Agenda Item	11
Report No	HC/4/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 10 March 2021

Report Title: **Annual Report - Statutory Performance Indicators, Benchmarking and Best Value 2020/21**

Report By: The Chief Executive

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   This report provides performance information on the Council's Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for 2020/21. 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. As expected, and signposted in the report for 2019/20, the full impact of COVID on the Council's performance framework is now evident for 2020/21. This will continue into 2021/22 as the effects of the pandemic continue to emerge.

1.2   Of the Council's 99 SPIs, performance against target for 2020/21 can be calculated for 82 of the indicators and there are 17 indicators where calculations cannot yet be made. COVID has impacted in widely varying ways across the Council's SPIs and, in order to provide an analysis of the outcomes, each indicator has been mapped against its current target and against the COVID impact. Appendix 4 provides a deeper analysis of the ways in which the global pandemic has affected performance and should be read in conjunction with the performance data. The Covid context, combined with a change in the way the Scottish Government has measured some performance indicators, means that an overall assessment of Council performance cannot be made. This position is not unique to Highland and is reflected across Scottish Local Authority reporting for 2021/22.

1.3   There are 27 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 is available for 25 of the Council's KPIs for 2020/21. The overall impact on this smaller set of core indicators has been greater. This is because the Council's KPIs focus on essential front-line services which have been most affected by COVID including rapid redesign of services, redeployment of staff to critical COVID activities, and staff shortages due to COVID related absence. This highlights the extent to which identifying the KPIs pre-pandemic has resulted in targets that are unrealistic in the context of 2 years of cumulative Covid impact.

1.4   For transparency, Appendix 3 provides the set and value of all LGBF indicators along with, where possible, trends over the previous 2 reporting years, progress against target, and benchmarking position. This data will be helpful to Members and Officers in reassessing targets for the new Corporate Plan for 2022-2027.

2.   Recommendations

2.1   Members are asked to:

i.   Scrutinise the performance of the Council's SPIs for 2020/21 in the context of COVID as outlined in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 of this report;

ii.   Scrutinise the analysis of COVID impacts on SPIs in Appendix 4 of this report;

iii.   Note the changing Audit Direction on public performance reporting and the Council's approach to compliance in Appendix 5 of this report;

iv.   Scrutinise the Best Value Qualitative Report summarised in Appendix 6 of this report and the full detail via the hyperlink provided;

v.   Note the External Audit opinion on the Council's delivery of Best Value in relation to the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) and associated BVAR Improvement Plan as outlined at section 7 of this report.

vi.   Note that Members should expect the opportunity to scrutinise plans for performance recovery in response to the information contained in this report through the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan for 2022-27 and through Strategic Committees;

vii.   Note that Service Plans will be presented to Strategic Committees in the second cycle of meetings in new financial year to allow for the development of a new Corporate Plan following Local Government elections in May 2022.

3.   Implications

3.1   Resource: There are no resource implications as a result of this performance report. The report however does contain a number of cost indicators which can support service improvement towards monitoring and reducing costs.

3.2   Legal: Implications relate to meeting statutory requirements for public performance reporting and demonstrating Best Value.

3.3   Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): 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 means the unit cost of service delivery is often higher and this presents a further challenge to achieving continuous improvement, especially given budgetary constraints.

3.4   Climate Change/ Carbon Clever: There are a number of indicators which relate to Climate Change, including: asset management, street lighting electricity costs, waste recycling, Council carbon emissions, and two LGBF indicators on climate change.

3.5   Risk: 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. The cost of roads maintenance per km is an example of this. The impact of COVID on results is an important factor that needs to be considered to provide context to the results for 2020/21 and it is anticipated 2021/22.

3.6   Gaelic: There are no implications arising from this report.

4.   Background

4.1   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. To achieve this the Council must report against the requirements of the Audit Direction set out by the Accounts

Commission in relation to Statutory Public Performance Reporting (PPR). The report is also scrutinised by Audit Scotland and external auditors, Grant Thornton.

4.2   From 2019/20, the Direction changed, and Councils can determine what elements of the LGBF are most relevant to PPR and used as SPIs. This is helpful given a growing LGBF dataset which no longer provides a balanced view of the Council's performance. This resulted in the Council agreeing 27 KPIs in order to achieve a balanced strategic view (Appendix 1). 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. The SPI indicator set is included as Appendix 2 of this report

4.3   The significant impact of the COVID on service delivery and therefore performance means that the stretch targets set by Members in the 2017-22 Corporate Plan need to be reviewed and rebased by the Council following the Local Government elections in May 2022. It will be necessary within the new Corporate Plan to develop a performance recovery plan and for Members and Officers to work together to develop short and long-term improvement targets.

4.4   For transparency, Appendix 3 of this report provides data on the Council's performance for all LGBF indicators. Also included is the Council's benchmarking position for 2020/21 and the previous reporting year, and the national average, minimum, and maximum values for 2020/21.

4.5   Members should note that good progress continues to be made in driving improvement in performance management across the Council. The Council's External Auditors Annual Report considered by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 29 November 2021 provided feedback on progress since the Council's BVAR and this external audit opinion now forms part of how the Council meets PPR requirements. The Council also received a detailed report on progress delivering the BVAR Improvement Plan on 9 September 2021 with good progress reported overall. The outcome of these reports is discussed in more detail in section 7 of this report.

4.6   The Audit Direction and planned approach to meeting the Audit Direction is set out in Appendix 5. This takes account of developing work in response to the Council's BVAR including developing our approach to Service Plans, implementing self-assessment, and strengthening performance reporting to Strategic Committees during 2021/22.

4.7   To fulfil the Audit Direction (Appendix 5) a range of data and other information is required. This report provides quantitative data to demonstrate the Council's progress to meet the Audit Direction. The Council also provides a wide range of information on its performance through:
    • Service performance reports to Strategic Committees
    • Annual Corporate Performance Report
    • Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey of the Citizens' Panel
    • The Council's website and social media; and
    • A range of publications, such as press releases, and Highpoints magazine.

A supplementary report, Best Value Qualitative Report - Performance Examples and Case Studies –2020/21, provides examples on how the Council fulfilled each of the audit direction statements for 2020/21 with a greater focus on qualitative evidence. In order to demonstrate Best Value, qualitative evidence is as important as quantitative data and the supplementary report provides important evidence in demonstrating Best Value to the Council's external auditors. A summary of the information provided is included at Appendix 6.

4.8 The Council's progress to meet the Audit Direction is monitored by the External Auditor with an assessment published in the annual external audit report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee in September each year.

The Accounts Commission published a new Audit Direction in 2021. Councils need to publish information to meet this revised approach for three years from 2022/23. Subtle changes can be seen in the 2021 Direction, which increases emphasis on:
- The importance of service reviews and self-assessments of performance.
- Reference to the assessments of other scrutiny and inspection bodies.
- The importance of empowering communities and ensuring accessibility to the performance information reported publicly.
- Reference to the annual external audit role in assessing performance against the Best Value Duty.

Whilst not detailed in the revised Direction, there is also an expectation that Councils will publish information on their recovery from COVID, and response to the climate emergency. These topics are also expected to be areas of interest to the Council's external auditors. The Council's approach to meeting current and future Best Value requirements as outlined in the Audit Direction are detailed at Appendix 5.

4.9 Almost all SPIs have a performance target. 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 be determined based on seeking improved local trends. The target value for 2020/21 is included in Appendix 2 with an assessment of performance. The impact of COVID on achieving these targets is detailed in Appendix 2 and 4.

4.10 It should also be noted that where indicators are shown as not meeting the target, this does not automatically signal a lack of improvement. Indeed, in several cases the figures show that that improvement is being achieved, but it is not yet meeting the expected pace of change required. This again highlights that these stretch targets were set in the Pre-pandemic period.

4.11 The data the Council holds on corporate performance is extensive. An electronic database system is used to manage this, called the Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS). Elected Members and Council officers can access this database and a link to a briefing on the data related to this report has been emailed directly to Members. This can be used to access dashboards providing graphs, additional information and data on the performance indicators. The link has not been included in this report as it provides access to an internal system.

5. Statutory Performance Indicators 2020/21 and COVID Impact

5.1 An overall assessment of performance is not possible due to the impact of the pandemic on Council performance. As outlined at paragraph 4.3 the stretch targets set by Members in the 2017-22 Corporate Plan need to be reviewed and rebased by the Council following the Local Government elections in May 2022 to reflect the post pandemic context. It will be necessary within the new Corporate Plan to develop a performance recovery plan and set short and longer-term improvement targets. Following discussion at a national level, several themes in relation to the impact of COVID have been identified. These resulted in changes to the operating landscape of Local Government in Scotland during 2020/21 and had significant effects on performance which are expected to continue into 2021/22. Further detail is provided in paragraphs 5.2 – 5.6 below.

5.2 Changes to patterns of expenditure impacted on cost indicators as mainstream budgets were and continue to be hit by additional expenditure due to higher costs

created by social distancing (e.g., waste collection delivery arrangements), price volatility within Council expenditure (most areas of service delivery) and income loss. In contrast there were additional funding streams for some areas of COVID response such as business grants.

5.3   There were changing service delivery demands and activity levels resulting from the initial emergency response which required the redeployment of many staff and shifted the focus of service delivery priorities. There were service closures such as culture and leisure and recycling centres and some services were paused including routine property maintenance, repairs and inspections. Through service redesign there was a greater reliance on virtual delivery with face-to-face support prioritised for the most vulnerable e.g., social work. There was a wholesale shift to homeworking with implications for democratic processes, the workforce and service delivery. There were also changes in patterns of recruitment with increased demand for cleaning and care staff.

5.4   There was also significant variability across Scotland which further complicates effective benchmarking of both expenditure and performance. Some of these features included local lockdowns; local priorities and the strategic direction of Councils pre-COVID; what and how existing infrastructure was used; local patterns of demand and need during the pandemic; the local partnership context and local economies and their reliance of sectors disproportionately impacted during COVID including hospitality and tourism.

5.5   There were also a number of wider societal factors which have affected the level of demand for Council services and the context they were delivered in. These include:
   • increased financial hardship for families and individuals, evidenced by increased demand for welfare services;
   • increased levels of vulnerability, including mental health and wellbeing;
   • exacerbated inequalities;
   • shut down and/or slowdown in economic activity impacting on businesses;
   • effects from other sectors including NHS hospitals and supplier and contractor engagement;
   • public perceptions and behaviour around risk and safety.

5.6   National and local analysis suggests so far, the key areas of COVID impact (positive and negative) have been seen in the following areas across Scotland:
   • Adult Social Care – home care and residential care, adult care quality ratings, delayed hospital discharges, hospital readmissions;
   • Children's Services – assessment and attainment, attendance, early years quality ratings, positive destinations, Child Protection re-registrations and placement stability;
   • Corporate – staff absence, council tax collection and the gender pay gap;
   • Culture and Leisure – usage levels and a digital shift;
   • Economic Development & Planning – claimants count (working age & 16-25), employment support and business start-ups, planning applications and processing times;
   • Environment – recycling and street cleanliness;
   • Housing – housing quality, housing management and rent arrears.

