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:

- i. Scrutinise and **note** progress on the projects covered in this report.

### 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 will be detailed in the Financials sections of each of the project/programme 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 additional 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.
- 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 a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

### 5. Service Improvement Solutions – LIFT Project

- 5.1 The Service Improvement Solutions project was reported as closed to the March 26 meeting of this Committee. However, a final report is provided here on the progress in implementing one of the initiatives identified through that project – the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT).
- 5.2 The Revenues and Commercialisation Team has introduced the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT), developed by Policy in Practice, to support targeted income maximisation and early intervention activity across Highland. The platform combines Council-held data with advanced analytics to identify residents who are in, or at risk of, poverty, enabling proactive and targeted engagement.
- 5.3 Independent research estimates that approximately £70 million in benefits remains unclaimed across the Highland area.

- 5.4 The LIFT platform supports a preventative and targeted approach to service delivery. It enables the collation and analysis of data to generate local-level insights, supporting earlier identification of households at risk and helping to prevent escalation into crisis. The platform also supports income maximisation activity, improved affordability, and more holistic engagement, alongside identifying opportunities to enhance access to employment and skills support.
- 5.5 The Council continues to prioritise early intervention and prevention within welfare services, recognising that crisis situations can have lasting impacts on individuals and families and are typically the most resource intensive to address. Encouraging early engagement with advice and information services, including the Council's Welfare Support Team and Citizens Advice Bureaux in Highland, remains a key objective. The implementation of LIFT supports this approach and contributes to more proactive, efficient, and outcome-focused service delivery across Highland.

## 6. Data Foundations

### 6.1 Overall Project RAG



- 6.1.1 The RAG status for Data Foundations is Green for Q4 2025. During Q4, the project moved from Amber to Green as a revised scope and re-baselined milestones were presented and signed off at Corporate Solutions Portfolio Board. This revised scope included an emphasis on Property Data, enabling a golden record for property and the provision of business intelligence to demonstrate success through several impactful use cases. In 2026 the project will move forward with implementation of this revised scope.

## 6.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

### 6.2.1 Milestones

<i>Starts Oct 24 / Completes Jan 25</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 01: Project team fully-resourced	<b>M12 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Jul 24 / Completes Nov 24</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 02: CBIR discovery carried out	<b>M8 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Mar 25 /Completes Oct 25</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 03: Data Governance oversight and draft Data Governance policy established.	<b>M12 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Jan 25 / Completes Feb 26</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 04: Data Platform Onboarded	<b>M11 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Feb 26 / Completes Apr 26</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 05: Data platform architecture implemented.	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Oct 25 / Completes Aug 26</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 06: First automated 'Operational Reporting' example dashboard published	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Sep 26</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 07: First automated 'Performance Indicator' dashboard published	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Aug 25 / Completes Sep 26</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 08: UPRNs matched and input into Housing and Rev's & Ben's applications	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts May 26 / Completes Dec 26</i>	Data Foundations Milestone 09: Golden Record for Property established and published	
<i>Starts Jan 26 / Completes Jan 27</i>	Data Foundations Milestone10: Data Governance Policy implemented	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Dec 26 / Completes Mar 27</i>	Data Foundations Milestone11: Data/BI Opportunity Roadmap documented	
<i>Starts Sep 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Data Foundations Milestone12: Project End	

### 6.2.2 Measures of success

Number of fields populated within the golden record with an assigned Data Owner. Starts Dec 26	
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### 6.2.3 Requests for Change: No requests for change.

## 6.3 Financial Summary

### 6.3.1 Savings

No savings targets are associated with this project.

### 6.3.2 Investment

Of the £637,000 approved from earmarked reserves over the 3-year period envisioned for Data Foundations, a budget of £577,678 remained for 25/26. As of the end of the 25/26 financial year a further £265,952 had been drawn down from this budget.

### 6.3.3 Mitigation

No mitigation action currently required. Project is currently within budget and financial forecasting.

