

Agenda Item	14
Report No	HC/23/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Highland Council

Date: 09 September 2021

Report Title: Annual Corporate Performance Report 2020/21

Report By: The Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an assessment of progress in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan. It is a key annual report measuring and reporting on progress against the performance targets set by the Council. The Corporate Plan covers the Council's Programme, Local Voices; Highland Choices, along with the strategic, operational and improvement priorities of the Council which reflect the Council's budget strategy and change programme 'A Sustainable Highland'. The report covers the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and performance is measured against the revised Corporate Plan approved by Council on 5 September 2019.
- 1.2 Progress is reported with 67% of performance indicators (48 out of the total 72) completed, performing on target or within the performance threshold. For 24 performance measures targets have not yet been achieved with a further 3 indicators not yet having data to report. For the Council's 27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 67% are performing on target or within the performance threshold. Progress is also reflective of our national benchmark position with most Corporate Plan indicators having targets to improve the Council's national benchmark position.
- 1.3 The Council's response to COVID-19 is also very relevant to reporting on 2020/21 performance and this has been highlighted in the report. The impact on the Council's KPIs in this context for 2020/21 will not be known until January 2022 once data is nationally verified.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Scrutinise the progress being made with the delivery of the Corporate Plan for the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

- ii. Scrutinise and agree the changes proposed to performance indicators and actions targets as outlined at section 6.
- iii. Note the Council's response and work towards recovery from the COVID-19 emergency during 2020/21.
- iv. Await a further report on Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework no later than March 2022.
- v. Note it was not possible to carry out the Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey (APAS) due to COVID, that the Citizen's Panel is being refreshed with APAS planned again in 2022.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – There are no new financial implications due to this performance report. However, progress outlined should be noted in the context of the current financial climate.
- 3.2 Legal – Implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting (PPR).
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The report identifies progress to achieve several relevant outcomes. This includes working with partners and communities to reduce inequality and tackle poverty and discrimination (outcome 3.1), support economic growth and create and protect jobs across Highland (outcome 4.2), working with partners to ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing opportunities (outcome 4.5), and promoting the Highlands as a diverse, safe, and friendly place to live, study, work and live (outcome 5.1).
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – This report identifies progress made with commitments on climate change, such as progress to develop a Highland-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and reducing the Council's carbon emissions (outcomes 5.3 & 5.6).
- 3.5 Risk – Reporting progress on the delivery of the Corporate Plan is an important strategic assessment of the Council's performance and an important element of external audit's assessment of the Council under Best Value. Any inability of the Council to demonstrate Best Value represents a high-level reputational risk, with Best Value assessed annually by the Council's external auditor. A Best Value Assurance Report of the Council was completed in 2019/20 and reported to Council in March 2020. This identified a need to drive improved performance. The setting of stretch targets by Members in the revised Corporate Plan is critical to responding to the findings of the report and driving continuous improvement.
- 3.6 Gaelic – The Corporate Plan has a commitment to the delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan (Outcome 2.7).

4. Background

- 4.1 An annual report of Corporate Performance is prepared each autumn. It covers performance for the previous financial year and analyses the most recent data available to provide a progress report on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan covers the priorities set in the Council's Programme, "Local Voices; Highland Choices", along with the strategic, operational and improvement priorities of the Council which reflect the Council's budget strategy and change programme for 2020/21 "A Sustainable Highland". The report therefore analyses the performance indicators set out in the Corporate Plan against the targets set by Council and their related performance thresholds.

- 4.2 The Corporate Plan addresses External Audit feedback (paragraph 3.5). There is an increased focus on performance measurement against targets and the Council presents performance against its 27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This approach demonstrates the Council's use of data to support continuous improvement and public performance reporting using an evidence-based approach. It also helps to evidence the achievement of the Council's vision to be Ambitious, Sustainable and Connected.
- 4.3 The principles that underpin the Council are that we will be ambitious, sustainable and connected. This means for public performance reporting (PPR) we will connect with the public by measuring our performance, reporting on it publicly and listening to our communities, to ensure we are delivering services that provide Best Value for Council taxpayers and demonstrate the Council's ambition. This report is therefore a key element of the Council's PPR. This report will also be scrutinised by Audit Scotland and our external auditors Grant Thornton and informs the ongoing assessment of the Council under Best Value.
- 4.4 The latest data available to report on the indicators in the Corporate Plan is for 2019/20 along with a small number of actions where the status of these as at end 2020/21 has been used to assess performance. This represents a further year of data for reporting against the plan targets agreed in September 2019 (2017/18 baseline). However, it should be noted that the Council considered the data when it was reported to Council as part of the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) and benchmarking report on 25 March 2021. Discussion in the Chamber in September 2019, when the Annual Performance Report was last considered by the Council, picked up the significant lag in data being verified at a national level and returned to the Council for use.
- 4.5 The option of producing local data trends ahead of nationally verification was considered as a partial solution. However, this has not been possible due to the impact of COVID-19 on normal work, the redeployment of staff to the COVID-19 response, and the delay nationally in the production of Local Financial Returns (LFRs). While this approach will be revisited to provide information on progress against local trends in the future, it is unlikely that the national verification of data timescales will change. This means there will continue to be a significant lag in receiving our benchmark position to assess progress against corporate targets or drive improvement and local trend data provides a limited assessment of progress.
- 4.6 Given the lag in national reporting, which is an issue for the Council every year, Executive Chief Officers are working with their teams to identify ways in which to demonstrate continuous improvement and monitor progress more regularly than the current focus on annual SPIs, benchmark indicators and the Corporate Plan. As part of Service Redesign, all Services are building in relevant performance information which will provide the Executive Leadership Team and Service Management Teams with a more regular monthly or quarterly view of progress. This approach has also been built into the Directorate Service Plans for 2021/22 onwards and will inform a refreshed approach to Quarterly Performance Reporting (QPR) to Strategic Committees where performance and financial reporting are being integrated. The impact of COVID-19 on the performance of benchmark indicators for 2020/21 is subject to national review and Members will be advised on any recommendations where current targets have been impacted by COVID-19.

5. Council Performance 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

- 5.1 As outlined at 4.4, the approach to this year's annual report had been to assess progress using the 2019/20 data across the themes of the Council Programme and Corporate Plan. This not only focuses on the Council's 27 key performance indicators

(KPIs) but also provides some qualitative update on progress for 2020/21 with detail of all indicators for 2019/20 also provided in Appendix 2.

- 5.2 For the 27 KPIs, performance is on target for 12, and within the determined performance threshold for 6. There are 9 KPIs showing no significant progress. 67% (18/27) of the KPIs are performing on target or within the performance threshold. This compares to 74% (20/27) in the previous reporting year (2018/19 data). Progress is also reflective of our national benchmark position with most Corporate Plan indicators having targets to improve the Council's national benchmark position. Table 1 provides a summary.