5.7   During 2020/21 there were significant challenges for schools in the accessibility and regularity of delivering the curriculum to young people. This was due to national and local lockdowns linked to COVID outbreaks, ongoing school closures linked to track, trace and isolation which meant that the educational experience of young people was very varied. Although there was mitigation through online learning this was equally

challenging in assessing the learning of children. As a result, the national examination system was aborted and replaced with the alternative assessment model for senior phase pupils. For primary pupils' school staff raised significant concerns about the ability to carry out assessment and many school staff expressed concerns over appropriateness and validity of carrying out assessment or labelling the progress of children. These contexts must be noted in any consideration of our children's attainment in this exceptional time and these issues were shared though the Council's Recovery Board and Education Committee. In addition, an improvement plan was submitted to Education Scotland and can be found at the following link: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22714/highland_council_schools_reopening_plan

6. Key Performance Indicators

6.1 Of the indicators that form the Council's SPIs there are 27 that the Council considers to be Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These provide a high-level overview of the Council's performance and have been selected considering their weighting in terms of evidencing effective service delivery of key Council functions. The overall impact of COVID on this smaller set of core indicators has been greater. This is because the KPIs focus on essential front-line services which were most affected by COVID including rapid redesign of services, redeployment of staff to critical COVID activities and staff shortages due to COVID related absence. Detail is provided in Appendix 1 of this report and as outlined at paragraphs 4.3 and 5.1. A performance recovery plan is required to in order to set targets to recover performance to pre-COVID levels and improve performance over the medium to long term.

7. Duty of Best Value

7.1 The Audit Direction outlined in Appendix 5 requires the Council to assess how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment. Internal and External Audit assessments of the Council's Best Value duty (and how these are responded to) will form part of the Council's Public Performance Reporting (PPR).

7.2 The Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) Improvement Plan was approved by Council on 12 March 2020 following publication of the Council's BVAR in January 2020 by the Accounts Commission. An update on progress delivering the BVAR Improvement Plan was provided to Council on 9 September 2021 and while COVID has impacted on progress in some areas of the plan, good progress has been achieved overall. The Council was advised that progress was monitored through the Council's Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS) and that over the 27 improvement actions being monitored 69% were completed or on target, and 8 actions had some slippage. Due to COVID one action relating to external learning visits required review and it was accepted that external learning had continued virtually rather than face to face. The progress report to Council in September 2021 across the 7 themes and 27 improvement actions of the BVAR Improvement Plan can be found at: Highland Council BVAR Improvement Plan Progress Report.

7.3 The Council's Annual External Audit Report 2020/21 assessed the Council's progress in delivering Best Value and provided an external opinion on the Council's progress in delivering the Best Value Improvement Plan. The key messages from the external audit report were presented to Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2021 and overall, the audit concluded that the Council had made good progress in implementing the BVAR Improvement Plan actions in response to the Council's BVAR. In their report External Audit recognised that 2020/21 had been a year of unprecedented challenge for the Council in responding and recovering from COVID and noted further work was required to complete the improvement plan. It also recognised that the Council would face considerable challenges and uncertainty operationally and financially in the future.

The external audit report on Best Value can be found at: [External Audit Update and Wider Scope Report.](#)

8.   Other Key Factors Influencing Performance

8.1   The performance indicators in normal operating circumstances represent a complex picture of how the Council is performing. While COVID has been the focus of analysis for 2020/21 there are other influencing factors that Members and Officers will need to consider when developing the new Corporate Plan for 2022-27:

- Improvements (cost reduction) are seen in many of the Council's local and national benchmark cost indicators. However, it should be noted that any improvement in performance may be due to improved efficiency, or due to budget reductions.
- Benchmark indicators such as cost of roads maintenance focus on the lowest spend being ranked highest nationally. The result is that additional investment in services such as roads maintenance being perceived negatively as the result is an increase in unit cost.
- The change to the Audit Direction has enabled the Council to select the most relevant LGBF indicators to the Council's priorities. This has resulted in a more focused selection of LGBF indicators that best represent the Council's service structure and priorities. For transparency the full set of LGBF indicators will continue to be reported and can be drawn on to develop the new Corporate Plan.
- Local and national performance indicators continue to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose. A review of the Council's locally defined performance indicators was again undertaken in 2021. There is continuous engagement on the national benchmark indicators through membership of a national steering group and themed events each year.
- Overall, as outlined in the BVAR, more analytical use of the data is needed by Services to understand the factors that link performance and resources, identifying opportunities where self-assessment, service redesign and benchmarking can support learning and improvement activity. This will provide greater clarity on the impact of Council budget decisions and this is now a requirement for Service Plan development. The resources are now in place to drive this forward with Corporate Performance Business Partners providing support to ECOs and management teams covering performance, risk management and self-assessment.
- Even with the effects of COVID on the data available it is still useful as a resource in supporting performance recovery and essential in supporting informed choices and decision making, driving improvement where appropriate, and strengthening public accountability.
- The Council's Annual Performance Report 2020/21 on the Corporate Plan was considered by Council on 9 September 2021 and at that time the lag in national indicator data was highlighted with only 2019/20 data available. This report now provides an update on data relating to the Corporate Plan for 2020/21 although again the data lag remains significant. Indicators marked in bold in Appendix 2 relate to the Corporate Plan.

8.2   Service Plans were presented to the Strategic Committees in the first cycle of the new financial year starting in May 2021 and there is regular quarterly reporting on performance to strategic committees with new integrated finance and performance reports. As outlined at 8.1, a new approach to Service Planning requires more analysis of performance to support the development of improvement activity around service delivery. Further joint work between Corporate Finance and Corporate Performance is needed to understand the Local Financial Returns (LFRs) and how they impact on Service cost indicators including reviewing internal recharging. The new business partner model for performance will link with Finance staff and HR staff to support Service Management Teams with this work and broader Service Planning. Service

Plans for 2022/23 will be delayed until the 2nd cycle of Strategic Committees in the new financial year to allow for the development of a new Corporate Plan following Local Government elections in May 2022.

8.3   Work is already underway to deliver improved performance and outcomes in some key Council service areas. At the time of writing, the Council's budget is still to be approved, but this contains investment proposals for Education and Children's Services to improve outcomes for young people and families; additional investment in roads and climate action and a focus on supporting and developing Council staff to deliver improved services. The Council's Education Committee also approved a range of improvement measures at its meeting on 24 February, including collaborative approaches to improving attainment in primary schools, standardised Quality Assurance Moderation training, improved transition with early years settings to support progressions and learning approaches and the development of core progressions in numeracy and literacy. During the pandemic and in line with key core collaborative messages shared with Head Teachers, well-being during this time had been the main priority for our Children and Young people. Our approach to improvement was outlined in Summer 2019 Education Committee papers along with an improvement plan which was submitted to Education Scotland and was highly commended.

8.4   A Quality Improvement Strategy is being developed for the Council which will look at best practice and exemplification as well as engaging with staff across all Services to progress the Council's approach to data collection, performance monitoring and improvement. This will include the development of a three-year plan for self-assessment incorporating the Public Service Improvement Framework developed by the Improvement Service.

8.5   The Improvement Service has developed an on-line tool to support Councils with public performance reporting, available at: http://scotland.mylocalcouncil.info/. 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 Local Authorities in Scotland.

9.   Internal Audit of SPIs and Statutory Duties
9.1   SPIs are subject to internal audit programmed on a seven-year cycle with the last audit for 2014/15 and therefore an audit is planned during 2022/23. Sampling and regular scrutiny of SPIs is carried out annually by the Corporate Performance Team along with existing scrutiny processes through Strategic Committees including the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

9.2   Public Performance Reporting (PPR)
The Council has a statutory duty to report on its performance to the public. To assess how well we meet this duty, External Audit review the information from this report as well as the results of the Annual Corporate Performance Report, which was considered by Council on 09 September 2021. The development of the performance pages on the Council website provides an important source of this and other information for Members, the public, staff and external audit at www.highland.gov.uk/performance

9.3   As anticipated, the impact of COVID on the outcomes for 2020/21 is, as was anticipated, significant. It is worth noting that the Accounts Commission have adopted the following principles to help it guide its work and fulfil its responsibilities during the COVID emergency:
*   The Commission recognises the significant pressures under which local government finds itself as a result of the current COVID emergency.
*   The Commission is of the firm view that the principles of sound financial management, good governance, public accountability and transparency are vital in

this emergency situation, although how these are delivered and achieved are likely to be different.

- The focus of external audit work will be on COVID response and COVID recovery.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 25.02.2022

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References: [Highland Council BVAR Improvement Plan Progress Report](#)

[Highland Council BVAR](#)

The Highland
Council
Comhairle na
Gàidhealtachd

Key Performance Indicators

Performance Report 2020/21

Introduction

The Highland Council collects data on a wide range of performance indicators. Of these, there are 27 which the Council considers to be Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

These provide a high-level overview of the Council's overall performance. The 27 indicators were selected as they provide key insights into effective service delivery across the Council's functions and provide a focus for strategic and operational improvement and decision making.

For many of these indicators, data is collected at each of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland. The Highland Council's performance can therefore be compared to other councils – either all 32, or only those councils which are similar to The Highland Council, also known as our 'Family Group'.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the KPIs for 2020/21, in most cases leading to a decrease in performance as services were disrupted or had to stop. For this reason, performance assessments are not included in this report. Targets for 2020/21 are included for interest, but will require reworking in future years due to the impact of COVID-19.

Indicators

- Level 5 attainment by all children
- Level 5 attainment by children from deprived areas
- Pupils entering positive destinations
- Pupil attainment - overall average total tariff
- Sickness absence – teachers
- School attendance (all pupils)
- School attendance (Looked After Children)
- Looked after children accommodated outwith Highland

Indicators

- Businesses supported by the Council and Business Gateway
- Average time per planning application
- Properties receiving superfast broadband

Indicators

- Direct payments spend on adults
- Adults with long term care needs receiving personal care at home

Indicators

- Staff sickness absence
- Council Tax received
- Council spend with Highland small and medium sized businesses
- Council asset suitability

Indicators

- Cost per leisure facility visit
- Cost per library visit
- Cost per museum visit

Indicators

- Time to re-let council homes
- Homelessness case duration
- Gross rent arrears (as proportion of rent due)

Indicators

- Street lighting energy consumption
- Road network to be considered for maintenance

Indicators

- Street cleanliness score
- Household waste recycled

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Key Performance Indicators

- Children's services
- Adult services
- Cultural & Leisure services
- Road services
- Environmental services
- Housing services
- Corporate services
- Business & Development services

Adult Services

5.6% of adult social care funding was allocated using direct payments or personalised managed budgets in Highland in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **8.2%** and for comparable councils it was **6.3%**.

14th Highland is ranked **14th** in Scotland, and our target is to be in the top eight councils by 2021/22.

