Agenda Item	4b.
Report No	RES/12/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Corporate Resources**

Date: 26 May 2021

Report Title: **Performance & Governance Directorate Service Plan 2021/22**

Report By: ECO Performance & Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report introduces the Performance & Governance Directorate Service Plan for 2021/22 It sets out our Directorate priorities and how we are contributing to the delivery of the Council's Programme, "Local Voices, Highland Choices."

1.2 This report provides the context and supporting evidence for the contents of the Directorate Service Plan at Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is invited to comment on the draft Directorate Service Plan for 2021/22, agree any amendments required and approve the plan.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource: The Directorate Service Plan outlines the revenue budget associated with the Directorate, along with the high level organisational structure. The Plan highlights how we are achieving Best Value and transforming the Directorate to achieve efficiency savings. The resources section at page 4 of the Plan provides a high level summary of the indicative budget as at April 2021 for the year ahead. It will be further refined during Q1 to ensure all changes agreed to the core budget agreed at the Council meeting in March 2021 are included, any one off spend approved in subsequent Council meetings is monitored and reported and any material changes in staff resources are tracked and accounted for.

3.2 Legal: Directorate Service Plans set out the planned objectives and measures which together form the framework for annual public performance reporting. The Performance and Governance Directorate is responsible for supporting

governance and assurance across the Council and has responsibility for several statutory functions including internal audit, public performance reporting, the role of Monitoring Officer, liaison with the Standards Commission, Clerk to the Licensing Board, the role of the Data Protection Officer and liaison with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Directorate also has responsibility for the management of local and national elections and referenda. In addition, the Directorate undertakes non-statutory roles in performing Company Secretarial duties for High Life Highland, Eden Court Highlands and Highland Opportunity Limited.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Activities within the Plan are subject to screening for Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). For those commitments which have already been screened the results have been passed to the Council's Equalities Officer as part of the corporate monitoring systems for Equalities Legislation. Commitments which have not yet been screened, along with policy, strategy and plans linked to the delivery of these commitments will be screened to assess their impact during the early part of the plan timescale.

3.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The ECO Performance and Governance is the lead sponsor for the Climate Change and Energy workstream in the Recovery Improvement and Transformation Programme; and the Climate Change and Energy Team will be transitioning across to the Service over the coming months. The Performance and Governance Directorate will be responsible for ensuring there is a strong corporate focus on delivering as a whole organisation against the Council's ambitious targets, whilst continuing to implement projects on the ground that will make a tangible difference. This will require active collaboration across all of the Council's Directorates and prioritisation to accelerate change, capitalising on the ability to make connections across multiple council projects and workstreams. This remit will continue to be driven through the Climate Change Working Group reporting to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

3.5 Risk: Directorate risks are recorded in the Directorate Service Plan and are managed through the Directorate Risk Register which is monitored quarterly. Changes will be reported to future Committee meetings and relevant corporate risks are also reported to every Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

3.6 Gaelic: The Directorate leads on Gaelic Development and the Directorate Service Plan reflects the improvement actions required to deliver the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP3) and develop GLP4 by 2023; and the delivery of GLP3 targets are reported to each meeting of the Gaelic Committee. The Performance and Governance Directorate is also leading a review of The Highland Council's Gaelic Vision and Strategy which is being taken through the Gaelic Committee and will report to Council later in the year. The Performance and Governance Directorate works in partnership with the Education and Learning Directorate to support the delivery of Gaelic Education and Gaelic Medium Education. The Highland Council has more Gaelic learners and children and young people enrolled in Gaelic Medium Education than any other local authority in Scotland and aims to sustain and increase the numbers on an annual basis. There is a strong focus on raising attainment and achievement for all, high quality learning and teaching and positive and sustained destinations.

4 Background

4.1 This Directorate Service Plan relates to Performance & Governance, its functions and resources. The Plan is structured around five key sections:

1. Plan on a page – a summary of key priorities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
2. Resources – Directorate budget and staffing.
3. Delivering the Corporate Plan – the Directorate's responsibilities.
4. Directorate successes and areas for improvement.
5. Directorate improvement actions for 2021/22.

