HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Performance and Governance

Date: 6 September 2023

Report Title: Service Plan 2023/24

Report By: Interim Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report introduces the Performance and Governance Service Plan for 2023/24. The format and content of the Plan has been updated following approval of the Corporate Plan 2022-27 by Council on 9th March 2023. This Plan sets out the Service's improvement priorities for the year including how this contributes to delivery of the Corporate Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is invited to comment on and approve the Service Plan for 2023/24.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource: The Service Plan outlines the revenue budget associated with the Service, along with the high-level organisational structure. The Plan highlights how we are achieving Best Value and transforming the Service to achieve efficiency savings. The resources section at page 3 of the Plan provides a high-level summary of the budget for 2023/24. Quarterly budget monitoring reports are provided to Committee. Any material change which affects Service Plan delivery will be reported to the Committee to enable informed decisions on any amendments required.

3.2 Legal: Service Plans set out the planned objectives and measures which together form the framework for annual public performance reporting.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Activities within the Plan are subject to screening for Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). Screening will take place once the plan is finalised, and the results have been passed to the Council's Equalities Officer as part of the corporate monitoring systems for Equalities Legislation. Screening will

also consider any policy, strategy and plans linked to the delivery of the Service Plan and their impact.

3.4   Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The Performance and Governance Service is responsible for ensuring there is a strong corporate focus on delivering as a whole organisation against the Council's ambitious targets. This will require active collaboration across all the Council's Services and prioritisation to accelerate change, capitalising on the ability to make connections across multiple council projects and workstreams. This remit will continue to be driven through the Climate Change Committee.

3.5   Risk: All risks will be identified, managed and regularly reviewed with progress reported to the relevant Committee.
Service risks are recorded in their risk register, monitored quarterly by the Service Management Team and progress reported to this Committee.
Corporate risks are recorded in the Corporate Risk Register which is reviewed at least quarterly by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Updates are reported to every Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting.

3.6   Gaelic: Once approved the Service Plan will have headings and sub-headings translated into Gaelic in keeping with Council policy.

4   Background

4.1   This Service Plan relates to the key functions, resources and strategic improvements for the Service. The Plan is structured around seven key sections:

        1   Service Vision
        2   Service Resources
        3   Service Improvement Priorities: Actions and Measures
        4   Responding to Strategies Through Actions and Measures
        5   Service Responsibilities on the Corporate Plan
        6   Risk Register
        7   Planned Audits, External and Internal Assessments.

        The focus of the Plan is on improving Service performance. A copy is provided at **Appendix 1**.

4.2.   The Service Plan is an active document which will be reviewed and updated annually. Any review will take account of internal and external influences and actions arising from monitoring activity throughout the year. This will also take account of any future amendments to the Corporate Plan.

4.3   Progress against the Service Plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis. This will be reported to Committee as part of an integrated budget monitoring and performance report allowing for ongoing scrutiny of delivery by Members.

5   Equality and Community Impact Assessment
5.1   Committee should be aware that the Service Plan once finalised is subject to the following statutory processes:

        • Equality and Community Impact Assessment – the Plan will be assessed for potential impacts on communities and an Equalities Impact

Assessment has also been completed. This helps us to achieve our duties in respect to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including socio-economic impacts at a strategic level, and a Council commitment to consider rural and poverty impacts. Assessments will be carried out for equality, rural and poverty impacts.

Designation: Interim Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

Author: Paul Nevin, Interim Exectuve Chief Officer Performance and Governance
Sophie Miller, Corporate Performance Business Partner

Date: 11 August 2023

Appendices: Appendix 1: Performance and Governance Service Plan 2023/24

APPENDIX

Performance and Governance

Service Plan (2022/27)

(Updated August 2023)

Service Vision

The Performance and Governance Service will support *a high performing Council committed to deliver* the Council Programme to empower the people of the Highlands, create vibrant and sustainable places, and drive economic growth and prosperity. Resilience in Council services is vital and we will continue to build robust systems and practices to effectively respond to challenges, emergencies, and changing circumstances.

People:
Through transparent and robust governance arrangements we support strong local democratic decision-making processes and effective management of Council resources, with a strong focus on improvement to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. We celebrate and preserve the region's heritage, through our commitment to the Gaelic language and culture. We will continue to support our communities by delivering excellent legal services in support of the Council's statutory powers and duties. We are committed to effective corporate communications to ensure clear and transparent information flows throughout the Council and between the Council, our stakeholders, and the public.

Place:
Our planning and licensing activities focus is on responsible growth and development that strikes a balance between economic progress and environmental stewardship. Our conveyancing and housing practice and advice will continue support the Council's statutory function as Housing Authority. Our provision of policy and leadership support aligns with the distinct challenges and opportunities of the Highlands, and we assist the Council to promote Highland interests at all levels of local and national government.