Financial Year
- Highland — Scotland — Family
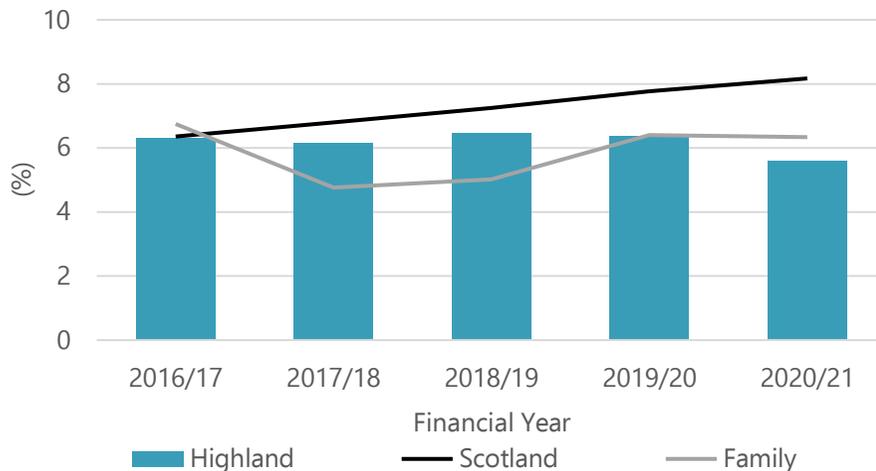
55.6% of people aged 65+ with long term care needs were receiving care at home in Highland in 2020/21.

Current rank

28th

2020/21

Target rank

16th

To be agreed

Financial Year
- Highland — Scotland — Family
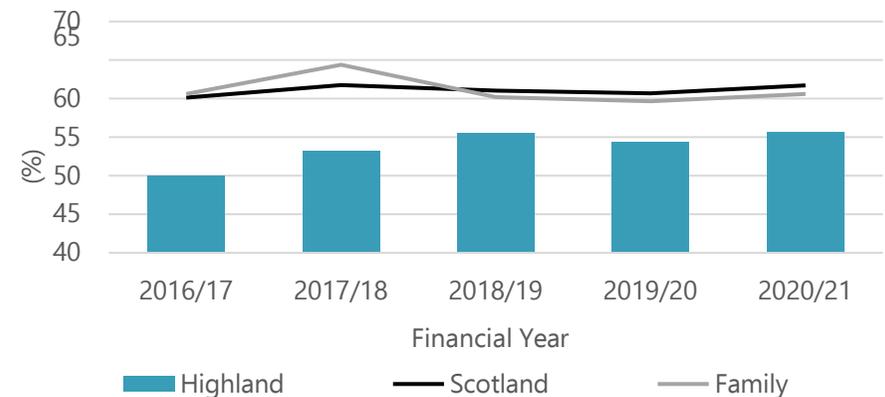
NHS Highland

Care at home

Children's Services

Level 5 attainment – all pupils

64% of Highland secondary school pupils in 2020/21 achieved 5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or higher.

The average across Scotland was **67%**, and for comparable councils was **66%**.

23rd Highland is ranked **23rd**. Our target is to be at least 16th by August 2022.

Level 5 attainment – from deprived areas

48% of Highland secondary school pupils from deprived areas achieved 5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or higher in 2020/21.
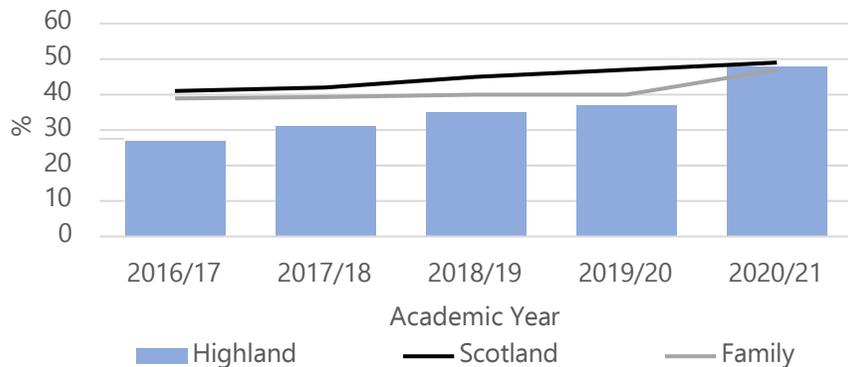
14th Highland is ranked **14th**. Our target is to remain in the top 16 councils.

Average total attainment points

The average total points awarded for levels of attainment in 2020/21 in Highland was **895 points**.
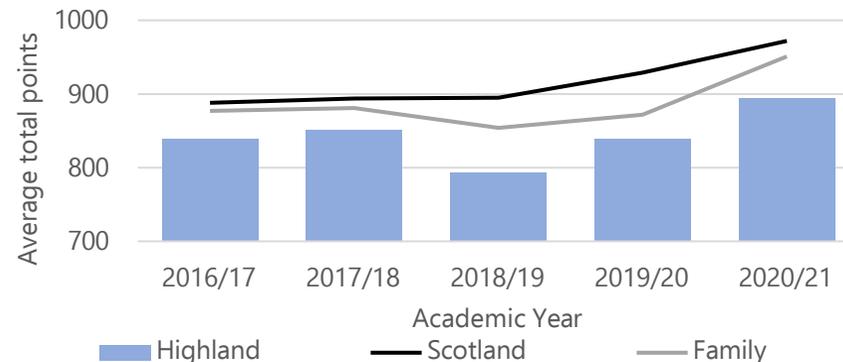
21st Highland is ranked **21st**. Our target is to be at least 16th by August 2022.

94.3% of Highland pupils entered positive destinations in 2020/21. This compares to **95.5%** across Scotland and **95.2%** for comparable councils.

27th Highland is ranked **27th** in Scotland. Our target is to be in the top 8 councils.

Pupil destinations

Children's Services

Sickness absence - teachers

Teachers took on average **3.2 days** of sickness absence in Highland in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **4.2 days** and for comparable councils it was **4.4 days**.

6th Highland is ranked **6th**. Our target is to be in the top 16 councils.

School attendance – All pupils

School attendance rates are calculated every two years. For 2020-21, the school attendance rate amongst all pupils in Highland was **91.50%**.

The Scottish average was **92.00%** and for comparable councils it was **92.78%**.

24th Highland is ranked **24th**.

Our target is to maintain at least position 24 by December 2022.

Looked After Children out with Highland

The average number of Looked After Children accommodated outwith Highland in 2020/21 was **28**. Our target is for this to be 20 children by March 2022.

Number of Children

Financial Year	Number of Children
2016/17	27
2017/18	34
2018/19	39
2019/20	30
2020/21	28

School attendance – Looked After Children

The latest school attendance rates for looked after children are from 2018-19. This data indicates an attendance rate of **85.7%**.

23rd Highland is ranked **23rd**, and our target is to be at least 16th by December 2022.

85.7%	86.8%	87.5%
Highland	**Scotland**	**Comparable Councils**
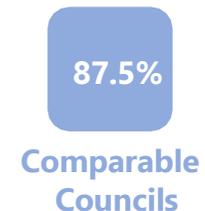
Cultural and Leisure Services

£24.99 Due to COVID, the average Council spend per customer visit to a sports or leisure facility in Highland increased in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **£40.36** and for comparable councils it was **£23.37**.

10th Highland is ranked **10th** in Scotland, and our target is to be in the top 8 by 2021/22.

There were **245,631 visits** to sports or leisure facilities in Highland in 2020/21.

Cost per leisure visit

Cost per library visit

£1.19
The average Council spend per customer visit to a library in Highland in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **£2.88** and for comparable councils it was **£7.19**.

5th Highland is ranked **5th** in Scotland, and our target is to remain in the top 8.

There were over **2.2 million visits** to our libraries in 2020/21.

The average Council spend per customer visit to a museum in Highland in 2020/21. **£2.75**

The Scottish average was **£10.14** and for comparable councils it was **£70.64**.

8th Highland is ranked **8th** in Scotland, and our target is to remain in the top 16.

There were more than **340,000 visits** to our museums in 2020/21.

Cost per museum visit

highlife
highland
na gàidhealtachd
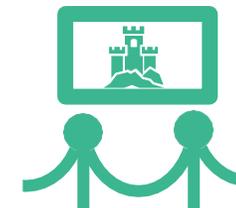
Road Services

Road maintenance

39.1% of the road network in Highland should be considered for maintenance treatment (2020/21).
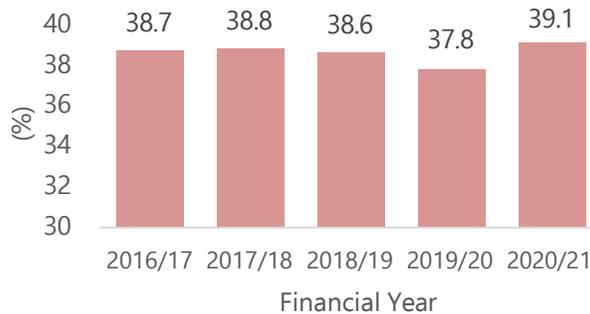
Performance is **within the performance threshold** (better than the average of the 3 previous years).

Chart: Road maintenance (%) by Financial Year
- 2016/17: 38.7
- 2017/18: 38.8
- 2018/19: 38.6
- 2019/20: 37.8
- 2020/21: 39.1

Street lighting

10.9 million kWh of energy was consumed by our streetlights in 2020/21. Our target is to reduce this to less than 10 million kWh by March 2022.

Chart: Million kWh by Financial Year (2016/17 – 2021/22)
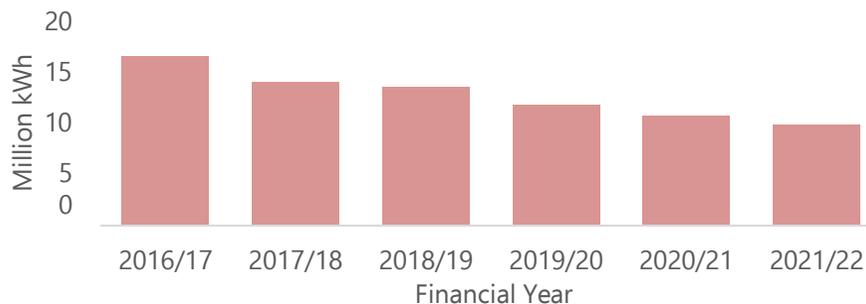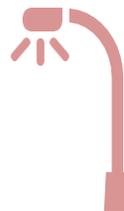
Environmental Services

Street cleanliness

The street cleanliness score for Highland was **95.0%** in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **90.1%** and for comparable councils it was **95.1%**.

8th Highland is ranked **8th** in Scotland. Our target is to remain in the top 8.

Household waste that is recycled

We recycled **35.7%** of household waste in 2021.

The Scottish average was **44.2%** and for comparable councils it was **33.4%**.

25th We are ranked **25th** in Scotland.

Our target is to be above the national average by March 2022.

