

Agenda Item	7
Report No	HCW/17/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee

Date: 19 August 2026

Report Title: Update on the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme and Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme (WFWP) and the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. Both programmes are funded by the Scottish Government and delivered through partnership arrangements led by the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and Integrated Children's Services Planning governance structures.
- 1.2 Governance, decision-making and funding oversight are undertaken through established multi-agency partnership arrangements. Strategic oversight is provided through the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board and associated governance groups. These arrangements reflect the statutory framework established through Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which place children's services planning and improvement within the wider Community Planning Partnership framework. The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme web pages are hosted on the Highland Community Planning Partnership website [here](#).
- 1.3 Since 2022, Highland has received £7.403 million through the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme. The funding has been used to support transformational change in how families access support, with investment focused on prevention, early intervention, community capacity building, workforce development and testing innovative approaches to holistic whole family support. Consistent with Scottish Government guidance, the funding is not intended to replace existing services or funding streams but instead to act as a catalyst for long-term whole system change.
- 1.4 The programme has supported 56 community-led small grant projects across Highland, established locality-based partnership networks, invested in collaborative family support services, developed workforce skills and strengthened partnership working across public, third and community sectors. Since its inception, the programme has directly supported 1,195 families through major funded projects and an estimated additional 1,500 to 2,500 families through community-led grants and local initiatives. Through these activities, the programme is contributing to delivery of The Promise, GIRFEC, UNCRC commitments and national child poverty priorities.

- 1.5 Highland has now been selected as one of only seven national case study areas for the Scottish Government's independent evaluation of the WWF National Programme, recognising the progress made locally in delivering family-centred and preventative approaches. As the Programme moves into its next phase, there is an opportunity for the Community Planning Partnership to review governance and delivery arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose and support the continued development of transformational family support across Highland.
- 1.6 A summary of programme achievements and investment is provided in the "Whole Family Wellbeing Programme Impact" infographic at **Appendix 1**, highlighting the scale of investment, partnership working and transformational activity delivered across Highland since 2022.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the substantial progress being delivered through the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme and the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.
 - ii. Note that both programmes are partnership programmes governed through Highland Community Planning Partnership and Integrated Children's Services Planning arrangements rather than through a single agency.
 - iii. Note the continued focus on transformational change and prevention, consistent with Scottish Government expectations that Whole Family Wellbeing Programme funding should be used to develop, test and embed new models of support rather than replace existing funding streams.
 - iv. Support the Community Planning Partnership undertaking a review of governance, accountability and delivery arrangements as the Programme moves into its next phase, with recommendations subsequently reported through appropriate partnership and Council governance structures.
 - v. Agree a Members' seminar will be arranged to consider the next phase of the Programme with any recommended revisions being considered by the Community Planning Partnership, with a further report to come to this Committee.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - The programmes are funded through Scottish Government allocations administered through partnership governance arrangements. Since 2022, Highland has received £7.403m through the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme, with investment decisions aligned to an agreed funding strategy approved through Integrated Children's Services Planning arrangements.
- 3.2 **Legal** - The governance arrangements support statutory duties associated with children's services planning, Community Planning Partnership working and delivery of Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This Committee has previously noted the decisions taken by the Community Planning Partnership to take forward the programme and to establish a programme team to support delivery.

- 3.3 **Risk** - Partnership governance arrangements support appropriate financial stewardship, transparency and accountability while ensuring that investment remains aligned with local need, Scottish Government guidance and agreed outcomes. Multi-agency oversight helps ensure funding decisions remain evidence-based and aligned to identified need.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no specific Gaelic implications 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 an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Whole Family Wellbeing Programme