## 6.4 Key Risks

Data Foundations Risk: Failure to Sustain Business Commitment	9	Treat
Data Foundations Risk: Insufficient Resource	8	Treat
Data Foundations Risk: Failure to Secure Data for Golden Record for Property	6	Treat
Data Foundations Risk: Services fail to embrace new way of working	9	Treat
Data Foundations Risk: Uncertain timeframes and complexity due to new technology	9	Treat
Data Foundations Risk: Limited sustainability of project benefits if existing expertise is lost	9	Treat

## 6.5 Forward Plan

Going forward into 2026, the project will focus on implementing its revised scope focusing on property data and the provision of business intelligence. In M1 of 2026, the project is on track to deliver its first re-baselined milestone to onboard our “Data Platform.” This is a key project deliverable and will serve as the central location which connects to Service source systems and enable all our future milestones.

## 7. Digital Foundations

### 7.1 Overall Project RAG



7.1.1 The RAG status is Green. The project continues to progress as planned and remains within budget.

The Digital Champions community has been successfully established, with 204 staff signed up from across Corporate, People and Place. Early engagement has been very positive, with many Champions already achieving badges and actively supporting colleagues by sharing knowledge and learning.

Site visits have been completed with the Brora and Nairn Waste Operations teams as part of the work to extend digital access. Staff have been identified for a pilot, and options for improving access to training, payslips and the pensions portal have been explored. Amendments have been made to the THC website to improve the customer journey for our harder to reach staff groups when accessing payslips and pensions.

## 7.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

### 7.2.1 Milestones

<i>Starts Apr24 / Completes Sep24</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Creation of Digital team	<b>M6 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Apr24 / Completes Dec24</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Digital and Data Skills Support Network Established	<b>M11 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Apr24 / Completes Dec24</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Digital Centre of Excellence, Improvement Hub and Network launched	<b>M11 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Mar 25 / Completes Jun 25</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Frontline Worker Enablement: Discovery	<b>M3 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Jul 25 / Completes Dec 25</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Extending Digital Access Phase 1	<b>M10 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Jan 26 / Completes Apr 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Launch a Digital Champions community	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Sep 25 / Completes May 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Digital Maturity Assessment and Digital Strategy Delivery	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Jan 26 / Completes May 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Extending Digital Access Phase 2	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Start Jan 26/ Completes May 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Digital Strategy Refresh	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Jun 25 / Completes Jun 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Engage Process Adoption and Best Practice	<b>M7 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Mar 25 / Completes Jul 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Digital Foundations: Capturing Data	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Jun 26 / Completes Jul 26</i>	Digital Foundations Milestone: Extending Digital Access Phase 3 (review)	

### 7.2.2 Measures of success

Scores from the most recent Digital Maturity Assessment have been added to PRMS. Highland Council's overall DMA score has increased from 2.59 in 24/25 to 2.63 in 25/26, indicating a modest but positive shift.

While the improvement may appear small it reflects common patterns seen across digital transformation work. As organisational digital awareness grows, expectations also rise. This can make progress seem less pronounced, even as capability continues to develop.

We expect to see a decline in the number of staff being supported for digital skills development as the Digital Champions become more embedded. Digital Bites engagement remains high with an average of 2456 views per month, showing that this is a very useful channel for sharing tips, tricks and asking for support with digital.

Digital Skills and Workforce [Digital Maturity Assessment Pillar]	3.23
Capacity for Change [Digital Maturity Assessment Pillar]	2.30
Biennial Digital Maturity Assessment	2.63
Digital Competency [Data Maturity Assessment Pillar]	2.36
Vision & Strategy [Digital Maturity Assessment Pillar]	2.48
Digital Foundations: Average No. staff receiving tailored support for digital skills development	141
Digital Foundations: Average No. Content views on Digital Bites per Month	2,456

7.2.3 Requests for Change:  
No requests for change.

### 7.3 Financial Summary

7.3.1 Savings  
No savings targets are associated with this project.

7.3.2 Investment  
Investment of £0.355m was approved primarily to cover 3\* Digital Business Partner, staff training. £0.085m was drawn down in 2024/25 and £0.167m in 2025/26 leaving a balance of £0.103m.