Economy:
Through efficient business management and responsible financial stewardship, we allocate resources effectively to get maximum benefit in the face of significant financial challenges. By diligently managing performance, conducting audits, and embracing continuous improvement, we will optimise service delivery, drive efficiency, and achieve best value for the people of the Highlands. By upholding Trading Standards, we protect consumers, foster fair competition, and contribute to a thriving business environment that drives economic growth and job creation.

Paul Nevin
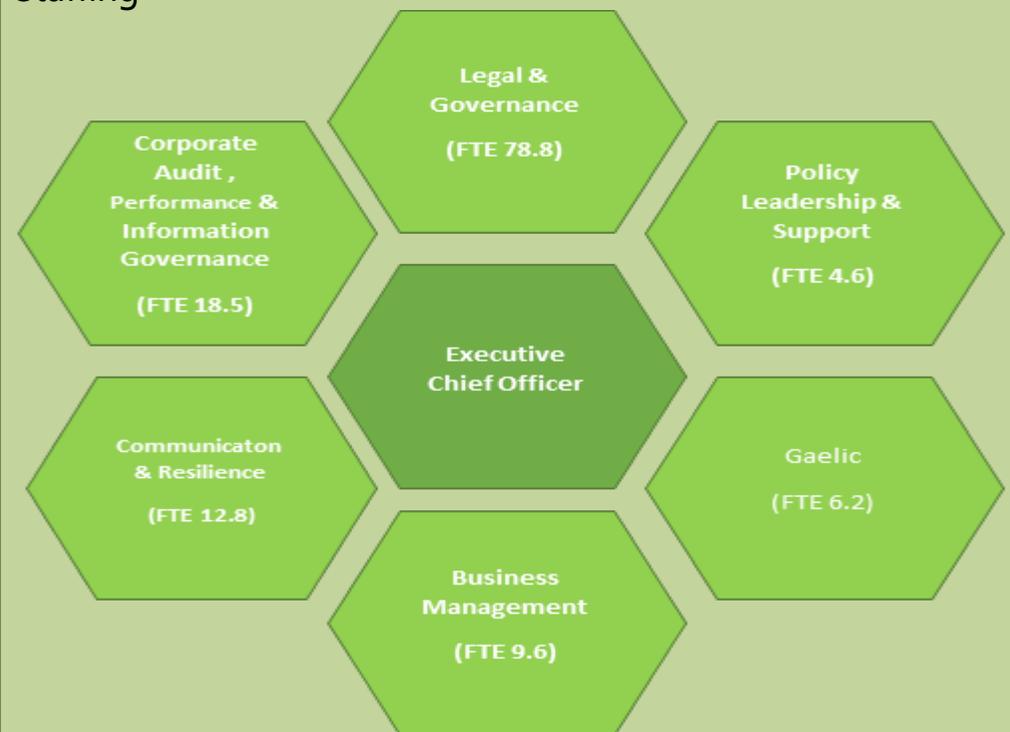**Interim Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance**

Service Resources

Revenue Budget

Function	Budget (2023/24)
Members	£1.758m
P & G Corporate	£0.411m
P & G Directorate	£0.775m
Emergency Panning	£0.046m
Corporate Communications	£0.348m
Legal Services	£0.384m
Licensing	£(0.461)m
Democratic Services	£0.710m
Elections	£0.197m
Trading Standards	£0.707m
Audit & Performance	£1.082m
Climate Change & Energy *	£(0.161)m
Total	**£5.796m**

Budget Saving	Value (2023/24)
Performance & Info Governance	£0.060
Trading Standards	£0.040
Legal	£0.030
Committee Services	£0.013
Drone Filming	£0.010
Energy & Sustainability	£0.180
Total	**£0.333**

Staffing

Corporate Audit, Performance & Information Governance (FTE 18.5)

Legal & Governance (FTE 78.8)

Policy Leadership & Support (FTE 4.6)

Communicaton & Resilience (FTE 12.8)

Executive Chief Officer

Gaelic (FTE 6.2)

Business Management (FTE 9.6)

* The Climate Change & Energy Team currently fall within the remit of the Deputy Chief Executive

