

# Highland First – Annual Corporate Performance Report 2015-2016

For ease of reference the following symbols have been used to provide an assessment of performance:

- √ Progressing well or on target
- = Actions have some slippage, indicators are maintaining performance or where it is too early to judge
- M Mixed performance - positive and negative movements in indicators/actions
- ✘ Commitment not met (no significant progress)
- C Completed

Where a √ and a C have been used this refers to commitments completed in 2015/16.

## 1. Community Led Highland

1	<p><b>Strengthening Local Democracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>We will be at the forefront in Scotland of bringing democracy closer to our communities</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will create new and better ways of involving communities in decisions affecting them</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will deliver new arrangements to deliver decentralised local decision making, prior to the Local Government elections in 2017</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <p>Taking forward the commitments to taking democracy closer to communities and decentralising decision making we agreed a Localism Action Plan in October 2015. The plan covered the establishment of seven new local committees with new and emerging powers, the progress with implementing new duties arising from the Community Empowerment legislation; and campaigning activity seeking further devolution of power to Highland. Each of the new Local Committees began meeting in early 2016. The plan also reflected the need to develop local partnership arrangements and discussions around developing local community planning arrangements progressed during 2015/16 with the result of proposals coming forward to the Council and the Community Planning Partnership Board for agreement in June 2016. A further element of the Localism Action Plan was to trial Participatory Budgeting. Events were held in Lochaber, Nairn and Caithness during 2015/6 with a further series of events taking place during the first quarter of 2016/17. Significant benefit of the process have emerged in local communities including-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating community networks</li> <li>• improving knowledge and awareness of community activity</li> <li>• promoting a discussion about issues and priorities</li> <li>• building community capacity</li> <li>• improving engagement with excluded groups</li> <li>• supporting wider democratic participation</li> <li>• creating a shift in agencies and communities focus and provision to meet need</li> <li>• preparing communities and agencies for discussions regarding more substantial mainstream budgets</li> </ul> <p>Building on the commitments in Highland First to strengthen local democracy and empower communities, we agreed to establish a Commission on Highland Democracy in March 2016. The Commission will be led by Rory Mair, former Chief Executive of COSLA. Discussions are currently underway to establish a programme of activity for the Commission and appoint Commissioners to oversee the process.</p>	√
2	<p><b>Empowering Communities</b></p> <p><b><i>Along with our Community Planning Partners, we will bring forward ways to implement the commitments contained within the Community Empowerment Act to ensure that where they wish to, communities are able to fully participate in the development of services and taking over the running of facilities and land. This will include:</i></b></p>	√

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development of an asset transfer policy, ensuring we have a transparent and simplified process for communities</b></li> <li>• <b>Reviewing ways of supporting communities to lead on the delivery of services locally</b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Planning Partnership has established a partnership group of key officers to consider the opportunities for a shared approach, wherever possible, around participation requests and asset transfer. Early discussions have highlighted the need for single point of contact for each agency, shared checklist or form to register an expression of interest and assessing the support that communities will be able to draw upon. Planning is now underway to develop policy and processes to meet the likely requirements of the Community Empowerment Act.</li> <li>• The central Community Challenge Fund was taken as a saving in our budget process for 2016/17. The fund as well as supporting the development of some valuable projects also developed our understanding of the needs of communities who wish to take over the delivery of services.</li> <li>• Our desire to work with communities to deliver services is still a key theme. Where communities wish to consider taking over service delivery it is still possible to discuss this with the lead service for that area and for council budget to be transferred through a Service Level Agreement to community organisations. We and the community organisation would need to explore as part of that process how any 'one off' costs for example for equipment or training could be met.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Local Community Planning</b></p> <p><b><i>Working with our partners, we will develop new arrangements to deliver Community Planning at a local level, prior to the Local Government elections in 2017</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>Progress on this commitment is provided at commitment 1 above.</p>	√
4	<p><b>Communities Delivering Social Care</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with our partners in the NHS to encourage and support communities to deliver more social care services and facilitate community led good practice</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased early years capacity and associated flexibility has in large part been achieved via partner centres, and there will be additional funding as we move towards implementation of 1140 hours.</li> <li>• A Partnership approach between the community and independent sector has enabled the establishment of community-led Care at Home in some rural areas. This brings together existing provision with community capacity to create reliable Care at Home where there previously had been none. It is planned to further develop this model in North and West Highland.</li> <li>• Highland Home Carers have supported local communities to deliver care and have encouraged local communities to learn from the practice developed in other parts of Highland.</li> </ul>	√
5	<p><b>Local Emergency Services</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will actively work with our partners in the emergency services to seek to ensure that national policies, practices and local plans are Highland proofed, taking into consideration local needs and the impact upon Highland communities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities and Partnerships Committee has continued to actively scrutinise emergency service activity during 2015/16 and reports have also been considered at Local Committees.</li> <li>• Local police and fire plans will be developed during 2016/17 following the review of strategic priorities for both services. The Council's role around the development of these will be important.</li> <li>• We responded to the call for evidence around the Scottish Police Authority's review of governance of Police Scotland. The Government's response to this review, and the</li> </ul>	√

	<p>implications for local scrutiny bodies, is currently awaited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along with our partners on the Community Planning Partnership we have agreed to actively support the recruitment of retained firefighters by disseminating information about vacancies to all staff on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul>	
6	<p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Transport - The Council recognises the importance of Community Transport and will work with our partners to find the best local solutions on how to deliver Community Transport provision across the Highlands</b></li> <li>• <b>Rural Patient Transport - The Council will work with the Scottish Ambulance Service, the NHS and the Scottish Government, to achieve better coverage across the Highlands. We will investigate sustainable solutions to improve Patient Transport in rural and urban areas</b></li> <li>• <b>Public Transport – We will work with public transport providers to improve the integration of services for communities across Highland.</b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Transport Strategy is being prepared in tandem with the Highland Wide Local Development Plan, to reflect the need to fully integrate transport and land use planning. There is some slippage, although further progress is expected over the course of 2016/17, following the completion of the Regional Transport Strategy, which is being led by HITRANS.</li> <li>• In relation to options for transport travel schemes with providers and operators, this relates to the Quality Bus Partnership which HITRANS lead. The HITRANS Board agreed a draft Statutory Quality Partnership (SQP) in April 2016, subject to minor changes and they intend to discuss this with the Council and Stagecoach in the near future, following which it will go to statutory consultation.</li> <li>• We provide grants for community transport activities and the Community Services Committee agreed a process for a new round of grant awards on 5 November 2015. Invitations were invited, and grant awards were agreed by Committee on 4 February 2016 for the next 3 financial years.</li> <li>• The Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service, the principal initiative under the pilot, operated from mid-June 2014 to end December 2015. Whilst delivering a positive output which had begun to address long-standing difficulties related to accessing transport, particularly in relation to transport to health-related appointments, the cost of operating the service was of concern to the project board. It was identified by the project board that to justify progression there was a need for detailed health sector insight to assist in ascertaining the true potential benefit a hub approach might generate; it was not possible to create this resource. Project partners determined that there was insufficient advantage being generated to commit longer term funding to a more permanent solution.</li> </ul>	√
7	<p><b>Helping Communities Reduce their Energy Use and Costs</b>  <b>The Council, with partners, will support communities to reduce their energy use and associated carbon emissions and costs.</b></p> <p>Progress is as noted below, please note there are related measures at commitment 53 below on affordable warmth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The carbon management plan was last refreshed in 2013 and now needs review to determine if it is still fit for purpose; given our changing priorities and available resources. The last report to Council, in this context, prioritised energy use in buildings and looked to target capital spend toward this.</li> <li>• The annual report to Scottish Government showing the Council's progress in meeting Scotland's Climate Change Declaration for 2014/15 was submitted on target by 30 November 2015.</li> <li>• Existing reporting arrangements have been overtaken by an annual mandatory report on our progress to tackle climate change. The first report is due to the Scottish Government by 30th November 2016.</li> </ul>	√

8	<p><b>Preventative Spend</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with its partners to maximise the use of collective resources to achieve best outcomes, demonstrating a shift to prevention and the re-allocation of resources between Community Planning Partners where this represents best value</i></b></p> <p>Progress:  The Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) original intention was to develop better preventative approaches by understanding how partners were collaborating, what difference it was making and what was needed for improvement. This has been set back by budget reductions, particularly in the Council for 2016/17 onwards. The Chief Officers Group will review how this can be taken forward in 2016/17 when the impact of budget and staff reductions is clearer. We agreed in March 2016 that Council redesign was needed. A Board was established and in phase 1 of its work the importance of prevention in our purpose and outcomes was agreed by the Council in June 2016. Discussions with partners in the CPP continue on how to work together preventatively.</p>	=
9	<p><b>Rural Impact Assessment</b>  <b><i>We will further embed Rural Impact Assessment across The Council and share our knowledge with the Scottish Government with the aim of ensuring this best practice approach is a key consideration during the formulation of Government policy.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Planning Partnership has agreed to use the Socio Economic Performance (SEP) index, along with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, to identify communities for Locality planning as provided for under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. This will ensure that vulnerable and fragile rural communities are targeted for Locality planning.</li> <li>• We have made the case for rural as well as island proofing as part of our response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Islands' Bill and also at COSLA. The Council Leader has followed this up in person in a meeting with the Minister, Humza Yousaf, as part of our engagement with the Scottish Government on the proposed Bill. We have also shared the rural proofing tool developed with other agencies including Scotland's Rural College as part of a consultative event on the persistence of poverty in rural Scotland.</li> </ul>	√
10	<p><b>Land Reform</b>  <b><i>The Council will engage with the Scottish Government over the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill to promote community land ownership and ensure crofting and farming communities are strengthened</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community ownership is being facilitated through the Council's asset management strategy and board.</li> <li>• During 2015/16 we carried out a Member workshop to examine details of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill and to establish Council lobbying priorities.</li> <li>• We meet Community Land Scotland on a regular basis throughout the year.</li> <li>• During 2015/16 there were 2 asset transfers to community organisations, a store at Muir-of-Ord and Achiltibuie School House. A further 8 assets are under negotiation to transfer.</li> </ul>	√
11	<p><b>Crown Estate</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish Government to develop proposals for the further devolution of the Crown Estate to ensure local communities control and benefit from the assets of the Crown Estate once it has been devolved from the UK Government</i></b></p> <p>Progress:  The Development &amp; Infrastructure Service has had regular liaison meetings with the Crown Estate to discuss the passage of the Scotland Bill and what the future relationships are likely to be. We also secured a place on the Crown Estates Stakeholder Group which is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment.</p>	√
12	<p><b>Forestry</b>  <b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish Government on the full devolution of the Forestry Commission to Scotland to maximise the benefits to local communities. The Council will</i></b></p>	√

