The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**18**
Report No	**ECI/51/26**

Committee: **Economy and Infrastructure**

Date: **12 November 2026**

Report Title: **Performance Monitoring Report 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 Economy and Infrastructure Service regarding:-

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

1.2 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.

1.3 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 **scrutinise** and **note** the performance information.

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 consequence 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 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. In common with other organisations, sickness absence generally decreases in the spring and summer months due to seasonal viruses.

5.2.2 Absence data is now reported by Chief Officer service area. This is available from Quarter 4 2025/26 and detailed in the table below. Previous data trends are provided for comparator purposes in the third table.

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
Infrastructure, Environment and Economy	2.11	2.03	1.59	2.32	1.81	2.33	2.91	2.54
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**

5.2.3 Absence monitoring information for Q2 was not available at the time of preparing this report. Based on analysis of monthly absence data for June, July and August 2026, and Q2 absence data from 2024/25 and 2025/26, it is anticipated that there may be a slight further decrease in absences compared to Q1 26/27.

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

5.2.5 Mental health related absences continue to appear within the top three long term absence reasons for all Clusters. Stress related absences, including non-work-related stress is the most common reason for absence within the service and some managers requested additional support and training on how to support staff dealing with stress. This additional support is being explored and will be rolled out across the services. The mental health and wellbeing helpline is available to employees which provides easy access to the following mental health support services: EAP; NHS 24; Samaritans and mental health representatives. There has also been a focus on recruiting and training an additional 21 mental health representatives, bringing the total in the Council to 91 reps. It should be noted that employees often require multiple treatments and ongoing support which may extend periods of absence. Additionally, there continues to be long NHS waiting lists to access appropriate mental health services.

5.2.6 Musculoskeletal, Kidney/bladder and gynaecological are in the top three absence reasons for the service and managers are mindful of the manual and sedentary workforce and the impact of those jobs on employee health and wellbeing. Therefore, occupational health and physiotherapy referrals are progressed as and when required. This is particularly important based on the aging workforce and the requirement to ensure staff receive the appropriate risk assessments, training and PPE to undertake their roles safely. Furthermore, guidance has been circulated to managers on supporting women's health in the workplace.

5.2.7 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;
- 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; and
- 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 Times**

5.3.1 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).

5.3.2

Service Complaints - Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

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	
Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	31	90 %	45	93 %	33	94 %	49	86 %	45	80 %	82	83 %	35	86 %	56	71 %
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	
Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	16	6 %	16	44 %	8	38 %	2	50 %	13	38 %	20	45 %	18	33 %	20	50 %
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	
Infrastructure, Environment & Economy	4	50 %	10	20 %	10	30 %	3	33 %	3	33 %	4	0 %	5	20 %	6	17 %
Highland Council	26	46 %	34	44 %	30	33 %	27	26 %	22	27 %	31	23 %	45	24 %	39	36 %

5.3.3 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 more than one team from one or more Cluster.

5.4 Service Freedom of Information (FOI) Response Times

5.4.1 FOI requests are co-ordinated by CIT in collaboration with Service teams which collate the information relevant to the request. From Q4 2025/2026 onwards figures are shown split by Chief Officer to reflect the new organisational structure.

5.4.2

Service Freedom of Information Requests - Place Cluster

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

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

5.4.3 Officers continue to take steps to improve performance regarding FOI compliance. It is recognised that some FOI can require significant work to obtain data and information to inform the final response. This can also involve more than one team from one or more Cluster.

5.5 Service Invoice Payment Times

5.5.1 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 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.

From Q1 2026/27 onwards figures are shown split by Service Cluster to reflect the new organisational structure.

5.5.2

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 %						

(The Table below reports prior year data)

Service Invoice Payment Times - Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

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
Infrastructure, Environment and Economy	90.3 %	93.5 %	95.9 %	94.8 %	93.3 %	95.5 %	97.0 %	98.1 %
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
Infrastructure, Environment and Economy	70.7 %	77.0 %	81.2 %	78.9 %	78.1 %	84.8 %	86.1 %	85.3 %
Highland Council	57.0 %	68.5 %	63.8 %	63.3 %	64.7 %	72.5 %	72.3 %	69.6 %

6 Service Contribution to the Performance Plan

6.1 The following summarises performance against the Economy and Infrastructure performance indicators in the Council's Performance Plan.

6.2

Economy & Infrastructure: Contribution to the Performance Plan

Strategic Priority 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
No. of community transport projects supported	FY 24/25	29	FY 25/26	29		
Income from hire of council buses - start reporting FY23/24	FY 24/25	£ 60,047	FY 25/26	£ 61,600		
No. low carbon buses in Council fleet - start reporting 26/27 || CP2.01	FY 24/25		FY 25/26	1		
Early Adoption of 20mph speed limits - start reporting 23/24	FY 24/25	127	FY 25/26	127		
Road network to be considered for maintenance	FY 24/25	39.1 %	FY 25/26	38.9 %		annual update June
Delivery of 22 Tier 1 priority projects in Highland Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan	Q1 26/27	Some Slippage	Q2 26/27	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 26/27
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband (ECON08)	FY 24/25	87 %	FY 25/26	91 %		annual update December
Progression of Inverness Railway Station Master Plan to detailed design	Q1 26/27	Some Slippage	Q2 26/27	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q1 24/25

