HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee:	**The Highland Council**
Date:	**14th March 2024**
Report Title:	**Annual Report 2022/23- Statutory Performance Indicators, Benchmarking and Best Value**
Report By:	**Chief Executive**

1. Purpose/ Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides performance information on the Council's Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for 2022/23. The SPIs are locally determined and are drawn from local performance indicators (LPI) and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators used in the Council's Corporate Plan.

1.2 For 2022/23 there were 80 SPIs and all of these had performance targets set. Data is not yet available for 11 of the indicators. Consequently, the performance against the target for the remaining 69 indicators shows:
   • 53 were performing on target or within the performance threshold.
   • 16 indicators, the targets had not been achieved.

1.3 There are 34 SPIs that the Council considers to be Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These provide a high-level overview of the Council's performance overall and have been selected considering their weighting in terms of evidencing effective service delivery of key Council functions. Performance data against targets is available for 27 of these KPIs, with provisional or previous year's data supplementing. The remaining 7 KPIs are within the Children's Services heading where the benchmarked data is still awaited.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

   i. Scrutinise the performance of the Council's SPIs for 2022/23 outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report;
   ii. Note the LGBF emerging trends set out in section 5.4;
   iii. Note the new approach being undertaken by Audit Scotland with regard to the audit of Best Value as detailed in section 6.1 and the outcome of their reported work for 2022/23 in section 6.2.

3. Implications

3.1 <u>Resources</u>
There are no resource implications as a result of this performance report. The report Appendices do contain a number of cost indicators which can support service improvement towards monitoring and reducing costs.

3.2 <u>Legal</u>
Implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting and demonstrating Best Value.

3.3 <u>Risk</u>: There is a risk of data being misinterpreted. For example, spend on services may be increased in response to political and public priorities increasing the overall unit cost per annum whereas the national benchmark assumes that the lowest cost per unit demonstrates better performance.

3.4 <u>Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)</u>
A number of performance indicators are useful in supporting improvement activity around equalities including "women managers in top 5% of earners", and the "gender pay gap". There are also indicators related to poverty, such as Housing indicators on energy efficiency and rent arrears. It is worth noting that the rural nature of Highland can often mean that the unit cost of service delivery is often higher, which presents a further challenge to achieving continuous improvement, especially given budgetary constraints.

3.5 <u>Climate Change/ Carbon Clever</u>
There are a number of indicators which relate to Climate Change, including: asset management, street lighting electricity costs, waste recycling and reducing Council carbon emissions.

3.6 <u>Gaelic</u>
There are no implications arising from this report.

4. Background

4.1 <u>Accounts Commission Statutory Performance Information (SPI) Direction</u>
The Accounts Commission has the statutory power to define the performance information that Councils must publish for performance comparison and benchmarking purposes. This is undertaken through issue of an SPI Direction setting out the requirements for Council's to report their performance to its citizens and communities. The current 2021 Direction requires each Council to report as follows:

<u>Statutory Performance Indicator 1: Improving local services and local outcomes:</u>
- Performance in improving local public services, both provided by itself and in conjunction with its partners and communities.
- Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.

The Council is expected to report information which allows comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies (the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and from other benchmarking activities). This requirement has been met through the information set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

<u>Statutory Performance Indicator 2: Demonstrating Best Value:</u>

- An assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, including self-assessments and service review activity, and how it has responded to this assessment.
- Audit assessments (including those in the annual audit) of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.
- Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.

Details of how these requirements are met is provided in Section 5 of the report. In addition, 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.

4.2 The data the Council holds on corporate performance is extensive. An electronic database system is used to manage this, the Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS). Access to the data is available to Elected Members and Council officers which contains access dashboards providing graphs, additional information and data on the performance indicators.

5. Statutory Performance Indicators and LGBF data

5.1 The detailed performance information is set out in **Appendix 1**, and this is summarised in Table 1 below. This shows that 77% (53/69) of the indicators are performing on target (equal to or better than the target) or within the performance threshold (below target but within an agreed level of tolerance). However, this does mean that 16 indicators (23%) were not achieved.

Table 1 – Summary of SPI performance

Performance against target		Number of SPIs
G	Performance is "On Target"	**41**
A	Performance is "Some Slippage"	**12**
R	Performance is "No Significant Progress"	**16**
	The indicator is data awaited/ no data available	**11**
	Total	**80**

5.2 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its strategic and operational priorities along with relevant LGBF indicators and targets to monitor progress. These LGBF indicators along with locally determined indicators are now the focus of the Council's SPI reporting.

Appendix 1 shows the performance for all 80 SPIs for 2022/23 together with the 2 previous years which have been provided for comparison purposes. The target for 2022/23 is also shown and these have either been set by Members through the Corporate Plan or have been established by Council officers. The type of target varies by indicator and may relate to an indicator's position in national benchmarking or seeking improved local trends.

Within the 80 SPIs, 34 are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were agreed to achieve a balanced strategic view of performance across the Council. All KPIs are denoted in bold.