	<p><b>also seek to work with the Forestry Commission to review land management and partnership arrangements on forestry land</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Environment, Projects and Facilities Team we are currently exploring the possibility of transferring one of our woodland sites (Storr, on Skye) to the local community. This action is ongoing and the outcome will be dependent on the requirements of the local community and if they wish to take on woodland and/or just the lower car park.</li> <li>• Lobbying work continues through involvement in a number of relevant forums including the response to the Scotland Land Use strategy.</li> <li>• The Forestry Team sit on the Highland Forestry Forum with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and other key Forestry stakeholders, where opportunities arise to influence FCS land management these will be taken. The Council also sits as a partner on the Peatland Partnership, Caithness (Flows to Future Project). Management of local FCS estate and interaction with Peatlands are discussed at these meeting.</li> </ul>	
13	<p><b>Community Resilience Planning</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will work with Scottish and Southern Energy and other utility companies to deliver improved resilience planning for our communities including planning for extreme weather events</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Flood Risk Management Team manages a dynamic risk-based system of watercourse inspections and implements remedial/ maintenance works as necessary to reduce flooding. Monthly targets for priority inspections are met and monitored using performance indicators.</li> <li>• The development of our first Local Flood Risk Management Plan is progressing in line with National programme, and expected to meet the statutory deadline of 22nd June 2016. Annual reporting on progress will follow the first publication.</li> <li>• Development of a Highland-wide Surface Water Management Plan commenced in 2015/2016 and will continue over the coming years with completion required before Plan publication in 2022.</li> <li>• Over the last 12 months, good progress has been made in helping and encouraging communities to prepare local community resilience plans. This has been achieved by Emergency Planning and Ward Managers working with Scottish &amp; Southern Energy Power Distribution's (SSEPD) staff to increase the adoption of plans within communities. Several communities made successful bids against SSE's Resilient Communities Fund, obtaining grants of up to £20,000 to support community resilience projects. Over 40 communities are now engaged in community resilience planning. SSE has led in this process and have recently had their efforts acknowledged in a recent SSEPD news article. The fund has reopened for 2016/17 and communities will be encouraged to make applications to the fund later this year.</li> </ul>	√
14	<p><b>Public Access Wi-Fi</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will work with the Scottish and UK Governments to improve Public Access Wi-Fi across Highland communities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Inverness city centre Wi-Fi project has been developed to include smart applications such as traffic management. In order to ensure that we deliver an efficient Wi-Fi service throughout the Inverness City Centre area it was felt that a pilot scheme should be established to ensure that the best system was put in place. Following the completion of a procurement process, this pilot should be operational by September 2016, with a view to full implementation by Spring 2017. The original target was March 2016.</li> <li>• The Council currently offers public access Wi-Fi in a number of its buildings. The current coverage of public access Wi-Fi is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HQ – open public access in the Chamber area;</li> <li>• County Buildings, Dingwall - open public access in the Chamber area;</li> <li>• All libraries (40) – controlled guest access via library cards;</li> <li>• Kingussie High School, Glenurquhart High School, Lochaline Primary School – same controlled access as per libraries – as a pilot for future school deployments;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	=

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inverness Museum and Art Gallery - same controlled access as per libraries.</li> </ul>	
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## 2. Well Served Highland

15	<p><b>Developing our Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>We will help to sustain our communities by ensuring our workforce has a strong presence across the Highlands</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will further implement our mobile and flexible working policies; expand the use of video and telephone conferencing, together with the development of Mobile Service Delivery. We will plan, monitor and review this on a regular basis</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will continue to support and develop our workforce and we will do all we can to avoid compulsory redundancies</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We monitor and report annually on the number of early retirements, posts deleted for efficiencies and the number of voluntary severances. During 2015/16 there were 42 retirements with a further 243 retirements on the grounds of ill-health, flexible retirement, redundancy or efficiency. A total of 285 posts.</li> <li>• The Unified Communications (UC) Project will deliver 3 key work streams which are new telephone systems for schools and corporate use and modern video conferencing. Design of telephony for 48 schools has been completed and procurement is about to start with systems planned to be in place between August 2016 and 2017.</li> <li>• Phase 1 of the design for telephony at our 25 largest corporate locations has been completed and procurement is expected to be completed and systems installed between September 2016 and June 2017. Phase 2 will involve engagement with our new ICT contract provider to integrate this work into the overall approach which includes use of Office 365 software and Skype for business.</li> <li>• Design of modern video conferencing is nearing completion with procurement planned for late summer and installation starting October 2016 and finishing March 2017.</li> <li>• Our new cloud based mobile system has capacity to support 325 mobile workers across Highland. Our first phase targeted 50 housing repairs staff to cover high priority, routine and emergency repairs. The project was able to deliver ahead of schedule and under budget. The system is proving to be highly resilient and has enjoyed 100% reliability since launch. The 2015/16 savings target of £40k was met and during 2016/17 the focus will be utilising all 325 licences.</li> <li>• The percentage of jobs located out-with Headquarters, Inverness remains high at 96% in 2015/16 compared to 94% the previous year.</li> <li>• Sickness absence, average working days lost per employee for Teachers was 6.1 days in 2015/16 compared to 5.6 days (ranked 7<sup>th</sup>) the previous year. This is provisional as the indicator is a national benchmark and will not be fully verified until December 2016 when national results are published.</li> <li>• Sickness absence, average working days lost per employee for non-teaching staff was 9.6 days in 2015/16 compared to 9.77 days (ranked 7<sup>th</sup>) the previous year. This is also a national benchmark indicator subject to final verification.</li> </ul>	√
16	<p><b>Growth in Early Years Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>We will support increasing numbers of young families to access additional pre-school hours and trial innovative approaches to early years and P1 education in some of our smaller schools</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will plan for the increased workforce needed, particularly in our smaller communities, and find ways that we can support a sufficient and qualified workforce</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to testing new approaches to delivering early years and P1 education, we carried</li> </ul>	√

	<p>out one test in Lairg Primary last session which was successful. We will have a further seven during 2016/17 and these will be evaluated during the school session by Early Years Support Officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After piloting in 2015/16 we have extended flexibility across Highland with 44 centres now offering a flexible service with various options of hours available. This will continue to grow as we plan for the delivery of 1140 hours required by 2020. Parents also have the option to purchase additional hours on top of the allocated 600 hours of early learning and childcare offered to them at the centres and some are choosing this. We will continue to promote this. We continue to offer 600 hours to eligible 2 year olds although the uptake of this by parents nationally is much less than anticipated. We will continue to promote and advise parents of the service available whilst acknowledging the importance of parental choice.</li> <li>• A review of management arrangements for early year's services has been completed and a structure is in place.</li> <li>• In relation to encouraging young people to consider employment in child care settings, there are college programmes on offer to school pupils to complete childcare courses while staying on at school. These courses are offered across all 3 college areas in Highland providing Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) progression from level 4 Early Education and Childcare through to Childcare and Development at level 7. There is increasing demand for level 4 &amp; 5 courses in Early Education and Childcare with 101 places taken up last year. Information and taster events are centrally organised through the NHS programme and are offered each year in particular on Health, Education, Child &amp; Social careers.</li> <li>• Due to the increase in flexibility in Local Authority nurseries we have developed an incremental approach to increasing the workforce by offering additional hours to our existing staff. This is proving successful and ensures investment and growth in our workforce. We continue to work with the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), other partner providers and also local colleges to ensure continued development and growth of the workforce into the future. We are seeing many qualified staff applying for posts when we are advertising for new staff in early years.</li> <li>• School and nursery placements are included across the Highlands on our work experience database for secondary school pupils to attend as short and long term placements. These can be stand alone or linked to a skills for work course. Nursery and Primary school placements are particularly popular with 183 placements organised in session 15/16 across Highland.</li> <li>• The cost per Pre-School Education Registration is a benchmarked indicator and data for 2015/16 will not be available until verified nationally at the end of this year. A report to Council on 10 March 2016 highlighted that while cost for 2014/15 had increased to £2,864.66 per registration; performance was in the top quartile ranked 7<sup>th</sup> nationally.</li> </ul>	
17	<p><b>Contracts and Procurement</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will complete its review of procurement practices by spring 2016 with a view to supporting local businesses and social enterprises, as well as maximising spend and benefit within the Highland economy, whilst ensuring that these provide value for money for the Council and meet legislative requirements. We will monitor the actions from this review on a regular basis to ensure the objectives are being met</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We implemented a new financial system from April 2016 that will deliver significant financial savings. A combination of ongoing process improvements and an enhanced understanding of the system should mean that the general improving trend of performance seen during the 2015/16 quarters should continue into future years aiming to achieve the challenging targets set from April 2015. Performance for Quarter 1 2016/17 saw 94.8% of invoices paid within 30 days and 60.1% within 10 days.</li> <li>• Against a target of 95% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt we achieved 91.3% in 2015/16 compared to 94.3% the previous year.</li> <li>• Against a target of 77% of invoices paid within 10 calendar days of receipt we achieved 56.5% in 2015/16 compared to 76.9% the previous year.</li> <li>• We aim to increase direct spend for both Highland businesses and Highland Small Medium Enterprises by 5% by March 2017. National data on these indicators will not be available until the late autumn. When last reported (2014/15) there had been a 1% decrease and a 5%</li> </ul>	M

	increase respectively.	
18	<p><b>Enhancing our Town Centres</b>  <i>We will seek additional opportunities to help address localised economic decline in town centres, specified streets or localities, including business rates incentives</i></p> <p>Progress:  Investigation into the use of Business Rates Incentive Scheme (BRIS) funding during 2015/16 resulted in a recommendation to Council on the residual balance from BRIS to fund Decriminalised Parking. BRIS has now been fully utilised and this action has been completed.</p>	√ C
19	<p><b>Libraries</b>  <i>We will work with our partners High Life Highland to build social and cultural capital throughout our communities by promoting an innovative and progressive Library Service</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Against the recommended national target for annual number of additions per 1000 population to adult lending stock in libraries we are below target having achieved 58.2% in 2015/16 compared to 55.4% the previous year. Nationally we are ranked 11<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in Scotland for acquisitions of adult fiction and non-fiction books respectively, 14<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> for adult fiction and non-fiction book issues respectively and 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> for the average number of times each adult fiction and non-fiction book is borrowed respectively giving an indication that the service is operating efficiently. Libraries have increased their digital offering year on year with new collections of e-resources including e-books, e-audiobooks and electronic magazines and newspapers. As this indicator and the one below do not include digital resources they are no longer effective measures and will be reviewed.</li> <li>• Against the recommended national target for annual number of additions per 1000 population to Children's and teenage lending stock in libraries we are above target having achieved 118.1% in 2015/16 compared to 114% the previous year. Nationally we are ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in Scotland for children and teenage fiction and non- acquisitions respectively, 8<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for junior fiction and non-fiction book issues respectively and 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for the average number of times each junior fiction and non-fiction book is borrowed respectively giving an indication that the service is operating efficiently. Libraries have increased their digital offering year on year with new collections of e-resources including e-books, e-audiobooks and electronic magazines and newspapers.</li> <li>• Library borrowers as a % of the resident Highland population have fallen to 16.2% in 2015/16 compared to 16.6% the previous year. This is indicative of an on-going national downward trend in this indicator. The full range of services provided by libraries extends beyond borrowing books and also includes the provision of public access computers; on-line resources such as electronic newspapers and magazines; and events and activities which are run by library staff. Visits to libraries better captures the full range of services and use of libraries and these increased from 2.3m in 2014-15 to 2.5m in 2015-16.</li> <li>• The cost per library visit is a national benchmark indicator and verified data is not expected to be available until late 2016. The latest data set available (2014/15) was reported to Council in March 2016 with cost per visit at £2.48 slightly higher than £2.44 the previous year. The Council is well placed at rank 8<sup>th</sup> and against a Scottish average figure of £2.59.</li> <li>• The % of adults satisfied with libraries is also a national benchmark indicator and verified data is not expected to be available until late 2016. The latest data set available (2014/15) reported to Council in March 2016 shows 75% satisfaction compared to a Scottish average of 77% and we are ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> nationally. The Council's 2015 Annual Survey of Performance and Attitudes gave a net satisfaction rating of 77% with 52% of the respondents having been library customers. In the library customer survey in 2015, 98.4% of respondents rated their library as good or very good and 95.1% rated staff helpfulness as being very good.</li> </ul>	M
20	<p><b>Europe</b>  <i>We will evaluate our activities and opportunities for influencing European policy, targeting our contribution where it is most effective and ensuring we make the very best of all financial opportunities for the Highlands</i></p> <p>Progress:</p>	=



