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| Agenda Item | <b>15.a</b>      |
| Report No   | <b>RES/41/26</b> |

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** Corporate Resources

**Date:** 27 August 2026

**Report Title:** Delivery Plan Budget Monitoring & Progress update – Corporate Solutions – Q1 26/27

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

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Delivery Plan 2024-27 consists of 66 projects/programmes, managed through 6 Portfolio Boards. This number will fluctuate as future work is developed, current projects close or work is restructured in order to improve an approach for successful delivery. 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 2026. Exceptions to this general rule may apply when for example circumstances merit a standalone project/programme report to either committee or council. If exceptions apply this report will signpost to where the relevant reporting can be found.
- 1.2 This report provides financial, performance, risk and general information on the following Delivery Plan projects/Programme:
  - Food in Schools - Delivering Sustainability
  - Investors in People
  - HR & Payroll Transformation Project
  - Talentlink Recruitment System Improvements
- 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** the project/programme updates provided in this report
  - ii. **Note** the revised format of this report, which includes the use of portfolio board project dashboards from the Performance and Risk Management system (PRMS), with accompanying project narrative sections aligned to the content of these.

### **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.

#### **3.4 Risk**

There are no risk implications arising as a direct result of this report. Project/Programme risks are identified via the council risk management process and monitored through the Portfolio Boards and are reported by exception only.

#### **3.5 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)**

#### **3.6 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. Food in Schools**

5.1 This project is under the governance and oversight of the Redesign Board with the next progress update to be presented to the Board on 27 August 2026 building on the detailed reports already taken to this Board supporting decision making and progress against actions.

### **6.0 Investors in People**

#### **6.1 Overall Project RAG & Milestones**

Below is an extract of the first page of the PRMS project dashboard which contains the Overall Project RAG and Key Project Milestones against which, project progress is tracked.

## Workstream 2: Organisational Development

### Project: Investors in People



**Project Overview:**  
The IIP programme will be implemented into The Council in project phases between April 2025 and July 2026. This project will be completed once the programme is established at the end of the three-year accreditation period by July 2029.  
**Project Elements:**  
Five IIP assessments which include

- Staff survey
- 1:1 with representative sample of staff
- Interim and final report for each project, with an annexed report for each team in the group
- Action plan for each team to implement recommendations, improve staff engagement, improve performance and realise the Council's organisational objectives.
- Champions network for each team to deliver and embed improvements – 1 Champion from each Chief Officer team
- Annual pulse surveys and focus groups to monitor and evaluate improvements at 12 months and 24 months

## Portfolio: Corporate Solutions

Portfolio Sponsor: Assistant Chief Executive

### MILESTONES

### CURRENT STATUS

|                                     |                                                            |                           |                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Starts May 25/<br>Completes Nov 25  | IIP: Corporate: Group 1_Assessments and Action Plans (1a)  | M8 25/26<br>Completed     | Legal & Corporate Governance                                                               |
| Starts Nov 25/<br>Completes Jul 28  | IIP: Corporate: Group 1_Implementation (1b)                | M3 26/27<br>On Target     |                                                                                            |
| Starts Sep25/<br>Completes Mar 26   | IIP: Corporate: Group 2_Assessments and Action Plans (2a)  | M1 26/27<br>Completed     | Business Solutions, Corporate Finance, HR & Communications, Revenues and Commercialisation |
| Starts Feb 26 /<br>Completes Nov 28 | IIP: Corporate: Group 2_Implementation (2b)                | M3 26/27<br>On Target     |                                                                                            |
| Starts Nov 25/<br>Completes May 26  | IIP: Place: Group 1_Assessments and Action Plans (3a)      | M3 26/27<br>Some Slippage | Housing & Communities, Property & Assets                                                   |
| Starts Apr 26 /<br>Completes Jan 29 | IIP: Place: Group 1_Implementation (3b)                    | M3 26/27<br>Not Updated   |                                                                                            |
| Starts May 26 /<br>Completes Aug 26 | IIP: Place: Group 2_Assessments and Action Plans (4a)      | M3 26/27<br>On Target     | Planning & Economic Development, Operations & Maintenance, Facilities & Fleet              |
| Starts Sep 26 /<br>Completes May 29 | IIP: Place: Group 2_Implementation (4b)                    |                           |                                                                                            |
| Starts Jan 26 /<br>Completes Jul 26 | IIP: People: Group 1_Assessments and Action Plans (5a)     | M3 26/27<br>On Target     | Health & Social Care, Integrated People Services                                           |
| Starts Jun 26 /<br>Completes Apr 29 | IIP: People: Group 1_Implementation (5b)                   |                           |                                                                                            |
| Starts Apr 26 /<br>Completes Oct 26 | IIP: People: Group 2_Assessments and Action Plans (6a)     | M3 26/27<br>On Target     | Primary Education and Early Years, Secondary Education, Support/Management Services        |
| Starts Sep 26 /<br>Completes Jun 29 | IIP: People: Group 2_Implementation (6b)                   |                           |                                                                                            |
| Starts Sep 25/<br>Completes Sep 26  | IIP: Champions Network                                     | M3 26/27<br>On Target     |                                                                                            |
| Starts Apr 27 /<br>Completes Jun 28 | Investors in People: 7 Determine future after project ends |                           |                                                                                            |
| Starts Jul 28 /<br>Completes Dec 29 | Investors in People: 8 Project End                         |                           |                                                                                            |

## Overall Project RAG

By 3 July 2026, all six Investors in People staff surveys for the whole Council had been completed which is a significant milestone achievement. The number of survey responses are shown below.