For the 75 performance indicators (PIs) in the Corporate Plan, performance against target can be assessed for 72 out of the 75 indicators. For these 72 indicators, 6 are complete, 29 are on target, and 13 are within the performance threshold. 24 PIs are showing no significant progress. 67% (48/72) of the indicators are either complete, on target, or within the performance threshold. This compares to 74% (50/68) in the previous reporting year (2018/19 data).

		KPIs	All PIs
	Performance is "Complete"	-	6
	Performance is "On Target"	12	29
	Performance is "Within Performance Threshold"	6	13
	Performance is "No Significant Progress"	9	24
	The indicator is new / changed / verified data awaited/ no data available	-	3
	Total	27	75

Table 1: Assessment of corporate performance, 2020/21

It is worth highlighting that while indicators may not yet be achieving the targets set by Members, this does not necessarily mean there has been no improvement in performance. The overall assessment relates to the specific target not having been met. Appendix 1 makes this clear, there are KPIs assessed as  where performance has improved on previous years and is expected to continue to improve. In some cases, it highlights where the targets need to be revisited as they are no longer relevant or appropriate. Appendix 3 also highlights that there are improvement actions in place, but their impact has not had time to affect the performance indicators and improvement is therefore expected in the next reporting period.

- 5.3 There were 35 indicators where performance in 2019/20 was on target or actions were completed (Table 1):

A Council that Champions the Highlands:

- Report on progress engaging with and influencing national policy on the Council's agenda and investment priorities

A Place to Live:

- With partners build on average 500 new affordable homes per year over the next 5 years (2017-2022)
- Average time take to re-let homes (days, SHR35)
- Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due (HSN1b; SHR31)
- Average days taken to complete medical adaptations in Council houses (SHR23)
- Net cost per visit to libraries (C&L2a)
- Net cost per visit to museums (C&L3a)

A Place to Thrive:

- SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds (CHN7)
- Teachers trained in inclusion/ ASN methods
- Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD2; CHN12c)
- All eligible 2, 3, and 4-year-old have access to 1140 hours of childcare by 2020
- Child Protection registrations in a year, which have been registered previously within the past 18 months (CHN22)
- Financial benefit to the customer from advice given
- School attendance rates (per 100 pupils; CHN19a)

A Place to Prosper:

- Percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment
- Total direct spend with Highland small and medium sized enterprises (ECON4)
- 300 modern apprentices by 2022
- The number of businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway

A Welcoming Place:

- Street Cleanliness Score (ENV3c)
- Street lighting energy consumption (kWh)
- Council carbon emissions (CO₂e)
- Tourism visitor numbers
- Tourism economic impact
- Develop a co-ordinated talent attraction and retention strategy with partners by June 2020
- Complete phase 1 of Inverness Castle development by December 2022
- Develop a Highland-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy with partners by 2022
- Maintain the current proportion of EU Council employees

Your Highland Council:

- Absence (days, non-teaching staff; CORP6b)
- Council Tax received (CORP7)
- Reducing staff travel costs
- 2 pilots to test in-sourcing non-housing building maintenance by August 2019
- Council reserves restored to 2% minimum by March 2022
- ICT network refresh across 374 sites by September 2019
- Maintain recruitment controls to shape the workforce and align budget and service delivery priorities (annual report)

5.4 There were 24 indicators which during 2019/20 did not progress as planned against target (Table1 above). However, as discussed, a significant lag in data makes assessment challenging and circumstances are likely to have changed compared to the available data for 2019/20. In addition, as outlined at 5.2 above there are positive local trends in data towards meeting the stretching targets Members have set for improvement in the Council's national benchmark positions. Appendix 3 of this report provides more detailed analysis of the actions being taken to drive improvement.

A Place to Live:

- Adults (65+) receiving personal care at home (SW3a)
- Direct payments spent on adults (18+; SW2)
- Household waste recycled and composted (%; ENV6)

- Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life (SW4b)

A Place to Thrive:

- Pupils entering positive destinations (16-19-year-olds participating in education, training and employment); (CHN11)
- SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds (CHN6)
- SCQF2 Level 6 attainment for all children (CHN5)
- Looked After Children being cared for in the community (CHN9)
- Overall average total tariff score for pupils (S4-S6; CHN12a)
- Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD1 – children living in areas of most disadvantage; (CHN12b)
- Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD3; CHN12d)
- Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD4; CHN12e)
- Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD5 – children living in areas of least disadvantage; (CHN12f)
- Funded early years provision graded good or better (CHN18)
- Number of new foster carers
- Homelessness – case duration (weeks)
- School attendance rates (per 100 looked after children; (CHN19b)

A Place to Prosper:

- Number of Business Gateway start-ups (per 10,000 population; (ECON5)
- Pupils entering positive destinations (CHN11)

A Welcoming Place:

- The number of visits to/usages of Council funded museums that were in person per 1,000 population
- The total number of visits to/ usages of Council funded museums (in person and virtual) per 1,000 population

Your Highland Council:

- Asset Management – Suitability (CAST1)
- Number of staff undertaking wellbeing workshops
- 450 staff transitioned to new roles by 2022

6. Highland Council response to COVID-19

6.1 During 2020/21 the Council was presented with unprecedented demands in order to respond to and work towards recovery from the COVID-19 emergency and this needs to be recognised in any performance report for 2020/21. Key elements of the Council's response include:

- Rapidly redeploying staff into new roles to support the Council's COVID response.
- Adapting ways of working to successfully engage with vulnerable people and communities to ensure their welfare and needs were met throughout the pandemic.
- Establishing a multi-strand COVID helpline to ensure our communities received the advice and support they needed.
- Providing 153.27 tonnes of food (34,706 bags) to people shielding, in need and to community bodies through a network of 10 distribution hubs.
- Supporting community resilience by establishing a network of over 330 community bodies and distributing new COVID ward discretionary funding of up to £0.776m
- Supporting public health teams with the Test and Protect Service including support for individuals and to business with advice on COVID compliance

- Establishing a business grants team and disbursing over £193m, making over 37,778 individual payments to 15,700 businesses across 12 different grant streams.
- Creating key worker childcare hubs and support to vulnerable young people.
- Delivering several Scottish Government funded financial support schemes to improve financial security among those in greatest need, including free school meal vouchers to 4,700 eligible pupils.
- Creating a new fuel payment grants of £1.9m reaching over 10,000 households.
- Adjusting all core services to keep services running e.g. waste, roads, Registrar services, burials & cremations, housing and homeless services and health and social care.
- Staff adapting to home working in order to ensure they and the Highlands stayed safe and our essential functions were maintained.
- Deploying technology solution to maintain communications and ensure our democratic processes continued, with over 240 formal committee meetings run and regular briefings for Members.
- Continued engagement with Scottish and UK Governments on a wide range of issues and participated in national and professional networks to develop COVID responses and share learning.
- Monitoring rapidly changing guidance and providing information to staff, Members and the public including outbreak support, welfare and business advice, videos, COVID briefings and community newsletters.
- Delivering education and supporting pupils both remotely and in a school environment.
- Delivering a safe by-election.
- Enhanced support for the health and wellbeing of front-line staff through establishing organisational wide communications, support and expert guidance mechanisms.
- Continuing to deliver the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements managing the risk of sexual and serious dangerous and violent offenders to keep local communities safe.
- Sustaining the uninterrupted service delivery of criminal justice social work to individuals subject to statutory court orders (e.g. community payback orders and drug testing & treatment orders) to reduce the risk of reoffending.
- Working closely with partner agencies to plan and ensure the successful reintegration of prisoners released under the emergency early release of prisoners under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020.