	<p>During 2015 work was completed on a Local Development Strategy (LDS) and Business Plan for the implementation of LEADER 2014-2020 in Highland in response to clarifications and changes which were requested by Scottish Government (SG). SG approved the strategy and business plan in July 2015 and following this we were issued with a Service Level Agreement (SLA). We conditionally signed the SLA in November 2015 with SG signing up in February 2016. The main condition of signing the SLA was the need to include an adequate dispute resolution process, particularly as the SLA is clear that much of the financial risk in delivering the Programme now sits with us.</p> <p>As set out in the LDS and business plan, the Highland LEADER team began the process of establishing the structure for delivering the Programme in Highland during 2015. As with the previous Programme there is a Strategic Local Action Group (LAG) with overall responsibility for delivery of the Programme and a suite of Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) to support this delivery at a local level. The LAG started to meet in April 2015 and the LAPs were formed over the following year with 7 now in place, each have an approved local area action plan that sets out their priorities and funding considerations for the Programme. We have also established two advisory groups to the LAG, an Equalities Reference Group and the Monitoring and Evaluation Group, both of which have been meeting and have agreed their remit.</p> <p>Expressions of interest for Highland have been received since the SLA signing was concluded in February 2016. To date 124 have been received. Guidance for the programme was issued by SG in February 2016 and in Highland the programme officially opened and began progressing applications in May 2016.</p> <p>Elements of the 2014-2020 Programme are still in development including the required elements of farm diversification and rural enterprise. A working group from the LAG is taking this forward and once criteria and eligibility for these funds has been set this will be forwarded to SG for approval. The LDS for Highland also covers the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) funding during this programming period and work is ongoing to allow the launch of this element of the programme. Marine Scotland required a reduction in the number of Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) areas in Scotland and as such Highland and Moray have amalgamated their areas and will deliver a joint EMFF programme. The details of how this will operate are still being worked on but it is hoped that these discussions will conclude shortly and the programme can be launched locally.</p>	
21	<p><b>Roads, Maintenance and Future Investment</b>  <b><i>We will review capital and maintenance programmes for our Highland roads, identify clear choices and prepare for any investment opportunities that may arise</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey data is used to prioritise maintenance work and the Roads Maintenance Allocation System was reviewed and reported to committee on 28 April 2016.</li> <li>• The purpose of the Road Asset Management Plan (RAMP) is to set out the approach and practices we will use to manage our road infrastructure. The development of a common framework for RAMPs has been ongoing through the SCOTS Road Asset Management project. The production of the 4th Road Asset Management Plan was moved to 2016 to allow for Council restructuring and budget decisions to take place. It is expected that version 4 of the RAMP will be available by the end of 2016.</li> <li>• The Capital Plan was reviewed and approved by the Council in 2016. An additional £24.5m was approved for investment in roads over the next nine years.</li> </ul>	√
22	<p><b>Winter Maintenance</b>  <b><i>We will continue to implement our winter maintenance policy including a pre gritting regime</i></b>  Progress:  The Winter Maintenance Policy was reviewed and presented to Committee on 28 April 2016.</p>	√

23	<p><b>Community Works</b>  <i>We will explore how community works, including drainage, verges, grass cutting and road improvements could be delivered in the context of local decision making and local priorities</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work has been completed and disaggregated budgets for all 8 local area committees valued at £28m in total were in place, on target, for April 2016.</li> </ul>	√ C
24	<p><b>Flood Alleviation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Council will bring forward a Local Flood Risk Management Plan by June 2016 and we will raise awareness within our communities and individual householders on how they can protect themselves from flood incidents</i></li> <li>• <i>We will further prioritise smaller flood relief schemes and will increase the funding available for this work</i></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2015/16 preparation of the flood protection scheme documents for Caol and Smithton &amp; Culloden continued and we are on target for formal consultation and approval in 2016/17. Development of a flood protection scheme for the River Enrick (protecting Drumnadrochit) will be awarded to consultants in summer 2016.</li> <li>• Development of our first local flood risk management plan continued during 2015/16, in line with the national programme, and is on target for publication in June 2016.</li> <li>• Lobby work has been completed with the Scottish Government confirming an 80% funding commitment to Caol, Smithton &amp; Culloden and River Enrick Flood Protection Schemes over the coming 6 years.</li> <li>• During 2015/16 the detailed design of small flood alleviation projects in Kirkhill and Feabuie were progressed with construction expected in 2016/17.</li> <li>• In order to promote and assist Community Resilience (Flood Action Groups) in 'at risk' communities we have developed a community resilience template and internal discussions on its use with Ward Managers and Emergency Planners is ongoing.</li> <li>• The publication of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan in June 2016 will help to raise awareness of flood risk in communities and the riparian responsibilities towards watercourse maintenance. Community Councils will be informed in due course of the publication and further initiatives to raise awareness and increase resilience in communities which will be developed over coming years.</li> </ul>	√
25	<p><b>Bridges</b>  <i>We will review the arrangements for our bridge inspections along with their maintenance and investment programmes</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We approved our capital plan 2015/16 to 2024/25 in December 2015 which provided an additional £24.520m for roads, bridges and harbours over the next 9 years. A report was subsequently taken to Community Service Committee (CSC) in February 2016, which approved the allocation of this additional funding to specific projects.</li> <li>• Bridge Stock Condition Indicator (BSCI) annual local assessment (BSCI Average) based upon the number of inspections undertaken and our investment into maintaining our bridges achieved a rating of 81% compared to 82% in 2014/15.</li> <li>• The annual report regarding condition of bridges and priorities for investment was approved by CSC in November 2015.</li> </ul>	√
26	<p><b>Piers and Harbours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Council will work with community groups to improve the sustainability and use of small piers and harbours and, where appropriate, to help rationalise the Council's ownership</i></li> <li>• <i>The Council will prepare a Strategic Investment Plan to identify specific developments and areas for investment at selected Highland ports and harbours, including in</i></li> </ul>	√

	<p><b>partnership with the private sector</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to seeking grant to improve harbour infrastructure, a £300k grant was secured to install a new ice plant at Lochinver and a £750k grant is in the application process to chill the market at Kinlochbervie.</li> <li>• In relation to the Strategic Investment Plan for Harbours, the 1st phase will be presented to the Harbours Management Board on the 7th September 2016.</li> <li>• The review of the management of piers and harbours and encourage community ownership is tied into the outcome of the Strategic Investment Plan and the outcomes of the Council Redesign.</li> </ul>	
27	<p><b>Dealing with our Waste</b></p> <p><b><i>We will develop plans to meet our obligations as a result of the landfill ban of biodegradable municipal waste by 1st January 2021</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>During 2015/16 work was undertaken to prepare an updated waste strategy for consideration in autumn 2016 which will advise on the potential options open to the Council to achieve the 2021 deadline and to consider its future direction with regards recycling.</p>	√
28	<p><b>Tourism</b></p> <p><b><i>We will improve our internal practices and policies to promote the positive impact they have on the significant tourism industry in the Highlands</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is underway on a cross-Service review of the impact and contribution of the Council to tourism and an initial report is planned for November 2016 with a target of March 2017 for completion.</li> </ul>	√
29	<p><b>Road Safety</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with our communities to promote pedestrian and cycle safety such as expanding the use of 20 mph zones and safer routes to schools</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report was considered at the December 2015 Communities and Partnerships Committee which set out an overview of progress towards a reduction in the number of people killed and injured on Highland roads. The report specifically demonstrated a reduction in 17 – 25 year old drivers involved in injury accidents from 1998 – 2014 and the general downward trend as well as a downward trend in motorcyclist casualties from 2002 – 2014. The report also recognised the continuing work of the Highland Road Safety Group in seeking to bring partners together to achieve continued improvements.</li> <li>• We approved the use of the National Roads Development Guide in May 2016 with agreed Highland local variations as guidance in the design of new developments in conjunction with our existing 'Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments'. This action is now complete.</li> <li>• The percentage of children walking and cycling to school increased to 58% in 2015/16 compared to 52% the year before.</li> <li>• The number of schools with agreed travel plans was 84% in 2015/16, the same as the previous year.</li> </ul>	=
30	<p><b>Strengthening our Partnership with NHS Highland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>The Council and NHS Highland will review the current partnership agreement with a greater emphasis on stronger financial scrutiny and governance</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will work with NHS Highland to accelerate efforts to shift the balance of care and provide more services within our communities</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governance and Financial Governance arrangements for integrated services with NHS Highland have been reviewed and a new meeting structure agreed for members and officers.</li> <li>• As part of the new Community Planning arrangements, each local Partnership has been</li> </ul>	<b>M</b>

	<p>asked to develop a plan for Children, Adults and Community Learning and Development. These plans will include new outcomes for each of the Partnership areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single point of access to care services in every District has not yet been achieved.</li> <li>• The aim is to have no hospital discharges delayed by more than 4 weeks, in 2015/16 there were 42.</li> <li>• We aim to monitor and report on the rate of emergency inpatient bed days for people aged 75+ and are working with NHS colleagues to achieve this.</li> <li>• The number of bed days lost due to delayed discharges increased from 3075 to 3573 during 2015/16.</li> <li>• NHS Highland has launched a campaign involving Community Planning Partners to address loneliness in older people.</li> </ul> <p><u>Benchmark Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)</u></p> <p>All benchmark SPIs go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2015/16 until early 2017. The current position for 2014/15 as reported to Council in March 2016 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older persons (Over 65) home care cost per hour was £31.18 in 2014/15 compared to £30.07 the year before. The Scottish average is £20.01 and this indicator is in the bottom quartile ranked 32<sup>nd</sup>.</li> <li>• Self-Directed Support (SDS) spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+ 4.2% in 2014/15 compared with 3.1% the year before. The Scottish Average is 7% and this indicator is in the top quartile ranked 7<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• The % of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home was 21.6% in 2014/15 compared to 21% the previous year. The Scottish Average is 36% and this indicator is in the bottom quartile ranked 31<sup>st</sup>.</li> <li>• The % of adults satisfied with social care or social work services was 52% in 2014/15 compared to 54% the year before. The Scottish Average is 51% and this indicator is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile ranked 15<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• The net residential cost per week for older persons (Over 65) was £406.39 in 2014/15 this compares to £406.94 the year before. The Scottish Average is £372 and this indicator is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile ranked 24<sup>th</sup>.</li> </ul>	
31	<p><b>Building the Local Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Where we can, we will create cohesive Highland and local workforce plans with other partner organisations</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will work with partners to develop training and apprenticeships with a particular focus on areas of skills shortages.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>With our partners, we will also seek to attract young people and families to the Highlands, to broaden the economic potential of the Highlands and enrich our communities</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Highland Workforce Planning (which incorporates the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Strategy and the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan) is monitored through annual reports to the Highland Community Planning Partnership. During 2015/16 the Highland Works partnership had a number of work streams underway including broad general education, senior phase/colleges, and communications/talent attraction. These take forward the activity contained with the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan and the Developing the Young Workforce agenda. The Inverness and Highland city-region Deal offers a further opportunity to involve partners from a strategic policy perspective to enable activity to be planned and delivered in response to Highland employability and skills issues.</li> <li>• The Enterprising Highland website is continually updated and modernised to ensure it remains an attractive portal for people interested in living and working in the Highlands, as well as for businesses and individuals looking to invest.</li> <li>• We have not progressed work on identifying skills gaps across the Community Planning Partners and a plan on how to address them. However the Community Planning Partnership has recently agreed the establishment of Local Partnerships that will have a responsibility for delivering Locality Plans to address inequalities in Highland communities. It is envisaged</li> </ul>	M