The focus of the plan is on improving Directorate performance and delivering the Council's Corporate Plan. The Directorate Service Plan is provided as Appendix 1 of this report.

4.2. The Directorate Service Plan is an active document and will be subject to update and review on an annual basis and submitted to Corporate Resources Committee for consideration. Any review will take account of internal and external influences and actions arising from monitoring activity throughout the year. This includes any amendments to the Council's Corporate Plan approved by Council that require the plan to be updated.

4.3 The plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis and quarterly reports will be provided to the Corporate Resources Committee and the content of these reports are discussed in more detailed at section 6 on Business Intelligence below.

4.4 To prepare the plan a number of key elements of review were required to be completed by the Directorate and these are detailed in the sections below.

5. Performance Analysis

5.1 In order to drive continuous improvement, the Directorate needs to be aware of its KPIs and review them in the context of the annual budget process to support setting targets and improvement actions for the financial year or longer term where required. The Performance & Governance Directorate is a support service and as such much of its work is about supporting Members and other Directorates, therefore many KPIs are qualitative in nature rather than quantitative. How each function of the Directorate monitors its performance is outlined below. Financial monitoring is an element for every part of the Directorate and financial trends and outturns with will reported quarterly.

- The Audit and Performance Team has one CIPFA benchmarked KPI for Internal Audit and a series of fixed deadlines for the delivery of Corporate Performance Reporting to Council and delivery of the agenda and papers for the Audit & Scrutiny Committee
    - CIPFA – cost of internal audit function, the indicator is nationally benchmarked and the Council consistently sits below the national average along with an average benchmark position of 8th.
    - Audit & Scrutiny Committee agenda and papers are issued to corporate deadlines.
    - Corporate Performance – delivery of Annual Performance Report to September 2021 Council, Citizen's Panel Survey to October 2021 Council and SPI & Benchmarking Report to March 2022 Council.
- Trading Standards
    - The Trading Standards Service has one KPI - ENV5A 'Cost of Trading Standards per 1000 population' under the LGBF Financial Performance Indicators Framework. The measure offers a simple calculation based on the Services total costs against the Council's population. The Council

consistently compares positively nationally reflecting the relative size of the service against the Highland population.

- Legal Service
  - There are no defined or identified KPIs within legal currently. The service has previously participated in national benchmarking exercises with other local authorities organised through the Society of Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR).
  - The Directorate reports corporate performance against FOI targets to the Information Commissioner on a quarterly basis.
- Democratic Services
  - The Service tracks and records performance internally capturing data on the number of meetings that have been supported and distribution of meeting papers.
  - Governance – the Code of Corporate Governance; the Scheme of Delegation; and Standing Orders for the Conduct of Meetings are reviewed and reported to Council annually.
- Gaelic
  - The Council's KPI's for Gaelic are in The Highland Council's third generation Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023 (GLP3). The GLP3 describes the Council's aims and ambitions for Gaelic language and culture over the period of the plan and how these will be achieved through 126 enabling actions spanning 6 themes.
  - Performance against GLP3 is reported quarterly to the Gaelic Committee as well as annually to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for scrutiny in an annual return.
  - There are twice yearly reports to the Scottish Government on the outcomes achieved against the projects supported by Gaelic Specific Grant.

6. Business Intelligence

6.1 The majority of the Council's KPIs are annual measures therefore it is important that Committee is sighted on more regular reporting on performance. On a quarterly basis Committee will be provided with the following business intelligence:

- Budget – in year and projected outturn of revenue budget
- Directorate staff sickness absence trends and targets (contribution to nationally benchmarked KPI)
- Directorate Complaints
- Corporate and Directorate FOI and EIR performance against targets
- Directorate invoice processing against target (contribution to nationally benchmarked KPI).
- Performance against Gaelic Language Plan 3 targets
- Recovery, Improvement and Transformation workstreams

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The Directorate's Management Team regularly reviews service delivery risks along with any Directorate owned or supported corporate risks. In preparing this Directorate Service Plan a review workshop was held and the following risks are being managed by the Directorate and where required improvement action reflected in the Directorate Service Plan.