Key elements of the Council's approach to recovery include:

- Developing and setting the budget of £9.81m in March 2021 for health and prosperity with a range of new one-off investments for economic prosperity, visitor management and place-based investment.
- Supporting NHS's vaccination programme with venues and facilities support and creating new mobile vaccination and testing units.
- Set up Recovery Groups, Plans and Strategies to ensure economic and community recovery e.g. Economic Recovery Partnership, City of Inverness and Area Recovery Group.
- Delivering £1.9m of temporary Active Travel improvements to support social distancing guidelines.
- Developing a Visitor Management Plan and allocating £2.4m to support it to be ready for the 2021 season

7. Review of Corporate Plan Performance Measures and Actions

7.1 The following indicators or actions have been reviewed by Council officers and require Members' scrutiny to agree the changes recommended. The impact of this will be to

amend the performance reported for 2020/21 to Council in March 2022 for SPIs and to Council in the Annual Performance Report in September 2022 (the final report on the current Corporate Plan and Council Programme). The reason for each of the changes recommended are:

- People aged 65+ with long term care needs receiving personal care at home (SW3a): The performance target is to improve to quartile 2, but in the Corporate Plan the timescale was yet to be agreed with NHS Highland. As part of reporting through the SPI process to Council in March 2021, an interim target timescale of March 2022 was put in place.
- Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life (SW4b): The performance target is to maintain quartile 1, but in the Corporate Plan the timescale was yet to be agreed with NHS Highland. Given performance was already in the top quartile, no performance timescale is required. Performance is reported against the target (to be in the top quartile).
- Direct payments spend on 18+ adults (SW2): The performance target is to improve to quartile 1, but in the Corporate Plan the timescale was yet to be agreed with NHS Highland. As part of reporting through the SPI process to Council in March 2021, an interim target timescale of March 2022 was put in place.
- Average time taken to complete medical adaptations to council houses (SHR23): Following a national review of data, Highland Council's baseline ranking for this indicator in the Corporate Plan was revised to 12th (2nd quartile). It is therefore proposed to amend the target from maintaining performance in the top quartile to maintaining better performance than the average of our housing family group. (For 2019/20: Highland Council performance was 39.97 days and the family group average was 44.50 days).
- Children meeting developmental milestones (CHN17): The target for this indicator was to achieve quartile 2, with the target date to be agreed with NHS Highland. The historic data for this indicator has been revised nationally and this has placed Highland towards the top of quartile 2, a revised target of quartile 1 with target date to be agreed with NHS Highland is proposed.
- All eligible 2,3, and 4-year olds to have access to 1,140 hours of childcare by 2020: The target for this indicator was August 2020, and this has been updated to August 2021 due to changes in Scottish Government guidance.
- Teachers trained in inclusion/ ASN methods: The performance indicator is marked as complete with 100% of teachers trained in inclusion/ ASN methods (2019/20). It is recommended that this indicator is removed from future reporting.
- Council carbon emissions (CO₂e): In the Corporate Plan the target is currently to agree revised targets by August 2019. An amended date of December 2021 is proposed in line with the establishment of a cross-service net zero working group.
- Reduce energy consumption across the Council's estate (electricity, natural gas, oil): In the Corporate Plan the target is to be included in an Energy Strategy by August 2019. The approach now is based on Members agreeing a net zero carbon target date in December 2021. This will allow annual targets to be set for reducing energy consumption.
- Council staff travel costs: Reflecting changes in staff behaviours due to COVID-19, staff travel costs have reduced significantly. Whilst budgets and decisions to travel sit with Council teams, the Communities and Place Directorate facilitate the booking of the most cost-effective transport. The new target set in the agreed Communities & Place Directorate Service Plan is that staff travel costs should now not exceed £1.5m annually. This is a reduction from the current target of £2.276m by March 2022.

- Street cleanliness score (ENV3c): The target set in the corporate plan was to maintain performance above the national average. Having achieved the top quartile, the agreed Communities & Place Directorate Plan has now set a more ambitious target to maintain a top quartile position within the current approach to assessment.
- Develop a Highland-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy with Community Planning Partners by 2022: The Directorate Service Plan approved by Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 5th May 2021 approved a revised target to April 2024 noting that this action and target are now the responsibility of the Performance & Governance Directorate.
- Number of staff undertaking wellbeing workshops (Staff resilience training): In response to COVID-19, the overall approach to staff health & wellbeing has adapted rapidly with new online materials, the Employee Assistance Programme, staff briefings and staff forums. There is no longer a need to monitor staff participation. It is recommended that this indicator is removed from future reporting.
- Staff transitioned to new roles: The planned approach to transitioning pupil support assistants (PSAs) into early years roles has changed with PSA numbers being maintained. The target to transition 450 members of staff by 2022 is no longer appropriate and it is recommended that this indicator is removed from the Corporate Plan.

8. Statutory Performance Indicators 2020/21 and Public Opinion Survey

- 8.1 The Council is required to report on its Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) within 12 months of the end of the financial year they refer to. These SPIs include both Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators and locally defined performance indicators (LPIs). The Council is currently in the process of completing data returns to the Improvement Service for 2020/21 which will enable LGBF performance indicators to be calculated, and data is being collected for the Council's LPIs. A report for 2020/21 will be presented to a full Council meeting no later than March 2022. In addition, the Annual Performance & Attitudes Survey (APAS) of the Citizens Panel has not been possible again this year, the survey results are normally submitted to Council in October annually. This is in large part due to the redeployment of staff onto COVID-19 related duties but also the approach which is currently largely paper based. A refresh of the Citizen's Panel is now due, and this will be completed in time for the 2022 survey.

9. Directorate Service Plans

- 9.1 Revised guidance on Directorate Service Planning has been implemented taking account of the new Corporate Plan and feedback from the Council's BVAR. Directorate Service Plans were prepared for 2021/22 and presented to Strategic Committees in the first quarter of 2021/22. These plans are based on the analysis of Service performance data, identified risks and the key strategic priorities for the Service in order to plan performance improvement. The plans are reviewed annually to take account of any agreed changes to the Council Programme and subsequent update to the Corporate Plan. With Local Government elections in May 2022, it is anticipated this process will be delayed into the second cycle of meetings to allow for the new Council's Administration to consider its priorities.

Designation: The Chief Executive

Date: 17.08.2021

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Angela Stewart, Corporate Performance Officer.