	<p>that these will address inequalities created by lack of employment opportunities and will give partners the opportunity to consider local skills gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not progressed pilots for Workforce Planning (WFP) at District Partnership level or below. As above there will be responsibilities placed on new Local Partnerships to consider these issues as part of the development of Locality Plans.</li> </ul>	
32	<p><b>Region for Young People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>We will enable Highland's young people to develop their skills for work, and support them to achieve ambitious and positive destinations after school. We will work specifically with young people who are unemployed to support them into work</i></b></li> <li><b><i>There is a growing business demand for young people with an interest and ability in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as language skills. The Council will encourage and promote a greater uptake in these subjects, so that Highland young people can successfully compete in a global market</i></b></li> <li><b><i>We aim to provide our pupils with a technology-rich environment, to address their learner needs and curriculum goals, and transform their learning experience</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Youth Employment strategy has now become the Developing Young Workforce strategy. A revised strategic plan has been put in place to deliver the recommendations set out by the Scottish Government. Highland Works is regularly updated on the implementation of this plan.</li> <li>The number of pupils who enrol for online courses continues to increase. At the moment these are mainly delivered through the colleges and Scholar (Heriot Watt University). A small number of courses are delivered directly by Highland via a small number of online tutors. The appointment of the Virtual School Coordinator post will ensure a more comprehensive delivery of on-line courses for senior pupils.</li> <li>To implement the ICT in Learning policy, a pilot Associated School Group (ASG) was set up to trail the use of 1-1 devices in schools. Training was provided to staff and pupils. A number of other smaller projects were set to explore the use of 1-1 devices in the delivery of learning and teaching. The outcomes of the pilot and smaller projects have been shared with staff across Highland via an online blog.</li> <li>During 2015/16 there were 103 young people supported into employment. 60 young people were supported as a result of transitional funding support to third sector organisations and 43 through the Council's own delivered programmes (3 Graduate Placements, 32 Scottish Employment Recruitment Incentives and 8 through Employment Grants).</li> <li>A project director has been appointed and is leading the development of the Science Skills Academy. The project is part of the City-region deal with an indicative allocation of £3m from Scottish Government. A Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) hub has opened at the Inverness Campus hosted by UHI.</li> </ul> <p><u>Benchmark SPIs</u></p> <p>All benchmark SPIs go through extensive verification at a national level and will not be finalised until early 2017. However the provisional calculation locally shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proportion of pupils entering positive destinations was 93.7% in 2015/16 compared to 92.7% the year before. Historically this indicator was ranked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile with last report at 14<sup>th</sup> in 2014/15 remaining consistently above the national average of 92.9%. Further education initial destinations have significantly increased and employment has decreased suggesting more young people are choosing further education routes. However follow up reports in March 2016 show that the greatest increase between the initial and the follow up return was employment, with an increase of 7.3%. Conversely, the largest decrease between the initial and the follow up return was further education with a 4.9% decrease, suggesting more work has to be done to address sustaining further education destinations. Those unemployed seeking work continues to decline and is more than 1% below the national average.</li> </ul>	√

33	<p><b>Building Tourism</b></p> <p><b><i>The Council will strive to grow tourism by working with partners to retain and develop world class events and promote destination management</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015 data for Highland and national rates on growth in tourism will not be available until autumn. Most recent data available for 2014 shows that Highland growth (-7% from 2013 to 2014) lagged behind the national rate of growth (+3%). This is due in part to the focus on Highland in 2013 (the Year of Natural Scotland) giving a strong year while the focus in 2014 included events such as the Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup where growth was in other areas of Scotland.</li> <li>• An annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) with VisitScotland was completed and signed off in summer 2015 on target. An SLA relating to local tourism activities to be delivered by destination organisations was agreed with each of the 7 destination organisations with all SLAs concluded by early autumn 2015.</li> <li>• Funding was awarded to support the Mountain Bike World Cup and Council officers also played a role in groups set up to ensure the smooth running of the event.</li> <li>• Funding was also awarded to support the 2016 Scottish Open Golf Championship at Castle Stuart and again Council officers also played a role in groups set up to ensure the smooth running of the event.</li> </ul>	=
34	<p><b>Gaelic</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with all our partners and across all communities to develop Gaelic as a regional asset, sharing our experience, skills and resources to continue implementing and building on the Gaelic Language Plan</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>The annual implementation report covered the period 31 January 2015 to January 2016 and this comprehensive overview of the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) implementation contained a number of achievements and a number of pan-Highland and national initiatives took place between April 1st 2015 and March 31st 2016 and these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An increase in Gaelic Medium Primary 1 intake.</li> <li>○ Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar was officially opened in March 2015 by Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages</li> <li>○ We had 5 Teachers undertaking the Gaelic Immersion for Teachers (GiFT) course which commenced in August 2015.</li> <li>○ We received financial support for 5 project applications from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and were awarded a total of £326k for the projects.</li> <li>○ Bòrd na Gàidhlig entered a 3 year partnership with us to continue to support the 0–3 age sector in collaboration with the Care and Learning Alliance, funding has been agreed to enable the partnership to continue.</li> <li>○ The Gaelic Careers Event (Siuthad! or Go On!) partnership between the Council, Skills Development Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Highlands &amp; Islands Enterprise took place in March 2016. 2 Careers Events took place, 1 in Eden Court Inverness and 1 at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, on Skye.</li> <li>○ We submitted a response to the UK Government Public Consultation on the BBC Royal Charter Review; specifically the section relating to Gaelic Broadcasting.</li> <li>• We monitor the extent to which respondents feel that we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language (Annual Performance Survey) and 76% of respondents felt we did in 2015/16 the same as the previous year.</li> <li>• Organisation of the Gaelic Development Team has been reviewed and mainstreamed to enhance support for strategic activities. Engagement with the wider community planning partnership is envisaged for later this year, when the new local arrangements are in place.</li> </ul>	√
35.	<p><b>Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>We will work towards achieving Highland's ambition to provide effective broadband and mobile (3G &amp; 4G) coverage for all</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will work with our partners to develop a joint action plan in order to define and deliver solutions of broadband and mobile technology to the most difficult to reach</i></b></li> </ul>	√

**areas of the Highlands**

- **Alongside improved connectivity, we will strive to achieve a digital dividend for the Highlands by working with partners to ensure digital inclusion for all. We will also promote and encourage innovative exploitation of the technology by the businesses and communities**

Progress:

In addition to progress on the Implement the ICT in Learning Programme at commitment 32 above:

- The Highland area is on target to achieve Superfast Broadband coverage to 84% of premises by the end of 2017.
- We continue to work closely with the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure that the area receives 100% next generation broadband coverage in line with the Scottish Government's aim of 100% coverage by 2021.
- We meet regularly with HIE to ensure that phase one of their roll-out plan for Superfast Broadband is reaching as many parts of the Highlands as possible.
- We are working closely with our partners to maximise the impact of this limited additional resource as well as discussing with them the best way of gaining 100% coverage within the Scottish Government's timescale.
- We continue to work with the mobile operators and with our partners, HIE and Digital Scotland, as well as local authorities across the Highlands and Islands, to encourage them to include in their future investment plans, improvements to 4G, and to 2G/3G coverage in the Highlands.
- The Scottish Government's commitment to 100% Superfast Broadband coverage by 2021 is welcome news. When placed alongside the UK Government's current consultation on the creation of a universal service obligation it should ensure that even the most difficult areas to reach in the Highlands will be able to benefit from 21st Century communications infrastructure.
- We have been working in partnership with Citizen's Online on the Digital Highland project. This project is part of a larger initiative in 4 council areas: Highland, Brighton and Hove, Plymouth and Gwynedd. The aim of the project is to develop a sustainable, partnership approach to addressing issues around digital inclusion, addressing the key barriers to residents going online, avoiding duplication and making best use of resources. Research has identified four key areas where future work will focus, low income, urban households; remote and rural communities; retired life in rural communities; rural unemployment and skills for job finding. Digital Highland has 15 partners from across the Highlands working together to look at issues around digital inclusion. A digital signposting tool has been developed to help staff to direct customers to the nearest internet access points and digital skills courses and support. 80 volunteer digital champions have been recruited and trained to support members of their communities to go online.
- The Digital First programme has delivered a range of new online services for customers over the last 12 months. This includes the launch locally of the national 'myaccount' customer portal. Currently we have over 13,500 customers signed up which allows them to prepopulate forms with their personal details, and reduces the need to prove their identity when using online forms. The programme has also provided a range of new online forms, including housing benefits, applications and repairs and also council tax direct debits, free school meals and clothing grant applications. There are now 90 online forms available on our website. Improvements include allowing customers to take photographs of evidence as well as scanning, and to upload evidence with their online forms. The forms are receiving positive customer feedback and uptake of online forms has risen to 26.5%. In 2015/16, £275,000 worth of savings were taken due to workload reduction and changing our approach, with total savings from the project to date amounting to £343,850.

36

**Developing Local and National Infrastructure**

**Working with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, HI-TRANS and HIAL, we will lobby to increase investment in infrastructure in the Highlands with a view to improving the road, rail and air links from the area. This will include:**

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- ***The upgrade of the A9 north of Inverness, including the Berriedale Braes and the Tomich Junction***
- ***The upgrade of the A82***
- ***Influence the implementation of the A9 South and A96 upgrades***
- ***Seek a long term solution for the Stromeferry bypass***
- ***Reducing rail journey times and costs north and south of Inverness***
- ***Plan for communities to benefit from additional rail stops***
- ***A long term solution for the Corran Ferry.***
- ***Seek improved air-links to and from the Highlands, including direct access to Heathrow***
- ***A831 twin tracking at Torgoyle Bridge.***
- ***A830 extension***
- ***Seek additional funding for road and bridge maintenance***

Progress:

- We have recognised the continuing deterioration of the road network and are committed to investing an additional £24.3 million over the next 9 years in roads, bridges and piers. This will help reduce the deterioration however it will take a few years before the investment is reflected in the road condition survey results, for 2015/16, therefore there has not been significant progress and the results are as follows:
  - 39.1% of the overall roads network was considered for maintenance treatment in 2015/16 compared to 36.2% the previous year;
  - 26.9% of class A roads were considered in 2015/16 compared to 25.3% the previous year;
  - 34.7% of class B roads were considered in 2015/16 compared to 35.5% the previous year;
  - 39% of class C roads were considered in 2015/16 compared to 41.8% the previous year and
  - 46.4% of U classed roads were considered in 2015/16 compared to 38.8% the previous year.
- The cost of maintenance per km of road is a national benchmark indicator and data for 2015/16 is not expected until the end of the year. Data was last reported to Council in March 2016 covering 2014/15 where the cost was £2,696.97 per km compared to £2,839.43 the year before. Due to the length of the network on cost we are ranked 4<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- To support and feed into the design development of the Trunk Road upgrades as proposed by Transport Scotland, this has been progressed on a number of levels. High level quarterly overview meetings are held with senior officers of Transport Scotland, Development and Infrastructure and attended by the Chair of the Planning Development and Infrastructure (PDI) Committee. This considers high level issues to both inform of progress and also ensure resources are appropriately coordinated, with targeted groups and thematic subgroups involving both D&I and Community Services working on the A96, the A96/A9 Link where close coordination with our Inshes junction is required, together with the dualling of the A9, where works are progressing. Each subsection of these routes are at different stages in design progression, but it is of note that the A9-A96 link and also the grade separation of Longman interchange were both included in the City Deal giving far more certainty over the delivery timeframe. Transport Scotland has held a local inquiry in respect of the A9 Berriedale Braes scheme and an announcement is anticipated soon.
- We continue to work with HITRANS and have regular liaison meetings with Transport Scotland/Network Rail to raise rail network experience matters including reduced journey times, secure fairer pricing and to develop new commuter rail opportunities in the region.
- While reports were prepared for the Scottish Government to secure funding for the A890 bypass, feedback indicated only elements relating to overcome the rock fall would be considered. A new appraisal is being written with greater emphasis being placed on the social and economic context for the scheme and its impacts on a fragile rural area. Good progress on the report is being made, with involvement of Transport Scotland at all stages to ensure that the revised report matches expectation. On completion of the report a formal approach to the Scottish Government will be made to determine whether funding may be



	<p>made available. Discussions with Transport Scotland are ongoing to determine whether a general funding commitment may be made or if consideration of a selected route would be more appropriate and this will be reported to committee. On determination of possible funding contribution further public consultations shall be held and a decision will be required from the Council to determine the route and also the route extent as the previous consultations have identified the communities concerns regarding some of the shortened options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to working with partners to progress the delivery of the Inverness Airport Rail Link, the project design unit in Golspie are continuing to work under instruction from HITRANS who are promoting the new station adjacent to the airport. The design has progressed through pre-planning and has also been through a public consultation stage. The planning design for the new infrastructure which include access roads, carpark and station platform are complete. The traffic appraisal and access statements are still in preparation. It is anticipated that planning will be lodged in autumn 2016.</li> <li>• Ongoing work with partners, HIE, HIAL and VisitScotland has ensured that new and enhanced air services, such as those to Heathrow and to Amsterdam continue to be developed.</li> <li>• No marketing support was requested for new air routes during 2015/16.</li> <li>• In relation to working with partners to seek expansion of concessionary commuter fares to rail routes south and east of Inverness, concessionary schemes for rail users has been raised through the Transport Integration Group meetings hosted by HITRANS and will be discussed further at the next meeting expected to be in September 2016.</li> <li>• The recent re-introduction of flights from Heathrow underlines the importance of continued lobbying. The Service will continue to monitor the situation, in liaison with HIE and the Scottish and UK Governments, and also to try and ensure that a decision is made on the establishment of a third runway, at either Heathrow or Gatwick that will ensure long term regional connectivity with London.</li> </ul>	
37	<p><b>Reducing Fatalities on our Roads</b>  <i>We will support efforts to reduce fatalities on our roads, such as a graduated driver licensing scheme and measures to reduce speeding</i>  Progress is reported at commitment 29 above.</p>	=
38	<p><b>Cycle Tracks</b>  <i>We will work with Sustrans and Hi-Trans to focus Scottish Government cycle track investment on some of our key commuting and tourist routes</i>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on submitting updated Active Travel Audits to committee has been severely disrupted due to staff changes at HITRANS which have impacted on the programme of the HITRANS commissioned consultant. A report has been prepared for the City of Inverness Area Committee (CIAC) on Active Travel Audit progress. Work with HITRANS on the Regional Active Travel Strategy is ongoing. Reports to other Area Committees will progress subject to HITRANS consultant outputs and Transport Planning staff resources.</li> <li>• A number of successful funding bids were submitted to Community Links in 2015/16. In addition a submission for Community Links PLUS funding competition has been prepared for the deadline at the end of June 2016.</li> <li>• Transport Scotland has completed the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 78 between Fort William and Inverness and we supported this work on several occasions.</li> </ul>	M
39	<p><b>Emergency Towing Vessels</b>  <i>The Council will work with the Scottish Government to press the UK Government for the same level of protection as previously provided by two emergency towing vessels (ETV) with fire-fighting capability covering the Minch and Northern Isles</i>  Progress:  We have been an active participant in the multi-agency stakeholder group established by the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) on the future provision of ETVs in Scotland. We have chaired one of the sub groups and contributed directly to the MCA's submission to the UK</p>	√

	Government Shipping Minister, Robin Goodwill. The UK Government's decision is expected after the summer. On 13 July 2016 The UK Government announced its decision provides a dedicated ETV for Scottish waters for the next 5 years. We will continue to press for a second ETV for the Minches.	
40	<p><b>Ferries</b></p> <p><b><i>We will continue to lobby for improved and additional ferry services, including more flexibility in timetabling to facilitate employment and tourism opportunities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>A range of meetings and communications have taken place with the Minister for Transport and the Islands, Scottish Government officials and partners resulting in a daily summer Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry service for the first time in over 20 years. This activity remains a high priority for us.</p>	√
41	<p><b>Dealing with our Waste</b></p> <p><b><i>As part of our approach to reducing and dealing with our waste, we will explore opportunities with other Local Authorities for a North of Scotland solution</i></b></p> <p>Progress is reported at commitment 27 above.</p>	√

### 3. A Fairer Highland

42	<p><b>Reducing the Attainment Gap</b></p> <p><b><i>We will improve pupil attainment by taking focused action in and beyond the classroom to help improve the performance of pupils, particularly those experiencing poverty and deprivation</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is continuing on the Health Visitor pathway, which included the process for gathering information on the progress of children at the 27-30 month review. Health Visitors in Highland will be using the Ages and Stages assessment tool and a baseline will be able to be established in early 2017, once staff training has been rolled out and these assessments have started to be completed.</li> <li>• The percentage of children achieving their key developmental milestones by the time they enter school increased from 85% in 2014/15 to 87% in 2015/16</li> <li>• In relation to increasing the % of children who reach their developmental milestones at entry to primary four, the Quality Improvement Team are considering the most effective means of gathering data but are also awaiting guidance from the Scottish Government as to what information will be required, to ensure comparative data will be available across local authorities. It is expected that a baseline measure will be agreed during session 2016-17.</li> <li>• The number of Looked After Children (LAC) who attain a qualification in any subject at level 3 or above is monitored and latest data for 2014/15 showed that 70% of children did. Data for 2015/16 will be available in late autumn.</li> <li>• The number of LAC who attain qualifications in English / maths at level 3 or above is monitored and latest data for 2014/15 showed that 46.7% of children did. Data for 2015/16 will be available in late autumn.</li> <li>• The number of Gypsy &amp; Traveller children &amp; young people attending nursery, primary &amp; secondary school. During 2015/16 there were 126 children in total (83%) on a mainstream school roll in Highland with 15 children in nursery (12%), 91 children in primary (72%) and 20 children in secondary (16%). This compares to 2014/15 with 131 children in total (87%) on a mainstream school roll in Highland 11 children in nursery (8%); 102 children in primary (78%) and 18 children in secondary (14%).</li> <li>• The Development Officer for Interrupted Learning provides a report on the number of Gypsy Traveller Families who engage with education on an annual basis. In 2015-16, the same number of children were accessing education as there had been in the previous school, session (average of 102 in any given week).</li> <li>• 99% of children are able to sustain full time timetables, however, work is on-going to address</li> </ul>	=
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	<p>the issues experienced by the small number of children who have significant needs, such that their timetables are reduced. This is a major focus for the ASN Improvement Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data for 2015/16 for the number of children achieving level 4 in literacy is due to be reported in late September 2016. For 2014/15 when last reported, 81% were achieving level 4 in literacy. Progress is due to schools reviewing Broad General Education progression and senior phase unit entries for literacy and numeracy levels 3 and 4. Evidence of this comes through 2014/15 school's attainment reviews. Although figures don't always reflect complete course levels in English and Maths, the literacy and numeracy units are often achieved and are now being credited.</li> <li>• We monitor multiple exclusions from school and data will next be available for academic year 2015/16 in late September. When last reported there were 42 children with multiple exclusions during 2014/15.</li> <li>• We aim to reduce the exclusion rate for Looked After Children (rate per 1000). When last reported in 2014/15 the rate was 161 and this represented the fourth successive increase in recent years and is concerning, particularly as school exclusion is a key factor contributing to young people being accommodated and placed away from home, frequently in expensive out of authority placements. Further analysis is required to understand the reasons behind the increase and 2015/16 data will be available in late autumn.</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark SPIs</b></p> <p>All benchmark SPIs go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2015/16 until early 2017. The current position for 2014/15 as reported to Council in March 2016 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (CHN 4) data has not been available at a national level for 2 years and at present the indicator cannot be reported on.</li> <li>• % of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (CHN5). Current data for 2014/15 shows that 27.7% of pupils were achieving 5+ awards at Level 6 and we are ranked 15<sup>th</sup> nationally.</li> <li>• % of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD) (CHN6) data has not been available at a national level for 2 years and at present the indicator cannot be reported on.</li> <li>• % Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 SIMD (CHN7). Current data for 2014/15 shows that 12.8% of pupils were achieving 5+ awards at Level 6 and we are ranked 11<sup>th</sup> nationally.</li> <li>• The provisional local data for 2015/16 for the % of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations is reported at commitment 32 above.</li> </ul>	
43	<p><b>Additional Support Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>We will continue with the agreed actions to fully implement the recommendations of the Additional Support Needs Review, making the most effective and efficient use of resources and in so doing, achieve the best outcomes for children and young people with Additional Support Needs at all stages</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>We will develop the work emerging around helping young people to move to adult services for those individuals with additional support needs with a particular emphasis on preparing them for work</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to information on the number of Gypsy &amp; Traveller children &amp; young people attending nursery, primary &amp; secondary school provided at commitment 42 above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The performance indicator for Allied Health Professional waiting times (Adults) is under review as there are several targets for AHP professions dependent on patient pathways. Data is currently collected for compliance with a 4 week HEAT target and for diagnostic pathways. However, community rehabilitation services which have a National target of 18weeks, but no national scrutiny, have no robust mechanism in place to report current performance. There is a plan for moving these services onto a new electronic system, anticipated to take a minimum of 1 year; those professions/patient pathways which require provision of data for national reports have been prioritised.</li> <li>• We aim to track the number of young people with complex disability post school for 3 years annually. Changes to the data collection process for this indicator have resulted in no data being available for 2015/16. It is hoped to be able to review the process and report on this in</li> </ul>	=