Chart: % waste recycled/ composted by Year (2017–2021), Highland (bars) and Scotland (line)
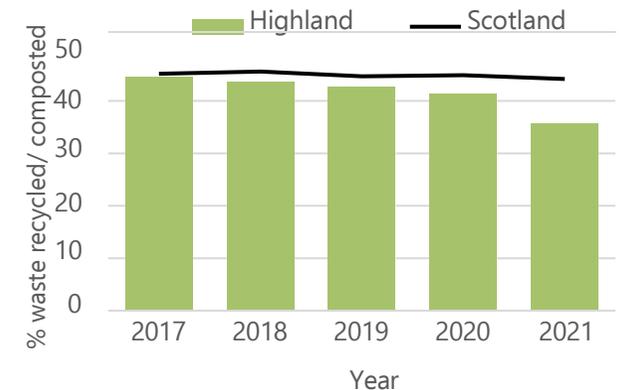
Housing Services

Re-letting Council houses

There are **14,315 Council houses** in Highland.

The average time to re-let Council homes in 2020/21 was **44.2 days**.

A total of **896 properties** were re-let.

Our target is for this to be below 35 days.

Homelessness case duration

The average case duration for someone who is homeless in Highland was **56 weeks** (2020/21).

Our target is to reduce this to 35 weeks by March 2022.

Homelessness case duration chart (Weeks by Financial Year)

Financial Year	Weeks
2016/17	37
2017/18	44
2018/19	48
2019/20	43
2020/21	56
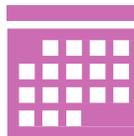
In Highland, gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due was **5.4%** in 2020/21.

Our target is for this to be below 5%.

The Scottish average was **8.2%**. For comparable councils it was **7.1%**.

4th Highland is ranked **4th** in Scotland.

Rent arrears chart (% by Financial Year)

Legend: Highland, Scotland, Family

Financial Year	Highland (%)
2016/17	~4.7
2017/18	~5.1
2018/19	~4.9
2019/20	~4.7
2020/21	~5.4
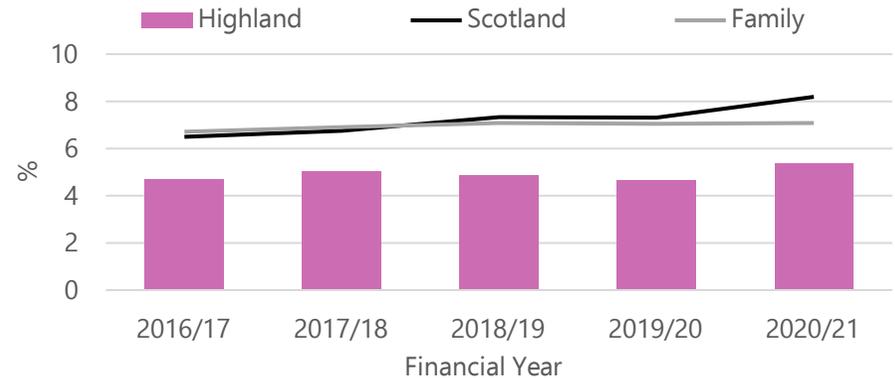
Rent arrears

For more information on Council Housing, visit:
www.highland.gov.uk/housing

Corporate Services

Asset suitability

67.5% of Highland Council buildings were suitable for their current use in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **82.3%**.

For comparable councils it was **80.8%**.
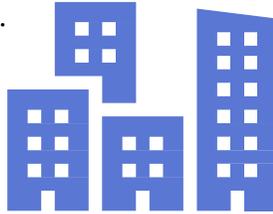
31st Highland is ranked **31st** in Scotland.

Our target is to be better than the family group average by March 2022.

Council staff sickness absence

Our sickness absence rate for staff (non-teachers) in 2020/21 was **6.4 days**.

Our target is to maintain this to less than 10.12 days.

The Scottish average was **9.7 1st days**. For comparable

1st We are ranked in Scotland.

95.7% of Council Tax owed in 2020/21 was collected by the Council.

15th Highland is ranked **15th** in Scotland.

The Scottish average was **94.8%**. For comparable councils it was **96.0%**.

Our target is to remain higher than the national average.
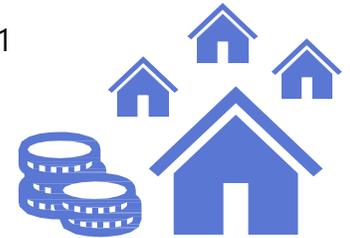
Council Tax received

47.0% of our procurement spend in 2020/21 was with local small and medium sized enterprises.

2nd Highland is ranked **2nd** in Scotland. Our target is to remain in the top 8.

The Scottish average was **29.1%** and for comparable councils it was **33.5%**.

Regional procurement

Business and Development Services

Planning application timescales

The average time taken to deliver a commercial planning application decision was **13.5 weeks** in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **11.1 weeks** and for comparable councils it was **12.3 weeks**.

27th Highland is ranked **27th** in Scotland. Our target is to be better than the national average by March 2022.
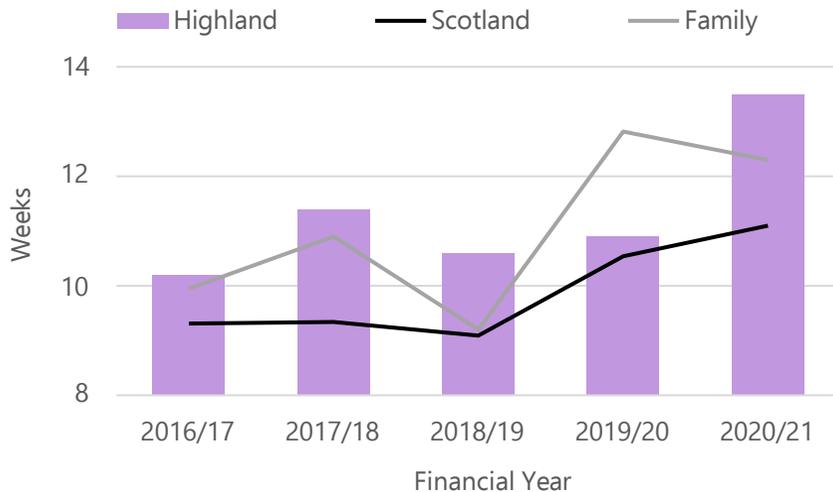
84% of properties in Highland had access to superfast broadband in 2020/21.

The Scottish average was **94%** and for comparable councils it was **82%**.

Our target is for **90%** of properties in Highland to have access to superfast broadband by March 2022.

Superfast broadband

15,319 businesses were supported by our Business Gateway and Economic Development services in 2020/21.

business gateway
Highland

This exceeds our target to support 1,600 businesses per year by March 2022.

Weeks

	Highland	Scotland	Family

Financial Year chart: 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21

No. businesses

15319

Financial Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
No. businesses	1061	1191	1802	1643	15319
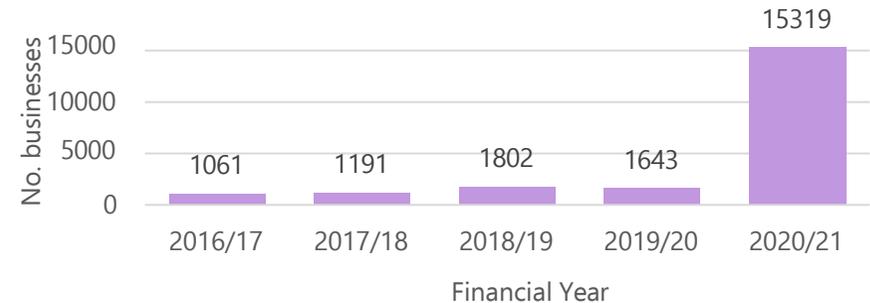
Highland businesses supported

Appendix 2: Statutory Performance Indicator Report 2020/21

Performance		
G	Performance is "On Target"	
A	Performance is "Some Slippage"	
R	Performance is "No Significant Progress"	
N	Not comparable due to change in methodology	
	The indicator is new / changed / verified data awaited/ no data available	

COVID Impact on Performance	
+ve	COVID has had a significant **positive** impact on performance
-	COVID had no significant impact on performance or impact cannot yet be determined.
-ve	COVID has had a significant **negative** impact on performance

Indicator names in **bold** relate to the Council's Corporate Plan and those marked * are also Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

Children's Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
School Meals – gross cost per meal provided	£3.50	£3.99	£6.77	£3.59	R	-ve
School Transport – cost per pupil transported	£1,316.00	£1,347.33	£1,459.00	£1,301.55	R	-ve
The number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council	81	84	70	76	G	-ve
The average number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council out with Highland *	39	30	28	24	R	-ve
Looked After Children in kinship care (%)	18.4%	20.5%	22.7%	25.0%	A	–
Number of persistent young offenders with 5+ referrals	14	6	3	9	G	+ve
Number of offence-based referrals to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	523	388	255	447	G	+ve
Average time between child accommodated to permanence decision (months)	7.4	7.0	8.7	9.0	G	-ve
Average time between decision for permanence via adoption to matching decision (months)	8.4	18.9	18.3	13.7	R	-ve
Average time between Child's Plan meeting decision to receipt of Child's adoption Permanence report (weeks)	38.3	35.9	39.6	12.0	R	-ve
Number of Foster Carers	127	119	120	179	R	–
CHN4 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children *	59%	62%	64%	67%	N	–
CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children	30%	34%	34%	39%	N	–
CHN6 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds *	35%	37%	48%	44%	N	–

Children's Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
CHN7 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	12%	15%	19%	18%	N	–
CHN9 – Looked After Children in the community	83.2%	83.3%	85.3%	89.3%	R	-ve
CHN11 – Pupils entering positive destinations *	94.8%	92.5%	94.3%	96.2%	R	-ve
CHN12a – Overall Average Total Tariff (S4-S6) *	794	841	895	952	N	–
CHN12b – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived 20%)	492	521	664	612	N	–
CHN12c – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 2	580	706	692	792	N	–
CHN12d – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 3	791	858	968	968	N	–
CHN12e – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 4	909	940	963	1,064	N	–
CHN12f – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived 20%)	1006	1045	1,041	1,269	N	–
CHN17 – Children meeting developmental milestones	87.9%	87.6%				
CHN18 – Funded early years provision which is graded good/better	93.9%	90.4%	91.1%	96.0%	R	-ve
CHN22 – Child protection re-registrations within 18 months	6.6%	7.3%				
CORP6a – Sickness absence days per teacher *	7.11	6.9	3.3	4.2	G	+ve

CHN9: Highland data is provisional, national benchmarking data is not yet available, target is provisional based on 2019/20 data.
CHN17; and CHN22: data for 2020/21 not yet available.
CHN12a: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 839 to 841; CHN12b: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 520 to 521; CHN12c: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 703 to 706;
CHN12e: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 856 to 858; CHN12e: adjustment to 2019/20 data from 936 to 940.
The number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council: change to Highland 2019/20 data from 82 to 84. Data for 2020/21 is provisional.

Children's Services	2016-2017	2018-2019	2020-2021	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
CHN19a – School attendance rate (per 100 pupils) *	93.4%	92.8%	91.5%	91.5%	G	+ve
CHN19b – School attendance rate (per 100 looked after children) *	85.5%	85.7%				
CHN20a – School exclusion rate (per 1000 pupils)	22.7	20.6				
CHN20b – School exclusion rate (per 1000 looked after children)	243.9	189.3				

CHN19b: change to Highland data for 2016-17 85.0% to 85.5%, 2018-19 83.7% to 85.7% (data for all local authorities was revised by the Improvement Service)
CHN19b; CHN20a; and CHN20b: 2020-21 data is not yet available.