7.3.3 Mitigation

### 7.4 Key Risks

Digital Foundations: Digital and Data Skills Support Network: meeting user needs	2	Tolerate
Digital Foundations: Increase in Highland Council's Digital Maturity Score	2	Tolerate
Digital Foundations: Extending Digital Access - navigating change	2	Tolerate

Risks subsequently closed in Q1:

1. Increase in Highland Council's Digital Maturity Score (due to a rise in our recent score)
2. Digital and Data Skills Support Network: meeting user needs (due to high engagement and positive feedback)

## 7.5 Forward Plan

The focus for Q1 is on supporting the Digital Champions community as it embeds, ensuring strong engagement and effective support during the early stages. In parallel, decisions will be taken during Q1 on extending Digital Access, with a paper to be submitted to CMT for consideration of options and costs both for the pilot and beyond- for potentially scaling this approach across the rest of our harder to reach staff groups.

Alongside delivery activity, work will also focus on consolidating the insights, learning and data gathered over the past two years to inform the project closure report. This will set out clear, evidence-based recommendations to support decisions on the continuation and future direction of this work.

## 8. Efficiencies from Procurement

### 8.1 Overall Project RAG

<b>Project: Efficiencies from Procurement</b>	<b>R</b> ●
	<b>A</b> ●
	<b>G</b> ●
	<b>C</b> ●

- 8.1.1 The RAG status for Efficiencies from Procurement is Red for Q4 2025, reflecting primarily the status of in-year saving delivery, distinct from other associated outcomes and measures. Progress has continued to be made on identification of, and in turn delivery of savings opportunities against target, however there are risks which have impacted the in-year achievement of savings. Firstly, market conditions and market movements due to geopolitical impacts have impacted areas which previously had a saving identified, increasing prices or reducing opportunities for saving. Secondly in respect of delays or part-year financial benefits arising in year, rather than higher earlier forecasts. There are and remain a significant value of pipeline saving opportunities being pursued, and activity to expand and increase opportunities identified, with a focus on realising savings as early in the year as possible.

## 8.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

### 8.2.1 Milestones

Starts Apr24 / Completes Dec24	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Develop corporate process to flag contract end-dates	<b>M4 24/25 Completed</b>
Starts Apr 24 / Completes Mar 25	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Update Delegated Procurement Authority training	<b>M7 24/25 Completed</b>
Starts Apr 24 / Completes Jun 25	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Consolidate stores product ranges & review core pricing	<b>M9 25/26 Completed</b>
Starts Apr 25 / Completes Jun 25	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Review and update annual procurement workplan	<b>M6 25/26 Completed</b>
Starts Apr25 / Completes Jun25	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Corporate process to identify/report off contract spend	<b>M12 25/26 Completed</b>
Starts Apr 25 / Completes May 26	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Mandate core list items and report on exceptions	<b>M12 25/26 Some Slippage</b>
Starts Apr 25 / Completes Mar 26	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: Conclude review of inflation challenges/budget pressures	<b>M12 25/26 Completed</b>
Starts Apr 26 / Completes Apr 26	Efficiencies from Procurement Milestone: End Stage Milestone	

### 8.2.2 Measures of success

Efficiencies from Procurement: Reduced off contract spend	
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A new report has now been developed on on-off contract spend, this will be routinely shared with Services in 26/27 as part of overall assurance reporting, the data will also be used to provide insight into further areas for savings opportunities.

### 8.2.3 Requests for Change No requests for change.

## 8.3 Financial Summary

### 8.3.1 Savings

£	Efficiency from Procurement: saving opportunities - FY 24-28	<b>£ 908,000</b>
£	Efficiencies from Procurement: New SWAN contract - FY 25-27	<b>£ 162,000</b>

### 8.3.2 Investment No requirement for investment identified for this project.

### 8.3.3 Mitigation

**N/A**

## 8.4 Key Risks

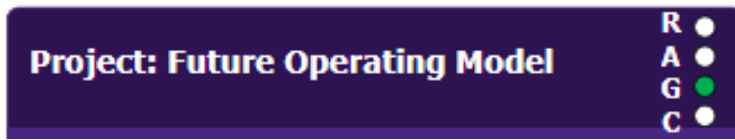
Efficiencies from Procurement: Lack of service engagement in procurement and procurement savings activity	6	Treat
Efficiencies from Procurement: Inflation and the price of goods and services	9	Tolerate

## 8.5 Forward Plan

- Progressing identified efficiency opportunities through agreed procurement and contract management actions.
- Strengthening benefits tracking and reporting to support transparency and assurance
- Alignment of procurement and savings activity with the Future Operating Model and wider transformation programmes.