| Survey Group              | Chief Officers                                                                                                                                                                                            | Survey Response Rate | Total Responses |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Corporate Cluster Group 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal &amp; Corporate Governance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                      | 83%                  | 98              |
| Corporate Cluster Group 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Solutions</li> <li>• Corporate Finance</li> <li>• HR &amp; Communications</li> <li>• Revenues &amp; Commercialisation</li> </ul>                        | 83%                  | 576             |
| Place Cluster Group 1     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing &amp; Communities</li> <li>• Property &amp; Assets</li> </ul>                                                                                            | 60%                  | 476             |
| Place Cluster Group 2     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprise &amp; Investment</li> <li>• Operations &amp; Maintenance</li> <li>• Facilities &amp; Fleet</li> </ul>                                                 | 47%                  | 1,268           |
| People Cluster Group 1    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; Social Care</li> <li>• Integrated People Services (HSC)</li> </ul>                                                                                  | 56%                  | 524             |
| People Cluster Group 2    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Education &amp; Early Years</li> <li>• Secondary Education</li> <li>• Support/Management Services</li> <li>• Integrated People Services (EDL)</li> </ul> | 38%                  | 2,319           |

Public sector staff surveys typically achieve response rates of around 30%. The programme set an ambitious internal target of 50% participation for each cohort, significantly exceeding the 7% minimum response rate required by IIP.

Overall, Highland achieved a 46.4% response rate, which is similar to the staff survey carried out in 2022. It should be noted that *Investors in People* is an improvement programme and the survey is just one part of the ongoing work to improve staff experience.

The primary objective of the programme is to drive meaningful improvements in how we lead, manage and support our people. Achieving this requires a robust evidence base to identify priorities, target improvement activity and measure progress over time. Given the size, geographical spread and operational diversity of the workforce, securing high levels of engagement has been a significant achievement.

### Milestones

At the end of June 2026 progress across the *Investors in People* programme remains positive, with strong engagement across services:

- Champions networks are developed in line with completion of feedback sessions for each cohort. A network has been established within Legal & Corporate Governance and is being developed across other Corporate Cluster services. Chief Officers in all cohorts promote participation and support culture change activity.
- Corporate 1 and 2 (whole Corporate Cluster): Assessment and action planning phase is complete. Action plans have been approved and the three-year implementation stage started in November is underway. The full report for the Corporate Cluster was reported to the Corporate Resources Committee on 4 June 2026. The first annual IIP progress review is scheduled for September 2026, when both groups will form a single cohort.
- Place 1 (Property & Assets and Housing & Communities) Assessment and action plan phase started in April 2026 and is scheduled to complete in September 2026. Survey response rate achieved 61%, with feedback sessions delivered in July for Housing & Communities and being planned during August/September for Property & Assets. Action planning underway.
- Place 2 (Facilities & Fleet, Operations & Maintenance, Enterprise & Investment) Assessment and action plan phase started in May 2026 and expected to complete in August 2026. The survey closed on the 3 July 2026. The survey feedback meeting was held on the 22 July 2026 to discuss results and agree next steps.
- People 1 – (Health & Social Care and Integrated People Services (H&SC)): Assessment and action plan phase nearing completion. Providing results to staff is being planned and developing the action plan is in progress and due to complete September 2026.

- People 2 – (Education & Learning and Integrated People Services (Education)): Assessment and action plan phase is progressing well. The survey closed on the 3 July 2026 with an extra week allocated to process printed surveys. IIP survey feedback session was held on the 16 July, and planning is progressing to the next stage of assessment.

## 6.2 Key Risks & Measures of Success

Below is an extract of the second page of the PRMS project dashboard which sets out the Key Risks and Measures of Success for the project.

| INVESTMENT                                                                        |                                                                                | CURRENT STATUS | KEY RISKS ASSESSED                                   | CURRENT RISK RATING | RESPONSE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------|
|  | Investors in People: Investment FY 25 : Recurring Budget (Current FY Forecast) | £ 90,000       | Investors in People: Insufficient time and expertise | 4                   | Tolerate |
|  | Investors In People (IIP): Investment FY 25-26: EMR (Current FY Forecast)      | £ 106,600      |                                                      |                     |          |

  

| MEASURES OF SUCCESS                                                                              |  | CURRENT STATUS |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Corporate Cluster Group 1 - Completed May 25 |  | 83 %           |
| Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Corporate Cluster Group 2 - Completed Nov 25 |  | 83 %           |
| Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – Place Cluster Group 1 - Completed Jan 26     |  | 60 %           |
| 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  |  | 56 %           |
| Investors in People: IIP Assessment Response Rate – People Cluster Group 2 - Completes Jun 26    |  |                |

### Key Risks

The risks associated with engaging staff who have challenging work patterns and limited digital access were mitigated as far as practicable throughout the process. Mitigations included managers regularly reminding and encouraging their staff to participate, IIP staff visiting depots and workshops, laptops and mobile phone access to the digital survey were provided, hardcopy versions of the survey provided.

### Financial Measures

Budget is on track (and funded via earmarked reserves).

### Performance & Measures of Success

Overall, results represent a positive outcome for the programme, providing a strong baseline for future measurement and demonstrating a clear willingness amongst employees to engage in shaping organisational improvement. Cohort-level action plans are being developed to address key themes identified through the survey feedback.

## 7.0 HR & Payroll Transformation Project & Talentlink Recruitment System Improvements

7.1 These projects are discussed in a separate / specific item to today's agenda.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

Date: 5 August 2026

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