- CR1 – Financial Sustainability (corporate support) – internal audits of procurement and purchase to pay to provide assurance on use of Council resources;

- CR2 – Security & Resilience (corporate support) – Off-site plans for major accident hazards and radiation emergency; multi agency planning and exercises; internal audit of cyber security;
- CR4 – Brexit (corporate support) – support networking with COSLA, COHI, Scottish Government, professional associations and partners; resilience planning;
- CR8 – Demographic Change (corporate support) – workforce planning and sustainable recruitment;
- CR18 – COVID-19 (corporate support) – ensure good governance and effective communications;
- CR20 – Data Transfers (International)(corporate support) – engage with Data Protection Network nationally on risk assessment of using offshore based data and keep under review national developments liaising with Information Commissioner;
- CR21 – Elections – (corporate support) – Ensure core Elections Team resilience and effective communications;
- PGV1 – Local Committees – review capacity to support increasing number of local committees;

8. Best Value

8.1 The Directorate leads in the preparation and engagement with external auditors on the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) and the ongoing review of the Council's delivery of Best Value through the annual external audit report. The Council's most recent BVAR in January 2020 resulted in an improvement plan approved by Council in March 2020 and the Directorate has responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the plan and for specific actions:

- Review of approach to performance & financial monitoring to Strategic and Area Committees (target Q2 2021/22)
- Target based annual reporting of the Corporate Plan utilising benchmarking and family group data (achieved October 2020 & now ongoing)
- Improved Directorate Service Planning process (achieved May 2021) and improved Strategic Committee monitoring (target Q2 2021/22)
- Review of Directorate performance data and business intelligence (completed May 2021)
- Review the Council's approach to self-assessment (target December 2021)
- Sharing best practice internally and externally and arranging a programme of external learning visits (on hold due to COVID)
- Review the Council's governance arrangements working with Members (target October 2021)
- Review operation of the Council's sub-committees and working groups to ensure their effectiveness (target December annually)
- Support the Chief Executive to review the effectiveness of the new organisational restructure and ensure there are effective work force plans and Directorate Learning Plan are in place (target December 2021)
- Support the Chief Executive evaluate the effectiveness of new management structures and their ability to deliver the pace of change required for transformation and long-term sustainability (target September annually)
- Develop a Members Training & Development Programme and report annually on training uptake (target December annually)
- Prepare a new induction programme for new Members (target February 2022).

9. Inspections, Internal and External Audit Report

9.1 The Council was subject to a BVAR in January 2020 which is detailed in section 8 above. The Directorate has a key role in liaising with external audit on the Council's statutory duties in relation to internal audit and for public performance reporting.

9.2 In relation to Gaelic Language, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), an executive agency of the Scottish Government is charged with supporting quality and improvement where Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner Education is available. The Gaelic Development Team supports Gaelic outcomes outlined within Education Scotland's Gaelic Education Advice to enhance opportunities for learning and support the performance of schools when under the inspection and review processes of HMIE.

The Council reports annually to Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the implementation of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan through the process of an 'Annual Return'.

9.3 The Directorate was not subject to any internal audit during 2020/21 partly as the Directorate was newly established at a time when the COVID response was prioritised. Planning is underway for the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan and discussion held with each ECO on a risk-based assessment on areas of audit focus. A final plan will be reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 17th June 2021.

9.4 The Directorate has lead responsibility for managing and supporting the Council's use of surveillance powers in terms of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act. (RIPSA) and the ECO for Performance and Governance undertakes the role of the Senior Information Risk Owner for the Council. The Council's use of surveillance powers is subject to regular inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO). The Council was inspected in the course of 2020 and received a positive report which identified a number of elements of good and best practice and made no recommendations for improvement.

10. Workforce Planning

10.1 Improvements in performance will be delivered through having the right staff in the right place with the right skills through effective workforce planning including training and development, wellbeing support, performance management and appraisal, transition, sustainability, flexibility and redeployment.