- 5.1 The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme (WFWP) is a Scottish Government investment programme established to support transformational change in how children, young people and families access support. The programme seeks to deliver earlier intervention, prevention and holistic whole family support, ensuring families can access help at the earliest opportunity and reducing the need for crisis intervention.
- 5.2 A core principle of the programme is that funding should be used to test, develop and embed new approaches rather than replace existing funding streams or statutory services. In Highland, partners have used the investment to strengthen collaborative working, build community capacity, support innovation and develop sustainable models of family support aligned to The Promise, GIRFEC, UNCRC and national child poverty priorities
- 5.3 Between 2022/2023 and 2026/2027 Highland received £7.403m through the Programme. As governance arrangements, partnerships and delivery infrastructure matured, annual expenditure increased from £0.392m in 2023/2024 to £2.377m in 2025/2026, reflecting the Programme's transition from establishment to delivery at scale.
- 5.4 Investment through the programme supports innovative community-based services, strengthens partnership working, builds community capacity and promotes earlier intervention. Activity is aligned to [Scottish Government principles of holistic whole family support](#) and contributes to wider local and national priorities including The Promise, GIRFEC, [Best Starts Bright Futures, Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#)

[2022-2026](#) and [Bringing Hope, Building Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2026-2031](#). This approach is consistent with the approach approved by the Community Planning Partnership in 2023. Information is provided by the Scottish Government which outlines the fund criteria and sets out options to implement the Programme with an emphasis on building more holistic approaches and reducing Poverty inequalities. One of those options is to implement a team to deliver, which was approved as the approach in Highland. The funding strategy supports that delivery and the criteria by focussing in on families who are at risk of Poverty, which encompasses families with a child or adult with disability, families where the mother is under 25, lone parents, larger families, minority ethnic families and families with a child under 1. The criteria looks also at a focus on care experienced families, particularly Kinship families to drive change to meet the aspirations of the Promise.

6 Governance Arrangements

- 6.1 The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme is a partnership programme governed through Highland's Community Planning Partnership and Integrated Children's Services Planning arrangements. Strategic oversight is provided by the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board, with financial operational oversight provided through the multi-agency Change Leadership Group. These arrangements ensure investment decisions remain transparent, evidence-based and aligned to local and national priorities.
- 6.2 The authority for these arrangements arises from Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and Community Planning arrangements established through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Accountability for the Programme therefore sits within established partnership structures rather than with any individual agency.
- 6.3 This committee considered a report in November 2023 which set out the basis on which the Programme and associated Fund are now governed and delivered. [WFWP Nov 2023](#). This provided a detailed update to Members following the approval of the approach by the Community Planning Partnership Board, which included the establishment of the Programme Delivery Team and wider partnership and locality based approach. It also established that the Programme would report on progress to the Integrated Children's Service Board and ultimately to the Community Planning Partnership Board.
- 6.4 As the Programme enters its next phase of development, there is an opportunity for the Community Planning Partnership to review governance, accountability and delivery arrangements to ensure they remain effective and support long-term sustainability.

7 Locality Coordinators

- 7.1 A distinctive feature of the Highland model has been the establishment of three Locality Coordinator posts. These are partnership posts funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme and hosted by The Highland Council on behalf of Community Planning Partnership partners.

- 7.2 The coordinators support partnership development across Highland, connecting services, communities and families, strengthening locality-based planning and ensuring investment decisions are informed by local need and lived experience. They have played a key role in developing local partnership networks and supporting community-led projects and innovation.

8 Programme Achievements and Impact

- 8.1 The Programme has made significant progress since its establishment and is now delivering investment and activity across every Community Partnership area in Highland. Key achievements include:
- £7.403m secured from Scottish Government between 2022 and 2027.
 - 56 community-led projects funded through the Element 1 Small Grants Programme.
 - More than £2.3m invested in collaborative partnership projects and transformational activity.
 - Establishment of locality-based partnership networks across Highland.
 - Investment in workforce development supporting delivery of holistic whole family support.
 - Development of innovative approaches including Family Links, Home-Start expansion, autism and neurodiversity support, contextual safeguarding, infant feeding support and family hub models.
- 8.2 The Programme has strengthened collaboration between public services, third sector organisations and communities, helping develop more joined-up and preventative approaches to supporting children, young people and families. It has created opportunities to test new approaches, generate learning and build evidence of what works in Highland communities.

Across the major Whole Family Wellbeing Fund projects, a total of 1,195 families have been supported as illustrated in the table below. A number of the listed projects are relatively new and there is an expectation that numbers will increase in the near future.