In considering the information provided the 2022/23 performance has been measured against the target and "ragged" accordingly. Any SPIs which are shown as **R** (no

significant progress) has further commentary provided detailing the reason why performance is less than expected, and the actions being undertaken to address this. Where indicators are shown as not meeting the target, this does not automatically signal a lack of improvement. In many cases the figures show improvement, but this is not meeting the expected pace of change required. Therefore, an assessment is also shown as to whether there is an improving pattern of performance over the three-year period reported.

5.3 **Appendix 2** of this report provides data on the Council's performance for those LGBF indicators which it has selected to use as part of its SPIs. This provides details of the Council's benchmarking position for 2022/23 and the previous reporting year, as well as the national average, minimum, and maximum values for 2022/23. The full LGBF data published can be accessed using the Improvement Service's website.

5.4 In considering the 2022/23 LGBF data, the Improvement Service have identified the main emerging trends as:
- Finance – Scottish Government funding for core services has fallen in real terms, Councils have been charged to do more by the Scottish Government but with less discretion for local priorities and spending is not keeping pace with demographic pressures. The long-term trend shows that social care, education and looked after children services have been protected creating a growing pressure on other Council services.
- Workforce pressures – staff absence figures are at all-time high. Reasons for this include long-term absences due to delayed hospital treatment and an increase in mental health related illness. Continued recruitment challenges and high staff turnover is also reported.
- Health and Social Care – care at home shows an increased service cost but less hours being provided. Hospital delayed discharge numbers have increased. The quality gradings for adult care services have reduced sharply but this may be due to a change in methodology.
- Children and Young People – real terms expenditure in education is lower than expected. Also, the potential for Councils to make savings in this area has been impacted by teacher numbers commitment.
- Poverty and the cost-of-living – Council Tax collection rates have recovered back to pre-Covid rates but rent arrears continue to rise. There has been a notable increased demand for the Scottish Welfare Fund crisis & community grants.

Many of these trends can be seen in the data reported for Highland.

5.5 A national report on the LGBF performance indicators is jointly published each year by SOLACE, COSLA, and the Improvement Service. This report aims to identify high-level performance trends and variations across all 32 Scottish Councils. The report recognises that Council services were managing unprecedented financial challenges from soaring inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. The focal points in the report are:
1. Local government financial and workforce pressures
2. Poverty, financial hardship and the cost-of-living crisis
3. Health and social care pressures
4. Education for children and young people
5. Performance of local government services.

The report states that it provides an evidence-based picture of the impact of deepening fiscal, workforce and demand pressures on local government services and the communities they serve. It concludes that despite an increasingly challenging backdrop, Councils have adapted quickly to meet new demands, maintain essential services and implement new ways of working.

However, the LGBF data also presents further evidence on the widening budget gap, insufficient capacity/ lack of local flexibility to respond to current demand, and declining service performance and public satisfaction. The data indicates that Covid and the cost-of-living crisis, on top of sustained fiscal, workforce and demand pressures, is likely to substantially disrupt performance and efficiency improvements previously gained and that these effects will continue for some time. The report also warns that efforts in the short-term in some service areas may need to focus on prioritising and maintaining performance, rather than service improvement.

It also states that local government is taking steps to mitigate the effects of the challenges and seeking to ensure the ongoing sustainability of services through a programme of performance improvement and transformation. Many of the examples quoted in the report including incorporating digital technology in service redesign; reconfiguring and repurposing our estate; working with partners, third sector and communities to adopt place-based approaches and reshape services will be familiar to Members as these are being undertaken within the Council.

6.   Best Value

6.1   For the audit period 2022/23 – 2026/27, Audit Scotland has adopted a new approach to auditing Best Value in Councils whereby this is now integrated within their annual audit work and with annual BV thematic reviews undertaken. There will still be a statutory report on each Council during this five-year period.

6.2   The first thematic review examined the effectiveness of the Council's leadership of the development of the council's strategic priorities, following the local government elections. The report also provides an update on the areas covered by the recommendations in the previous statutory Best Value Assurance Report published in 2020. A copy of the report considered by the Audit Committee on 24 January 2024 can be accessed from the following link: BV thematic report 2022-23. This Committee also considered the 2022/23 Annual Report where reporting on Best Value, the External Auditors concluded:

"The Highland Council has a clear and well-articulated strategic vision. This is well embedded across the organisation and through the service planning process. It has set out its priority areas and the associated performance levels it wants to achieve and should now set the remaining outstanding targets.

Appropriate plans are in place and aligned to the council's priorities. The Council has aligned it's 2023/24 budget to its new priorities."

6.3   The next thematic on "workforce innovation" started in February and will be reported as part of Audit Scotland's 2023/24 annual audit work. In addition, the statutory report work is now scheduled to be undertaken between October 2024 and August 2025.

6.4   **Appendix 3** provides some examples on how the Council has met its Best Value duties in respect of assessments by scrutiny and inspection bodies.

The Council has adopted the Public Sector Improvement Framework to undertake self-assessment activities and a report on the programme of planned reviews will be provided to the next meeting of the Audit Committee on 21st March 2024.