10.2 An initial workshop was undertaken early in 2021 utilising SWOT and PESTLE analyses to understand the workforce planning requirements that the Directorate needs to address. A number of single points of failure were identified in relation to key roles in Elections management, Data Protection and information management as well as difficulties in recruiting to legal vacancies which has led to a range of improved resilience arrangements and resources being put in place to manage these issues. It remains the case that the Highland Council's corporate functions such as Performance and Audit, Policy, Trading Standards, members/committee support, Corporate Communications and Resilience are small compared with local authorities of a similar size. This means that it is essential that resources are properly focused on the areas of highest priority for the organisation and that staff are able to be fully effective with strong cross-service engagement, clear workplans and appropriate training and support.

10.3 In common with many parts of the organisation, the Directorate has a high proportion of staff in the 50-59 age bracket with well over half the workforce over 40 years old. A review will be undertaken in the first half of 2021/22 to identify areas of

particular concern and potential mitigating actions, including looking at opportunities to employ Modern Apprentices and introduce Graduate placements. Staff absence is low at 2.14 days lost per employee and well below the average of 6.44 days for the Council overall.

10.4 The Directorate will formulate a training and development plan for staff across all parts of the Service to ensure mandatory training requirements are being met, skills gaps identified and opportunities for learning and development are maximised. These plans will be drawn up on the back of the Employee Review and Development (ERD) process which is currently under review corporately and the staff survey responses.

10.5 There was over 90% return rate from the Directorate to the recent Staff Survey and, once available, the Service breakdown of answers will be analysed to understand how best to support the Performance and Governance staff as part of the Return to the Workplace programme of work. Updated Service and section Workforce Plans will be developed in line with Corporate strategy.

11. Staff Health, Safety & Wellbeing

11.1 A nominated senior manager attends corporate meetings with Trade Unions and reports back to Senior Management Team meetings with information, issues and actions. In addition, every quarter the Directorate holds Health & Safety meetings jointly with the Resources and Finance and Transformation Services to discuss service-based risks/concerns. These meetings are attended by senior managers, Trade Union representatives, Human Resources and Health & Safety Advisors. The minutes of these meetings are reported to the Central Safety Committee

11.2 Staff engagement is known to drive up levels of staff satisfaction. An All-Staff Engagement Survey will be carried out in Autumn 21 to establish a satisfaction index. Future Directorate Service Plans will include percentage improvement against those indicators going forward.

12. Supporting Strategies and Plans

12.1 The Directorate contributes to the delivery of the following plans and strategies:

- Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP)
- The Council Programme
- Corporate Plan
- BVAR Improvement Plan
- Ambitious Highland – Health & Prosperity Strategy
- Corporate Communications Strategy
- The Highland Council Emergency Plan
- Gaelic Language Plan

13. Equality and Community Impact Assessment, and Strategic Environmental Assessment

13.1 <u>Equality and Community Impact Assessment</u>
The Directorate Service Plan has been assessed for potential impacts on communities and an Equalities Impact Assessment has also been completed. This helps us to achieve our duties in respect to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including socio-

economic impacts at a strategic level, and a Council commitment to consider rural and poverty impacts.

Assessments have been carried out for equality, rural and poverty impacts and no negative impacts were identified. The Fairer Scotland Duty was also considered and following an initial online screening no strategic impacts was identified. The equality, rural and poverty impact assessments will be submitted to the Head of Policy following approval of the plan.

13.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Council has a legal duty to consider for all plans, programmes and strategies, the relevance of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. No environmental impacts were identified to justify a full screening exercise for the plan. The pre-screening assessment has been submitted and acknowledged by the Scottish Government.