	<p>the next quarter of 2016/17 and annually going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We currently have 275 young carers who have self-identified and who have been referred to our young carer groups with 64 known to statutory education services, this is a gap we are trying to close.</li> <li>The number of self-identified young carers who report they are supported in school was 47% in 2015/16.</li> </ul>	
44	<p><b>Supporting Headteachers</b>  <i>We will work collaboratively with Headteachers to provide them with the best opportunity to maintain standards, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and to drive further improvement</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Models for new delivery and management arrangements are being scoped across Associated School Groups (ASGs).</li> <li>Further consultation events have been organised for members and Head Teachers across the coming months, and this will lead to wider stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>Recommendations for schools facilities management have been considered by members, and will be considered further as part of Council redesign later in 2016, for implementation during 2017. The initial target date for implementation of the initial review outcomes has slipped.</li> <li>The outcome of a School Office Review which started in 2014 and included trials in 2 associated school groups will be reported to committee in August 2016. That report will be considered under the heading of the wider Future Management of Schools Programme, as recommendations coming forward in future in relation to the school office, will be as part of that programme, and have to closely relate to other recommendations which may arise in relation to teaching management arrangements in schools. A consultation programme in relation to the Future Management of Schools programme will take place over the latter half of 2016, with recommendations then expected late 2016/early 2017. This original project was delivered to target and now forms part of the wider review.</li> <li>The reducing bureaucracy action plan continues to be implemented.</li> </ul>	=
45	<p><b>Physical Activity and Health</b>  <i>We will continue the introduction of PE groups in each Associated School Group and we will trial simple and effective initiatives such as the 'Daily Mile' project in Highland Primary Schools</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the % of children walking and cycling to school reported at commitment 29 above, the following is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We aim to increase the number of children achieving one hour or more moderate activity on 5+ days per week. During 2015 we established a baseline of 41%; data will next be available in 2017 to assess progress.</li> <li>An increasing number of primary schools are engaging with the daily mile programme. Schools report that young people engage positively with the programme and teachers suggest there is a positive impact in the classroom.</li> <li>In relation to establishing PE groups in each Associated School Group (ASG). An increasing number of schools are planning their PE programmes as an ASG. The approach allows a more coordinated program to be delivered. It supports a more consistent delivery model and also allows more efficient use of resources.</li> </ul>	√
46	<p><b>Positive Mental Health and Stigma</b>  <i>We will support work across all partners to reduce stigma around mental health and promote good mental health and wellbeing in our communities and our staff. We will have a particular focus on positive mental health for our young people and will support innovative ways to address this issue</i></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We aim to decrease the gap between formal agency recording and self-reporting rates from children and young people affected by domestic abuse. A baseline of 36.2% was</li> </ul>	=

	<p>established in 2015/16 which will be reviewed in in 2017 when the next lifestyle survey is undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2015/16 academic year the percentage of children who reported they feel safe and cared for in school was 85.4% compared to 83% the previous year.</li> <li>• Measuring that the gap between formal and self-reporting of bullying decreases is a biannual indicator next due to be reported in 2016/17, the current figure is 36% and this will be used to assess progress when new data is available.</li> <li>• Our aim is for more young people to say they know where to get help with bullying and in 2015 there were 88.2% of young people who said they did, slightly lower than the 91% reported in 2013.</li> <li>• Our aim is for more young people to say that they would tell someone if they were being bullied and 76.7% said they would tell someone when surveyed in 2015 compared to 61.1% went last reported in 2013.</li> <li>• We monitor the number of staff trained in Brief Interventions and Motivational Interviewing, a baseline of 15 was established in 2014/15 with 2015/16 data available in October 2016.</li> <li>• During academic year 2015/16 the number of children entering P1 who demonstrated an ability to develop positive relationships increases was 94% compared to 91% in the previous year.</li> <li>• The number of schools participating in the delivery of Resilient Kids training was 145 in academic year 2015/16, this is a new indicator and the aim is to increase this number.</li> <li>• In 2015/16 we trained 55 managers in the NHS Scotland's Healthy Working Lives course "Mentally Healthy Working" which helps managers identify the key factors that contribute to a mentally healthy workplace, the factors that help reduce stress and improves confidence in managing stress in the workplace. Stress risk assessments for both individuals and teams were introduced to help identify specific causes and resolutions for work related stress. More structured advice on the causes of work related stress is being delivered by occupational health, based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Stress Standards.</li> </ul>	
47	<p><b>Treating People Fairly, with Dignity and Respect</b>  <b><i>The Council will continue to work towards achieving the equality outcomes set out in the Fairer Highland Plan and will promote equality of opportunity in all its work</i></b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality outcomes were published in March 2013, with a progress report in March 2015 and preparations made to review equality outcomes for March 2017. We published a full set of 20 equality outcomes in March 2013 which reflected priorities from engagement with local equality groups and national evidence and include addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving public attitudes and awareness</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity in Education</li> <li>• Tackling discrimination, prejudice and safety:</li> <li>• Access to employment and occupational segregation</li> <li>• Participation and representation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In March 2015 a report on progress was made to the committee. Specific duties require that equality outcomes are reviewed within 4 years, and plans are underway to carry out a review for March 2017. The published outcomes and progress reports are available on our website. Over time, these outcomes aim to contribute to a fairer, more inclusive Highland. The actions and indicators below contribute towards a number of our equality outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We also report every 2 years on how equality is mainstreamed into the Council, for example, through continuing commitments to raising awareness through staff training, in our recruitment and employment practices, and ensuring services and information are accessible.</li> <li>• We monitor the percentage difference between men's average hourly pay (excluding overtime) and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime). Data is available on a biennial basis and an update is next due in 2017. Current trends between 2011-13 and 2013-15 show a further reduction in the Gender Pay Gap from 9.3% to 8.16% of a difference.</li> <li>• A revised equal pay statement and report which includes race &amp; disability is due in 2017 and</li> </ul>	√

	<p>we are making good progress towards this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis of our budget consultation, carried out in 2015, considered whether there were any particular differences in patterns of response depending upon gender, age, disability and whether the respondent has children. In some instances, respondent numbers are low and therefore cannot be said to be representative, however they do provide an indication of varying views which were taken into account in the assessment of potential impact of the budget proposals.</li> <li>• We have maintained our AA rating and improvements in the website have been noted from the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) upgrading the site from a 2 star mobile compatible site to a 3 star mobile compatible site. This is the first time that the website has achieved 3 star SOCITM status. We are progressing AAA status although this is significant work. The website enjoys Digital Accessibility Centre two tick accreditation. One income generation opportunity that is being assessed is selling advertising on our website. This option, if approved, will significantly change the look and feel of our website and this will impact on the accreditation process and increase overall cost. It may take longer to get to AAA status.</li> <li>• We aim to increase the percentage of women in management in the Council top 5% of earners. This is a national benchmark indicator and data will not be verified until the end of 2016. However local calculation shows that 47.2% of our top 5% of earners were women during 2015/16 compared to 48.2% (ranked 22<sup>nd</sup>) the previous year. We continue to take positive action to encourage women into management posts including our Women in Management Programme and the options for flexible working.</li> <li>• We work with partners to encourage the reporting of hate crimes, domestic abuse and prejudiced based bullying in schools. In 2015-16, details were reported to committee on levels of hate incidents, domestic abuse and prejudice based bullying in schools in Highland. In 2015, reports were also presented to the Communities and Partnerships Committee on Hate Incidents and Hate Crimes and an update on Violence Against Women. An update report on Bullying Prevention was made to the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee. Information on attitudes and awareness from the our annual Public Performance survey support this outcome with 73% of respondents aware of the impact of hate incidents compared to 71% the previous year. Improvements in data capture in schools will start to provide information across all equalities characteristics in future years. Performance indicators relating to violence against women are under development.</li> <li>• Highland does reflect a trend across Scotland which has seen a general decrease in the number of hate crime charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). From the most recent data available there were 117 hate crimes reported in 2014/15 compared to 146 the previous year.</li> <li>• Our annual survey of performance and attitudes asks the local Citizen's Panel for feedback on attitudes to equality and diversity. The 2015 results show a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who feel there is sometimes good reason to be prejudiced against certain groups between 2014 (23.2%) and 2015 (25%). When we first asked this question in 2011, 33% of respondents to the Council survey felt there was sometimes good reason to be prejudiced against certain groups.</li> <li>• The % of our buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to people with a disability was 95.9% the same as the previous year. Nationally this indicator is seen as having served its purpose and data will no longer be collected.</li> </ul>	
48	<p><b>Council Housing Schemes Environmental Improvements</b>  <b>We will target 10% of Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme spend on external works including environmental improvements</b>  Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Plan 2016-21 contains provision for 10% of the programme on external works including environmental improvements.</li> <li>• Monitoring reports are provided to each meeting of the Community Services Committee on the percentage spend against HRA capital programme budget.</li> <li>• A comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey in 2016 reported 69% of tenants were satisfied with our management of their neighbourhood, this establishes a baseline on tenant satisfaction.</li> </ul>	√

49	<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will promote and support more community led housing initiatives in rural areas to deliver housing to meet local need.</li> <li>• Working from the initial modular housing pilot project developed in Alness and Invergordon, we will encourage development of locally produced energy efficient modular housing units to deliver part of the Council housing programme quicker and more efficiently than traditional built housing</li> <li>• We will develop new methods of meeting the needs of disabled householders who have a need for ground floor facilities irrespective of tenure</li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust we have worked directly with over 40 communities on community led housing options.</li> <li>• The initial modular housing pilot project developed in Alness has proved successful and we are currently working with Albyn Housing Society on further clusters of modular Housing.</li> <li>• We are tendering for a pilot project for modular disabled adaption units following discussions with occupational therapists. Tenders are due back 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016.</li> </ul>	=
50	<p><b>Poverty and Deprivation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>With our partners, we will develop an anti-poverty strategy that also recognises the issue of poverty in rural areas. It will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable within our communities and help us meet the new legal duties for community planning partnerships to reduce inequalities from socio-economic disadvantage in specific localities. This will include maximising incomes, addressing fuel poverty, improving digital access and capability as well as equipping people with the skills to manage their money</i></li> <li>• <i>We will aim to reduce the number of Highland data zones in the most deprived national 15% with the aim of having no such data zones in the next decade</i></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to increase the number of customers reached by the Council's money advice and welfare rights this includes the funded work of the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB). This is a new indicator for 2015/16 and the Council and CAB teams reached 10,203 customers.</li> <li>• We increased the financial benefit to customers from the advice given by the Council from £3.97m in 2014/15 to £4.0m in 2015/16.</li> <li>• The operational application for the ESF programme on poverty, social inclusion and discrimination was submitted to the Scottish Government at the beginning of April 2016. The application focuses on 2 strands of activity - Move On which will be an intensive support service to co-ordinate support for clients with multiple barriers and Preventing Poverty and Increasing Financial Capability which will be a preventative approach working with families to ensure that they are in receipt of all appropriate entitlements, ensuring any debt issues are explored, provide advice in order to sustain employment and that the client is empowered to manage their financial matters. The operation is currently awaiting approval from the Scottish Government.</li> <li>• The Welfare Reform working group agreed in December 2015 to proceed with a programme of work to consider what is currently known about poverty in the Highlands and to understand the individual experience of poverty. It was considered that this would be a more appropriate way to proceed with developing an anti-poverty strategy than a Partnership/Stakeholder event and provide a better evidence base for any future strategy. This work is currently ongoing, overseen by the Welfare Reform Working Group and the CPP Health Inequalities Working Group, and supported by the Centre for Remote and Rural Studies at UHI.</li> <li>• The new version of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation has not yet been released. It is expected later in 2016. At that point analysis will be undertaken to assess the change between the previous and new versions of SIMD.</li> </ul>	√
51	<p><b>Looked After Children</b></p> <p><i>We will put the views of our young people who have experienced care at the heart of our decision-making &amp; will build on the commitment for all Community Planning Partners to</i></p>	=

**provide employment for care leavers. We will continue to reduce the number of children who are placed outwith Highland & will progress the case for a new residential home in Inverness for young people with Autism**

Progress:

- We aim to decrease the delay in the time taken between a child being accommodated and permanency decision. During 2015/16 we reduced the time to 9.7 months from 15 months the year before. Significant focus and effort has gone into improving this performance over the last year, as noted in the recent inspection of Adoption and Fostering. Potential cases are being identified at a much earlier stage. Progress however has been hampered in some areas by a shortage of experienced social workers and also impacted by a growing trend for legal challenge through the Children's Hearing, leading to delays in outcomes for children.
- Despite significant progress in developing alternatives to out of authority placements and the imaginative use of resources to return young people to the Highland area, there is a steady stream of new placements which has kept the numbers fairly static. Efforts are being made to develop services targeted at supporting families where there is a risk of a young person needing to be accommodated, however this will depend on the ability to access external funding. It's apparent that there is a culture of resorting to an out of authority placement for more challenging young people and this is proving difficult to change, with Children's Hearings often pushing for this outcome. The contracted residential service for young people is currently out to tender with the aim of developing a more robust service, as an alternative to out of authority placements. Therefore following a significant reduction in 2014/15 of the number of Looked After Children (LAC) accommodated outwith Highland to 27 we are currently maintaining this reduction with 29 placements in 2015/16.
- There are some signs of improvement through a higher profile for this option, and a push to consider kinship at an earlier stage in the permanence planning for children. During 2015/16 the percentage of children needing to live away from the family home but supported in kinship care was 15.8% compared to 14.6% the previous year.
- We aim to Increase consultation and engagement with Looked After Children. The concept of Development Assistants (care experienced young people employed by Highland Council, mostly on a part-time basis) has proved very successful and they are actively involved in many of the Improvement Groups to promote the voice of young people. They have been involved in training for foster carers and have worked with Who Cares? to put on a highly successful conference. The CHAMPS board (senior officers of partner agencies, elected members and young people) is now well established and is progressing actions.

**Benchmark SPIs**

All benchmark SPI go through extensive verification at a national level. The indicators below will not be updated for 2015/16 until early 2017. The current position for 2014/15 as reported to Council in March 2016 is as follows:

- The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services per Child per Week was £3191.35 in 2014/15 compared to £2846.58 the year before and is benchmarked 19<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a Community Setting per Child per Week was £206.77 in 2014/15 compared to £216.03 the previous year; this indicator has gone into the top quartiles ranked 8<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- In relation to the Balance of Care for looked after children (percentage of children being looked after in the community) in 2014/15 there were 82% looked after in the community compared to 81% the year before. This indicator is currently ranked 30<sup>th</sup> nationally.

**52 Affordable Housing**

***The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Housing Associations, and the private sector to help to deliver 5000 new homes between 2012 and 2017. This will include at least the completion of, or starting on site of 1700 new affordable homes including Council and housing association houses, low cost home ownership and mid-market rent homes. We will also work with the NHS to deliver housing for the elderly via clusters of self-contained houses with care support***

Progress:

- During 2015/16 there were a further 159 council house completions bringing the total to 593 against a target to achieve 688 by March 2017. We are developing, along with Albyn

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	<p>Housing Society, NHS Highland, The Highland Hospice and the private sector a pilot project in Alness which will deliver a cluster of sustainable and digitally enabled homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent statistics show that 835 homes were constructed in Highland in 2015/16. There was also more up to date data for the previous year 2014/15 showing 971 completions, instead of the 874 reported last year. Although projections show that we are likely to fall short of the overall 5000 home target, with measures such as the Highland Hub the Council is working with partners to overcome barriers and maximise the delivery of housing. The adoption of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan in early 2015/16 reconfirmed a generous supply of viable housing land across Highland.</li> <li>We meet monthly, through the Highland Housing Hub, to review progress within the overall affordable housing new build housing programme as well as monitoring against agreed targets. This allows early identification of issues that may affect our ability to meet agreed targets ahead of the fixed quarterly review meetings held with the Scottish Government and thus maximising opportunities presented by available investment available to develop affordable homes within the Highlands.</li> </ul>	
53	<p><b>Affordable Warmth</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with our partners to bring forward a new affordable warmth programme as part of our anti-poverty strategy and will aim to prioritise the delivery of as much as we can at our own hand</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital plan is based on 45% of the programme being on energy efficiency works to Council housing. We therefore continue to prioritise expenditure on energy efficiency across housing tenure and work in partnership with other organisations to provide advice and assistance to householders.</li> <li>We continue to monitor the proportion of the council's housing stock meeting energy efficient standards (SHQS) during 2015/16 we achieved 92.4% compared to 86.7% against a target of 100%.</li> <li>The Affordable Warmth Partners Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress against the Affordable Warmth Action Plan. We continue to prioritise expenditure on energy efficiency across housing tenure and work in partnership with other organisations to provide advice and assistance to householders.</li> <li>The Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS-ABS) has included properties from areas across the Highlands and has helped to complete zones that were left following the end of previous schemes. In total 1111 properties have benefited from insulation work under HEEP-ABS. During 2015/16 there were 345 properties in Inverness and Fort William which benefitted. The programme has targeted remote and rural areas with off-gas properties being prioritised. The programme has now been extended to 2018 and 281 properties will be completed in 2016-17.</li> </ul>	M
54	<p><b>Temporary Accommodation</b></p> <p><b><i>We will refresh the plan and continue to deliver supported temporary accommodation for those who are homeless, such as one bedroom flats as an alternative to bed and breakfast</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>We have agreed an approach to the future provision of temporary accommodation for Homeless people and monitoring reports will continue to be provided to the Committee. The following monitoring indicators have been established for 2015/16 forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We aim to reduce the use of bed and breakfast type temporary accommodation. During 2015/16 we used this option 215 times.</li> <li>We aim to increase the use of Council owned temporary accommodation and we used this option 310 times in 2015/16.</li> <li>We opened 1677 housing options cases in 2015/16 and closed 413.</li> </ul>	√
55	<p><b>Supporting Independent Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>We will support independent living by leading on the delivery of adaptations and technology enabled care with, and on behalf of, our NHS partners</i></b></li> </ul>	=

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>We will use the Highland Council's Scheme of Assistance Model to work with partners to deliver works for injured Armed Forces personnel</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current arrangements for delivering housing support services are being reviewed to meet new statutory duties introduced in 2012 to assess housing support needs and provide access to integrated housing support for all and to tailor support for homeless people. We have engaged with current housing support providers regarding the requirements for change through one to one consultation sessions. We have re-drafted the Service Specification which sets out consistent service delivery requirements; arrangements for referrals of clients to support providers; and reporting and monitoring of outcomes. It is intended that the housing support service will be advertised for tender during summer 2016 with a view to commence the new service with effect from 1 October 2016.</li> <li>In 2015/16 we developed a "one stop" delivery model, using the Handyperson Service to deliver Repairs, Adaptations, and Telecare install and maintenance (on behalf of NHS Highland) to speed up the process, minimising duplication and ensuring that clients get the benefit of a suite of services from a single Handyperson visit. We won a Quality Award for our progress in this area.</li> <li>The Scheme of Assistance is set up to receive referrals from and on behalf of Service Personnel and to react accordingly. We have worked with Agencies representing Personnel to ensure that our services meet specific needs, whether it is assistance with Handyperson tasks such as minor repairs, adaptations or Telecare installations, or larger structural works to adapt properties to accommodate injuries/disabilities. Housing Options and Housing Development are linked to this process to offer a range of solutions for injured personnel returning home. We were shortlisted for a Quality Award for our work in this area.</li> <li>We report on the number of adaptations and timescales for their delivery. During 2015/16 69.1% were approved compared to 63.5% the previous year.</li> <li>The average number of days to complete medical adaptations applications increased from 54 days to 70 days in 2015/16.</li> </ul>	
56	<p><b>Tackling Empty Properties</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with partners to use the Scheme of Assistance and Empty Property legislation to tackle property disrepair in the private sector, including empty flats and properties above shops, improving housing stock, promoting affordable warmth, and returning empty and substandard property to housing use</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose of the exercise in reporting the number of defective building incidents within Highland was to assist a Member of the Scottish Parliament in the creation of The Building (Scotland) Act 2003 (Charging Orders) Regulations 2014; which came into force in January 2015. This work is now complete.</li> <li>We are continuing to work with owners and partner organisations on bringing empty properties back into residential use. The 200% council tax initiative relating to empty properties has resulted in a noticeable increase in the number of owners of empty properties getting in touch. We will continue to offer financial assistance in the form of grant and interest free loans in areas of housing need. Empty property owners in all areas of the Highlands will continue to be issued, on request, with a VAT reduction letter if their property has been empty for at least 2 years. Over 40 of these letters have been issued to date.</li> </ul>	√
57	<p><b>Alcohol Dependency</b></p> <p><b><i>Working with our partners including the Drug and Alcohol Partnership, we will support efforts to address alcohol dependency in all of our communities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partnership continues to work towards achieving the drug and alcohol waiting times target (3 weeks from referral to treatment). However, the Partnership is doing very well with the delivery of Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABI's) which is a more preventative approach and are improving in many other areas including child protection case conferences (alcohol and drugs). Good progress is being made developing a set of core local indicators and these will be reported on in 2016/17.</li> </ul>	√

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have a biennial lifestyle survey in schools and from 2015 we asked children and young people to self-report whether they have ever had an alcoholic drink. We will look for improvement from this 2015 baseline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P7 – 90% have never had an alcoholic drink</li> <li>S2 – 63% have never had an alcoholic drink</li> <li>S4 – 29% have never had alcoholic drink.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
58	<p><b>Welfare Reform</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with the UK and Scottish Governments about the impacts of Welfare Reform in the Highlands and seek to ensure a fair and equal welfare system for our communities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>We are continuing to lobby where possible. Our Finance Service are actively engaged in working groups at a national level, and also act as COSLA advisers in discussions with Scottish Government.</p>	√
59	<p><b>Modernising the Council Tax System</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with the Scottish Government, other Local Authorities and COSLA to devise fairer forms of local taxation and work towards Local Authorities controlling a greater proportion of their funding</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>We now have the political party manifesto commitments in terms of the responses to the Commission on Local Taxation, and await formal proposals from the Scottish Government regarding their programme for the next 5 years. However it would appear that the proposals will look at amending the upper bandings of council tax rather than any fundamental change to local taxation. Officers are fully engaged at a national level in various working groups, and will continue to monitor and comment on proposals as they are developed.</p>	√
60	<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>We will lobby for an infrastructure grant fund mechanism from the Scottish Government to open up strategic sites throughout the Highlands to enable the delivery of new affordable housing</i></b></li> <li><b><i>We will continue to lobby the Scottish Government for additional resources to enable us to deliver more affordable homes in the Highlands</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the delivery of 688 new Council Houses by March 2017 reported as commitment 52 above, the following progress has been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Scottish Government have announced a £50 million infrastructure loan fund which we will be bidding for part of for individual strategic projects. They also announced increased grant rates in January 2016 following representation from Highland Council and others and they have also increased the affordable housing target to 50,000 over a five year period.</li> <li>We are working with our housing partners to deliver further National Housing Trust projects on identified sites in Inverness, Aviemore and the Black Isle</li> </ul>	√
61	<p><b>Fairer Fuel and Energy</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with UK and Scottish Governments and energy suppliers to promote fair domestic fuel pricing for the Highlands and a fairer system for targeting energy efficiency funding based on levels of fuel poverty</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the monitoring and reporting on the Affordable Warmth Action Plan and the number of home insulation measures committed through the Home Energy Programme for Scotland (Area Based Scheme) outlined at commitment 53 above, the following progress is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to work with HIE, and the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure that the Highlands is not disadvantaged in terms of the domestic fuel price, this includes monitoring the distribution network across the area to ensure that it is working efficiently for the Highland consumer.</li> </ul>	√