Designation: Chief Executive

Statutory Performance Indicator Report 2022/23

Performance against target:		Progress of performance:		Notes:
G	Performance is "On Target"	⬆	Improving	Indicators shown in bold are Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
A	Performance is "Some Slippage"	⬌	Being maintained	CP R9ef – denotes link to Corporate Plan indicator
R	Performance is "No Significant Progress"	⬇	Worsening	LGBF – denotes LGBF reference number
	Indicator is new/ changed /verified data awaited/ no data yet available (n/a)	n/a	Cannot be assessed as no data yet available	

Children's Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
School Meals - gross cost per meal provided			£6.77	£4.18	£4.44	£4.98	**G**	⬆
School Transport - cost per pupil transported			£1,459	£1,545	£1,693	£1,450	**R** note (1)	⬇
No of accommodated children and young people – residential *2022/23 figure is provisional*			70	65	52	70	**G**	⬆
The average number of children and young people accommodated outwith Highland (Annual)	CP1.08		28	24	20	19	**A**	⬆
% of Children and Young People in formal kinship care	CP1.08		22.7%	19.1%	18.4%	21.0%	**R** note (2)	⬇
% of statutory health assessments completed within 4 weeks of notification of new episode of care (Annual)			80%	72%	63%	95%	**R** note (3)	⬇
The number of foster carer approvals (Annual)			16	13	8	16	**R** note (4)	⬇
SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children	CP1.01	CHN04	64%	67%	n/a	67.5%	n/a	n/a
SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children	CP1.01	CHN05	34%	33%	n/a	33.5%	n/a	n/a
SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds *2022/23 data and target tied to benchmark data which is not yet available*	CP1.02	CHN06	48%	51%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Children's Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds *2022/23 data and target tied to benchmark data which is not yet available*	CP1.02	CHN07	19%	19%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
% of Children and Young People in care in the community *2022/23 figure is provisional as data and target tied to benchmark data which is not yet available.* *2021/22 data amended from 83.7% to 83.8%.*	CP1.08	CHN09	85.4%	83.8%	87.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pupils entering positive destinations	CP1.03	CHN11	94.3%	94.5%	n/a	95.5%	n/a	n/a
% P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Literacy	CP1.01	CHN13a	49.5%	59.3%	64.8%	67%	**A**	⬆
% P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Numeracy	CP1.01	CHN13b	60.1%	68.8%	72.2%	75%	**A**	⬆
% of child protection re-registrations within 18 months *2022/23 figure is provisional. Target tied to benchmark data which is not yet available.*		CHN22	9.3%	1.5%	3.7%	n/a	n/a	⬆
School Leavers - Highest attaining 20% - Complementary Tariff Score	CP1.01		1302	1257	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Leavers - Lowest attaining 20% - Complementary Tariff Score	CP1.01		139	134	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Leavers - Middle attaining 60% - Complementary Tariff Score	CP1.01		656	618	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Commentary on red ragged indicators

Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
(1) School Transport – Cost per pupil The target set for this indicator is a rolling average of the previous 3 year's performance. In 2022/23 this worked out as a target of £1,450, that year the cost of school transport per pupil was £1,693.	The increased cost is attributed to inflationary pressures affecting fuel and running costs, plus difficulty in recruiting drivers. These costs are outside the Council's control. Action taken includes the setting up of an in-house bus operation which delivers passenger and school transport services at a lower cost compared to commercial contractors. This will be extended as opportunities are presented.
(2) % of Children and Young People in formal kinship care The target for this indicator is by 26/27 to have 25% of children experiencing care be in formal kinship care. Progress to this target has been staged to achieve 21% by 2022/23. At the end of 2022/23 18.4% of children were in formal kinship care.	We are continuing to try and ensure that children live with Kinship care when they are not able to live with their parents. The family group decision making approach is being developed to help us in supporting more children live with their families and we hope that this will lead to an increase in the number of children who are able to be supported in Kinship placements. We have continued to make steady progress in making permanent plans for children in Kinship placements with more children being supported through Kinship care orders.
(3) % of statutory health assessments completed within 4 weeks of notification of new episode of care The target for this indicator is to complete 95% of assessments in the 4-week time period. During 2022/23, 63% (68/108) were completed in the time frame.	The Performance for statutory health assessments of Care Experienced Children and Young People has declined across the last quarter of the year. There are a number of contributory factors including delay in receiving consent, assessment refusal, change of placement. However, the main issue relates to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children received in Highland who have Looked After Status. This accounts for a 50% increase in the number of Care Experienced Children and Young People needing a statutory health assessment. The increased demand has created pressure to deliver the assessments within the timescales. There is now a mitigating plan in place.

