The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8
Report No	EDU/34/26

Committee: **Education**

Date: **18 November 2026**

Report Title: **Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 2026/27**

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

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with the Quarter 2 2026/27 performance monitoring position for the Education Service.

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.

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:

i. **Scrutinise** and **note** the performance information for the Education 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:** Risk implications will be kept under regular review and any risks identified reported to future Committees.

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 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 Sickness Absence

5.2.1 Absence data for Q2 2026/27 is not ready at the time of writing the report. When new data is available, it will be reported at the next committee.

5.2.2 Attendance management training has been provided to the Area Quality Improvement Managers and Education Support Officers who line manage Head Teachers and provide support to schools. There is also online training available to Head Teachers and tailored twilight sessions have also been provided. Sessions are continuing to be held this session to ensure all newly appointed and Acting Head Teachers receive the training required to manage absence within their school. There is also a monthly focussed meeting with the Strategic Lead who holds responsibility for workforce and the Education Attendance Support Officer to consider actions required to resolve longer term cases.

5.3 Service Complaints Response Times

5.3.1 Monitoring complaints provides important feedback which can facilitate decision making and service design. Each Service is responsible for responding to complaints which are issued on their behalf by the Complaints and Information Team (CIT).

There has been a decline in performance for front line resolution and the reasons for this have been reviewed. When the number of cases is so low – 3 in Quarter 2 – the difference between 100% and 67% compliance is missing the deadline for one case. Nevertheless, the aspiration is to meet the deadline in all cases. It should be noted that many complaints are resolved at school level by Head Teachers informally.

Given the complexity of most of the complaints that come into the service, unsurprisingly there are many more that are registered as Stage 2 cases. The Service regularly performs better than the Council average for complaints requiring resolution within 20 days.

However, there was a dip in performance in Quarter 2 (July-Sept). Many complaints require data held at school level and so those that are received during school holiday periods will impact on the service ability to reply within the expected timeframe. Attention will be paid to improving response times for Quarter 3.

5.3.2

Service Complaints - Education and Learning

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	
Education and Learning	12	92 %	12	92 %	21	90 %	7	86 %	9	78 %	7	86 %	8	75 %	3	67 %
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	
Education and Learning	24	83 %	29	69 %	25	56 %	35	40 %	52	71 %	53	62 %	56	57 %	56	30 %
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	
Education and Learning	2	50 %	2	50 %	1	0 %	1	0 %	2	0 %	3	0 %	3	0 %	1	0 %
Highland Council	26	46 %	34	44 %	30	33 %	27	26 %	22	27 %	31	23 %	45	24 %	39	36 %

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.

5.4.2 The performance for FOI response times during Q2 2026/27 against a corporate target of 90% was as follows:

Service Freedom of Information Requests - Education and Learning

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

% FOIs Compliant - Education and Learning	Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Q4 25/26		Q1 26/27		Q2 26/27	
	90	70 %	74	57 %	65	83 %	70	67 %	55	67 %	69	52 %	65	51 %	51	67 %

% FOIs Compliant - Highland Council	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 %

Tables display the number of FOIs closed within the quarter and % of those that were compliant with the legislative timescale (20 working days) for the service and the Highland Council overall.
The Scottish Information Commissioner requires the Council to achieve a minimum compliance rate of 90%.

5.4.3 The Service is continuing to work to meet the corporate target. It is of note that the service receives a high number of FOIs that are complex and often require significant amounts of data to be collated. This impacts on the team's ability to respond within the timescales, especially when requests relate to information that is held at school level. In recognition of the need to improve performance, an officer has recently been appointed, part of the duties of this post are to have oversight of FOIs relating to workforce issues which represent a significant proportion of those received.

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 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.

5.5.2 The figures are shown by cluster from Q1 2026/27 onwards.
Invoice data for Q2 2026/27 is shown below: -

Invoice Payment Times - PEOPLE Cluster

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
People	92.8 %	90.4 %						
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
People	64.1 %	70.4 %						
Highland Council	63.5 %	63.4 %						

With regard to the reporting on invoice payment times, this is being provided by cluster where previously it was reported by individual service, therefore no comparison has been provided for Q4 2025/26. The majority of invoice payments are made at school level as part of Devolved School Management budgets. It is recognised that invoice payments can be delayed due to school holidays. A reminder has been issued to schools to ensure that invoices are prioritised before and after holiday periods.

6. Contribution to the Performance Plan

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

Information for the most recent Academic Year is not generally available until the national Insights data is published.

6.2 There is no new data for Q2 2026/27 at the time of writing the report. When new data is available, it will be reported at the next committee.

7. Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) Outwith the Performance Plan

7.1 There is no new data for FY 2025/26 SPIs Outwith the Performance Plan at the time of writing the report. When new data is available, it will be reported at the next committee.

8. Remaining Service Plan Items - Progress

8.1 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). Only data that not previously reported is provided. There is no new data for Q2 2026/27 at the time of writing the report. When new data is available it will be reported at the next committee.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 27 October 2026

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Background Papers: N/A

Appendices: N/A