Designation: ECO Performance & Governance

Author: Corporate Audit & Performance Manager

Date: 12 May 2021

Appendices: Performance & Governance Service Plan 2021/22

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Performance and Governance
Coileanadh agus Riaghlachas

Directorate Service Plan (2021-2022)
Plana Seirbheis na Buidhne-stiùiridh (2021-2022)

(Updated 26 May 2021)
(Ùraichte 26 Cèitean 2021)

Ambitious Sustainable Connected

Key Priorities Prìomhachasan		Key Performance Indicators Prìomh Thaisbeanairean Coileanaidh
Through the work of the new Policy Development Unit support Members to represent and promote the Highlands.	Support the Council Administration and all Service Directorates to implement the Council's Programme.	• Agree and report annually priorities to represent and promote the Highlands; • Cost of Internal Audit (per £m Council net expenditure); • Meeting Statutory Duties on Public Performance Reporting and Risk; • Directorate- average days absence per employee; • Directorate - Invoices payments within 30 days; • Directorate - FOI requests met within 20 days; • Time taken to respond to complaints (Stage 1- 5 days, Stage 2 – 20 days); • Annual Code of Corporate Governance approved and monitored. • Annual report to Council on progress delivering the Council's BVAR Improvement Plan. • Delivery of Gaelic Language Plan 3 targets • Cost of Trading Standards per 1000 population • During 2021/22 a new service-wide performance framework will be developed drawing on a range of data, external reports and self-evaluation. KPIs to use will be refreshed.
Deliver effective elections management which achieve accurate results and maintain the confidence of the electorate.	Ensure there are effective governance arrangements in place including the annual Code of Corporate Governance.	
Deliver an effective statutory internal audit service. Robust arrangements for the prevention of fraud and effective detection and investigation of fraud.	Ensure corporate performance is effectively measured, reported, scrutinised and used to improve services and deliver Best Value. Ensure the statutory duty of Public Performance Reporting is achieved.	
Support the Council to embed effective corporate risk management processes.	Promote & Support Gaelic language and culture.	

Protect Highland consumers and businesses by tackling unfair and unsafe trading practices and assist business growth through best practice.	Deliver an effective internal and external communications service, to inform service users, and promote confidence in Council's use of resources.	
Support the Recovery Improvement and Transformation Programme and jointly sponsor Climate Change and Energy; Digital Transformation; Economic Development.	Ensure resilience to plan effectively for risks and respond to emergencies. Ensure the Council meets statutory resilience obligations within the Civil Contingencies Act and other legislation.	
Offer effective support to meetings of the Council, its Committees and ALEOs.	Support the Council and its services through the provision of high-quality legal advice.	
Support the delivery of the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) Improvement Plan.	Ensure the Council has robust Information Management and Information Risk processes and procedures in place.	