Service Priorities and Improvement Actions: Measures and Actions

Service Priority	Measures of Success	Improvement Actions
Corporate Performance, Audit and Information Governance		
Ensure corporate performance is effectively measured, reported, scrutinised and used to improve services and deliver Best Value. Ensure the statutory duty of Public Performance Reporting is achieved.	• Support a Programme of Quarterly Performance Reviews for all Services • All Services have up to date Service Plans • All Services have up to date Risk Registers • Corporate Plan progress is reported to Council annually • Statutory Performance Indicators are reported to Council annually • Corporate fraud investigations are reported to Audit & Scrutiny annually	• Development of revised PSIF Programme **Target Date = December 2023** • Implement robust and consistent quarterly performance reporting to inform improvement activity and enable Strategic Committees to monitor progress **Target Date = December 2023** • Public Performance reporting Framework Review to enable more timeous reporting and improve presentation of data **Target Date = March 2024** • Review Best Value Improvement Plan to support continuous improvement and effective performance management **Target Date = March 2024** • Develop the Business Intelligence action plan **Target Date = December 2023**

Service Priority	Measures of Success	Improvement Actions
Support the Council to embed effective strategic risk management processes **Ensure the Council has robust Information Governance and Information Risk processes and procedures in place.**	• Robust management of Service Risk Registers on PRMS and reported quarterly to Strategic Committees • Reduction in the number of Data breaches • Increase numbers of staff and Members completing Information Management Training	• Develop a quarterly indicator to measure the cost of internal audits **Target Date = December 2023** • Review and improve our approach to Risk Management for both Corporate and Service Risks **Target Date = December 2023** • Implement the Information Governance Strategy with a cross-service action plan managed on PRMS. **Target Date = December 2023**
Elections		
Deliver effective elections management which achieve accurate results and maintain the confidence of the electorate.	• Support the work of the Electoral Commission in reviewing and redesigning the forms to be used at the upcoming UK Parliamentary Election. • Lead on a Digital Accessibility Project sponsored by the Electoral Management Board Convener to develop and implement a voters accessibility one stop service	• Polling Station Review **Target Date = March 2024**

Service Priority	Measures of Success	Improvement Actions
	• Maintain high Performance Standards for Returning Officer as set out in the Electoral Commissions performance standards framework.	
Ensure effective governance arrangements including the annual review of Code of Corporate Governance and responsibility for the Council's Financial Regulations.	• Comply with Standing Order requirement to issue Committee papers 10 days prior to meetings	• Review the current arrangements for managing the business of the Council and present options for improvement to the Council for approval. **Target Date = October 2023** • Develop an improved process for the annual review of Code of Corporate Governance **Target Date = March 2024**
Gaelic		
Promote, support and develop Gaelic language and culture to maximise the cultural, economic and educational benefits to the Highlands.	• CP1.11 % GM Nursery Pupils 2022/23 Performance = 8.59% • CP1.11 % GM Primary Pupils 2022/23 Performance = 6.64% • CP1.11 % Gaidhlig Secondary Pupils 2022/23 Performance = 3.14% • CP1.11% Gaelic Medium Secondary Pupils	• *CP1.11 – New measures and indicators for Gaelic developed as part of the new Gaelic Language Plan* *Completed June 2023*

Service Priority	Measures of Success	Improvement Actions
	2022/23 Performance = 14.60% • Number of Gaelic culture reports promoted through press releases **Target = 3 year rolling average**	
	Communications and Resilience	
Deliver a responsive and effective internal and external communications function to inform service users and promote confidence in Council's use of resources.	• Ranking for Scottish Local Authorities for Social Media. Q4 2022/23 Performance = Rank 10 **Target = Rank 10**	• CP1.12 – Culture and heritage events promoted through press and social media **Target = Review March 2024** • CP1.12 – Highland AR App used to promote Highland heritage and culture **Target = Review March 2024** • CP2.07 – Work with partners to support campaigns to keep public spaces clean and safe **Target = Review March 2024** • Monitor and report completion of Service Business Continuity Plans, exercises undertaken and training delivered **Target = Review March 2024** • Report debrief learning in Resilience Group Action Plans

Service Priority	Measures of Success	Improvement Actions
		Target = Review March 2024 • Report / Increase on overall engagement stats for social media **Target = Review March 2024** • Rolling programme of face-to-face and Teams staff engagement **Target = Ongoing**
Provide high quality effective Corporate Leadership Support/Policy Development.	• Ensure effective engagement with parliamentary and government consultations and enquiries • Ensure effective development and delivery of key corporate policy areas i.e Local Governance Review; Islands Act; Open Water Safety • Deliver robust internal governance through support of the Executive Leadership Team and associated project and programme boards	• Effective co-ordination for the implementation of the Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Action Plan **Target Date = March 2024**
Protect Highland consumers and businesses by tackling unfair and unsafe trading practices and	• Trading Standards – Business Advice – 14 Days 2022/23 Performance = 81.6%	• Develop a revised Performance Indicator to reflect changes to Trading Standards Practices