Corporate Plan
Annual Performance Report 2020/21

Local Voices Highland Choices and The Council's Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan is set out under the six key themes of the Council's Programme, Local Voices, Highland Choices:

1. A Council that champions the Highlands
2. A place to live
3. A place to thrive
4. A place to prosper
5. A welcoming place
6. Your Highland Council

Progress is monitored using a suite of performance measures and actions outlined in Appendix 2. To compliment this, case studies are provided highlighting performance in 2020/21 against the six themes of Local Voices, Highlands Choices.

1. A Council that champions the Highlands

Review of Electoral Boundaries

On 16 July 2020, the then Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland set out their proposals for electoral arrangements in the Highland Council area. The Council opposed these proposals and the Leader wrote letters to the then Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning setting out the Council's concerns. This was followed up by letters to Community Councils, MSPs and the Chair of the Commission. Beyond this reporting period further engagement has and continues to take place.

Digitalisation

As the Highlands recovers COVID-19, a key part of this will be to ensure that digital connectivity is available across the Highlands. This will be a critical enabler for individuals, communities and businesses as they get back on their feet. Letters were sent to both Scottish and UK Governments and this was followed up by meetings with the then Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands and separately with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Scotland) to explore how the Scottish Government working with the UK Government and the Council could work together to speed up the delivery of a full fibre broadband network for the Highlands. Subsequently the contractual issues for the North Lot were resolved. Efforts to inject pace into the digitisation of the Highlands continues.

Wick John O'Groats Airport

The Leader continued to make the case to both Secretary of State for Scotland and the then Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity of the need for an ambitious new approach to protecting our vital regional aviation links, as laid out in the business case that has been presented to Transport Scotland for a Public Service Obligation from Wick. On 4 February, the Scottish Government offered a financial contribution to establishing a Public Service Obligation. Further engagement subsequently took place with the UK Government. Work continues with a view to reaching a solution.

Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund

The Leader has engaged with the Scotland Office on numerous occasions to seek clarity over the UK Government's intentions over the Shared Prosperity Fund. Following the budget announcement which set out details of the UK Levelling Up Fund and the UK Community Renewal Fund, the Leader wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing disappointment with the outcome for the Highlands. This was followed up by letters to MPs and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Scotland). Beyond this reporting period further engagement has and continues to take place.

Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

Recognising the importance of tourism and the role that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund has played in delivering significant and much needed improvements across the Council, the Leader discussed the matter with the then Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism and followed this up with a letter to the Scottish Government seeking both the continuation of the Fund and an increase from £3m to £10 million. The Scottish Government subsequently confirmed that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund would continue and be doubled to £6.2 million.

2. A Place to Live

Tenant Participation and Welfare – COVID-19

The priority at the start of the pandemic in 2020 was to identify and help the most vulnerable tenants and housing clients. During the first few weeks of lockdown tenants were contacted to carry out welfare checks:

- Direct contact by phone - 3,264 tenants
- Email contact – 3,973 tenants
- Text message contact – 6,858 tenants

Emails and texts linked to an online survey on welfare needs (completed by 2,703 tenants). Any tenant requiring help was referred to the local Community Hubs.

The priority in the second phase of lockdown was again to identify and help the most vulnerable tenants and housing clients. In January 2021, the following welfare checks were completed:

- Direct contact by phone – 2,672 tenants aged over 70
- Email contact – 688 tenants
- Text message contact – 8,158 tenants

The emails and texts linked to a Tenant Briefing on Housing Services and useful contacts. This was also promoted on social media and through media outlets.

Online sessions have been held on “Energy Saving” and “Scams”. Future sessions are planned on “Mental Health Wellbeing” and “Fuel Poverty”. Virtual social events for tenants, to address loneliness and social isolation, have been held such as a Christmas party, quiz sessions, and a regular drop-in coffee morning.

High Life Highland

High Life Highland (HLH) develops and promotes opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing throughout the whole of the Highlands, for both residents and visitors. Since HLH was established the number of customer engagements has increased and reliance on Council funding has decreased. Performance in 2020/21 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and this is reflected in the performance measures:

	2011/12	2019/20	2020/21
HLH customer engagements	2.3M	9M	4.8M
HLH reliance on Council funding	79%	50%	50%
Population with HLH card	N/A	40%	19%

Gaelic

Highland Council recognises that Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland’s heritage, national identity and cultural life. The Gaelic committee meets four times a year. The [Gaelic Language Plan 2018–2023](#) sets out a formal structure for strengthening current developments, introduces new initiatives, and sets clear targets.

Quarterly performance updates are made to the Gaelic committee. Key initiatives in 2020/21 include:

- Partnership event with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig delivering a live online Gaelic Day for parents of Early Years
- Gaelic awareness event aimed at new parents in the Nairn area
- A planned series of Gaelic language classes for parents to build confidence using Gaelic with babies/toddlers.
- With FC Sonas, produced Health and Wellbeing resource “Sonas Slàinte” for schools with Gaelic medium provision
- In response to the 2021 lockdown, provided live interaction services on Google Classroom

3. A Place to Thrive

SQA attainment

SQA attainment for 2019/20 was finalised following the Scottish Government's alignment of certified grades with school estimates.

The National 5 A-C pass rate in Highland was 89.7%, up 11.3% and ahead of the national figure of 89.0%.

At Higher, the A-C pass rate in Highland was 90.8%, up 15.8% and ahead of the national figure of 89.3%.

At Advanced Higher, the A-C pass rate in Highland was 91.7%. This is slightly behind the national figure (93.1%) but shows improvement of 13.1% on the 2018/19 figure.

These improvements are very welcome, as is the narrowing of the deprivation linked attainment gap for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher A-C pass rates.

Leadership Support

As we work to develop Highland as the best place to learn, we have put in place support for school leaders. We have run weekly sessions for new and acting Head Teachers and have established a collaboratively designed programme for middle leaders in schools.

We have supported experienced Head Teachers by promoting sign-up for the Education Scotland 2021/22 Excellence in Headship programme, and have 15 participants, a record for Highland.

To develop the next cohort of effective Head Teachers we have recruited 42 leaders for the Education Scotland 2021/22 Into Headship programme, the highest figure ever from Highland.

Returning young people to Highland

The Placement Services Change Programme returns young people to Highland from expensive Out of Area residential placements (OOA). The current number of OOA placements is the lowest in over 8 years at 19 young people.

Since the programme began in June 2018, 53 young people have returned to Highland avoiding costs of over £11M compared with these young people remaining out of area for a further year. There are also 45 children in new provisions in Highland avoiding going OOA. The money saved has been invested in the development of services in Highland. Also, there are much improved educational and emotional wellbeing outcomes for the returning young people.

Attainment of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

We continue to work on closing the deprivation-linked attainment gap and have seen progress in 2021. S4-6 candidates in Quintile 1 achieved A-D pass rates of 92.0% (National 5), 91.2% (Higher) and 93.1% (Advanced Higher), compared to all-candidate pass rates of 92.5%, 92.3% and 93.2% respectively. 2019 Quintile 1 pass rates were 85.7% (N5), 85.8% (H) and 53.3% (AH).