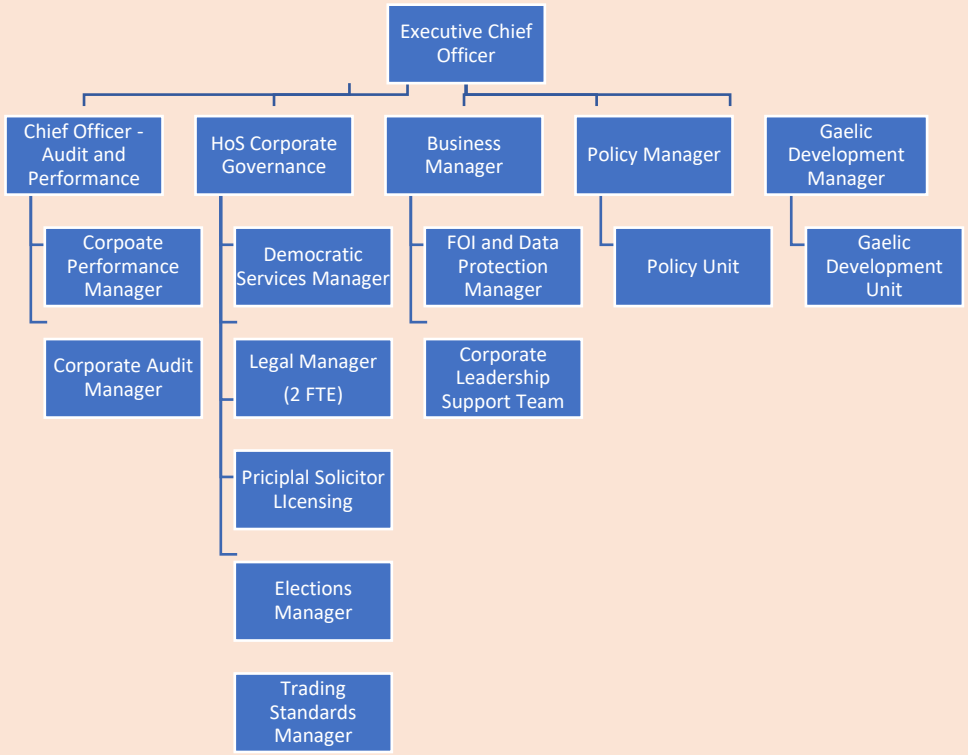
Resources

Goireasan

Revenue Budget

Section	
Exec Office & Directorate	477,195
Cosla	126,054
Information Management	76,646
Members	1,711,322
Communications & Resilience	244,399
Legal Services	352,670
Licensing	(419,214)
Democratic Services	662,311
Elections	240,512
Trading Standards	662,979
Audit & Performance	885,126
Gaelic Development	720,929
Grand Total	**5,740,929**

Organisational Structure



The Directorate receives approximately £4M income in addition to the base budget. The major sources of this relate to a range of regulatory and licensing activities plus grants relating to Gaelic development from the Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Delivering the Corporate Plan
A' Lìbhrigeadh a' Phlana Chorporra

	Performance Analysis	Target	Actions
Support the Council's engagement with Government bodies and influence national policy on the Council's agreed policies and investment priorities.	Report to Council to demonstrate the breadth and effectiveness of national engagement.	Annually	Report to Council.
Absence (non-teaching) LGBF CORP6b	Data is not yet available for the new organisation structure. Continue to ensure that absence management policies are adhered to and staff wellbeing is a focus for the Directorate. Set targets for improvement once baseline data is available. Functions which make up the new Directorate have consistently performed well and **for 2020/21 Absence Days Lost per Employee was 2.14 days compared to 6.44 days for the Council overall**.	Quarterly ongoing	Report absence to Corporate Resources Committee quarterly. Manage absence to maintain high performance and contribute to the annual corporate target of less than 10.12 days by 2021/22.

Reduce Staff and Member Travel Costs	Monitor staff and Member travel ensuring use of grey fleet is maximised.	Monthly review and reporting September annually	Monitor and report annually to Corporate Resources Committee. Manage and reduce costs to contribute to the corporate target of reducing staff travel costs to £2.3m by 2021/22 and the recurring Service savings in the Members' budget of £20,000
Maintain recruitment controls to shape the workforce and align with budget and service delivery priorities	Ensure strong governance around recruitment in the Directorate contributing to corporate policy and controls	Annual performance report to Council – September Annually	Contribute to annual performance report on recruitment controls.
Promote and support the Gaelic language and culture through the 3rd generation Gaelic Language Plan (GLP)	Delivery monitored through PRMS. 4th iteration of the GLP in development building on previous plans.	Quarterly Report on progress to the Gaelic Committee. Annual report to Council each Autumn	Contribute to the Council annual performance report on Corporate Plan outcome 2.7 on GLP. Utilise the Council's Corporate Performance Reporting System (PRMS) to monitor and enable quarterly performance reports to Committee.
Review structures and governance arrangements to ensure we are adaptive to our local and Highland-wide priorities	Review Autumn 2022 and report to Council thereafter	3rd Quarter 2021	Engage with Members and officers following the summer recess to undertake a SWOT analysis of current arrangements and make recommendations

Successes and Areas for Improvement and Development

Soirbheasan agus Raointean airson Leasachadh

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Corporate Performance and Corporate Risk Management	✓ Completed review of Directorate Service Planning guidance in response to BVAR (January 2021). ✓ Completed review and refreshed approach to SPI and Benchmarking reporting or March 2021 Council. ✓ Completed review of the Council's approach to Corporate Risk Management including Strategy (March 2021). ✓ Piloted Power BI to improve data visualisation across the Council (January 2021). ✓ Presented Corporate and Public Performance Reporting include progress against targets and benchmarks to October 2020 Council.	❖ Ensure that public performance reporting is based on assessment of progress against targets and meets Best Value requirements. ❖ Embedding corporate performance and risk management processes across new Council structure. ❖ Developing dashboards to improve access and understanding of Council's Corporate Performance Indicators. ❖ Further develop the use of PRMS and Power BI to improve the use of data. ❖ Develop corporate performance reporting to further improve PPR. ❖ Self-Evaluation - implement a corporate process for critical self-evaluation and review the work of high performing Councils to inform the approach. ❖ Commence development of Corporate Plan 2022-2027