## 9. Future Operating Model

### 9.1 Overall Project RAG



#### 9.1.1 The RAG status is Green.

The programme has made significant progress in mobilising following the in Q4 FY 25/26 following the approval of the paper at full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> October and with the Programme Manager starting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025.

A lot of engagement has taken place between the programme, Council services, programmes and groups, public sector partners and effective relationships are growing. Update papers have been delivered to Corporate Resources Committee and the Highland Community Planning Partnership. The programme remains transparent in providing updates and engagement.

The Working and Operation Groups with key stakeholders have been implemented and meeting monthly. Programme approaches for communications, quality, benefits and risk have been developed and the programme remains focussed on delivering what was agreed in the paper of 30<sup>th</sup> October.

Recruitment has also been successful, and 5 appointments have been made and are due to start in Q1 FY 26/27, these are:

- Facilities Development Officer
- Community Engagement Officers x 2 (North & East and Mid & West)
- Family and Education Link Workers x 2 (North & East and Mid & West)

Recruitment for the remaining roles will continue throughout Q1 FY 26/27.

## 9.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

### 9.2.1 Milestones

<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Feb 26</i>	Future Operating Model: Revised Programme Governance and Updated Portfolio Dashboard	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Jan 26 / Completes Mar 27</i>	Future Operating Model: Programme Team - Recruitment	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Mar 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 1A_Asset - Council HQ - Future	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	ASSET
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Jun 26</i>	Future Operating Model: 1B_Asset - Smarter Working	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Feb 26 / Completes Dec 26</i>	Future Operating Model: 1C_Asset - Tigh na Sgìre (Portree) - Asset consolidation and redesign	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Feb 26 / Completes Mar 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 2A_Collaborative - Beaully Primary - Touchdown Staff	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	COLLABORATIVE
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 2B_Collaborative - Community Transport - improving local connectivity	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 2C_Collaborative - Enterprise Car Club - Shared agreement	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Apr 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 2D_Collaborative - Kinlochbervie - Collaboration with NorthWest 2045		
<i>Starts TBD / Completes TBD</i>	Future Operating Model: 2E_Collaborative - Tain - Opportunity assessment and recommendation		
<i>Starts Feb 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 2F_Collaborative - Tornagrain Primary - Touchdown Staff	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Jun 26</i>	Future Operating Model: 3A_Operational - Bus Operating Model Design	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	OPERATIONAL
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Jun 26</i>	Future Operating Model: 3B_Operational - Hybrid Working Approach and Implementation	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Apr 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 3C_Operational - Kinlochbervie/Lochinver - Touchdown facilities - staff	<b>M12 25/26</b>	
<i>Starts Apr 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 3D_Operational - Mobile Service Delivery Design - Remote areas	<b>M12 25/26</b>	
<i>Starts Apr 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 3E_Operational - Ullapool - Touchdown facilities - staff	<b>M12 25/26</b>	
<i>Starts Dec 25 / Completes Apr 26</i>	Future Operating Model: 4B_Strategic - Scope SC quick wins	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	STRATEGIC
<i>Starts Feb 26 / Completes Apr 27</i>	Future Operating Model: 4A_Strategic - Local Transport Strategy Implementation	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Jun 26</i>	Future Operating Model: 5A_System - Space Booking System - analysis, SBAR and implementation	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	SYSTEM

### 9.2.2 Measures of success

Measures of success are currently under development. A Benefits Approach has been developed and will inform the Measures of Success for Board oversight.


### 9.2.3 Requests for Change:

No requests for change.

## 9.3 Financial Summary

Savings: A forecasted savings of £415,000 for 2025/26 and separate savings of £100,000 and £320,000 for 2026/27 are associated with the FOM. Confirmation and reporting of actual savings will be provided in the subsequent financial update.

9.3.1

	Future Operating Model: Total Project Savings	<b>£ 415,000</b>
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9.3.2

Investment: A total recurring investment of £500,000 was approved (on 6 March 2025) for the FOM. More detailed information on the investment can be found in the 30 October report to full Council, available on the Highland Council's website: [Highland Council | The Highland Council](#).