Candidates eligible for free school meals also achieved strong A-D pass rates: 91.8% at National 5, 90.2% at Higher and 97.4% at Advanced Higher. The equivalent 2019 pass rates were 84.6% at National 5, 88.9% at Higher and 80.8% at Advanced Higher.

4. A Place to Prosper

Highland Employment Recruitment Offer

In February 2021 Highland Council made a commitment to support (with its own and external funding) up to 150 jobs via its proposed Highland Employment Recruitment Offer (HERO).

The grant scheme was launched 15 March, and by end July 2021, 242 HERO applications had been approved in principle, with 167 recruited/currently getting recruited. This is above expectations and demonstrates business demand to recruit despite the uncertainties linked to COVID-19.

This has been achieved by the funding flexibility afforded with the Council's Economic Prosperity Fund commitment. It has allowed the Council to offer to business the one scheme but, behind the scenes, to fund it from different sources depending on who is recruited into the post.

Highland Roads Recovery

Road infrastructure features as a key priority for communities in their feedback and is therefore a key priority for the Council. Based on commitments made in 2020/21, investments in Highland roads are set to be at unprecedented levels. £22.7 million will be invested in 2021/22, and a further £20.7 million invested in 2022/23.

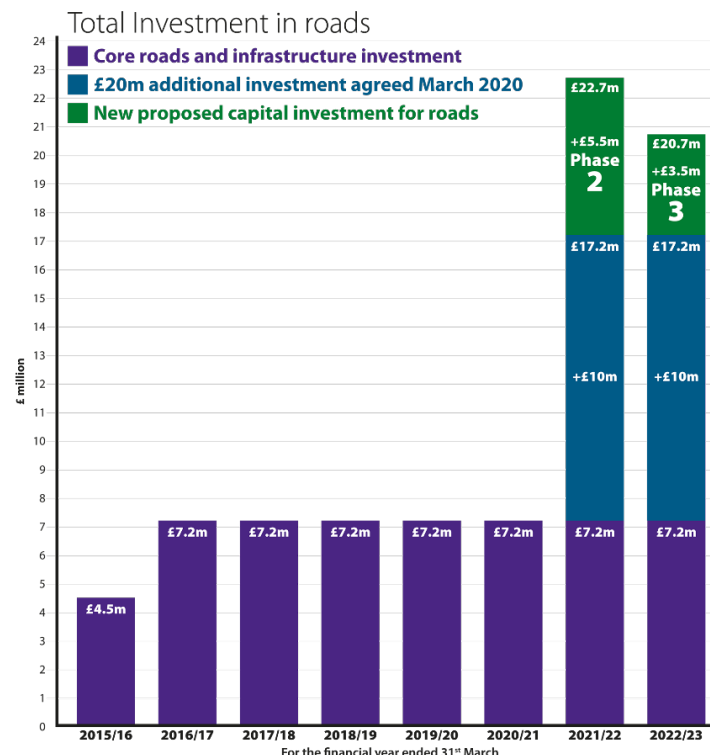
Work on repairing Highland Council maintained roads is underway. As lockdown restrictions have eased, teams across the region have switched from their winter roads duties to road surfacing, patching, lining, edging and verging of prioritised projects.

The Council highlights some of the roads maintenance works that have recently been completed and these are being featured at www.highland.gov.uk/highlandroadsrecovery and social media with the hashtag #HighlandRoadsRecovery.

COVID-19 Business Grants

The continued social and economic lockdown has had a significant and adverse impact on the economy and the role of the Council in delivering the COVID business grants has been critical and a lifeline service to business. A business grants team was established disbursing over £193m, making over 37,778 individual payments to 15,700 businesses across 12 different grant streams.

In particular, the Council's Discretionary Grant Scheme has been able to support 833 Highland businesses who otherwise have fallen through the support schemes offered by the UK and Scottish Governments.



5. A Welcoming Place

Tourism Infrastructure Fund

Continued longer term growth in tourism allied to the increased interest in domestic trips due to COVID-19 has meant the need for additional investment in tourism infrastructure remains.

In 2020/21, The Council has continued to work with communities across Highland on bids for funding from the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to support this investment.

The first three funding rounds have seen 22 projects in Highland awarded funding – 1 via the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the remainder via the Highland Council. Of those where funding was awarded via the Council, 13 are being delivered by community groups and eight being delivered directly by the Council.

Ten projects were either completed or nearing completion by the year end contributing new public toilets, parking, footpaths and motorhome waste facilities in advance of the 2021 summer season.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The Council has attracted more than £3.5m of investment in electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure since 2012. Over 80 charging points have been installed and this is expected to rise to over 100 by 2022, an increase of over 200% since 2018. Charging sessions on the Council network increased by 19% from 2019 to 2020, indicating an increase in EVs and demand for publicly accessible charging points. The Council's first ever strategic control plan was developed for EV Infrastructure in 2020 providing focus and direction for work streams. A draft fleet decarbonisation plan is also underway.

Highland Adapts

Over the past 24 months, the Council has led on the Highland Adapts initiative. The focus of the partnership, which includes NHS Highland, HIE, Zero Waste Scotland, Changeworks, NatureScot and Forestry & Land Scotland is to enable the Highlands to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. It will bring organisations, businesses, and communities together to develop a shared vision and understanding of climate change risks and opportunities across the Highlands. It will identify adaptation and mitigation priorities for communities, areas, and sectors that will establish where and how the region can increase resilience and adapt. It is co-funded by partners, and a dedicated programme lead, hosted by the Council, will be employed in 2021/22.

Inverness Castle

Inverness Castle is being transformed into a sustainable, viable and "must-see" centre that will celebrate the spirit of the Highlands. The is supported by £15 million Scottish Government and £1.63 million UK Government investment through the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal.

In 2020/21, work has continued as planned. Full planning permission and listed building consent applications were submitted in January 2021. In March 2021 a tender was issued to engage exhibition designer services for the development and presentation of the Spirit of the Highlands theme. Once appointed, work will begin to develop the stories gathered from individuals and communities across the Highlands into the interpretation within the attraction.

6. Your Highland Council

Absence Management during COVID-19

Staff have been homeworking during COVID-19. This has resulted in less short-term absence, e.g. cold/flu. This may be attributed to improved hygiene habits, use of face coverings, not travelling into a work location, use of flexible working hours and taking breaks, whilst still being able to complete their duties.

There have been challenges for staff dealing with the pandemic which has impacted on health and overall wellbeing. The Council has provided guidance and advice on how to lessen the feeling of isolation through changes in work patterns, online check-ins and undertaking risk assessments using the government health risk assessment for COVID-19.

Staff who have been home schooling and experiencing stress have been supported with managing flexible work patterns which has also assisted their colleagues and managers.

Support for employees with cancer and terminal illness

A link has been established with MacMillan Cancer to support employees where they do not feel comfortable discussing their diagnosis with their line manager. Support has been provided to five employees who are terminally ill and facilitated a positive Ill Health Retirement process for the members of staff.

