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|-------------|-----------------|
| Agenda Item | <b>16</b>       |
| Report No   | <b>HP/29/26</b> |

# The Highland Council

**Committee:**           **Housing and Property**

**Date:**                   **12 August 2026**

**Report Title:**       **Service Performance Reporting for Q1 FY 26/27**

**Report By:**           **Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

## **1 Purpose/Executive Summary**

1.1 The report details relevant performance monitoring information for the Housing and Property Service as follows:-

- Corporate Indicators
- Contribution to the Performance Plan
- Statutory Performance Indicators
- 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 performance information for the Housing & Property Service; and
- ii. **Note** the change to Absence and 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. Previous data trends are provided for comparator purposes in the second table.

**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     |          |          |          |          |          |

### Service Sickness Absence - Housing and Property

#### Average number working days per employee lost through sickness absence

| Average Days Lost    | Q2<br>23/24 | Q3<br>23/24 | Q4<br>23/24 | Q1<br>24/25 | Q2<br>24/25 | Q3<br>24/25 | Q4<br>24/25 | Q1<br>25/26 |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Housing and Property | 2.43        | 4.60        | 4.39        | 4.49        | 3.27        | 3.85        | 4.63        | 4.45        |
| Highland Council     | 2.08        | 3.35        | 3.48        | 3.24        | 2.54        | 3.42        | 3.95        | 3.55        |

- 5.2.3 For both Housing and Communities and Property and Assets, Q1 absence monitoring information was not available at the time of preparing this report. Based on analysis of monthly absence data for April and May 2026, and Q1 absence data from 2024/25 and 2025/26, it is anticipated that there may be a slight decrease in absences compared to Q4 25/26.

The pattern of absence is generally higher amongst Housing and Communities which will, in part, be related to the higher number of manual workforce in this service area. Based on the absence data available, long-term absence represents a disproportionate level of FTE days lost compared to the number of employees affected. The top three reasons for absence amongst Housing and Communities staff were vial, broken bones and stress (not work related) and amongst Property and Assets staff this related to vial, blood clot/thrombosis and neurological conditions.

- 5.2.4 Reducing absence rates through a strong and consistent approach to attendance management is a particular focus for the services. 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 and additional officers have been recruited to support service managers.

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.

- 5.2.5 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.
- 5.2.6 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.
- 5.2.7 As detailed within the Place Cluster Workforce Plan report, key proactive intervention measures include:-

- Recruitment of three additional Attendance Support Officers to increase capacity and provide targeted support to managers in managing attendance.
- Review of absence data and analysis provided to managers to increase the quality and frequency of information to enable robust absence management.
- 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 Time

5.3.1 The Complaints data up to and including Q1 26/27 is shown below: -

#### Service Complaints - Housing and Property

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

##### Frontline Resolution within 5 days

|                      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      | Q2 25/26 |      | Q3 25/26 |      | Q4 25/26 |      | Q1 26/27 |      |
|----------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Housing and Property | 33       | 76 % | 32       | 84 % | 42       | 83 % | 23       | 83 % | 43       | 86 % | 50       | 88 % | 58       | 69 % | 67       | 70 % |
| Highland Council     | 196      | 78 % | 155      | 88 % | 183      | 87 % | 174      | 91 % | 223      | 90 % | 200      | 85 % | 262      | 82 % | 261      | 84 % |

##### Investigation Resolution within 20 days

|                      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      | Q2 25/26 |      | Q3 25/26 |      | Q4 25/26 |      | Q1 26/27 |      |
|----------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Housing and Property | 11       | 55 % | 25       | 28 % | 12       | 42 % | 20       | 40 % | 28       | 39 % | 19       | 26 % | 17       | 35 % | 17       | 24 % |
| Highland Council     | 101      | 57 % | 90       | 42 % | 71       | 51 % | 68       | 47 % | 86       | 40 % | 94       | 55 % | 110      | 51 % | 111      | 43 % |

##### Escalated Resolution within 20 days

|                      | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      | Q2 25/26 |      | Q3 25/26 |      | Q4 25/26 |      | Q1 26/27 |      |
|----------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Housing and Property | 7        | 29 % | 9        | 22 % | 13       | 46 % | 7        | 14 % | 9        | 56 % | 6        | 17 % | 10       | 30 % | 18       | 22 % |
| Highland Council     | 28       | 50 % | 26       | 46 % | 34       | 44 % | 30       | 33 % | 27       | 26 % | 22       | 27 % | 31       | 23 % | 45       | 24 % |

- 5.3.2 Performance in responding to frontline complaints remains below expected levels at Q1 and similar to Q4 performance. Investigation response performance has also fallen in the last quarter. Work continues with service management teams to improve response times and maintain consistency.