Commentary on red ragged indicators	
Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
(4) The number of foster carer approvals 8 foster carer and prospective adopter approvals were made in 2022/23. The target was 16.	Although recruitment is ongoing and year-round, there are challenges in replacing those who cease fostering, mainly due to retirement, changes in employment, health, and family circumstances. However, we are seeing a slight increase in the number of enquiries coming into the service. Whether they materialise into approved foster care placements depends very much on the assessment process, as the number of enquires far exceeds the number of final approvals which is the case across Scotland. There is a direct link between recruitment and retention, and the allowances and fees paid by Councils. In March 2023 the Council agreed to increase allowances paid to Kinship, Foster Carers and to a small number of families who adopt from 1st April 2023, bringing these in line with other Scottish Councils. Further in September 2023 the Scottish Government agreed a National Minimum allowance which meant a further increase in allowances paid for three of the age categories. By increasing allowances and raising the profile of fostering in Highland we hope to attract more people to become carers over the next 2/3 years.

Children's Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2017-2019	2019-2021	2021-2023	Target	Performance against target	Progress
School attendance rates % (Biennial)	CP1.01	CHN19a	92.8%	91.5%	90.0%	90.2%	A	⬌
School attendance rates % for those who are Care Experienced (Biennial)	CP1.01	CHN19b	85.7%	86.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Adult Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Criminal Justice - % offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Supervision) seen within 5 working days			42.3%	46.1%	46.0%	69.0%	R note (5)	⬆
% Criminal Justice Social Work reports submitted to court by due date			92.8%	95.0%	95.0%	100.0%	A	⬌
Criminal Justice - % offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Unpaid Work) 1st placement within 7 working days			39.4%	47.4%	47.2%	62.0%	R note (6)	⬆

Adult Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Criminal Justice - % Community Payback Order (Unpaid Work) Beneficiaries			100%	100%	100%	100%	G	⬌
Criminal Justice - % Level 3 MAPPA cases reviewed once every 6 weeks			100%	100%	100%	100%	G	⬌
Criminal Justice - % Level 2 MAPPA cases reviewed once every 12 weeks			100%	100%	100%	100%	G	⬌
The average Adults with Incapacity waiting list *New indicator for 2022/23*					2	0	A	**n/a**
Direct payments spend on 18+ adults	CP2.05	SW02	6.6%	7.5%	7.3%	8.7%	R note (7)	⬆
% of people aged 65+ with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	CP2.05	SW03a	55.6%	55.8%	52.9%	61.7%	R note (8)	⬇

Adult Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2017-2019	2019-2021	2021-2023	Target	Performance against target	Progress
% Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life (Biennial)		SW04b	85.7%	78.0%	84.3%	83.6%	G	⬌

Commentary on red ragged indicators

Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
(5) Criminal Justice - % offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Supervision) seen within 5 working days A target of 69% has been set for this indicator. In 2022/23 46% was achieved.	During and after Covid, changes have occurred impacting on our ability to meet these targets; some Courts throughout Highland have not provided paperwork in a timely manner. Furthermore, some of our areas have limited Officer cover and any absences have a significant impact statistically. Courts in the North have changed trial days, which has affected our KPIs as working days had been arranged around previous Court dates which had not changed in years.
(6) Criminal Justice - % offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Unpaid Work) 1st placement within 7 working days A target of 62% has been set for this indicator. In 2022/23 47.2% was achieved.	Many unpaid work orders are granted without the need of a Justice Social Work Report. Therefore, we may only become aware of the order upon receipt of the Court paperwork with no contact details for the individual except for the address written in the order. This means that delays occur as at times it can take up to a week or more for a person to sign the order which then impacts upon the start date of the unpaid work placement.
(7) Direct payments spend on 18+ adults The target for this benchmarked indicator is to be ranked in the top quartile of local authorities, that is rank 1 to 8. In 2022/23 Highland was ranked 11, 7.25% of the total social work spend on adults was on the cost of Direct Payments for over 18s.	This indicator is linked to the outcomes set out in the Adult Services Strategic Plan which has recently been developed for adults. One of its key drivers is to promote independence and choice making people the centre of the care that they require. On that basis the service, delivered by NHS Highland, is looking to expand the use of all Self-Directed Support options and there is a programme of work ongoing with a view to delivering that and hence leading to an improved performance in terms of this indicator.
(8) % of people aged 65+ with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home The target for this benchmarked indicator was to be ranked in the second quartile (ranked 9-16) of local authorities. In 2022/23 Highland was ranked 31st. The percentage of people reduced from 55.7% in 21/22 to 52.9% on 22/23.	NHS Highland is reporting levels of unmet need in terms of care at home. These challenges arise in terms of difficulties in recruiting both directly and by commissioning as some contracts for care delivery have been handed back by the providers. The Adult Services Strategic Plan has as its vision the role of communities and the aspiration that as many adults as possible, both under and over 65, with a long-term care need can receive personal care at home. This is a key aim of the Strategic Plan. To deliver this element of the plan it will be necessary to consider various strategies aimed at supporting this including, for example, increased use of telecare and other early intervention strategies.