8.3	Organisation / Lead Partner	Project	Families Supported
	Autism and Neurodivergence Scotland	Stay, Play and Connect Sessions	102
	Barnardo's	Contextual Safeguarding Project	36
	Family Links Partnership (The Care and Learning Alliance, Home-Start East Highland and Thriving Families)	Family Links	68
	Highland Action for Little Ones (HALO)	Infant Food Insecurity Pathway	89
	Home-Start Caithness	Family Support Services	619

Home-Start East Highland	Family Support Services	127
Lochbroom and Ullapool Community Trust	Stepping Stones	18
Thriving Families	Family Support Services	133
Thriving Families	Drummond School Family Links	3
Total		1,195

In addition, the Community-Based Small Grants Programme (56 projects) have supported between 1,500 and 2,500 families across Highland communities.

- 8.4 Recognition of Highland's progress is reflected in its selection as one of only seven national case study areas within the Scottish Government's independent Years 3 and 4 evaluation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme.

9 Programme Monitoring and Evaluation

- 9.1 Monitoring and evaluation remain central to the Programme's approach. Outcome data is gathered across funded activity to assess impact, inform future investment decisions and identify successful models that may contribute to longer-term system change.
- 9.2 A growing evidence base is now emerging through funded projects, locality activity and whole-system initiatives, providing valuable insight into how preventative and family-centred approaches can improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

10 Finance

- 10.1 Since 2022, Highland has received £7.403m through the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme. Funding allocations are shown below:

Financial Year	Funding
2022/23	£1.420m
2023/24	£1.420m
2024/25	£1.353m
2025/26	£1.605m
2026/27	£1.605m

Total Funding to date: £7.403M

- 10.2 Programme expenditure has increased significantly as delivery has accelerated, reaching £2.377m during 2025/2026. This reflects the Programme's continued transition from programme establishment to delivery and investment.

- 10.3 At the commencement of 2026/2027, total available funding amounted to approximately £3.216m. After allowing for existing commitments, approximately £1.466m remains available to support future transformational activity and investment.

11 National Evaluation and Future Direction

- 11.1 Highland has been selected as one of seven national case study areas within the Scottish Government's independent Years 3 and 4 evaluation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme. The evaluation will assess progress towards national outcomes and identify emerging learning and effective practice across Scotland.
- 11.2 The next phase of the Programme presents an opportunity to consolidate learning, strengthen governance arrangements, maximise the impact of future investment and continue the transition towards a more preventative, family-centred system of support across Highland.

12 Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

- 12.1 The Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund provides Scottish Government investment to support community-based mental health and wellbeing activity, focusing on prevention, early intervention and reducing the need for more specialist services. The fund supports activities that improve wellbeing, reduce inequalities and strengthen community support for children, young people and families.
- 12.2 Highland has developed a funding framework that supports investment across three levels: Small Partnership Grants, Locality Partnership Grants and Strategic/Thematic Grants. This approach enables investment in local innovation while also supporting wider system development and collaboration across partners. The Funding Framework has been developed from the outcome data gathered from the activity during FY 2025/2026, which is provided in the [CYP-MHWP-Thematic-and-Quantitative-Analysis-Report.pdf](#)
- 12.3 As with the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme, governance of the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund is undertaken through partnership structures. Strategic oversight is now provided by the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, a multi-agency partnership responsible for coordinating improvement activity across Highland.
- 12.4 The fund also sits within the wider governance framework of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board, providing alignment with children's services planning priorities and ensuring investment decisions are informed by evidence, identified need and agreed outcomes.
- 12.5 These arrangements provide accountability, transparency and collective decision making across partners. They ensure resources are directed towards priority areas, learning informs future service development, and investment remains aligned with the strategic aims of improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. Governance responsibility rests with the partnership structures established under children's services planning arrangements.

12.6 Finance - The Scottish Government CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing fund allocation to Highland for Financial Year 2026/2027 is £566,000, carrying forward an underspend from Financial Year 2025/2026 provides and overall budget of £732,9555.

