The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**14**
Report No	**CP/36/26**

Committee: **Communities and Place**

Date: **5 November 2026**

Report Title: **Performance Monitoring Q2 2026/27**

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

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with the Q2 2026/27 performance monitoring position for the Communities and Place Committee.

1.2 This report provides the following performance information:-

- Corporate Indicators.
- Contribution to the Performance Plan.
- Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) out with the Performance Plan.
- Service Plan progress.

Additional performance information such as longer-term trend analysis and comparisons against Highland Council's family group average as well as the national picture is available via the Local Government Benchmarking Data if required.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **scrutinise** and **note** the performance information for the Communities and Place Service.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – There are no resource implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.

3.2 **Legal** – This report contributes to the Council's statutory duties to report performance and secure best value in terms of Section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992, and Section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, respectively.

3.3 **Risk** – There are no risk implications arising as a direct consequence 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 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 Performance - Corporate Indicators

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

5.1.1 As the Resources & Finance service is the SPI-owner for Sickness Absence, and Invoice Payments, the corporate position is also detailed below.

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 was previously recorded by the previous Council service areas. Data by new service area is now available and will be provided going forward.

5.3 Sickness Absence

Service Sickness Absence - Place

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	0.38				
Facilities and Fleet Management	3.32	4.36	4.77	4.53				
Housing and Communities	3.06	4.83	4.48	4.19				
Operations and Maintenance	5.50	5.32	5.35	5.45				
Property and Assets	1.53	1.29	1.86	2.55				
Highland Council	3.02	4.09	3.97	3.55				

Average Days Lost	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26
Communities and Place	4.27	4.38	4.31	4.21	4.41	4.99	5.14	4.80
Highland Council	2.08	3.35	3.48	3.24	2.54	3.42	3.95	3.55

Place Absence Stats	Average Days Lost (June 2026)	Average Days Lost (July 2026)	Average Days Lost (August 2026)
Enterprise and Investment	0.0	0.1	0.0
Facilities and Fleet Management	1.7	1.3	1.0
Housing and Communities	1.5	1.5	1.4
Operations and Maintenance	2.0	2.0	2.1
Property and Assets	0.7	0.9	1.2
Place Total	**1.6**	**1.4**	**1.4**

5.3.1 Absence monitoring information for Q2 was not available at the time this report was prepared. However, analysis of the monthly absence data for June, July and August 2026, together with Q2 trends from 2024/25 and 2025/26 suggests that absence levels within F&FM may decrease compared with Q1 2026/27. This likely reflects the significant proportion of CCFM employees who work on term-time contracts and are therefore on annual leave during school holiday periods. However, the monthly absence data indicates that absence levels within O&M and H&C are likely to increase during Q2.

Operations and Maintenance, Facilities and Fleet Management, and Housing and Communities continue to experience higher levels of absence compared to other services. This is likely influenced by the predominantly manual workforce and the associated physical demands of these roles.

5.3.2 Long-term absence represents a disproportionate level of FTE days lost compared to the number of employees affected. The main reasons for absence amongst these staff groups includes viral, non-work-related stress and musculoskeletal being common across the three service areas.

5.3.3 Reducing absence rates through a strong and consistent approach to attendance management is a particular focus for the Cluster. 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. 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.

5.3.4 The causes of absence are being proactively addressed through a co-ordinated 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.

5.3.5 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.

5.3.6 As detailed within the Place Cluster Workforce Planning 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 across the Council.
- 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.

5.4 Service Complaints Response Times

5.4.1 Monitoring complaints provides important feedback which can facilitate decision making and service design. Each cluster is responsible for responding to complaints which are issued on their behalf by the Complaints and Information Team (CIT). At the time of preparing this report the data for Q2 is not yet available, this will be provided as part of the next report.

5.4.2

Service Complaints - Communities and Place

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

Frontline Resolution within 5 days

	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
Communities and Place	56	86 %	52	88 %	63	95 %	93	94 %	74	82 %	69	86 %	95	89 %	91	90 %
Highland Council	155	88 %	183	87 %	174	91 %	223	90 %	200	85 %	262	82 %	261	84 %	259	83 %

Investigation Resolution within 20 days

	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
Communities and Place	4	25 %	4	50 %	2	100 %	2	100 %	2	50 %	8	50 %	3	33 %	7	71 %
Highland Council	90	42 %	71	51 %	68	47 %	86	40 %	94	55 %	110	51 %	111	43 %	140	34 %

Escalated Resolution within 20 days

	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
Communities and Place	8	75 %	8	63 %	7	71 %	7	29 %	5	20 %	4	50 %	7	57 %	9	56 %
Highland Council	26	46 %	34	44 %	30	33 %	27	26 %	22	27 %	31	23 %	45	24 %	39	36 %

5.4.3 Officers continue to take steps to resolve complaints within the target completion timescales recognising that some complaints can require significant work to obtain data and information to inform the final response. This can also involve cross-team collaboration within and across clusters.