### 5.3.3 Service Freedom of Information ('FOI') Response Times

The FOI data up to and including Q1 26/27 is shown below: -

#### Service Freedom of Information Requests - Communities & Place Committee

#### % of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

| % FOIs Compliant - Housing and Communities Quarterly | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      | Q2 25/26 |      | Q3 25/26 |      | Q4 25/26 |      | Q1 26/27 |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|                                                      | 86       | 65 % | 89       | 69 % | 83       | 69 % | 97       | 76 % | 110      | 74 % | 146      | 73 % | 97       | 67 % | 70       | 87 % |

| % FOIs Compliant - Highland Council Quarterly | Q2 24/25 |      | Q3 24/25 |      | Q4 24/25 |      | Q1 25/26 |      | Q2 25/26 |      | Q3 25/26 |      | Q4 25/26 |      | Q1 26/27 |      |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|                                               | 481      | 76 % | 570      | 73 % | 617      | 71 % | 577      | 81 % | 601      | 77 % | 581      | 73 % | 578      | 65 % | 563      | 84 % |

- 5.3.4 Performance in relation to FOI requests improved to 87% in Q1, representing a 20% increase from Q4 2025/26. This demonstrates the positive impact of the work undertaken with service management teams to strengthen compliance and improve performance across the service.

### 5.4 Service Invoice Payment Times

- 5.4.1 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.
- 5.4.2 The performance for invoice payment times within 10- and 30-days was as follows:-

| Invoice Payment within 30 days | Q1 26/27 | Q2 26/27 | Q3 26/27 | Q4 26/27 | Q1 27/28 | Q2 27/28 | Q3 27/28 | Q4 27/28 |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Place                          | 94.2 %   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Highland Council               | 93.7 %   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |

| Invoice Payment less than 10 days | Q1 26/27 | Q2 26/27 | Q3 26/27 | Q4 26/27 | Q1 27/28 | Q2 27/28 | Q3 27/28 | Q4 27/28 |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Place                             | 62.0 %   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Highland Council                  | 63.5 %   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |

| Invoice Payment within 30 days | Q1<br>24/25 | Q2<br>24/25 | Q3<br>24/25 | Q4<br>24/25 | Q1<br>25/26 | Q2<br>25/26 | Q3<br>25/26 | Q4<br>25/26 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Housing and Property           | 85.8 %      | 94.4 %      | 93.9 %      | 94.4 %      | 94.3 %      | 96.8 %      | 95.9 %      | 96.3 %      |
| 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<br>24/25 | Q2<br>24/25 | Q3<br>24/25 | Q4<br>24/25 | Q1<br>25/26 | Q2<br>25/26 | Q3<br>25/26 | Q4<br>25/26 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Housing and Property              | 31.0 %      | 64.0 %      | 52.5 %      | 55.0 %      | 54.0 %      | 68.8 %      | 68.1 %      | 60.2 %      |
| Highland Council                  | 57.0 %      | 68.5 %      | 63.8 %      | 63.3 %      | 64.7 %      | 72.5 %      | 72.3 %      | 69.6 %      |

- 5.4.3 Performance in invoice payment remains strong and in line with the Council average. Figures are now reported at a Cluster level.

## 6 Service Contribution to the Performance Plan

- 6.1 The following summarises performance against the Housing and Property performance indicators in the Council's Performance Plan.