Adult Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Criminal Justice – Offenders on new Community Payback Orders (Supervision) seen within 5 working days	68.2%	69.0%	42.3%	69.2%	R	-ve
Criminal Justice Social Work reports submitted to court by due date	91.2%	93.0%	92.8%	93.0%	A	–
Criminal Justice – Offenders on new Community Payback Orders (unpaid work) first placement within 7 working days	62.5%	65.6%	39.4%	62.2%	R	-ve
Criminal Justice – Community Payback Order (Unpaid Work) Beneficiaries	96%	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	–
SW2 – Direct payments spend on adults (18+) *	6.2%	6.3%	5.6%	7.7%	R	-ve
SW3a – Adults (65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home *	55.6%	54.4%	55.6%	61.0%	R	-ve

Adult Services	2015-16	2017-18	2019-20	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
SW4b – Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	86.7%	85.7%	78.0%	83.6%	R	-ve

Cultural and Leisure Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Museums – Visits/ usage virtual or in person per 1,000 population	2,798	2,562	1,475	2,676	R	-ve
Museums – Visits/ usage in person per 1,000 population	1,362	1,360	157	1,381	R	-ve
Library Usage – Visits per 1,000 population (in person and virtual)	13,879	15,884	9,549	8,500	G	-ve
Library Usage – Virtual visits per 1,000 population	4,470	6,533	9,329	4,870	G	+ve
High Life Highland reliance on Council funding	50%	50%	49%	51%	G	–
High Life Highland customer engagements	8,152,375	8,893,094	4,865,324	8,173,120	R	-ve
Highland population with a High Life Highland card	41%	40%	31.8%	40.0%	R	-ve
C&L1a – Net cost per attendance to leisure facilities *	£1.56	£1.80	£24.99	£21.44	R	-ve

Cultural and Leisure Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
C&L2a – Net cost per visit to libraries *	£1.52	£1.33	£1.19	£2.54	G	+ve
C&L3a – Net cost per museum visit *	£1.43	£1.64	£2.75	£23.24	G	-ve

C&L3a: change to Highland 2019-20 data from £1.67 to £1.64
Museums – Visits/usage in person per 1000 pop: change to Highland 2019/20 data from 1,360 to 1,361
Museums – Visits/usage virtual or in person per 1000 pop: change to Highland 2019/20 data from 2,567 to 2,562

Road Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Cost of electricity per street lighting unit	£35.13	£32.59	£31.58	£34.29	G	–
Cost of maintenance per street lighting unit	£14.82	£12.67	£12.51	£14.56	G	–
Traffic light failures completed in 3 hours	95.0%	96.2%	91.0%	94.1%	A	-ve
Street light failures completed in 7 days	62%	69%	55%	66.7%	R	-ve
Street lighting energy consumption (kWh) *	13,734,725	11,878,227	10,904,332	11,800,000	G	–
Road network to be considered for maintenance *	38.6%	37.8%	39.1%	38.4%	A	-ve
Average Bridge Stock Condition Indicator	79.6	79.0	79.0	80.0	A	–

Environmental Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Net cost of Waste collection per premises (ENV1a)	£48.63	£72.60	£83.66	£77.30	R	-ve
Net cost per Waste disposal per premises (ENV2a)	£85.40	£103.62	£96.24	£124.82	G	–
Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (ENV3a)	£3,728	£8,184	£6,775	£9,285	G	+ve
ENV3c – Street Cleanliness Score *	95.6%	95.7%	95.0%	95.0%	G	–
ENV6a – Household waste that is recycled (Data for calendar year) *	42.7%	41.3%	35.7%	42.0%	R	-ve
Adults satisfied – refuse collection (ENV7a)	86.8%	87.8%				
Adults satisfied – street cleaning (ENV7b)	69.9%	66.2%				
Trading Standards – Business advice requested completed within 14 days	86.4%	85.3%	85.1%	87.8%	A	–
High risk food businesses inspected for food hygiene	97%	91%	13%	95%	R	-ve
High risk private water supplies inspected and sampled (Data for calendar year)	84%	71%	17%	95%	R	-ve
Council carbon emissions (tonnes CO$_2$e)	45,076	40,622	32,404	50,595	G	+ve

ENV7a; and ENV7b: 2020/21 data is not available for 2020/21. This indicator is calculated using data from the Scottish Household Survey. Due to COVID-19 this survey was conducted with a smaller sample via telephone interviews. As such data will not be available at a Local Authority level.

Business and Development Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Number of natural and cultural consultations responded to annually by Historic Environment and Forestry Teams.	1,420	1,531	1,813	1,412	G	–
Businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway Services *	1,802	1,643	15,319	1,600	G	**+ve**
ECON3 – Average Time (weeks) per Planning Application*	10.6	10.9	13.5	11.1	R	**-ve**
ECON5 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	11.89	11.96	7.35	11.19	R	**-ve**
ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband *	75%	82%	84%	86%	A	–

ECON8: change to Highland data for 2019/20 from 81% to 82%

Housing Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Average time to complete emergency housing repairs (hours) SHR11	5.8	6.0	8.5	5.0	R	**-ve**
Average time taken to re-let homes (days) SHR35 *	36.8	31.9	44.2	36.0	R	**-ve**
Homelessness – case duration (weeks) *	48	43	56	37	R	**-ve**
HSN1b/SHR31 – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due *	4.9%	4.6%	5.4%	5.0%	R	**-ve**
Average number of new affordable homes built (rolling average from 2017/18)	408	414	377	450	R	**-ve**
Average time to complete medical adaptations (days) SHR23	34.8	40.0	44.2	44.5	G	**-ve**

Corporate Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Creditors – unit cost per creditor invoice issued	£1.66	£1.66	£2.28	£2.21	A	**-ve**
Cost of Accounting (% of net revenue budget + housing revenue account)	0.29%	0.28%	0.27%	0.29%	G	–
Non-Domestic Rates collected by year end	97.7%	97.8%	96.0%	97.8%	A	**-ve**
Cost of Non-Domestic Rates collection per chargeable property	£16.52	£17.65	£17.78	£25.27	G	–

Corporate Services	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Target	Performance against target	COVID Impact
Overall Council Tax collection level (previous 5 years)	97.2%	97.2%	97.1%	95.7%	G	-ve
Income sundry debtors collected during year	82.0%	88.6%	83.8%	86.5%	A	-ve
Sickness – Days lost per employee (all staff)	9.4	8.8	5.5	9.3	G	+ve
Central ICT cost (excluding curriculum) as a proportion of net revenue budget	2.31%	1.49%	1.53%	1.98%	G	–
Payroll – cost per payslip produced	£2.72	£2.35	£2.47	£2.53	G	–
Pensions – cost per member	£33.10	£30.11	£28.72	£24.01	R	–
Benefit to customers from advice given	£6,188,835	£6,651,012	£6,662,340	£6,207,546	G	-ve
Benefits Administration costs – Gross cost per case	£37.49	£38.75	£38.64	£38.96	G	–
Cost of Procurement Section as a proportion of net revenue budget	0.121%	0.104%	0.104%	0.108%	G	–
Women managers in top 2% of earners	39.0%	39.1%	41.6%	39.6%	G	+ve
Cost of Internal Audit (per £m net expenditure)	£726.12	£722.30	£775.56	£920.51	G	–
Accident injury rate	219	209	140	191	G	+ve
CORP6b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher) *	10.5	9.7	6.4	10.1	G	+ve
CORP7 – Council Tax received – Annual percentage received *	96.3%	96.3%	95.7%	94.8%	G	-ve
ECON4 – Direct spend with Highland small and medium sized enterprises *	43.6%	47.3%	47.0%	36.2%	G	–
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability *	67.6%	67.5%	67.5%	80.8%	R	-ve

Appendix 3: Local Government Benchmark Report 2020/21

Where the target is "Scot Av." This means that the Council's target is the Scottish 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.
Quartiles: First quartile (rank 1-8); second quartile (rank 9-16); third quartile (rank 17-24); and fourth quartile (rank 24-32).
FY – Financial Year   **CY** – Calendar Year   **AY** – Academic Year

Children's Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
CHN1 – Cost per primary school pupil	14th	20th	Scot Av.	£6,046	£5,897	£9,916	£5,273
CHN2 – Cost per secondary school pupil	13th	21st	Scot Av.	£7,755	£7,629	£11,953	£6,789
CHN3 – Cost per pre-school education registration	10th	5th	Scot Av.	£7,510	£9,255	£13,702	£7,223
CHN8a – Gross cost per bed/week Children's Residential Units	22nd		Scot Av.	£5,166			
CHN8b – Cost of Looked After Children (per child per week) – community	8th		Scot Av.	£280			
CHN10 – Adults satisfied with schools [3 year rolled averages]	18th		Scot Av.				
CHN17 – Children meeting developmental milestones	9th		8th				
CHN18 – Funded early years provision which is graded good/better	18th	17th	96.0%	91.1%	90.9%	73.9%	100.0%
CHN21 – Participation rate for 16–19-year-olds	11th	16th	Scot Av.	92.6%	92.2%	89.4%	97.2%
CHN22 – Child protection re-registrations within 18 months	14th		17th				
CHN24 – Children living in poverty (after housing costs)	15th						

CHN8a and CHN8b: 2020/21 Highland data is provisional, benchmarking data is not yet available
CHN24: this is a new performance indicator for this reporting year.
CHN10; CHN17; CHN22; and CHN24: 2020-21 data is not yet available.

Children's Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	AY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
CHN4 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children	19th	23rd	17th	64%	67%	58%	90%
CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children	21st	26th	17th	34%	41%	29%	70%
CHN6 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	24th	14th	20th	48%	49%	36%	79%
CHN7 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds	20th	18th	20th	19%	23%	13%	43%
CHN9 – Percentage of Looked After Children in the community	28th		19th	85.3%			

Children's Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	AY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
CHN11 – Pupils entering positive destinations	20th	27th	8th	94.3%	95.5%	91.0%	98.6%
CHN12a – Overall Average Total Tariff (S4-S6)	21st	23rd	17th	895	972	771	1482
CHN12b – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived 20%)	26th	17th	20th	664	688	435	1069
CHN12c – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 2	19th	27th	20th	692	817	616	1355
CHN12d – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 3	22nd	17th	17th	968	975	758	1337
CHN12e – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 4	25th	30th	20th	963	1,108	452	1,517
CHN12f – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5	27th	29th	18th	1,041	1,320	965	1,626
CHN13a - % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Literacy		32nd		49%	67%	49%	74%
CHN13b - % P1/4/7 Pupils Achieving in Numeracy		32nd		60%	75%	60%	91%
CHN14a – Literacy Attainment Gap [P1/4/7]		25th		31%	25%	38%	18%
CHN14b – Numeracy Attainment Gap [P1/4/7]		27th		30%	21%	31%	13%
CHN23 – Looked After Children with more than one placement last year (Aug-July)	28th		Scot Av.				