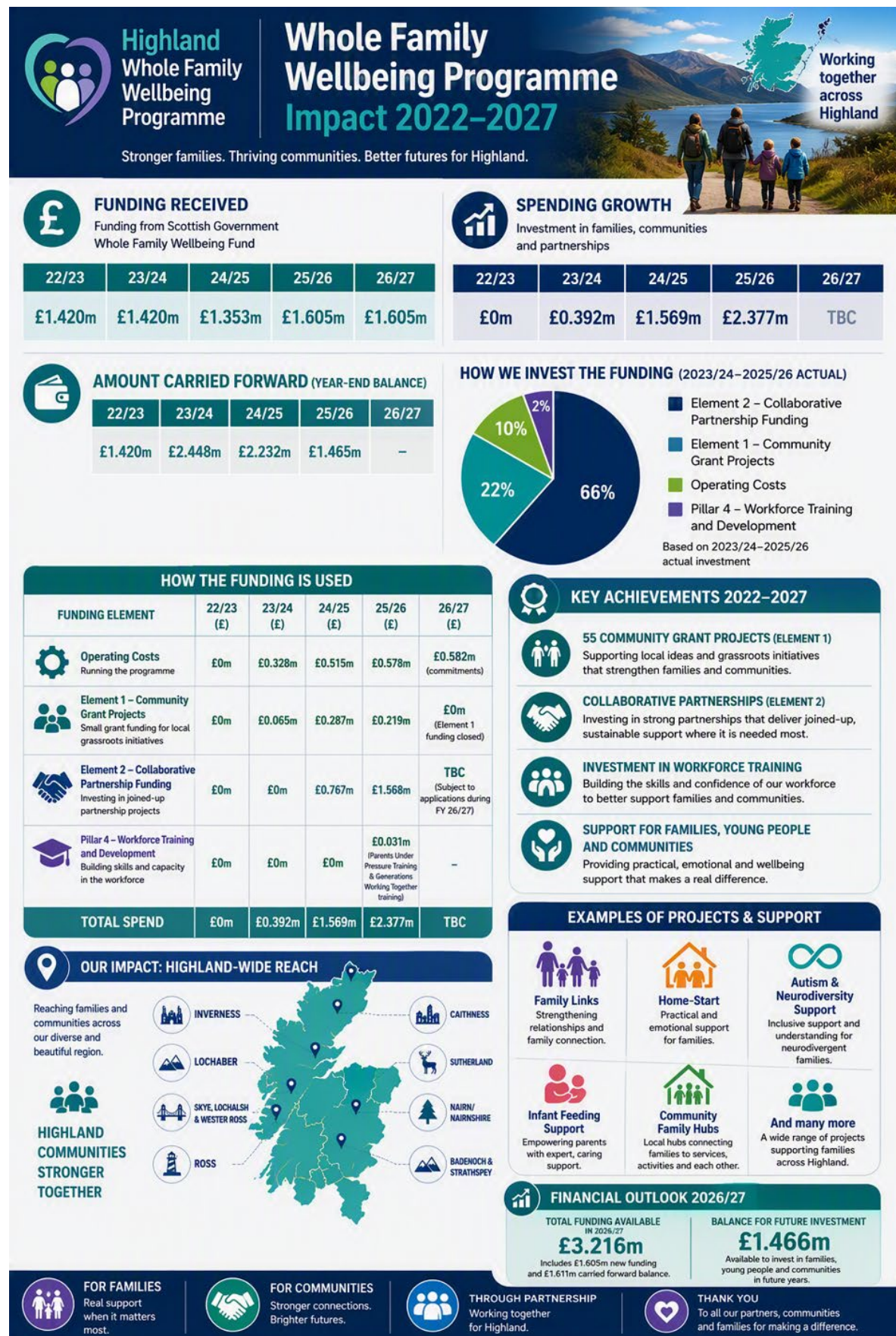
Designation: Assistant Chief Executive –People

Date: 04 August 2026

Author: Ian Kyle, Chair Integrated Children’s Services Board

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Update on Whole Family Wellbeing Programme and Children and Young People’s Community Mental Health and Wellbeing
Appendix 2 - Whole Family Wellbeing Programme Analysis of Family Support per Project

Appendix 1



WFWP Element 2 (Whole System Approach and Locality Projects) - <£50K and >£50K

[illegible]

CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (46 Projects in Total) - <£10K

Various	Various	0	2,936	9012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2025	2026
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