Cultural and Leisure Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Net cost per attendance at sports facilities		C&L1a	£24.99	£6.73	£3.74	£2.98	**R** note (9)	⬆
Net cost per visit to libraries		C&L2a	£1.19	£1.53	£1.31	£2.14	**G**	⬇
Net cost per museum visit		C&L3a	£2.75	£1.29	£0.24	£4.58	**G**	⬆

Commentary on red ragged indicators	
Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
HLH has provided the following contextual information in respect of the above indicators. HLH's overall performance has continued to improve. The year-on year increases in customer engagements and income have continued with HLH being on-track to achieve c. 10m customer engagements this year and income from its leisure subscriptions being 10% above previous levels. At the same time, HLH has made savings in its budget of £2.7m during the current year. To provide the overall picture of HLH's performance, since it was established: • customer engagements have increased with 2.3m in 2011 and an estimated 10m by the end of this financial year (an increase of c. 1m on 22/23); • efficiency has improved over that time with 21% of HLH's budget coming from customers and external grants when it was established. Now, it now generates almost 50% from customers and grant funding. The net cost for libraries and museum visits have shown improvement whereby customer numbers have increased and HLH costs reduced. This pattern has continued into the current financial year. This improvement in performance has been achieved through the Council and HLH working together to protect public services in the Highlands.	
(9) Net cost per attendance at sports facilities The target for this benchmarked indicator was to be ranked in the top quartile of local authorities, that is rank 1 to 8. In 2022/23 Highland was ranked 11 with a cost per attendance at sport facilities of £3.74. The cost of the local authority ranked 8 was £2.98.	Customer numbers have increased, and costs have reduced during 2022/23 period and this has continued into the current financial year and while this does not meant that the ranking of Highland will increase (because of the changes in what is taking place in other areas in Scotland) it is an improving position with HLH having increased its customer and income to a point where they are exceeding even pre-pandemic highs.

Road Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Cost of electricity per street lighting unit			£31.58	£30.36	£30.79	£31.51	G	⬌
Cost of maintenance per street lighting unit			£12.51	£13.72	£13.32	£12.97	A	⬌
Traffic light failures completed in 3 hours			91.0%	93.0%	90.0%	93.39%	A	⬌
Street light failures completed in 7 days			55.0%	62.0%	60.0%	62.0%	A	⬌
Street lighting energy consumption (kWh)	CP4.07		10,904,332	10,035,100	9,175,349	9,500,000	G	⬆
Road network to be considered for maintenance	CP2.03		39.1%	36.7%	36.5%	37.9%	G	⬆

Environmental Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Net Cost of Waste Collection per Premise		ENV1a	£83.66	£90.50	£87.72	£88.66	G	⬆
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise		ENV2a	£97.68	£100.11	£103.06	£114.35	G	⬇
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1,000 population		ENV3a	£6,775	£8,805	£9,880	£9,880	G	⬇
Street Cleanliness Score	CP2.07	ENV3c	95.0%	93.7%	96.1%	94.4%	G	⬌
% Household waste recycled *2021/22 data adjusted from 37.3% to 37.4%*	CP4.06	ENV6a	35.7%	37.4%	37.2%	37.0%	G	⬌
% adults satisfied - refuse collection		ENV7a	89.1%	91.3%	92.0%	86.7%	G	⬌
% adults satisfied - street cleaning		ENV7b	66.9%	65.7%	69.7%	58.3%	G	⬆
Trading Standards – Business advice requested completed within 14 days			85.1%	86.3%	81.6%	85.5%	A	⬇
High risk private water supplies inspected and sampled (Calendar year)			17%	42%	44%	95%	R note (10)	⬆

Commentary on red ragged indicators	
Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
(10) High risk private water supplies inspected and sampled	The Highland private water supply register has increased by 41 supplies which is reflective of the introduction of Short Term Let Licensing. Within the existing resource, the annual monitoring

| | | | The target set for this indicator is 95%. In 2022/23 44% of high-risk private water supplies were inspected and sampled. | programme is managed alongside a prioritised risk assessment programme. During the period April – September 2023, one Environmental Health office had a reduction of 1 FTE due to staff sickness. Across Highland, officers were managing a significant increase in water scarcity enquires which impacted on programmed work. A review of the current private water supply resources has been completed which has identified that additional resources, funded by charging, are needed if the Council is to meet its statutory performance targets. The anticipated performance for 2023/24 is a 61%, a significant improvement on the 2022/23 reported for performance. |

Business and Development Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
% of Building Standard Warrants determined within 6 days			99.8%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	G	⬄
% of Completion Certificates issued within 3 days			99.5%	99.7%	99.1%	90.0%	G	⬄
Average time per planning application (weeks):								
- **all Local Developments**	CP3.07		11.6	13.1	16.2	14.5	R note (11)	⬇
- **all Majors**	CP3.07		27.8	56.7	75.2	40.0	R note (12)	⬇
- **Other Consents**	CP3.07		9.8	9.9	12.1	11.0	A	⬇
Businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway Services *2020/21 includes Covid business grants*			15,319	2,208	2,742	1,884	G	⬆
No. Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	CP5.09	ECON05	7.35	8.49	13.23	14.30	R note (13)	⬆
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	CP2.08	ECON08	84%	83%	86%	86%	G	⬄