Budget for Health, Recovery and Prosperity

In March 2021, The Council approved its Health and Prosperity Strategy as part of its budget. This is focused on investment in the Highland economy and securing medium term financial sustainability for the Council. The strategy contains three strands:

- Investment in people, infrastructure, places and business across the Highlands;
- Recovery, Improvement and Transformation;
- Key savings themes for delivering a balanced budget.

There is an ambitious investment plan including: £6M Economic Prosperity Fund; £1.5M Visitor Management Strategy; £2.1M place-based investment; and £2.25M for a Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Fund. The budget includes sustaining non-earmarked reserves above £24.7M. The Council's reprofiled capital plan will see a £260M investment over the next two years.

Financial Reserves

Due to COVID-19, 2020/21 was an extraordinary year. Prudent financial management, coupled with additional government funding support, saw year end reserves significantly above target levels. Part of the increase was due to a planned and budgeted increase to bring them to the desired level.

Plans are in place for the excess reserves above the target level to be invested during 2021/22 as part of the Council's Recovery and Transformation activity.

Appendix 2: Performance Data Tables

In reviewing this report, it should be noted that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic began in Scotland in early 2020. This has had an impact both on the ability of the Council to collect and present data on its performance for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and will also have affected the performance of some of the indicators.

Any indicator that is **emboldened** is part of the Council's 27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Each performance indicator has an agreed target and performance against this can be assessed. Where available, data for previous years, national data, and data for councils similar to The Highland Council (Family Group) is also presented. The following symbols are used throughout the report to indicate progress against target:

	Performance is "Complete"
	Performance is "On Target"
	Performance is "Within Performance Threshold"
	Performance is "No Significant Progress"
	No data or the target for this indicator is yet to be agreed

1. A Council that Champions the Highlands

Action	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21
Annual report on progress engaging with and influencing national policy on the Council's agenda and investment priorities		

2. A Place to Live

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
With partners build on average 500 new affordable homes per year over the next 5 years (2017-2022) ¹		414	408	290			400	
Average time take to re-let homes (days, SHR35)	44.2	31.9	36.8	36.6			37.0	

¹ Data provided is the rolling average of new affordable homes per year

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due (HSN1b; SHR31) ²	5.3%	4.6%	4.9%	5.0%	7.3%	7.1%	5.0%	★
Adults (65+) receiving personal care at home (SW3a)		54.4%	55.5%	53.2%	61.7%	60.4%	59.5%	▼
Direct payments spent on adults (18+; SW2)		6.4%	6.5%	6.1%	7.8%	6.4%	6.8%	▼
Average days taken to complete medical adaptations in Council houses (SHR23) ³	44.2	40.0	34.8	33.2		44.5	44.5	★
Net cost per attendance to leisure facilities (C&L1a)		£1.80	£1.56	£1.68	£2.71	£2.38	£1.79	●
Net cost per visit to libraries (C&L2a)		£1.33	£1.52	£1.62	£2.00	£2.40	£1.90	★
Net cost per visit to museums (C&L3a)		£1.64	£1.43	£2.19	£3.27	£4.41	£3.48	★
Household waste recycled and composted (%; ENV6)		41.3%	42.7%	43.6%	32.4%	44.9%	44.9%	▼

Indicator	2019-20	2017-18	2015-16	National Average 2019-20	Family Average 2019-20	Target 2019-20	Performance 2019-20
Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life (SW4b)	78.0%	85.7%	86.7%	80.0%	76.8%	83.6%	▼

3. A Place to Thrive

- *Due to change in method of assessment attainment measures are not comparable for trends.

Indicator	AY 2020/21	AY 2019/20	AY 2018/19	AY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Pupils entering positive destinations (16-19 year olds participating in education, training and employment; CHN11)		92.5%	94.8%	96.1%	93.3%	93.3%	94.6%	▼
SCQF Level 5 attainment for all children (CHN4)		62%	*	*	64%	63%	63%	●
SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds (CHN6)		37%	*	*	47%	40%	38%	▼
SCQF Level 6 attainment for all children (CHN5)		34%	*	*	38%	36%	36%	▼

² Data for 20/21 is currently undergoing verification with the national regulator.

Indicator	AY 2020/21	AY 2019/20	AY 2018/19	AY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds (CHN7)		15%	*	*	21%	16%	14%	★
Teachers trained in inclusion/ ASN methods		100%					100%	★
Number of accommodated Looked After Children		84	81	85			77	●
Looked After Children being cared for in the community (CHN9)		83.0%	83.2%	83.7%	90.1%	86.5%	88.0%	▼
Overall average total tariff score for pupils (S4-S6; CHN12a)		839	*	*	929	872	881	▼
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD1 – children living in areas of most disadvantage; CHN12b)		520	*	*	649	601	543	▼
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD2; CHN12c)		703	*	*	759	677	698	★
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD3; CHN12d)		856	*	*	904	843	906	▼
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD4; CHN12e)		936	*	*	1,029	968	969	▼
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD5 – children living in areas of least disadvantage; CHN12f)		1,045	*	*	1,240	1,118	1,156	▼

Action	Performance 2018/19	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21
All eligible 2, 3, and 4 year old have access to 1140 hours of childcare by 2020	★	●	★

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Average number of Looked After Children in accommodation out with Highland	28	30	39	34			29	●
Funded early years provision graded good or better (CHN18)		90.4%	93.9%	89.2%	90.2%	89.0%	94%	▼
Children meeting developmental milestones (CHN17)		87.6%	87.9%	86.3%	85.7%	89.0%	TBC	
Child Protection registrations in a year, which have been registered previously within the past 18 months (CHN22)		7.32%	6.62%	6.80%	6.92%	5.65%	7.80%	★

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Looked After Children being cared for in kinship care	22.7%	20.5%	18.4%	19.5%			22.5%	🟡
Number of new foster carers		119	127	144			164	🔻
Homelessness – case duration (weeks)		43	48	44			39	🔻
Financial benefit to the customer from advice given		£6,651,012	£6,188,835	£6,024,983			£6,146,085	🟢

Indicator	AY 2018-19	AY 2016-17	AY 2014-15	National Average AY 2018-19	Family Average AY 2018-19	Target AY 2018-19	Performance 2018-19
School attendance rates (per 100 pupils; CHN19a)	92.75%	93.40%	93.20%	92.95%	93.32%	92.59%	🟢
School attendance rates (per 100 looked after children; CHN19b)	85.67%	85.46%	86.88%	86.78%	85.74%	86.45%	🔻
School exclusions (per 1,000 pupils; CHN20a)	20.6	22.7	20.4	21.7	21.9	20.0	🟡
School exclusion rate for Looked After Children (per 1,000 pupils; CHN20b)	189.3	243.9	264.3	152.2	188.6	165.4	🟡