6.2

| Housing & Property: Contribution to the Performance Plan          |             |                  |             |                  |              |                             |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Strategic Priority 1<br>Fair & Caring Highland                    | Period      | Data             | Period      | Data             | Target Value | Completion/<br>Update Date  |  |
| Deliver Portree Public Sector Co-location Project                 | Q4<br>25/26 | Some<br>Slippage | Q1<br>26/27 | Some<br>Slippage |              | Due to complete Q4<br>24/25 |  |
| Strategic Priority 2<br>Resilient and Sustainable Communities     | Period      | Data             | Period      | Data             | Target Value | Completion/<br>Update Date  |  |
| Homelessness - case duration [weeks] for all applications         | FY<br>24/25 | 35               | FY<br>25/26 | 35               |              | annual update August        |  |
| Strategic Priority 3<br>Accessible and Sustainable Highland Homes | Period      | Data             | Period      | Data             | Target Value | Completion/<br>Update Date  |  |
| Avg. time taken to re-let properties in last yr [days]            | FY<br>24/25 | 53.95            | FY<br>25/26 | 43.96            |              | annual update June          |  |
| No. serving and ex-armed forces personnel allocated housing       | FY<br>24/25 | 14               | FY<br>25/26 | 23               |              |                             |  |
| No. serving and ex-armed forces personnel applying for housing    | FY<br>24/25 | 110              | FY<br>25/26 | 158              |              |                             |  |
| Average days to complete medical adaptation applications          | FY<br>24/25 | 27.07            | FY<br>25/26 | 29.71            |              | annual update June          |  |
| Strategic Priority 5<br>A Resilient and Sustainable Council       | Period      | Data             | Period      | Data             | Target Value | Completion/<br>Update Date  |  |
| ERDs being completed - PRH    CP5.01                              | Q4<br>25/26 | Some<br>Slippage | Q1<br>26/27 | Completed        |              | Completed Q1 26/27          |  |
| Asset Management - % Suitability (CORP-ASSET01)                   | FY<br>24/25 | 77.9 %           | FY<br>25/26 | 77.9 %           |              | annual update August        |  |
| Asset Management - Condition (CORP-ASSET02)                       | FY<br>24/25 | 82.4 %           | FY<br>25/26 | 82.2 %           |              | annual update August        |  |
| Gross rent arrears as % of rent due (HSN01b)                      | FY<br>24/25 | 6.42 %           | FY<br>25/26 | 5.84 %           |              | annual update June          |  |

## 7 SPI's Not Included in the Performance Plan

- 7.1 The following outlines Housing and Place Statutory Performance Indicators outwith the Performance Plan.

7.2

| Housing & Property: SPIs                               |          |        |          |        |              |                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|--------------|------------------------|
| SPIs not monitored in Performance Plan                 | Period   | Data   | Period   | Data   | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| School Meals - gross cost per meal provided            | FY 24/25 | £ 4.88 | FY 25/26 | £ 5.00 |              | annual update June     |
| Avg. time to complete emergency repairs [hours] Annual | FY 24/25 | 3.5    | FY 25/26 | 4.7    |              | annual update June     |

## 8 Service Plan Progress

8.1 The following outlines service performance against the service plan.

8.2

| Housing and Building Maintenance Q1 26/27                                 |          |        |          |        |              |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions & PIs being monitored in Service Plan                             | Period   | Data   | Period   | Data   | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| % Tenants satisfied with opportunities in decision-making process         | FY 24/25 | 81.9 % | FY 25/26 | 91.9 % | 90.0 %       |                        |
| Ave time taken to complete non-emergency repairs Highland Wide [days] Qtr | Q4 25/26 | 8.0    | Q1 26/27 | 6.6    | 8.9          |                        |
| Ave time to complete emergency repairs [hours] Highland Wide Qtr          | Q4 25/26 | 4.7    | Q1 26/27 | 4.3    |              |                        |
| Scottish Govt and SHR deadlines for reporting met                         | FY 24/25 | 100 %  | FY 25/26 | 100 %  | 100 %        |                        |

8.3

| Property and Facilities Management Q1 26/27                                                   |          |       |          |       |              |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|--------------|------------------------|
| Actions & PIs being monitored in Service Plan                                                 | Period   | Data  | Period   | Data  | Target Value | Completion/Update Date |
| % Energy reduction projects completed p.a. as planned                                         | FY 24/25 |       | FY 25/26 |       | 90 %         |                        |
| % of planned GF Capital improvement programmes completed                                      | FY 24/25 |       | FY 25/26 |       | 90 %         |                        |
| % of planned GF Revenue improvement programmes completed                                      | FY 24/25 |       | FY 25/26 |       | 90 %         |                        |
| No. site condition survey completed per annum                                                 | FY 24/25 | 50    | FY 25/26 | 82    |              |                        |
| Improve Asset Condition: Progress of condition surveys completed Qtr [reporting starts 23/24] | Q4 25/26 | 111 % | Q1 26/27 | 117 % | 90 %         |                        |
| Renewable Energy generated per annum                                                          | FY 24/25 |       | FY 25/26 |       |              |                        |

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 2026

Author: Alison Clark, Chief Officer Housing and Communities  
Sophie Stuart, Portfolio Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None