Commentary on red ragged indicators	
Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action

Average time per planning application:	Planning performance overall was impacted through a significant and continued increase in application numbers. This ripple effect of the pandemic has continued into 2022/23 through the increase in time taken to determine planning applications. This reflects the cumulative impact of the increase in workload, with case officers not being able to process applications as quickly and as efficiently as they previously did. Measures have recently been implemented to provide additional staffing to address this. Although new staff are currently being appointed it will take a little while for them to be trained and to be able to make significant contribution to addressing the performance measures in the short term.
(11) Local Developments The 2022/23 target for All Local Developments is 14.5 weeks, on average planning applications took 16.2 weeks. (12) Majors For All Majors the target was 40 weeks, on average planning applications took 75.2 weeks.	
(13) No. Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population The target for this benchmarked indicator is to achieve the Scottish Average, in 2022/23 this was a value of 14.3, Highland's rate was 13.2.	The number of Start-ups in 2022/23 increased by 54% compared to the previous year. The combination of Council start-up grants providing added stability to support new businesses, along with a dedicated start-up coordinator has driven the number of start-ups to its highest level. Economic recovery is closely tied to several indicators, including supply chain, cashflow and general economic conditions. The latter is concerning as this could potentially delay new businesses, given many are in the hospitality and food and drink sector in the Highlands. We expect some of these pressures to ease towards the end of 2023/24 and this together, with continued specialist start-up adviser and grant support, hopefully will result in continued improvement in business start-ups.

Housing Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Average time to complete emergency housing repairs (hours)			8.5	5.8	5.5	4.2	R (note 14)	⬆
Average time taken to re-let homes (days)			44.2	35.5	32.1	35.0	G	⬆
Homelessness - case duration for all applications (weeks)	CP2.05		56	50	45	48	G	⬆
Gross rent arrears as % of rent due	CP5.10	HSN1b	5.4%	5.5%	7.1%	5.0%	R (note 15)	⬇
No. council houses built/ purchased per year 2022-27 *New indicator for 2022/23*	CP3.01				180	130	G	n/a
Avg. time to complete medical adaptation applications (days)	CP3.05		44.2	45.6	38.6	60.9	G	⬆

Commentary on red ragged indicators

Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
(14) Average time to complete emergency housing repairs The 2022/23 target for this indicator is 4.2 hours. In this year 12,458 repairs were completed with an average of 5.5 hours.	Performance on emergency repairs continued to improve in 2022/23 (previously 5.8 hours) which reflects efforts to prioritise these repairs despite issues with contractors' capacity and material supply in the construction industry.
(15) Gross rent arrears as % of rent due A target of 5 % or lower has been set for this target. In 2022/23 gross rent arrears were 7.05% of the rent due for the year.	Rent arrears have increased during 2022/23 and this is primarily related to the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The financial pressures experienced by households is reflected in the increased number of tenants in arrears. The Cost of Living (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Government on 6 October 2022. This has temporarily suspended evictions in most circumstances, although social landlords are still able to evict where tenants have been found responsible for ongoing anti-social behaviour or where they have in arrears of over £2,250. The legislation has now been extended to 31 March 2024. All high-level arrears cases are under regular review in line with our Rent Arrears Management Policy. While arrears have increased in 2022/23, our performance remains significantly better than national benchmarking average of 9.59%.

Corporate Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Cost of Accounting (% of net revenue budget + housing revenue account)			0.27%	0.28%	0.21%	0.28%	G	⬆
Non-Domestic Rates collected by year end			96.0%	97.5%	97.9%	97.9%	G	⬌
Cost of Non-Domestic Rates collection per chargeable property			£17.78	£17.93	£12.54	£16.01	G	⬆
Overall Council Tax collection level (previous 5 years)			97.1%	97.2%	97.3%	96.3%	G	⬌
Income sundry debtors collected during year			83.8%	83.8%	86.8%	84.5%	G	⬆
Sickness – Days lost per employee (all staff)			5.5	7.4	8.6	8.5	A	⬇

Corporate Services	CP Ref.	LGBF Ref	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Target	Performance against target	Progress
Average Days to Process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Claims:								
- **Changes of Circumstances**			1.7	1.8	1.9	n/a	**G**	↓
- **New Claims** *Targets were based on CIPFA benchmarking data which is no longer available*			9.1	9.4	11.0	n/a	**G**	↓
Benefits Administration costs – Gross cost per case			£38.64	£41.99	£30.76	£41.99	**G**	↑
Council carbon emissions tonnes CO2e	CP4.07		35,408	33,766	36,147	49,077	**G**	↓
Cost of Procurement Section as a proportion of net revenue budget			0.104%	0.109%	0.091%	0.106%	**G**	↑
Women managers in top 2% of earners *21/22 correction from 39.6% to 42.7%*			41.6%	42.7%	46.6%	41.1%	**G**	↑
Accident injury rate			150	125	151	161	**G**	↓
Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)		CORP06b	6.4	8.2	9.2	13.2	**G**	↓
Council Tax received Annual percentage received	CP5.10	CORP07	95.7%	96.5%	96.7%	96.2%	**G**	↔
% of procurement spend on local enterprises	CP2.11	ECON04	47.0%	49.8%	49.1%	36.3%	**G**	↔
Asset Management - % Suitability	CP5.08	CAST1	67.5%	75.9%	77.7%	83.1%	**R** (note 16)	↑