4. A Place to Prosper

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment	39.1%	37.8%	38.6%	38.8%			38.7%	🟢
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband (ECON8)		81%	75%	76%	93%	77%	83%	🟡
Total direct spend with Highland small and medium sized enterprises (ECON4)		47.3%	43.6%	40.9%	28.5%	35.9%	33.3%	🟢
Average time per planning application (weeks; ECON3)		10.9	10.6	11.4	10.5	12.8	10.5	🟡
300 modern apprentices by 2022		215					200	🟢
Number of Business Gateway start-ups (per 10,000 population; ECON5)		11.96	11.89	11.01	16.41	18.49	16.41	🔻
The number of businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway		1,643	1,802	1,191			1,500	🟢

Indicator	AY 2020/21	AY 2019/20	AY 2018/19	AY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Pupils entering positive destinations (CHN11)		92.5%	94.8%	96.1%	93.3%	93.3%	94.6%	▼

Action	Performance 2018/19	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21
Develop a delivery plan for Highland broadband using the City-Region Deal funding by December 2019	★	●	●
Implement the £6.7m Inverness Community Links Plus cycling project by 2022	●	●	★

5. A Welcoming Place

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
The number of visits to/usages of Council funded museums that were in person per 1,000 population ³	157	1,360	1,362	1,421			1,436	▼
The total number of visits to/ usages of Council funded museums (in person and virtual) per 1,000 population ⁴	1,475	2,567	2,798	2,667			2,782	▼
Council carbon emissions (CO ₂ e)		40,622	45,076	53,665			52,160	★
Street Cleanliness Score (ENV3c)		95.7	95.6	93.9	92.3	96.4	92.3	★
Street lighting energy consumption (kWh)	10,904,332	11,878,227	13,734,725	14,178,050			13,650,000	★
Energy consumption across the Council estate (million kWh)		110.683	109.507	116.332			TBC	

Indicator	CY 2020	CY 2019	CY 2018	CY 2017	National Average CY 2019	Family Average CY 2019	Target CY 2019	Performance CY 2019
Tourism visitor numbers		7,488,000	6,528,000	6,486,000			6,486,000	★
Tourism economic impact		£1.399bn	£1.285bn	£1.253bn			£1.253bn	★

³ Data for 2019/20 is incomplete, with some data for Q4 yet to be returned for a small proportion of museums.

Action	Performance 2018/19	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21
Consult on the Council's plans for a Transient Visitor Levy by December 2019		★	
Develop a co-ordinated talent attraction and retention strategy with partners by June 2020	★	★	▼
Complete phase 1 of Inverness Castle development by December 2022		★	★
Develop a Highland-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy with partners by 2022	●	★	★
Maintain the current proportion of EU Council employees		★	★

6. Your Highland Council

Indicator	FY 2020/21	FY 2019/20	FY 2018/19	FY 2017/18	National Average 2019/20	Family Average 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Performance 2019/20
Absence (days, non-teaching staff; CORP6b)	6.44	9.70	10.50	10.75	11.87	11.36	10.40	★
Absence (days, teaching staff; CORP6a)	3.28	6.90	7.11	7.17	6.34	7.11	6.85	●
Council Tax received (CORP7)	95.7%	96.3%	96.3%	96.2%	95.8%	96.5%	95.8%	★
Asset Management – Suitability (CAST1)	67.5%	67.5%	67.6%	66.1%	82.5%	80.5%	80.5%	▼
Citizens' Panel who believe the Council listens (%)			26%	29%				
Reducing staff travel costs		£1,639,820	£2,179,936	£2,901,280			£2,351,280	★
Number of staff undertaking wellbeing workshops		458					600	▼
450 staff transitioned to new roles by 2022		26					150	▼

Action	Performance (2018/19)	Performance (2019/20)	Performance (2020/21)
2 pilots to test in-sourcing non-housing building maintenance by August 2019		★	●
3 community engagement sessions per local area per year		●	★
£37.456m savings achieved by March 2022		●	★
Council reserves restored to 2% minimum by March 2022		★	★
ICT network refresh across 374 sites by September 2019		★	
Maintain recruitment controls to shape the workforce and align budget and service delivery priorities (annual report)		★	★

Appendix 3: Areas for Improvement

The performance of all indicators below is currently showing “no significant progress” 

A Place to Live	Commentary and Improvement actions
Adults (65+) receiving personal care at home (SW3a)	The number of older people resident in care homes as increased from 1,358 (March 2019) to 1,388 (March 2020). The number of older people in receipt of care at home services reduced slightly by 34. The definition for this indicator has been calculated slightly differently to allow for COVID-19 in Q4 2020 however there has been less than 1% change reported.
Direct payments spent on adults (18+; SW2)	This includes costs related to Direct Payments (DPs) and Individual Service Funds (ISF). At March 2020 the number of people in receipt of one of these options had increased by 23 on the previous year-end. While DPs showed an increase across all client groups, ISFs showed reduction in older people category and increases in Learning Disability & Physical Disability clients. Both these options continue to be discussed with people who require services.
Household waste recycled and composted (%; ENV6)	An improvement in data management has led to more accurate reporting and this shows a reduction in overall household waste tonnage. The household recycling rate and tonnage of material recycled has also reduced within the total tonnage of waste generated. Improved controls at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) mean unlawful trade waste is less likely to be counted in household waste. Waste sent to landfill has reduced from 2018 to 2019. National changes are expected around the Household Recycling Charter and along with the accompanying national Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF). This will guide activity to improve the quality and quantity of material collected for recycling. An update on the Council's access to the RIF was reported to the Communities and Place Committee on 31.08.21. All seven expressions of interest (EOIs) have met the criteria set and applications are being developed. The total value of the EOIs was £7.5m. If applications are successful, we will be able to improve recycling rates from new recycling infrastructure.
Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life (SW4b)	Data comes from the Biannual Health Care and Experience Survey. This is Indicator 7 of the National Integration Indicators which has not yet been updated by Public Health Scotland. The results from the survey and information from the website suggests that the results for the Integration Indicators will be reported on separately through further analysis of responses from those who indicated that their care is funded by the Council or NHS. The data reported by the Improvement Service shows a reduction on the previous year, but it is unclear whether this is as a result of the change to the survey in 2019/20.