6.3

Economy & Infrastructure: Contribution to the Performance Plan

Strategic Priority 3 Accessible and Sustainable Highland Homes	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Deliver Affordable Housing: No. council houses built/ purchased per year 2022-27	FY 24/25	189	FY 25/26	222		annual update August
Deliver Affordable Housing: No. affordable houses built by others per year 2022-27	FY 24/25	175	FY 25/26	277		Target: 170/year
Avg time [wks] per planning application - all Local Developments	FY 24/25	17.1	FY 25/26			annual update September
Avg time [wks] per planning application - all Majors	FY 24/25	52.2	FY 25/26			annual update September
Avg time [wks] per planning application - Other Consents	FY 24/25	10.4	FY 25/26			annual update September
Deliver Affordable Housing: No. key worker homes made available avg p.a. 2022-27	FY 24/25	10	FY 25/26	9		Target: 10/year
Bus Service Improvement Project submitted to Economy and Infrastructure Committee	Q1 26/27	Some Slippage	Q2 26/27	Completed		Completed Q2 26/27

Planning application data for 25/26 is delayed and will not be available for this round of reporting. This is due to delays with Scottish Government data processing.

6.4

Economy & Infrastructure: Contribution to the Performance Plan						
Strategic Priority 4 A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
Deliver Active Travel Infrastructure project: Wick	Q1 26/27	Some Slippage	Q2 26/27	On Target		Design due to complete Q2 23/24
No. Funding Opportunities aimed at Community Energy Projects	FY 24/25	6	FY 25/26	2		
% of Nature Restoration Fund Allocated Annually	FY 24/25	0 %	FY 25/26	100 %		
Street lighting energy consumption	FY 24/25	7,975,464	FY 25/26	7,671,747		annual update June

6.5

Economy & Infrastructure: Contribution to the Performance Plan						
Strategic Priority 5 A Resilient and Sustainable Council	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
ERDs being completed - IEE || CP5.01	Q1 26/27	Completed	Q2 26/27			Completed Q1 26/27
No. Business Gateway start-ups per 10000 popn (ECON05)	FY 24/25	16.22	FY 25/26	16.01		annual update October
Number of businesses supported by Council ED and BG	FY 24/25	2,357	FY 25/26			annual update October

The Indicator for "Number of businesses supported by Council ED and BG is currently under review" as it does not fully capture the breadth of business support activity now delivered by the Economic Development and Regeneration Service.

7 SPI's Not Included in the Performance Plan

7.1 The following outlines Economy and Infrastructure Statutory Performance Indicators out with the Performance Plan.

7.2

Economy & Infrastructure: SPIs						
SPIs not monitored in Performance Plan	**Period**	**Data**	**Period**	**Data**	**Target Value**	**Completion/ Update Date**
School Transport - cost per pupil transported	FY 24/25	£ 3,363.64	FY 25/26	£ 3,555.23	£ 3,498.19	annual update June
% of traffic light failures completed in 3 hours	FY 24/25	96.00 %	FY 25/26	95.00 %	95.33 %	annual update June
% of street light failures completed in 7 days	FY 24/25	66.00 %	FY 25/26	67.00 %	62.00 %	annual update June
Average Bridge Stock Condition Index [BSCI Average]	FY 24/25		FY 25/26	79.1	80.0	annual update June
Cost of electricity/street lighting unit	FY 24/25	£ 38.04	FY 25/26	£ 32.65	£ 35.18	annual update June
Cost of maintenance/street lighting unit	FY 24/25	£ 18.35	FY 25/26	£ 19.17	£ 16.17	annual update June

8 Service Plan Progress

8.1

Planning, Environment and Low-Carbon Transport Q2 26/27						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Increase length of core path networks across Highland	FY 24/25	2,724	FY 25/26	2,714	2,742	
Local nature conservation sites identified and designated	FY 24/25		FY 25/26	0	5	Starts reporting Q1 26/27
National Customer Satisfaction Survey for Building Standards	FY 24/25	8.4	FY 25/26	8.6	8.9	

8.2

Roads and Infrastructure Q2 26/27						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Develop the Health and Safety system structure for Roads Service activities	Q1 26/27	Some Slippage	Q2 26/27	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q2 24/25
Road network - A Class | | ENV04b	FY 24/25	30.1 %	FY 25/26	31.1 %	30.3 %	annual update June
Road network - B Class | | ENV04c	FY 24/25	39.8 %	FY 25/26	37.7 %	33.4 %	annual update June
Road network - C Class | | ENV04d	FY 24/25	42.8 %	FY 25/26	39.5 %	32.9 %	annual update June
Road Network - U Class | | ENV04e	FY 24/25	41.3 %	FY 25/26	42.7 %	36.4 %	annual update June
Initiate reviewing and updating the Road Guidelines for new developments	Q1 26/27	No Significant Progress	Q2 26/27	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q2 24/25
Reduce CO2 emissions for street lighting [tonnes CO2]	FY 24/25	1,779	FY 25/26	1,482	5,135	

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 14 October 2026

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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None