CHN9: 2020/21 Highland data is provisional, national benchmarking data is not yet available.
CHN12c: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 20th to 19th
CHN23: 2020/21 data is not yet available.

Children's Services	Highland				Scotland (2020-21)		
	Rank 2018-19	Rank 2020-21	Target (2020-21)	2020-21	Average	Min	Max
CHN19a – School attendance rate (per 100 pupils)	21st	24th	24th	91.5%	92.0%	89.8%	95.5%
CHN19b – School attendance rate (per 100 looked after children)	23rd		16th				
CHN20a – School exclusion rate (per 1000 pupils)	18th		16th				
CHN20b – School exclusion rate (per 1000 looked after children)	21st		16th				

CHN19b: change to Highland rank for 2018-19 from 29th to 23rd, 2020-21 data is not yet available.
CHN20a and CHN20b: 2020-21 data is not yet available.

Adult Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
SW1 – Adult Home Care costs per hour (aged 65+)	25th	26th		£35.24	£27.65	£74.62	£14.05

Adult Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
SW2 – Direct payments spend on adults (aged 18+)	11th	14th	8th	5.6%	8.2%	2.1%	27.6%
SW3a – Adults (aged 65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home	29th	28th	19th	55.6%	61.7%	52.4%	76.1%
SW5 – Net residential costs per week for adults (aged 65+)	30th	29th		£643	£439	£1,465	£204
SW6 – Readmissions to hospital within 28 days of discharge (per 1,000 discharge)	23rd	15th		117	120	164	76
SW7 – Proportion of care services graded good or better	21st	20th		84%	83%	76%	97%
SW8 – Number of days people spend in hospital when ready for discharge (per 1,000 population, aged 75+)	29th	30th		817	484	909	151

SW1: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 23rd to 25th
SW3a: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 28th to 29th
SW5: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 26th to 30th
SW7: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 12th to 21st

Adult Services	Highland				Scotland (19/20)		
	Rank 2017-18	Rank 2019-20	Target 19-20	2019-20	Average	Min	Max
SW4b – Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	4th	24th	8th	78.0%	80.0%	67.6%	88.2%
SW4c – Adults supported to live independently or who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible	2nd	13th		82.3%	80.8%	70.8%	98.3%
SW4d – Adults supported at home who agree that they have had a say in how their help, care, or support was provided	8th	16th		75.4%	75.4%	66.9%	87.3%
SW4e – Carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role	17th	21st		33.3%	34.3%	29.0%	49.9%

Culture and Leisure Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (19/20)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
C&L1a – Net cost per visit to leisure facilities	9th	10th	8th	£24.99	£40.36	£225.61	£2.74
C&L2a – Net cost per visit to libraries	6th	5th	8th	£1.19	£2.88	£36.92	£0.34
C&L3a – Net cost per museum visit	6th	8th	Scot Av.	£2.75	£10.14	£1,242.65	£0.06
C&L4a – Net cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population	4th	2nd	Scot Av.	£3,169	£19,112	£42,733	£906
C&L5a – Adults satisfied with libraries (3 year rolled averages)	28th		Scot Av.				

Culture and Leisure Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (19/20)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
C&L5b – Adults satisfied with parks & open spaces (3-year average)	30th		Scot Av.				
C&L5c – Adults satisfied with museums & galleries (3-year average)	27th		Scot Av.				
C&L5d – Adults satisfied with leisure facilities (3-year average)	19th		Scot Av.				

C&L5a; C&L5b; C&L5c; C&L5d: 2020/21 data is not available for 2020/21. This indicator is calculated using data from the Scottish Household Survey. Due to COVID this survey was conducted with a smaller sample via telephone interviews. As such data will not be available at a Local Authority level.

Environmental Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
ENV1a – Net cost of waste collection per premises	23rd	28th	24th	£83.66	£72.35	£137.56	£34.66
ENV2a – Net cost per waste disposal per premises	19th	12th	24th	£96.24	£104.50	£180.69	£34.02
ENV3a – Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	7th	3rd	8th	£6,775	£14,845	£28,842	£5,307
ENV 3c – Street cleanliness score	7th	8th	8th	95.0%	90.1%	100.0%	81.1%
ENV4a – Cost of roads maintenance (per km)	7th	6th	Scot Av.	£5,057	£9,667	£64,637	£3,021
ENV4b – Road network condition – A Class roads	23rd	20th	Scot Av.	29.8%	29.8%	40.3%	15.7%
ENV4c – Road network condition – B Class roads	27th	27th	Scot Av.	37.0%	34.0%	59.7%	18.5%
ENV4d – Road network condition – C Class roads	26th	26th	Scot Av.	39.2%	33.6%	56.0%	14.2%
ENV4e – Road network condition – U Class roads	23rd	26th	Scot Av.	44.3%	38.3%	58.7%	23.6%
ENV5a – Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice, and Citizen Advice per 1,000 population	23rd	23rd	Scot Av.	£8,143	£5,857	£14,386	£1,891
ENV5b – Cost of Environmental Health per 1,000 population	26th	4th	Scot Av.	£7,425	£12,606	£37,473	£6,661
ENV6a – Percentage of household waste that is recycled (Data for calendar year)	23rd	25th	Scot Av.	35.7%	42.0%	18.4%	57.9%
ENV7a – Adults satisfied with refuse collection	2nd		8th				
ENV7b – Adults satisfied with street cleaning	15th		Scot Av.				

ENV2a: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 20th to 19th
ENV3a: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 6th to 7th
ENV4a: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 6th to 7th
ENV5a: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 4th to 23rd. Citizen Advice Bureau costs added.
ENV7a and ENV7b: 2020/21 data is not available for 2020/21. This indicator is calculated using data from the Scottish Household Survey. Due to COVID this survey was conducted with a smaller sample via telephone interviews. As such data will not be available at a Local Authority level.

Tackling Climate Change (NEW)	Highland				Scotland (19/20)		
	Rank 18/19	Rank 19/20	Target (19/20)	FY 19/20	Average	Min	Max
CLIM01 – CO_2 emissions area wide per capita	13th	16th		5.77	5.68	21.62	3.11
CLIM02 – CO_2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of Local Authority per capita	28th	29th		6.57	4.62	7.54	3.23

Economic Development	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
ECON1 – Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work	25th	4th	Scot Av.	15.9%	6.0%	1.3%	21.0%
ECON2 – Cost per planning application	1st	2nd	Scot Av.	£3,077	£5,044	£10,488	£3,007
ECON3 – Average time (weeks) per planning application	23rd	27th	Scot Av.	13.5	11.1	27.1	5.4
ECON4 – Spend with Highland small and medium sized enterprises	1st	2nd	8th	47.0%	29.1%	9.5%	48.7%
ECON5 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	31st	26th	Scot Av.	7.4	11.2	0.4	26.9
ECON6 – Cost of Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 pop.	19th	20th	Scot Av.	£78,015	£87,793	£297,019	£17,791
ECON7 – Percentage earning less than the living wage	13th	8th	Scot Av.	14.9%	15.2%	30.9%	11.1%
ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	29th	28th	86%	84%	94%	70%	99%
ECON9 – Town centre vacancy rates	2nd	4th	Scot Av.	5.2	12.4	21.9	3.0
ECON10 – Immediately available employment land	28th	27th	Scot Av.	13.2%	38.9%	1.3%	98.1%
ECON11 – Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita	7th						
ECON12a – Claimant Count as a percentage of working age population	8th	12th		5.4%	6.1%	8.3%	2.9%
ECON12b – Claimant Count as a percentage of 16-24 Population	12th	13th		7.1%	7.2%	10.6%	4.4%

ECON10: Data for 2020/21 was modelled by the Improvement Service. The rate of change for the rest of Scotland has been calculated and used to determine the value for each Council, based on the last submitted estimate.
ECON11: 2020/21 data is not yet available. .
ECON11; ECON12a; and ECON12b: these are new performance indicators for this reporting year.
ECON06: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 21st to 19th
ECON08: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 28th to 29th

Housing Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
HSN1/SHR31 – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	4th	4th	5.0%	5.4%	8.2%	14.6%	3.2%

Housing Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
HSN2/SHR34 – Rent lost through voids	7th	8th	1.7%	0.8%	1.4%	4.4%	0.4%
HSN3/SHR7 – Houses meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standard	12th	5th	Scot Av.	97.7%	90.3%	59.9%	99.1%
HSN4b/SHR12 – Average days to complete non-emergency repairs	4th	14th	9.0	7.9	7.3	19.5	3.2
HSN5 – Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient	23rd	24th	74.2%	74.6%	86.4%	57.4%	99.4%

When considering benchmarking positions, please note that only 26 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland provide Housing services.

Corporate Services	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 19 20/21	Average	Min	Max
CORP1 – Central Support Services as a proportion of running costs	23rd	22nd	Scot Av.	4.2%	4.1%	6.7%	1.3%
CORP3b – Women managers in top 5% of earners	23rd	15th	Scot Av.	57%	58%	29%	70%
CORP3c – Gender Pay Gap	24th	23rd	Scot Av.	5.0%	3.7%	14.1%	-5.6%
CORP4 – Council Tax Collection cost per dwelling	22nd	19th	£7.98	£7.91	£6.64	£16.31	£1.58
CORP6a – Sickness absence days per teacher	21st	6th	18th	3.3	4.2	7.1	1.7
CORP6b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	3rd	1st	10.1	6.4	9.7	12.3	6.4
CORP7 – Council Tax – Annual percentage received	16th	15th	Scot Av.	95.7%	94.8%	91.9%	97.1%
CORP8 – Invoices Payment within 30 days	8th	15th	95.0%	94.1%	91.8%	74.2%	97.3%

CORP01: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 28th to 23rd. Data has been resubmitted to the Improvement Service, and the rank for 2019/20 is expected to improve further to Rank 22nd.
CORP6a: Sickness absence days per teacher change to rank 2019/20 from 20th to 21st
CORP6b: change to Highland rank for 2019/20 from 2nd to 3rd

Corporate Assets	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability for use	31st	31st	80.8%	67.5%	82.3%	67.3%	98.2%
CAST2 – Asset Management – Condition	28th	29th	88.1%	82.4%	89.2%	66.9%	99.7%

Financial Sustainability	Highland				Scotland (20/21)		
	Rank 19/20	Rank 20/21	Target (20/21)	FY 20/21	Average	Min	Max

FINSUS01 – Total useable reserves as a percentage of council annual budgeted revenue	23rd	15th		23.2%	23.6%	375.3%	6.5%
FINSUS02 – Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a percentage of council annual budgeted net revenue	15th	4th		6.9%	3.5%	0.5%	16.3%
FINSUS03 – Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (General Fund)	32nd	31st		11.4%	6.2%	12.3%	1.5%
FINSUS04 – Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (Housing Revenue Account)	22nd	25th		37.7%	22.9%	51.4%	6.8%
FINSUS05 – Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	22nd	20th		96.4%	97.4%	87.9%	102.1%

Appendix 4: Initial Analysis of Impact of COVID on Performance 2020/21

For all indicators where the has been a significant positive or negative impact on performance by COVID a description of that impact is given below. Indicators in bold relate to the Council's Corporate Plan.