Commentary on red ragged indicators	
Performance Indicator	Commentary and Improvement Action
(16) Asset Management % suitability The target for this benchmarked indicator is to achieve the Family Average, in 2022/23 this was 83.1%, Highland reported a Suitability rate of 77.7%.	Progress continues to be made towards the targets set and the position has improved on the previous year. However, performance remains below target which reflects the challenges of geography, resource, construction industry, materials inflationary pressures, and contractor availability. It also illustrates the need to accelerate the Council's asset rationalisation programme.

Extract from the Local Government Benchmark Report 2022/23

Targets:	Rankings:	Quartiles:	Years:
"Scot Avg." means that the Council's target is the Scottish average; "Fam Avg." means that the Council's target is family group average.	The rank position of indicators is as published by the Improvement Service. This may be subject to change as data is reviewed by local authorities, any such changes are shown in italics.	First quartile (rank 1-8); Second quartile (rank 9-16); Third quartile (rank 17-24); Fourth quartile (rank 24-32).	**FY** – Financial Year **AY** – Academic Year

Children's Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
CHN22 – Child protection re-registrations within 18 months *Provisional Highland data for 22/23, benchmarking not yet available.*	5th	n/a	16th	3.7%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Children's Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual AY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
CHN4 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children *Change to indicator for 22/23, data not yet available*	20th	n/a	67.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children *Change to indicator for 22/23, data not yet available*	26th	n/a	33.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CHN6 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds *Change to indicator for 22/23, data not yet available*	14th	n/a	16th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CHN7 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds *Change to indicator for 22/23, data not yet available. Ranked position for 21/22 adjusted from 14th to 15th*	15th	n/a	16th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CHN9 – Percentage of Children and Young People in care, in the community *Provisional Highland data for 22/23. Benchmarking data not yet available.*	23rd	n/a	16th	87.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
CHN11 – Pupils entering positive destinations *22/23 data not yet available*	26th	n/a	95.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CHN13a - % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Literacy	32nd	31st	67%	64.8%	72.7%	64.5%	87.6%
CHN13b - % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Numeracy	32nd	31st	75%	72.2%	79.6%	72.0%	91.2%

Adult Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
SW02 – Direct payments spend on adults (aged 18+) *21/22 ranked position adjusted from 10th to 12th*	12th	11th	8th	7.3%	8.7%	1.8%	30.5%
SW03a – Adults (aged 65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home	30th	31st	16th	52.9%	61.5%	51.3%	75.8%

Adult Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 19-21	Rank 21-23	Target 21-23	Actual 21-23	Average	Min	Max
SW04b – Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	24th	4th	8th	84.3%	78.1%	63.1%	93.6%

Culture and Leisure Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
C&L1a – Net cost per visit to leisure facilities	22nd	11th	8th	£3.74	£4.89	£17.88	£0.97
C&L2a – Net cost per visit to libraries *21/22 ranked position adjusted from 4th to 3rd*	3rd	2nd	8th	£1.31	£2.81	£10.49	£0.98
C&L3a – Net cost per museum visit *21/22 ranked position adjusted from 5th to 4th*	4th	4th	16th	£0.24	£3.07	£35.39	£0.01

Environmental Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
ENV1a – Net cost of waste collection per premises	30th	23rd	24th	£87.72	£75.64	£126.63	£38.92
ENV2a – Net cost per waste disposal per premises	15th	18th	24th	£103.06	£95.28	£229.70	£5.65
ENV3a – Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	6th	8th	8th	£9,880	£16,068	£25,361	£5,242
ENV3c – Street cleanliness score	7th	5th	8th	96.1%	90.6%	83.9%	100.0%
ENV6a – Percentage of household waste that is recycled (calendar year)	26th	26th	37.0% (Fam Avg.)	37.2%	43.3%	21.0%	58.0%
ENV7a – Adults satisfied with refuse collection	2nd	1st	8th	92.0%	78.0%	53.3%	92.0%

Environmental Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
ENV7b – Adults satisfied with street cleaning	11th	3rd	58.3% (Scot Avg.)	69.7%	58.3%	38.7%	77.3%

Economic Development	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
ECON04 – % of Procurement Spend on Local Enterprises	2nd	1st	8th	49.1%	29.6%	11.9%	49.1%
ECON05 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population *21/22 ranked position adjusted from 28th to 21st*	21st	16th	14.3 (Scot Avg.)	13.2	14.3	8.0	26.8
ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	28th	27th	86%	86%	96%	70%	99%

Housing Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
HSN1b – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due *NB only 26 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland provide Housing services*	5th	5th	5.0%	7.05%	9.6%	17.4%	4.3%

Corporate Services	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
CORP06b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	1st	2nd	13.2 (Scot Avg.)	9.24	13.2	17.14	7.66
CORP07 – Council Tax – Annual percentage received	14th	16th	96.2% (Scot Avg.)	96.7%	96.2%	94.2%	98.8%

Corporate Assets	Highland				Scotland (22/23)		
	Rank 21/22	Rank 22/23	Target 22/23	Actual FY 22/23	Average	Min	Max
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability for use	29th	29th	83.1% (Fam Avg.)	77.7%	86.1%	65.2%	97.5%

Best Value Qualitative Examples

The following examples are provided as further evidence to support how the Council meets its Best Value requirements. Further information will be published on the Council's website when available.

Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how the Council has responded to these assessments.

Inspections of Nurseries and Schools are undertaken by Education Scotland. The aim of this work is to secure continuous improvement. Different themes may be inspected, and each is assessed using the following standard assessment:

Grade	Meaning
excellent	outstanding, sector-leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

This link can be used to access the inspection reports issued during 2022/23. Those Headteachers who received an evaluation of "good" or above, have been involved in sharing of good practice sessions at the termly headteacher meetings.

Care Inspectorate Reports – Residential Care establishments for Children and Young People

A summary of the inspection reports issued in 2022/23 for the establishments shows the following gradings:

Establishment	Report Date	Overall grade	Inspection findings
Mainstay	April 2022	Adequate - 3	This was the first inspection of this new service. It was noted that the inspectors thought that the service was beginning to build a positive trauma informed culture and the service was passionate about obtaining the views of the young people and having their needs taken into consideration. Care plans had goals set for the young people but could have been more "SMART" and some documentation was not available for all the young people. An improvement plan was also required.
Ashton House	May 2022	Excellent - 6	The inspectors said that this service had a very enabling approach to support people's wishes and aspirations. There was a trauma informed approach to care and provided stability and the opportunity to stay in their home until adulthood.

Establishment	Report Date	Overall grade	Inspection findings
Thor House	July 2022	Good - 4	The inspectors noted that while there were some strengths these were compromised by significant weaknesses. The team had worked hard to create and strengthen relationships with young people and their families. However there the care plans were not seen as adequate and there was no evidence of a development plan for the year ahead.
Avonlea *	July 2022	Unsatisfactory – 1	The inspectors found significant weakness which compromised the safety and wellbeing of young people. They issued a letter of serious concern as urgent improvements were required.
Killen	November 2022	Very good - 5	The inspection report identified major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people and some aspects of practice which they considered to be excellent. Comment from one of the young people was "you do not need to ask anything else, it is perfect here".
Arach	September 2022	Adequate - 3	Positive points noted that staffing was consistent and young people were safe and protected from harm. Most young people had positive relationships with staff, who were responsive to young people and persevered in building trust. It was recommended that the service should continue to develop young people's personal plans to ensure they identify more specific and measurable outcomes and experiences to work towards. Also, evaluation of progress towards achieving agreed outcomes in personal plans could be improved.
Oakwood	February 2023	Good - 4	It was identified that the management team were working hard to ensure the service had an improvement agenda. They observed very positive relationships between staff and young people and witnessed staff and young people having fun, baking, eating meals together and discussing day to day issues. It was noted that care plans could be improved upon and heard about some disruption that kept young people awake at night.

* This establishment was subsequently closed in September 2022 as it was not meeting the expected standard of quality care.

Care Inspectorate Report – Fostering Service
The report issued in September 2022 had the following quality evaluations:

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	2 – Weak
How good is our leadership?	2 – Weak
How good is our staff team?	4 – Good
How well is our care and support planned?	2 – Weak

As a result, the Inspectors identified 7 requirements and 5 areas of improvement. In response, a comprehensive Improvement and Action Plan was implemented with significant progress being made in the first six months following the inspection report being finalised. The reported position as at May 2023 shows:

- Progress on 27 actions relating to the requirements made by the inspectors was: 19 assessed as green and 8 as amber.
- Progress on the 5 actions relating to the areas for improvement was: one assessed as green and 4 as amber.

Joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Highland

This report was issued in December 2022 and it concluded:
"Chief officers in Highland recognise their critical leadership role and have given their commitment to taking forward improvements in the areas identified in this report. Their work needs to be supported by a shared approach to decision-making, commissioning and budgeting arrangements. To achieve success, staff from across the range of organisations, including third sector partners, need to be fully engaged in the improvement journey and confident that their voice is heard and their contribution understood. There should be effective mechanisms in place to hear the voices of children and young people, particularly the voices of those at risk of harm, and use them to shape practice and inform strategic planning. Governance and reporting frameworks should be strengthened by embedding the recently developed quality assurance strategy and audit cycles and by more effective collection and use of outcomes-based data."

An improvement plan was agreed and progress with implementation is subject to ongoing review by the Care Inspectorate. Annual updates will also be reported to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

Further information on the improvement priorities being undertaken to meet the recommendations arising from the inspection reports was provided to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee on 9th February 2023.