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recent reduction in the price of oil has led to a drop in the price of fuel across the Highlands. Furthermore, the introduction of some community run petrol stations combined with the fuel duty rebate, has also helped to ensure that fuel supplies remain accessible in our fragile areas. We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure the retention of petrol stations in our fragile areas.</li> <li>We have drafted an Energy Strategy and this will shortly be taken to committee.</li> <li>Roll out of smart metering in our public buildings has increased from 27.7% in 2014/15 to 32% in 2015/16; against a target of 50% which is now expected to be achieved in 2016/17.</li> <li>We targeted full poor homes and areas of deprivation in the Home Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEPS) programme during 2015-16.</li> <li>We have developed a scheme for Energy Efficiency improvements within HEEPS and this has been completed.</li> </ul>	
62	<p><b>Grid Connections</b></p> <p><b><i>We will work with the Scottish Government to lobby the UK Government to reduce grid access charges which impact negatively on renewable energy production in the Highlands</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to work with HIE and our fellow Highlands and Islands Local Authorities to ensure that the renewable energy resources of the area are not adversely affected by unfair transmission charges.</li> <li>Work is ongoing with our partners across the region to develop projects aimed at ensuring that Highland renewable energy projects are not constrained by inadequate transmission/distribution grid access. This is of particular relevance in relation to the development of community renewable energy projects that may be located in areas where grid access is not currently available.</li> </ul>	√
63	<p><b>Housing Debt</b></p> <p><b><i>We will take a fresh look at how we can continue to press UK and Scottish Government to write off the Council's historic housing debt</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>We continue to lobby politically on the issue of housing debt. In the UK debt accrued for the purpose of providing council housing is treated as "public sector debt". In some other European countries this debt is not reported as public sector debt. Irrespective of the reporting conventions applied the debt remains repayable by the organisation who undertook the borrowing.</p>	√

#### 4. Inverness City – the Capital of the Highlands

64	<p><b><u>City/Region Deal</u> - Progress the City/Region deal to lever in additional infrastructure investment, improve connectivity and enhance the skills of our young people across the Highlands</b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following initial meetings with the Scottish and UK Governments a long list of proposals was developed and a statement of intent provided. After further investigation of costs and benefits a final programme was agreed and The Heads of Terms (in principle agreement) for the City Region Deal was signed on the 22nd March 2016.</li> <li>Good progress has been made in preparing the West Highland and Islands plan. A series of consultation events were held across the plan area as part of a Main Issues Report consultation where communities were asked for their views on the main priorities for the future of their community. The Plan is scheduled to be submitted to Ministers early 2018 with adoption in early 2019.</li> <li>In relation to the Caithness &amp; Sutherland local development, the Proposed Plan was subject to consultation from January to March 2016 with over 600 comments received from 200 individuals, groups or businesses. The comments received will be analysed before we</li> </ul>	√
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	<p>seek Members approval for how we advance to the subsequent examination stage, which will determine the likely date for adoption in either late 2017 or early 2018.</p>	
65	<p><b><i>Infrastructure for Growth – to continue to grow, Inverness needs to address infrastructure constraints to enable the delivery of new housing, business and recreational facilities.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inverness West Link enabling works have been completed and these were the diversion of the main statutory services equipment (e.g. water, telecoms) in advance of the main West Link construction and these were completed in advance of the commencement of West Link stage 1 as programmed.</li> <li>• West Link Stage 1 is the construction of the link between the Dores Road and the A82 (Glenurquhart Road) including the River Ness bridge crossing. The contract was awarded to Wills Bros. Ltd and works commenced in spring 2016 to ensure the temporary works in the River can be completed over the environmentally less sensitive summer months. Works are progressing well and are programmed to be complete in December 2017.</li> <li>• Inverness West Link and commencement of Torvean golf course. Tenders were invited for the golf course and the contract has been awarded to Coffey Construction and EGS Joint Venture and works are programmed to commence in August 2016. This is a slight delay over the original programme, but this is not critical as the access dates for works on the live golf course are still to be achieved and works are programmed to be complete in spring 2019 as originally programmed.</li> <li>• In relation to the target for completion of the West Link, Stage 1 is under construction and the Golf Course is to commence in August 2016. Completion of the Golf Course in spring of 2019 will allow the existing golf course to be vacated allowing Stage 2 to commence for completion late 2020 all as programmed.</li> <li>• In relation to Inshes roundabout traffic capacity enhancements. Design work to ensure that the local traffic capacity enhancements at Inshes roundabout are compatible with future designs, delayed the commencement and these works were completed and operational in July 2016. The works were largely constructed off line with minimal traffic disruption and have been well received.</li> <li>• The Inshes roundabout scheme and the promotion of construction consents target of December 2016. The solution adopted by Transport Scotland for the A96/A9 link will dictate/influence the design to be adopted for Inshes Junction. Transport Scotland are to undertake public consultation in August 2016, and it is anticipated that the route will be announced by ministers in Spring 2017. We continue to work very closely with Transport Scotland to coordinate the design and construction programme.</li> <li>• In relation to the completion of works, as highlighted above, Inshes junction will be designed and constructed to dovetail with the A9-A96 link. Design works are ongoing to provide the next phase of Inshes Junction – under permitted development rights, to provide three lanes over Inshes overbridge. A decision to move to the construction phase will only be taken when certainty exists over the future of the bridge in respect of the A9-A96 link promoted by Transport Scotland.</li> </ul>	=
66	<p><b><i>City Promotion – We will progress the move of the Scottish Courts Service from Inverness Castle and turn the castle and surrounding area into a major visitor attraction for the city and region. We will also work with partners to enhance visitor experience by seeking to deliver further attractions for the city centre including the riverside arts trail</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to the development of Inverness Castle. A public consultation was undertaken and option agreed for castle by end March 2016. A new joint delivery group has been formed jointly chaired by the Provost/leader of Inverness and the Minister for the Rural Economy. Work is progressing on the viewing platform and is now part of the wider environmental improvements. Completion is due in late 2016 as additional stone repairs are being undertaken.</li> <li>• We have reviewed the Riverside Arts trail project programme which has resulted in the</li> </ul>	√

	<p>need to reschedule projected delivery. All projects are in process and it is anticipated that the Projects Programme will be completed by October 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit Inverness Loch Ness, the tourism BID include the riverside as one of the important features of the city in their marketing activity that promotes Inverness as a key visitor destination. As the Riverside Arts Project progresses there will be the opportunity for more specific references or promotional activity to promote both the wider project and specific installations.</li> </ul>	
67	<p><b><i>City Centre – We will work with our partners to deliver city centre Wi-Fi and other projects to deliver SMART Cities; as well as playing a full part in the Scottish Cities Alliance.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the Inverness city centre Wi-Fi project which is reported on at commitment 14 above. The following progress is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to play a full part in the smart cities work of the Scottish Cities Alliance with the “Scotland’s 8th City: The Smart City” Strategic Intervention projects progressing in parallel with the other cities. In addition to the strategic Intervention we are also in the process of developing other smart cities pipeline projects in collaboration with our partners.</li> <li>• The Council maintains a strong contribution to the work of the Scottish Cities Alliance, by participation in a wide range of initiatives aimed at working together to growing the economy of all of Scotland’s Cities.</li> </ul>	√
68	<p><b><i>Business Vibrancy - We will encourage new businesses to locate in the city centre, notably in creative industries and information technology. We will also progress the development of the Victorian Market as a major attraction.</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An incubator for start-ups is part of one of the projects being progressed through the Academy Street regeneration project. A proposal by Glasgow-based Wasps Artist Studios for the Midmills Building also includes potential incubator space.</li> <li>• The Project timescales have been amended following the City of Inverness Area Committee decision on 1 March 2016 to create a Victorian Market Stakeholder Group which includes Councillors and local business representatives. It will meet in early August 2016 and as part of its objectives (which focus on delivering a vibrant and sustainable future for the Market) will consider proposals for the Academy Street entrance. Progress on delivery of the contract is now anticipated to be in the last quarter of this financial year.</li> <li>• We have established a stakeholder working group and will report on options in December 2016 for future management of the Victorian Market.</li> </ul>	=
69	<p><b><i>Health and Wellbeing – Working with our partners we will progress the delivery of a regional sports facilities for the Highlands in Inverness incorporating indoor cycling, tennis and athletics as part of our aim of promoting the Highlands as a great place to live, work and visit. We will also explore options for a transport schemes so that all of Highland can benefit from these facilities</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>A revised outline business case will be prepared in August 2016 for the Regional Sports Facility project to establish if it can be included as part of our future Capital Programme. Outline design work is on hold until the Capital Programme review has been concluded.</p>	√
70	<p><b><i>Transport - Working with our partners we will develop public transport provision in the city and we will work with Abellio Scotrail to prepare and implement a masterplan for Inverness Railway Station. We also will aim to make Inverness one of the most family and visitor friendly cities in the UK through expanding 20mph zones throughout the residential areas of the city</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September 2015 the Council, Abellio Scotrail (AS) and HITRANS entered into a joint</li> </ul>	M

	<p>commission to develop design ideas for improvements to Inverness Railway Station. AS plans to invest up to £2m on station improvements as part of its franchise agreement with Transport Scotland. The study was completed in March 2016 and discussions are now underway on implementation. A report was made to the City of Inverness Area Committee setting out progress with this work on 3 March 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road Construction Consents were granted for Tornagraim and Ness Castle during the 2015/16 period which requires the developers to formally implement 20mph schemes within their developments. Work on both these developments commenced during the reporting period. Although the Council did not implement any formal 20mph zones in Inverness during 2015/16, we plan to deliver 3 schemes in 2016/17 in Merkinch (Inverness), Muir of Ord and Nairn.</li> <li>• A report on the National Roads Development Guidance was considered at the May 2016 Planning Development and Infrastructure Committee. This document, along with the Council's local guidance, sets out the requirement for roads within new developments to be designed for low speeds, and allows for the Council to require that 20mph schemes be delivered where appropriate. The Committee approved its use as guidance in the design of new developments.</li> </ul>	
71	<p><b><i>Social Equality - Working with our partners we will seek public sector infrastructure investment and training opportunities in our deprived communities to create jobs and improve quality of life</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite targeted marketing there were no shared apprentices taken on from the most deprived SIMD areas during 2015/16. Of those taken on, 6 of the 9 apprentices came from rural areas.</li> <li>• In 2015/16 we secured Regeneration capital grant funding for the conversion of the Welfare H</li> <li>• all in Merkinch, working in partnership with Merkinch Enterprise to deliver a new community project in its most deprived area. The scheme is currently on site.</li> </ul>	√
72	<p><b><i>Education - We will work to develop the presence of the University of the Highlands and Islands within the city, to enhance options for the retention of young people within the City and Region and encourage sector growth in industries</i></b></p> <p>Progress:</p> <p>In addition to the monitoring of implementation of the Highland Workforce Planning (which incorporates the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Strategy and the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan) which is provided at commitment 31 above. The following progress has been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The premises for the Highland Skills Academy at the Inverness Campus have been completed with work now focussing on the delivery of the action plan for the academy.</li> </ul>	√