Children's Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Attainment: **CHN4 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children** **CHN5 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children** **CHN6 – SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds** **CHN7 – SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds** **CHN12a – Overall Average Total Tariff (S4-S6)** **CHN12b – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived 20%)** **CHN12c – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 2** **CHN12d – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 3** **CHN12e – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 4** **CHN12f – Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived 20%)**	–	The absence of external assessment information during 2020 and 2021 led to grades awarded being based on teacher estimates. These results are therefore not directly comparable with previous and future years, and any change in attainment levels during this time should not be seen as an indication that performance has improved or worsened without further evidence. During the COVID pandemic, levels of attainment have continued to increase, and at a faster rate for some levels and some groups than observed previously. However, it is not possible to fully determine the extent to which the coronavirus pandemic and, more specifically, the certification methods used in 2020 and 2021 have affected the attainment levels of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 pupil cohorts.
CHN19a – School attendance rate (per 100 pupils)	+ve	There were specific requirements for recording absence in COVID and with schools shut for a large part of the year every child was then recorded as attending school. Due to difficulties recording attendance in lockdowns this dataset is not comparable with previous years.
CHN11 – Pupils entering positive destinations	-ve	COVID had a clear impact on opportunities for young people with a 10% decrease in the number of young people entering employment last session and a large increase in unemployment.
CHN18 – Funded early years provision which is graded good/better	-ve	The Care Inspectorate stopped inspections as a result of COVID and have only visited settings where concerns have been highlighted (intelligence). As a result, majority of settings visited have been given grades below good as an average.
School Meals – gross cost per meal provided	-ve	COVID and the associated lockdowns resulted in half the number of meals being produced in 2020/21 (1,256,148) compared to 2019/20 (2,580,568), whilst staffing costs remain fixed.
School Transport – cost per pupil transported	-ve	Most costs remained during COVID lockdowns such as Council staff costs and payments to contractors. As schools re-opened, costs increased to meet the social

Children's Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
		distancing requirements, for example double journeys (where a vehicle would take in a proportion of the number of children on the route and then return for the rest, resulting in longer times and increased mileage) or duplicate vehicles provided. Social distancing also resulted in not being able to offer concessionary passengers. In addition, it became increasingly difficult and costly to procure parts and labour to keep vehicles operational, impacting on contract prices.
The number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council. **The average number of Looked After Children accommodated by the Council out with Highland** **CHN9 – Looked After Children in the community**	**-ve**	While there is in the short term a positive shift in the number accommodated, there is the potential for hidden harms to emerge as COVID restrictions ease. Delays in children's hearings and court processes all contributed.
Average time between child accommodated to permanence decision (months) Average time between decision for permanence via adoption to matching decision (months)	**-ve**	COVID significantly impacted the timescales for permanence decisions to be made for children and it took slightly longer during the period 2020/21 for this to happen once children were accommodated. Delays in children's hearings and court processes all contributed to the timescales increasing. During lockdown recruitment for fostering and adoption was a challenge.
Average time between Child's Plan meeting decision to receipt of Child's adoption Permanence report (weeks)	**-ve**	Staff vacancies in the family teams and having to prioritise crisis/ child protection work when short staffed, as well as COVID, have all contributed to significant delays in the Childs Adoption and Permanence reports being completed and submitted.
Number of persistent young offenders with 5+ referrals	**+ve**	The significant decrease in persistent offences correlates to COVID restrictions. Council staff continued face-to-face contact, where possible, with young people and their parents to limit the potential increase in offending and provide support for many hard-to-reach young people. Maintaining relationships was important, however we have also seen a decline in mental health during this people with many young people staying indoors more, hence the decline in referrals to SCRA.
Number of offence based referrals to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	**+ve**	The decline is in part due to COVID as explained for the previous indicator. In addition, our police colleagues' approach to supporting young people and referrals to SCRA have slowly reduced, understanding the needs of young people being greater than their offences at times. With this, we have regular discussions to enable an early intervention approach in some cases but also a joined-up approach to how we support the needs of some of our young people.
CORP6a – Sickness absence days per teacher	**+ve**	Many staff have been working from home and may have continued to work with minor ailments, where under normal circumstances they would have not come into

Children's Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
		the workplace. Staff have also said that having more flexibility over hours/ childcare arrangements has also helped them to remain in work, i.e., they don't have to work a set pattern and can take a break or get caught up on work later in the day.

Adult Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
SW2 – Direct payments spend on adults (18+) **SW3a – Adults (65+) with long term care needs receiving personal care at home.** **SW4b – Adults supported at home who agree the services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life.**	**-ve**	Many community resources closed during lock-down so clients had limited choice available to them. Providers had significant staffing issues which impacted on service delivery which in turn impacted on care needs and perceptions around the service impact on quality of life.

Culture and Leisure Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Museums – Visits/ usage virtual or in person per 1,000 population	**-ve**	COVID had a significant impact on visits to /usages of museums. Three museums closed throughout the period. The others followed Government guidance and opened in late July/ August with restricted opening hours and a reduced capacity to enable social distancing. The independent sector was impacted on by a reluctance of volunteers to take on public facing roles which resulted in museums remaining closed or operating on extremely reduced hours.
Museums – Visits/ usage in person per 1,000 population	**-ve**	
C&L3a – Net cost per museum visit	**-ve**	
High Life Highland customer engagements	**-ve**	High Life Highland customer engagements were significantly impacted by COVID with physical service delivery stopped during the two lockdowns and reduced numbers while there were restrictions in place. This was mitigated to an extent through an increase in on-line activities and service delivery.
Highland population with a High Life Highland card	**-ve**	People with a High Life Highland leisure centre or library card dropped during the pandemic with the reduction starting at the lockdown in March 2020. The largest reduction was in April 2020 as customers cancelled their leisure subscriptions (some customers continued with their subscriptions to support the charity during the lockdowns). Library subscriptions lapsed throughout the year as buildings were closed and people could not use the in-person services. The reductions were mitigated through the shift to on-line service provision and as services have been allowed to return the number of subscriptions has been recovering.
C&L1a – Net cost per attendance to leisure facilities	**-ve**	Facility closures related to COVID and thereafter restrictions have significantly reduced attendance levels, whilst operational costs (staffing etc.) remained. Also the reduction in customer income has also led to costs being higher in net terms (mitigated to an extent by furlough scheme while it operated).

Culture and Leisure Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Library Usage – Visits per 1,000 population (in person and virtual)	-ve	Due to COVID restrictions libraries remained closed or on reduced opening hours for much of the year, leading to a significant drop in physical footfall. Our digital footfall increased significantly during this period. This is attributed to events and activities such as Bookbug being delivered online and further investment in digital library (e.g., e-books, e-audiobooks, e-newspapers and e-magazines).
Library Usage – Virtual visits per 1,000 population	+ve	
C&L2a – Net cost per visit to libraries	**+ve**	

Road Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Traffic light failures completed in 3 hours	-ve	From the first lockdown to July 2020 the service only responded to emergencies. No routine low risk repairs were carried out. There were limited staff available during this time due to staff shielding and others redeployed to other services.
Street light failures completed in 7 days	-ve	
Road network to be considered for maintenance	**-ve**	Due to the shutdown of businesses (including contractors and quarries) during lockdown, the surface treatment programme could not be completed. As works are seasonal and weather dependent, the window for completing works was missed. There is significant additional investment in roads for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which will positively affect future performance.

Environmental Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Net cost of Waste collection per premises (ENV1a)	-ve	Waste collection was impacted by increased costs from additional COVID controls to ensure that staff were sufficiently socially distanced. This included additional transport and additional cover for COVID related staff absence. There was a loss of business/commercial waste income when businesses ceased to operate during COVID or operated in more limited ways.
Net cost per Waste disposal per premises (ENV2a)	-	Generally, there was a reduction to waste arising for disposal due to business closures this was partly balanced out by a small increase in household waste.
Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (ENV3a)	+ve	Part of the street cleansing resource was redeployed to waste collection to ensure this critical front-line service was prioritised and costs were meet by waste collection budgets.
Street Cleanliness Score (ENV3c)	-	Although less street cleansing was in place this was compensated for by school closures, business closures and a lack of night time economy which significantly reduce litter levels.
ENV6a – Household waste that is recycled (Data for calendar year)	**-ve**	The main reason for the variance is the closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) for around two months and the pause to the kerbside garden waste collection service during the first lockdown from the end of March to the beginning of June. There was also a significant reduction in rubble and plasterboard collected which was due to additional control measures put in place at HWRCs.

Environmental Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
High risk food businesses inspected for food hygiene	**-ve**	COVID significantly impacted the food trade with restrictions being imposed for much of 2020/21, reducing opportunities for inspections. The team also had to comply with COVID restrictions and risk assessments when considering inspections. Food Standards Scotland issued a relaxation from much of the statutory work. Contact was made with high-risk food businesses via alternative means to assess their business operation/ compliance and COVID control measures but these interventions are not considered as inspections. Key work for EU exit to support local businesses was also undertaken. Inspections have recommenced with highest risk premises being prioritised.
High risk private water supplies inspected and sampled (Data for calendar year)	**-ve**	COVID significantly impacted this statutory work with restrictions including lockdown being imposed for much of 2020/21. The team also had to comply with risk assessments when considering visits. COVID restrictions also impacted on laboratory availability.
Council carbon emissions (tonnes CO$_2$e)	**+ve**	As most staff were homeworking in 2020/21, many schools and offices were consuming much less energy and therefore our corporate carbon footprint fell significantly. The figures for 2020/21 do, however, include a calculation for the carbon impact of home working, but the impact of this is significantly lower than the reduction in energy from the closure of the estate. Staff also travelled less due to COVID, and the associated emissions declined significantly.

Business and Development Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
ECON3 – Average Time (weeks) per Planning Application	**-ve**	Planning performance and service delivery was impacted as a consequence of the pandemic including staff redeployment, reduced site visits and restricted IT access in the early stages of lockdown. Improvement is expected as we transition back to normal working arrangements.
ECON5 – Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	**-ve**	COVID had differing impacts on business sectors. Some were able to continue trading, others diversified with new business opportunities, but many experienced significant downturns in trade and business viability/survival was critical. There were also high levels of uncertainty and thus many individuals either did not start their business or deferred until trading conditions were more favourable.
Businesses supported by Economic Development and Business Gateway Services	**+ve**	The top priority for the Economy and Regeneration team has been to deliver the range of COVID business grants to enable Highland businesses to survive the pandemic. Accompanying these grants has been an advisory and support service provided by the Council's Business Gateway service. This has involved the team working directly with businesses across a wide range of sectors.