Service Priority	Measures of Success	Improvement Actions
assist business growth through best practice.	**Target = Maintain performance over 3-year rolling average** • Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice and Citizen Advice per 1000 population 2021/22 Performance = £8426, Rank 23 **Target = LGBF Scottish Average**	**Target Date = March 2024**
Provide high-quality legal advice and representation to the Council, its committees and services.	• Monitor case numbers and compliance of Guardianship applications logded with Court within 30 days of date of first medical assessment **Target = 90%**	• Support the introduction of Short Term Lets Licensing Regime **Target Date = December 2023** • Develop a digital solution to store closed legal files in compliance with GDPR Regulations **Target Date = March 2024**
Support elected Members to represent and promote the Highlands.	• Support external engagement with COSLA; COHI; Islands Forum	• Develop a Members Learning and Training Programme and monitor uptake **Target Date = March 2024**

Responding to Strategies

Corporate Strategy	Corporate Indicators	Target
Corporate Business Intelligence	Service Complaints – responded to within 5 days (Financial Quarter) (Service Performance Q4 2022/23 = 100%)	80% or more responded to within the timescale
	Service Complaints - Investigation – responded to within 20 days (Financial Quarter) (Service Performance Q4 2022/23 = 50%)	80% or more responded to within the timescale
	Service FOI Legislative requirement (20 days) (Financial Quarter) (Service Performance Q4 2022/23 = 73%)	90% or more responded to within the timescale
People Strategy	Service Absence rate (Financial Quarter) (Service Performance Q4 2022/23 = 2.13) % of staff ERDs completed (annual) This is a new indicator	Keep below Highland Council Average Annual target is 90% and progress towards this will be reported on a quarterly basis
Sustainable Business Travel Strategy	Reduce Business Travel Mileage (Service performance in Q4 2022/23 = 49,193)	Target to be determined by each service for Miles travelled by Grey Fleet & Car Club
	Reduce Carbon Emissions from Business Travel This is a new indicator	Currently tracked, reduction based on reduction of miles

Service Responsibilities in the Corporate Plan

Strategic Priority Outcome	Commitment	Measures and Actions
Fair and Caring Highland. Work together to improve quality of life and opportunities for Highland people.	Continue to promote Gaelic language and cultural development.	CP1.11 % GM Nursery Pupils
		CP1.11 % GP Primary Pupils
		CP1.11 % Gaelic Secondary Pupils
		CP1.11 % Gaelic Learner Secondary Pupils
	Promote and enhance the Highland's rich heritage and culture.	Cultural and heritage events including Archaeology Festival, Highland Heritage Trail & Blas Festival, promoted through the press and social media.
		Highland AR App used to promote Highland Heritage and culture
		Gaelic culture Reports promoted through press releases – maintain 3 year rolling average.
Resilient and Sustainable Communities: Help our communities to be prosperous, sustainable and resilient, making a positive difference to the lives of people.	Work with communities and partners to keep public spaces clean and safe.	Work with partners including Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), SEPA, Scottish Water, Scottish Canals, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, and Scottish Government to support campaigns to keep public spaces clean and safe.

Strategic Priority Outcome	Commitment	Measures and Actions
Resilient and Sustainable Council: Work with partners to address service delivery challenges with a positive approach to change.	Grow and retain our own talent within the Council.	ERDs being completed.

Risk Register

Corporate Risk No.	Risk Rating	Risk Name
CR22	C2	Security and Resilience – Physical Assets and Infrastructure
CR27	D4	Election Act 2022
CR28	D4	UK Parliamentary Boundary Changes

Service Risk No.	Risk Rating	Risk Name
PGV01	C2	Local Committees
PGV04	E3	Public Performance Reporting
PGV05	D2	Best Value Assurance Report
PGV07	D3	Brexit Implications for Traders
PGV08	D3	Succession and Workforce Planning
PGV09	E2	Gaelic Language Plan
PGV10	D2	Covid-19 Variants
PGV11	D3	Contribute to the Economic Recovery from COVID-19
PGV12	D3	Licensing of Short Term Lets
PGV14	D3	Changing Consumer Landscape

The Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS) contains all identified Service risks and any corporate risks that the Service owns and is used to monitor mitigating actions quarterly.

Service Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) Set

SPI Category	Indicator
Environmental Services	Trading Standards – business advice – 14 days

The Statutory Performance Indicator Set is currently being reviewed.

Planned Audits, External and Internal Assessments

Title of Assessment	Brief Description	Timeframe
Internal Audit	Verification of Statutory Performance Indicators to ensure these are collected and reported in accordance with the Accounts Commission's Audit Direction	November 2023
Internal Audit	Review of the arrangements for the production and delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan 4	March 2024