5.5 Service Freedom of Information (FOI) Response Times

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

5.5.2

Service Freedom of Information Requests - Place Cluster

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

% FOIs Compliant - Enterprise and Investment Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	73	67 %	69	65 %	79	77 %	87	80 %	109	70 %	88	59 %	51	82 %	66	59 %
% FOIs Compliant - Housing and Communities Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	89	69 %	83	69 %	97	76 %	110	74 %	146	73 %	97	67 %	70	87 %	115	62 %
% FOIs Compliant - Operations and Maintenance Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	155	75 %	191	76 %	149	81 %	150	83 %	132	70 %	149	70 %	184	91 %	157	71 %
% FOIs Compliant - Property and Assets Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	5	60 %	17	53 %	15	67 %	30	60 %	16	56 %	17	29 %	12	67 %	20	70 %
% FOIs Compliant - Facilities and Fleet Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	22	68 %	28	57 %	18	94 %	20	65 %	25	72 %	24	75 %	17	94 %	25	56 %
ACE % FOIs Compliant - Place Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	490	70 %	526	69 %	516	78 %	571	78 %	646	70 %	551	63 %	436	87 %	515	63 %
% FOIs Compliant - Highland Council Quarterly	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	570	73 %	617	71 %	577	81 %	601	77 %	581	73 %	578	65 %	563	84 %	599	65 %

5.5.3 All teams within the Place Cluster continue to take steps to monitor performance and to identify further improvement actions.

5.6 Invoice Payment Times

5.6.1 These indicators measure the Council's efficiency at paying invoices within 30 days and 10 days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid. While payment of invoices within 30 days of receipt is a Council Statutory Performance Indicator, the Council also monitors the number of invoices paid within 10 days of receipt. The targets for performance are 95% and 77% respectively for 30- and 10-days.

5.6.2

Invoice Payment Times - PLACE

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 %	92.3 %						
Highland Council	93.7 %	92.3 %						

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 %	62.0 %						
Highland Council	63.5 %	63.4 %						

Service Invoice Payment Times - Communities and Place

Invoice Payment within 30 days	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Communities & Place	80.8 %	88.2 %	87.9 %	88.7 %	88.2 %	94.4 %	91.2 %	94.4 %
Highland Council	87.7 %	91.4 %	92.9 %	92.9 %	93.0 %	94.8 %	94.3 %	95.2 %

Invoice Payment less than 10 days	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Communities & Place	49.7 %	66.7 %	52.1 %	46.5 %	53.4 %	64.9 %	70.0 %	69.5 %
Highland Council	57.0 %	68.5 %	63.8 %	63.3 %	64.7 %	72.5 %	72.3 %	69.6 %

5.6.3 For this 30-day measure all teams within the Place Cluster continue to take steps to ensure timely payment of invoices.

6 Contribution to the Performance Plan

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

Communities & Place: Contribution to the Performance Plan

Strategic Priority 1 Fair & Caring Highland	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Reduce Highland Suicide rate - 5 Yr Avg	CY 2024	17.4	CY 2025			
No. HC workforce trained in supporting people with mental health and wellbeing concerns	FY 24/25	370	FY 25/26			

Strategic Priority 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Street Cleanliness Score [ENV03c]	FY 24/25	95.91 %	FY 25/26	95.30 %		annual update December

Strategic Priority 4 A Sustainable Highland Environment	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Continue partnership with Intermediate Labour Market Highland	Q1 26/27	On Target	Q2 26/27	On Target		Target is ongoing
% of total household waste arising that is recycled (ENV06)	FY 24/25	42.5 %	FY 25/26	45.1 %		annual update September

Strategic Priority 5 A Resiliant and Sustainable Council	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
ERDs being completed - CPL || CP5.01	Q1 26/27	Completed	Q2 26/27			Completed Q1 26/27
Supporting and engaging with Community Councils	Q1 26/27	On Target	Q2 26/27	On Target		Target is ongoing

7 Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) Outwith the Performance Plan

Communities & Place: SPIs						
SPIs not monitored in Performance Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Net Cost of Waste Collection per Premise || ENV01a	FY 24/25	£ 100.97	FY 25/26			annual update November
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise || ENV02a	FY 24/25	£ 89.69	FY 25/26			annual update November
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1000 popn || ENV03a	FY 24/25	£ 11,644	FY 25/26			annual update November
% adults satisfied - refuse collection || ENV07a	FY 24/25	87.0 %	FY 25/26			annual update December
% adults satisfied - street cleaning || ENV07b	FY 24/25	62.0 %	FY 25/26			annual update December
95% of high risk private water supplies are inspected and sampled	FY 24/25	66 %	FY 25/26	78 %		annual update October

8 Remaining Service Plan Items – Progress

Bereavement Services, Transforming Services for Significant Life Events Q2 26/27						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Delivery of Burial Ground Projects	Q1 26/27	On Target	Q2 26/27	On Target		Targets set in project plan

Community Development and Involvement Approaches Q2 26/27						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
External Annual Examination by National Records of Scotland	CY 2024	97 %	CY 2025	97 %	98 %	annual update November

Transforming our Approach to Community Spaces Q2 26/27						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Develop community volunteering policy	Q1 26/27	Some Slippage	Q2 26/27	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q3 23/24

The dashboards have been updated to remove elements that were previously reported as complete or archived, as well as elements that appear in multiple plans (i.e., in the Performance Plan or as an SPI).

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 23 October 2026

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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None