An additional £500k was approved in the budget in March 2026 for the Future Operating Model Programme. In addition to covering staffing costs, £150k of this will be put towards the delivery of a mobile service delivery unit, which is an exciting and important opportunity to deliver support to our communities.

In addition, £205,000 in Earmarked Reserve funding was original provided to Future Operating Model. Of this, £154,500 has been transferred to the IIP project (see section 11), leaving a remaining 50,500 for use by FOM. This enables the roll out of IIP, which is an improvement methodology aligned to staff engagement and culture change; in turn supporting the implementation of the Future Operating Model.

Mitigations: the project budget will continue to be monitored closely and if further investment should be required; it will be managed through appropriate governance.

9.4

#### Key Risks

Future Operating Model: Lack of Stakeholder Engagement	<b>12</b>	<b>Treat</b>
Future Operating Model: Asset_Reconfiguration_Dependencies	<b>9</b>	<b>Treat</b>

With the programme now mobilised, the Working and Operation Groups in place and successful engagement happening and ongoing, these risks will be updated for Q1 FY 26/27.

9.5

#### Forward Plan

- Onboarding of the new team taking place in Q1 FY26/27 with strong focus on engagement and relationship building for each new team member with relevant service, programmes, groups and organisations.
- Driving forward of new and already initiated demonstrator projects listed in the milestones, with the expectation of an 'at pace' delivery.
- Ongoing governance and transparent updates.
- Programme planning beyond the current planning horizon of March 27.

## 10. Hybrid Working

### 10.1 Overall Project RAG

As of the writing of this report in May 2026, The Hybrid Working project was preparing to formally close, after completing the majority of its remaining work in Q4 25/26.

The Hybrid Working project set out to deliver two outcomes:

- Develop a policy to support improved processes, efficiency and productivity for employees;
- Establish a baseline of hybrid workers across the organisation.

Both outcomes have been achieved. The Flexible Working and Hybrid Working policies were reviewed and incorporated into a Flexible Working Arrangements Policy supported by guidance. The policy was approved at Corporate Resources Committee in June 2025.

The hybrid working baseline was established via a survey sent to all staff over a 3-week period starting on 11 February 2026. This survey contained a range of questions allowing data to be gathered to assist not only the Hybrid Working project, but also Future Operating Model, Asset Management and Estate Reconfiguration, Net Zero, Sustainable Travel, Fleet and Business Travel. This approach enabled richer data to be gathered and avoided the need for multiple surveys.

## 10.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

### 10.2.1 Milestones

<i>Starts Apr 24 / Completes Jun 24</i>	Hybrid Working: Process established	<b>M3 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Apr 24 / Completes Jun 24</i>	Hybrid Working: Strengthened training and HR policies	<b>M8 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Nov25/ Completes Jan 26</i>	Hybrid Working: Net Zero Survey Issued with Hybrid Working questions included	<b>M12 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Nov 25 / Completes Feb 26</i>	Hybrid Working: Net Zero Survey data gathered	<b>M12 25/26 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Apr 24 / Completes Mar 26</i>	Hybrid Working: baseline established	<b>M1 26/27 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Nov 25 / March 26</i>	Hybrid Working: Net Zero Survey data analysed to provide benchmarking data	<b>M1 26/27 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Jan 26/ Completes Apr 26</i>	Hybrid Working: Project end milestone	<b>M2 26/27 Completed</b>

### 10.2.2 Measures of success

Hybrid Working: Hybrid working baseline established as of March 2026.	<b>71 %</b>
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Data from the survey has been analysed and has been made available via a PowerBI dashboard. Overall, 1,340 responses were received representing staff in all Service Clusters and a wide range of geographic locations. Responses covered staff who are office-based (54%), school-based (18%), site-based (19%) and peripatetic (9%). A majority of respondents live around Inverness (44%) with others spread across Highland.

Of those surveyed who answered the question on workstyle, 71% had the ability to work in a hybrid fashion. There is significant variation in hybrid working by Cluster. In the Corporate Cluster, 95% of respondents who answered the question stated they were able to access hybrid working, in the Place Cluster the figure was 75% and in the People Cluster 44%, reflecting the preponderance of school-based staff. The HR & Payroll Programme will in future allow more granular recording and reporting of workstyle.