Housing Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Average time to complete emergency housing repairs (hours) SHR11	**-ve**	Emergency repairs took longer in 2020/21 reflecting the impact of Government restrictions on carrying out work during the pandemic and national delays to contractor capacity and materials within the construction industry.
Average time to complete medical adaptations (days) SHR23	**-ve**	As above, the pandemic restrictions (and impact e.g. material shortages, contractor capacity) resulted in longer times to complete adaptations. The Council continued to prioritise medical adaptations and carried them out as quickly as possible where it was safe to do so.
Average time taken to re-let homes (days) SHR35	**-ve**	Performance on reletting times remains above target. In line with national guidance, housing allocations during lockdown were happening at a greatly reduced level and were focused on homeless clients and other high needs cases. Repairs teams continued to undertake reletting repairs on a targeted basis, however changes to working practices extended the time taken for repairs. A large number of households still face complex housing issues and staff have continued to undertake housing options work and provide information and advice to people through telephone or video calls.
Homelessness – case duration (weeks)	**-ve**	There was a reduction in general tenancy turnover because of emergency measures and this reduced the number of empty properties The Council was able to relet. The Council tried to increase the supply of temporary furnished accommodation within its own stock. There was a focus on reletting repairs work on properties required for temporary accommodation. This has had an impact on the number of properties that we have had available for relet as mainstream tenancies. There was some slippage in our new build programme which resulted in lower property supply.
HSN1b/SHR31 – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	**-ve**	Despite efforts made to support tenants, rent arrears for 2020/21 have increased. Engagement with tenants and partners has confirmed that tenants are experiencing the same issues of unemployment and/or reduced income as the rest of the population during the pandemic. Many tenants are claiming Universal Credit for the first time. Under the emergency legislation, there has been an extension to the notice period required to be given to tenants before landlords can start legal action to obtain an order for eviction. In line with this, Highland did not progress any rent arrears cases to court during the emergency. The Council is awaiting further clarification as to whether the extended notice period will continue.
Average number of new affordable homes built (rolling average from 2017/18)	**-ve**	Delays to housing development projects due to COVID compliance issues and material shortages. Also, some projects have not proceeded due to cost increases making them unviable.

Corporate Services	COVID Impact	Commentary
Creditors – unit cost per creditor invoice issued	**-ve**	The number of invoices submitted to the Council decreased during the COVID lockdown period. The workload on the team increased however with the processing of business grants.
Non-Domestic Rates collected by year end	**-ve**	COVID has had a national impact on customers' ability to pay, sheriff officers' ability to operate, and therefore the ability of Council's to maintain collection rate performance. Billing and recovery were paused at the start of the 2020/21, bills were not issued until June 2020 and recovery did not resume till much later in the year. All necessary steps are being taken to minimise the effect on the collection rate.
Overall Council Tax collection level (previous 5 years)	**-ve**	
CORP7 – Council Tax received – Annual percentage received	**-ve**	
Income sundry debtors collected during year	**-ve**	
Benefit to customers from advice given	**-ve**	COVID has had a national impact on households' finances with significantly more seeking financial support from the benefits system. In many cases households became dependent on the benefit system for the first time. The reported performance is grossly understated as this indicator relies on customers reporting the outcome of their applications for benefits to the Department of Work and Pensions and Social Security Scotland. Customers had many issues to deal with during COVID and as a result did not confirm the value of their awards with the Welfare Team and there has been no capacity to contact customers to obtain the necessary information. 8 additional temporary welfare staff have been employed and staff have been mobilised from other Council teams to help meet the demand for welfare.
CAST1 – Asset Management – Suitability	**-ve**	Condition surveys have been delayed due to COVID and contractor staff absences. Overall, the asset rationalisation programme needs further Member input and this again will assist in improving our benchmark position going forward. Suitability is a complex issue. The Council is in discussion with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils to share best practice in approaches to enable a set of criteria for Highland to be agreed to define 'suitability' and ensure we have the right approach to the strategic location of our assets.
Sickness – Days lost per employee (all staff)	**+ve**	Due to lockdown restrictions routine hospital and dental visits have not taken place. Many staff worked from home and may have continued to work with minor ailments, where under normal circumstances they would have not come into the workplace. Staff have also said that having more flexibility over hours/childcare arrangements has also helped them to remain in work.
CORP6b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	**+ve**	
Women managers in top 2% of earners	**+ve**	Senior roles may be more attractive to women due to the flexibility COVID restrictions have provided to work arrangements.
Accident injury rate	**+ve**	The significant reduction is most likely because of changes to some work processes due to COVID constraints.

Appendix 5: Public Performance Reporting: Approach to meeting the Audit Direction

The Audit Direction, as issued by the Accounts Commission, outlines what performance information councils are expected to publish as part of their public performance reporting:

"**Statutory Performance Indicator 1: Improving local services and local outcomes**
• Performance in improving local public services, provided by both (i) the council itself and (ii) by the council in conjunction with its partners and communities.
• Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.

The Commission requires the council to report such information to allow comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies. The Commission requires the council to report on information <u>drawn from</u> the Local Government Benchmarking Framework in particular and from other benchmarking activities.

Statutory Performance Indicator 2: Demonstrating Best Value
• The council's assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment.
• Audit assessments of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.
• In particular, how it (in conjunction with its partners as appropriate) has engaged with and responded to its diverse communities

In satisfying the requirements set out in this schedule, the Commission expects the council to take cognisance of current statutory guidance on Best Value requirements in relation to public performance reporting, and in particular to ensure:
• Balance in reporting areas of improvement that have been achieved and not achieved.
• As much timeousness and currency as is practical."

How the Council will meet the audit direction is detailed below:

Requirement		Approach/ Evidence for Reporting Year	
		2020/21	**2021/22**
SPI1	**Performance in improving local public services, provided by the council**	• **SPIs (CP-LGBF and LPIs)** • **Corporate Plan Annual Report** • **Performance Examples and Case Studies Report (strategic and area committee reports, press releases)**	• **SPIs** (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • **Corporate Plan Annual Report** • **Service Performance Reporting** • (strategic and area committee reports, quarterly performance reports, press releases) • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**

Requirement		Approach/ Evidence for Reporting Year	
		2020/21	**2021/22**
SPI1	**Performance in improving local public services, provided by the council in conjunction with partners and communities**	• **SPIs** (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • **Performance Examples and Case Studies Report** (strategic and area committee reports, press releases)	• **SPIs** (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • **Service Performance Reporting** (To include partnership work: NHS Integration, Children's Services, CPP, HLH etc.) • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**
SPI1	**Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.**	• **Performance Examples and Case Studies Report** (Strategic and area committee reports, press releases, CPP, NHS Integration, Children's Services…)	• **Service Performance Reporting** (Strategic and area committee reports, press releases, CPP, NHS Integration, Children's Services…) • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**
SPI2	**The council's assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment.**	• **BVAR Improvement Plan** • **Service Plans – covering report** • **External Audit Annual Report on BV**	• **BVAR Improvement Plan** • **Service Plans – covering report** • **External Audit Annual Report on BV** • **Self-Assessment Improvement Plans**
SPI2	**Audit assessments of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.**	• **BVAR Improvement Plan** • **Annual External Audit Report and Response/ Action Plan** • **Internal Audit reports relevant to BV**	• **BVAR Improvement Plan** • **Annual External Audit Report and Response/ Action Plan** • **Internal Audit reports relevant to BV**
SPI2	**In particular, how it (in conjunction with its partners as appropriate) has engaged with and responded to its diverse communities.**	• **Performance Examples and Case Studies Report** • **Locality Plans and Reports** • **Partnership Reports to Area Committees**	• **Service Performance Reporting** • **Locality Plans and Reports** • **Partnership Reports to Area Committees** • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**

Requirement		Approach/ Evidence for Reporting Year
		2022/23; 2023/24; and 2024/25
SPI1	**Performance in improving local public services, provided by the council**	• **SPIs** (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • **Corporate Plan Annual Report** • **Service Performance Reporting** • (strategic and area committee reports, quarterly performance reports, press releases) • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**
SPI1	**Performance in improving local public services, provided by the council in conjunction with partners and communities**	• **SPIs** (CP-LGBF and LPIs) • **Service Performance Reporting** (To include partnership work: NHS Integration, Children's Services, CPP, HLH etc.) • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**
SPI1	**Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.**	• **Service Performance Reporting** (Strategic and area committee reports, press releases, CPP, NHS Integration, Children's Services…)
SPI1	**In agreeing it's outcomes, how it has engaged with, responded to and helped to empower its**	• **Service Performance Reporting** • **Locality Plans and Reports**

Requirement		Approach/ Evidence for Reporting Year
		2022/23; 2023/24; and 2024/25
	communities, including those who require greater support.	• **Partnership Reports to Area Committees** • **Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey**
SPI2	Its assessments 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.	• **Service Plans – covering report** • **Annual External Audit Report and Response/ Action Plan** • **Self-Assessment Reports and Improvement Plans (Public Service Improvement Framework etc.)** • **Reports to the Recovery, Improvement and Transformation Board**
SPI2	Audit assessments of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.	• **Annual External Audit Report and Response/ Action Plan** • **Internal Audit reports relevant to BV**
SPI2	Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.	• **Service Plans** • **Reports to Strategic Committees**

Appendix 6: Best Value Qualitative Report - Performance Examples and Case Studies

A supplementary report, [Performance Examples and Case Studies – 2020/21](#), provides qualitative evidence on how the Council fulfilled each of the 2020/21 audit direction statements.

Best Value Requirement	Performance Examples and Case Studies
Performance in improving local public services, provided by the council	• Highland Council response to COVID-19 • Budget for Health, Recovery and Prosperity • Financial Reserves • Best Value Assurance Report and Improvement Plan • Council Programme • Corporate Plan • Education Leadership Support • ICT in Learning during COVID-19 • Building and Refurbishing Schools • Improving Pupil Wellbeing • Housing - Fire Safety • Official Council business during COVID-19 • LED Street Lighting • Protecting Highland consumers and businesses on Social Media • Mixed Glass Recycling • Gaelic Language Plan
Performance in improving local public services, provided by the council in conjunction with partners and communities	• COVID-19 Business Grants • Distillery production of hand sanitiser • Advice and Guidance on PPE • New technology for vulnerable Highland families • Free school meals via e-vouchers • City Region Deal • Inverness Castle • Returning young people to Highland • The Promise • Tourism Infrastructure Fund • Seasonal Rangers • Public toilets and comfort schemes • Highland Employment Recruitment Offer • Smart IoT Technology • Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure • Highland Adapts • Installing Solar Panels with E.ON • Wake up and Shake up sessions • Tackling Homelessness – What Works Community
Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities	• Partnership approach to COVID-19 vaccination programme • Grant Scheme for Community Resilience • Modern and Graduate Apprentice Programme • The ECHO Project • Climate and Ecological Emergency • The Financial Inclusion Initiative • Integrated Adult and Children's Services • Highland Violence Against Women Partnership • New North Coast Care Facility project • New Integrated Children's Services Plan
In particular, how it (in conjunction with its partners as	• COVID-19 Helpline • Tenant Participation and Welfare – COVID-19

Best Value Requirement	Performance Examples and Case Studies
appropriate) has engaged with and responded to its diverse communities	• Tenant Satisfaction Survey • Community Support Co-ordinators • Mental wellbeing Pathfinder Project – Caithness • Highland Community Planning Partnership