A Place to Thrive	Commentary and Improvement actions
Pupils entering positive destinations (16-19 year olds participating in education, training and employment; CHN11)	The COVID-19 pandemic, both nationally and in Highland, has impacted the number of young people progressing to a positive post-school destinations. Employment plays a significant role for Highland school leavers in comparison to the national picture. The impact of COVID-19 on employment opportunities has led to a 10% decrease in school leavers taking up employment upon leaving school compared to last year. However, this has resulted in an increase of Highland school leavers enrolling into further and higher education. We continue to work hard towards our recovery from the pandemic. This includes the induction of new Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Coordinators linked to the Scottish Government's "Young Person's Guarantee" programme hosted by chamber of commerce groups. As well as the creation of a new data tool to reflect on pupil aspirations which will be used by schools to support planning of the learner journey. Our most vulnerable pupils are being supported through partnership working with Skills Development Scotland, DYW Regional Groups, MCR Pathways (a national mentoring programme and charity that helps care-experienced and disadvantaged young people build motivation, commitment, and resilience), and post-school with the Employability Team.
SCQF2 Level 6 attainment for all children (CHN5)	Once again, the nature of the SQA assessment procedures were altered in 2021, with the new Alternative Model for Certification introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were asked to submit provisional grades based on demonstrated attainment. Full analysis of 2021 attainment will be possible when the Insight Benchmarking Tool is released, allowing for comparison with our virtual comparator. However, it is important to note that the results for 2020 should not be directly compared to those in 2021 due to the different award system in place. Initial examination of 2021 attainment data shows improvement in many measures compared to 2019 and 2018 data. Further work will be done to determine the extent to which these improvements are the result of course modifications, changes to assessment procedures, focused learning and teaching or a combination of these factors. The Highland Council draft action plan for education (shared with the Education Committee on 11 February 2021) continues to address improvement activity, particularly under the themes of Leadership, Performance analysis & improving outcomes, Assessment & moderation and Curriculum.
SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds (CHN6)	
Overall average total tariff score for pupils (S4-S6; CHN12a)	
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD1 – children living in areas of most disadvantage; CHN12b)	
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD3; CHN12d)	
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD4; CHN12e)	

A Place to Thrive	Commentary and Improvement actions
Average total tariff score for pupils in S4-S6 (SIMD5 – children living in areas of least disadvantage; CHN12f)	Some commentary is provided on each attainment indicator below: • CHN05 - Level 6 Attainment by all Children: Highest in 5 years with 4% increase on last year and an overall 5 year average increase of 0.8%. Highland/National gap reduced by 1% on last year. A continuing trend will result in Highland being in line with the LGBF family group in 2020/21. • CHN6 - Level 5 Attainment by Children from Deprived Backgrounds: 1% away from this year's LGBF family target and showing a 4 year rising trend of 10% since 2016/17. • CHN12a - Overall Total Tariff: Moved from quartile 4 to quartile 3 from last year and increase of 45 tariff points. Scotland also increased so a similar gap remains. • CHN12b - Average total Tariff SIMD Q1: Slight increase from the previous year but not at the same rate as family group authorities which has resulted in dropping to quartile 4 from 3. Exploration of the reason for this drop will be included in the COVID-19 recovery actions. • CHN12d - Average total Tariff SIMD Q3: While there has been improvement from the previous year by an increase of 65 tariff points, National performance has also improved, resulting in a continued but narrowed gap. • CHN12e - Average total Tariff SIMD Q4: A small increase in tariff points from the previous year and the first increase from a 4 year downward trend. • CHN12f - Average total Tariff SIMD Q5: A small increase in tariff points from the previous year but a large gap still remains for this cohort.
Looked After Children being cared for in the community (CHN9)	The percentage of looked after children in the community has remained static over the last five years. As integral to service redesign, the new Health and Social Care service is changing its focus to place more emphasis on prevention and early intervention. This focus on early intervention concentrates effort to support families to sustain home and kinship placements. The placement change programme will be further developed to place greater emphasis on returning children currently placed outwith Highland to their family home or a kinship placement.
Funded early years provision graded good or better (CHN18)	With the introduction of the National Standard, wider expectations are taken into consideration when Care Inspection gradings are awarded. An overall downgrading of commissioned ELC settings and Childminding services within Highland Council have been evident. Council Officers are working intensively with Managers and Practitioners within ELC settings and Childminders to address shortfall of gradings. This is to ensure priorities around improvements link to the new National Standard.
Number of new foster carers	We continue to recruit, assess and approve foster carers across Highland. The introduction of an online enquiry process, service specific web page as well creating two new posts to

A Place to Thrive	Commentary and Improvement actions
	undertake assessments and increasing fees to foster carers will contribute to increasing our number and retaining those already approved.
Homelessness – case duration (weeks)	Homelessness case duration decreased in 2019/20 though it remains out with target. As part of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, Rapid Rehousing Officers are now in post to reduce the case duration and assist clients with achieving a sustainable and permanent housing outcome to their homelessness application.
School attendance rates (per 100 looked after children; CHN19b)	Pupils who had difficulty engaging with education were supported using a multi-agency approach as appropriate. Home visiting teachers were in place, however, reach was limited, and schools often relied on staffing within the school or support from health & social care. Building on the success of the Highland Virtual Academy (HVA) and remote learning, in particular pupil engagement, the HVA transformed our approach to supporting all learners across remote and rural school estate. HVA have supported a new referral system where schools can ask for allocated teaching time online. This approach has seen significant success around attendance and re-engaging learners. HVA work with pupils and young people who have been absent from school long-term and disengaged with learning.

A Place to Prosper	Commentary and Improvement actions
Number of Business Gateway start-ups (per 10,000 population; ECON5)	Highland has one of the highest business rates per population and historically the economic development task was not to increase the number of business starts, but to grow businesses (with efforts focused on the number of businesses supported and also the number of business (exceeding target) on the Council's Local Growth Accelerator Programme). The economic impacts of COVID-19 has adversely affected both start-ups and growing businesses, and efforts as part of the economic recovery, will be focused on supporting both.
Pupils entering positive destinations (CHN11)	See commentary for CHN11 under “A Place to Thrive”.

A Welcoming Place	Commentary and Improvement actions
The number of visits to/usages of Council funded museums that were in person per 1,000 population	Due to overall reduction in visitor numbers. Specifically, the impact of charging at Caithness Horizons which led to visitor numbers falling from 72,768 (2016/17) to 2,823 (2017/18). Museum closed by 2019/20. Museum to open 2021/22 with new branding and no entrance fee. Museum visitor numbers will be affected in future years due to COVID-19. It is therefore anticipated that a three-year rolling average target will no longer be suitable. The impact of COVID-19 on performance is subject to national review and Members will be advised on recommendations for targets impacted by COVID-19.
The total number of visits to/ usages of Council funded museums (in person and virtual) per 1,000 population	

Your Highland Council	Commentary and Improvement actions
Asset Management – Suitability (CAST1)	Safe and effective property is an identified corporate risk. Asset rationalisation projects are under way and resource has been made available to take forward a strategic assessment of all of our buildings. This will allow decisions to be taken about what is core stock, and what stock can be remodelled and/or disposed of. Significant large scale capital receipts and revenue budget savings are unlikely in the next 24-36 months. The Council is also investing £2.85m in addressing the backlog of statutory non-compliance issues across our buildings.
Number of staff undertaking wellbeing workshops	In response to COVID-19, the overall approach to staff health & wellbeing has adapted rapidly with new online materials, the Employee Assistance Programme, staff briefings and staff forums, therefore there is no longer a need to monitor staff participation. A recommendation in this report is that this indicator is removed from future reporting in the Corporate Plan.
450 staff transitioned to new roles by 2022	The planned approach to transitioning pupil support assistants (PSAs) into early years roles has changed with PSA numbers being maintained. The target to transition 450 staff by 2022 is no longer appropriate. A recommendation in this report it that this indicator is removed from future reporting in the Corporate Plan.