Key findings were:

- Hybrid working is strongly valued by staff responding to the survey and is widely associated with perceptions of improved productivity, wellbeing and work-life balance.
- Staff reported that they typically attend offices for collaboration, connection and location-specific tasks rather than routine desk-based work.
- A recurring theme in responses was inconsistency in the application of hybrid working arrangements between teams.
- Office quality and suitability were frequently raised by respondents.
- Commuting, parking and transport were commonly cited as barriers by respondents.

By Service Cluster, the following themes emerged:

- People colleagues were the most geographically diverse, reflecting the locations of schools across the Highlands. Respondents from the People Cluster typically have a positive perception of their work base, which they attend for location-specific tasks.
- Place colleagues have the most diverse types of base, encompassing offices, depots, home-working and site visits. They were more likely to want access to touchdown space.
- Corporate colleagues are 'happy hybrids', typically splitting time between a work base and home and appreciating the flexibility this provides.

High-level findings have been presented to Trade Union reps and at the Staff Partnership meeting on 6 May 2026. An action plan has been developed which includes improving active and sustainable travel options and increasing communications and understanding of the Flexible Working Arrangements policy.

#### 10.2.3 Requests for Change:

A project closure report was taken to the Corporate Solutions Portfolio Board on 13 May, and it was agreed to move towards closure as the outcomes had all been met.

### 10.3 **Financial Summary**

#### 10.3.1 Savings

The council set a corporate budget saving of £0.627m for 2024/2025 aligned to efficiencies from hybrid working. These budget saving have been fully achieved.

#### 10.3.2 Investment

There is no investment associated with this project.

10.3.3 Mitigations  
There are no mitigations

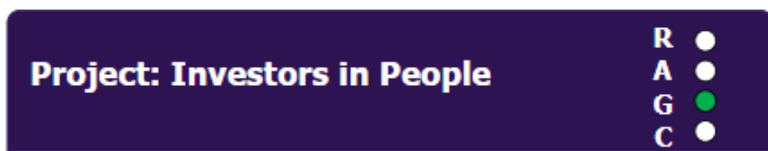
#### 10.4 Key Risks

Hybrid Working: Resourcing the delivery of the Hybrid Working Model	2	Tolerate
Hybrid Working: Disconnect with Customer Experience	1	Tolerate
Hybrid Working: Failure to support staff due to inconsistencies	2	Tolerate

All risks will now be closed as the project has been formally closed.

### 11. Investors in People

#### 11.1 Overall Project RAG



11.1.1 The RAG status is Green as evidenced in the measures and milestones tracking below.

## 11.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

### 11.2.1 Milestones

Starts May 25/ Completes Nov 25	IIP: Corporate: Group 1_Assessments and Action Plans (1a)	<b>M8 25/26 Completed</b>	Legal & Corporate Governance
Starts Nov 25/ Completes Jul 28	IIP: Corporate: Group 1_Implementation (1b)	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
Starts Sep25/ Completes Mar 26	IIP: Corporate: Group 2_Assessments and Action Plans (2a)	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	Business Solutions, Corporate Finance, HR & Communications, Revenues and Commercialisation
Starts Feb 26 / Completes Nov 28	IIP: Corporate: Group 2_Implementation (2b)	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
Starts Nov 25/ Completes May 26	IIP: Place: Group 1_Assessments and Action Plans (3a)	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	Housing & Communities,Property & Assets
Starts Apr 26 / Completes Jan 29	IIP: Place: Group 1_Implementation (3b)		
Starts May 26 / Completes Aug 26	IIP: Place: Group 2_Assessments and Action Plans (4a)		Planning & Economic Development, Operations & Maintenance , Facilities & Fleet
Starts Jul 26 / Completes May 29	IIP: Place: Group 2_Implementation (4b)		
Starts Jan 26 / Completes Jul 26	IIP: People: Group 1_Assessments and Action Plans (5a)	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	Health & Social Care,Integrated People Services
Starts Jun 26 / Completes Apr 29	IIP: People: Group 1_Implementation (5b)		
Starts Apr 26 / Completes Oct 26	IIP: People: Group 2_Assessments and Action Plans (6a)		Primary Education and Early Years , Secondary Education , Support/Management Services
Starts Sep 26 / Completes Jun 29	IIP: People: Group 2_Implementation (6b)		
Starts Sep 25/ Completes Sep 26	IIP: Champions Network	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>	
Starts Apr 26/ Completes June 28	Investors in People: 7 Determine future after project ends		
Starts Jul 28 / Completes Dec 29	Investors in People: 8 Project End		

### 11.2.2 Measures of success

Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Corporate Cluster Group 1 - Completed May 25	<b>83 %</b>
Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Corporate Cluster Group 2 - Completed Nov 25	<b>83 %</b>
Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Place Cluster Group 1 - Completed Jan 26	<b>60 %</b>
Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Place Cluster Group 2 - Completes Jun 26	
Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – People Cluster Group 1 - Completes April 26	
Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – People Cluster Group 2 - Completes Jun 26	

### 11.2.3 Requests for Change:

A change request to start the Place group 2 process after the final Chief Officer started in post was approved. This will result in roll out of all six cohorts completing IIP assessments by September 2026.

## 11.3 Financial Summary

### 11.3.1 Savings N/A

### 11.3.2 Investment

IIP has an annual recurring budget of £90,000. This meets core staffing costs and limited incidental expenses, while services provide in kind business support to coordinate and facilitate the IIP assessment process. In addition, £154,500 in Earmarked reserve funding was made available to cover the assessment and accreditation costs. Actual spend to date on assessment and accreditation costs is £20,900 in 2026/27.

### 11.3.3 Mitigations N/A

## 11.4 Key Risks

Investors in People: Insufficient time and expertise	<b>12</b>	<b>Treat</b>
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The planning and implementation of assessments is being supported by Business Support resource from within each service, with Programme Manager oversight. Champion networks will further increase capability and support the implementation of action plans over the remainder of the three-year cycle.

## 11.5 Forward Plan

The programme will continue its phased rollout of the assessment process through to September 2026, while cohorts that have completed assessment transition into structured action-planning. Investors in People reports will provide a consistent evidence base to inform prioritised, outcome-focused actions, enabling progress to be monitored systematically as improved workplace practices are embedded. This approach will support strategic decision-making by identifying where targeted intervention is required at organisational, service, or team level, ensuring continuous improvement and the effective deployment of resources to maximise organisational impact and performance.

Champions networks will be established within each service to support implementation, build capability and embed sustainable change informed by the programme outcomes.

Highland Council pulse surveys and facilitated focus group discussions will be developed and implemented to track progress, providing regular evidence-based updates for our staff, The Council and to IIP as part of the required annual review process.

## 12. 1% Efficiency Target

### 12.1 Overall Project RAG

**Project: 1% Efficiency Target**

R	●
A	●
G	●
C	●

12.1.1 The RAG status is shown as Green reflecting that the project actions to implement the budget decisions (originally made in February 2024 and spanning three financial years) have been actioned and implemented.

### 12.2 Key Milestones & Requests for Change

#### 12.2.1 Milestones

<i>Starts Apr 24 / Completes Apr 24</i>	1% Efficiency Target: Saving allocated to service budgets	<b>M7 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Apr 24 / Completes June 24</i>	1% Efficiency Target: Specific reduction measures implemented by services	<b>M8 24/25 Completed</b>
<i>Starts Apr 24 / Completes Mar 27</i>	1% Efficiency Target: ongoing monitoring of savings delivery	<b>M12 25/26 On Target</b>
<i>Starts Apr 26 / Completes Apr 26</i>	1% Efficiency Target: Project End	

It is expected that the project will move to project closure in early 2026, reflecting the implementation of all corporate budget actions and those most recently related to the budget agreed for 2026/27.

#### 12.2.2 Measures of success


All corporate budget actions associated with this project and saving are on target.

#### 12.2.3 Requests for Change:

No requests for change.

### 12.3 Financial Summary

#### 12.3.1 Savings

 1% Efficiency Target: Savings - FY 24-27	<b>£ 985,000</b>
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#### 12.3.2 Investment

There is no additional investment associated with this project.

#### 12.3.3 Mitigations

N/A

#### 12.4 Key Risks

N/A

## 12.5 **Forward Plan**

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate

Date: 15 May 26

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