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Internal Audit & Fraud Investigation	✓ Completed review of the governance arrangements for the Audit & Scrutiny Committee. ✓ HC Whistleblowing Policy reviewed and transferred to Fraud Team Management. New procedures in place. ✓ Internal Audit Plan approved. ✓ Annual survey of Members of the effectiveness of Audit & Scrutiny Committee.	❖ Promoting good practice in the prevention and detection of fraud. ❖ Support Members to undertake more effective scrutiny. ❖ Improve reporting format of progress against Internal Audit Plan. ❖ Undertake programme of learning visits to other Councils to review and ensure best practice approach to Audit
Trading Standards	✓ Dealing with Trading Standards matters during the pandemic, in particular scams, premises restrictions, product safety and consumer refunds. ✓ Assisting local businesses with new trading obligations relating to EU Exit. ✓ Continuing to improve situation for Highland buyers in relation to internet delivery surcharges. ✓ Protecting vulnerable consumers such as elderly through anti-scams work including call-blocker installations.	❖ Restart work suspended or reduced during pandemic restrictions, e.g.: • Tobacco and age restricted sales • Weights and Measures calibration

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Legal Services	✓ Even without adjusting for Covid Conveyancing & Commercial are managing an increased workload in 2020 over 2019. ✓ Digitisation of work processes ongoing. ✓ Supported remote regulatory meetings and prepared meeting protocols. ✓ Review of Scheme of Delegation in respect of planning applications.	❖ GDPR compliance work requires completion during 2021 (File storage & destruction). ❖ Conveyancing & Commercial plan to offer 'legal surgeries' to services. ❖ Implement full digitisation of legal records as part of the Digital Transformation Programme.
Democratic Services	✓ Supported the move to online/virtual Committee and Council meetings. ✓ Developed a SharePoint site to allow for the electronic distribution of papers including a system for secure distribution of confidential papers. ✓ Developed an electronic voting system in conjunction with ICT Services.	❖ Supporting Services to ensure papers are distributed in accordance with Standing Orders. ❖ Support the Redesign Board's review of hard copy report distribution. ❖ Support review of area support arrangements – Autumn 2021. ❖ Preparation for new Council 2022.

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Data Protection, FOI and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	✓ Supported Council staff and Councillors in relation to emergency powers and how these affected the processing of personal data. ✓ Advised on the Council's implementation of "helping hands" to ensure that the correct balance was struck between emergency powers and data protection principles. ✓ Implementation of FOI action plan in relation to Scottish Information Commissioner's intervention. ✓ Participation in development of the Customer Improvement and Resolution Team (an outcome of the FOI action plan) to improve compliance with information requests and complaints management. ✓ Participation in the progress and development of the new customer relationship management system including new processes for FOI requests and complaints. ✓ Reduction in cases proceeding to the SPSO and upheld	❖ Provision of training and support for the newly established Customer Improvement and Resolution Team. ❖ Testing and improvement of CRM processes for FOI and complaints including data verification and reporting. ❖ Review and update publication scheme. ❖ Completion of FOI action plan and conclusion of intervention. ❖ Review of corporate information governance and risk to establish standards for information management including the processing of personal data. ❖ Review and analysis of Secondary school use of pupil data with a view to agreeing strategy and standardisation. ❖ Refresh Information Management Governance Board. ❖ Agree Information Audit schedule. ❖ Provide training and induction to new elected Members May 2022.

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Gaelic Language & Culture	✓ Re-established the Gaelic Committee with an agreed workplan. ✓ Quarterly reporting of progress against the GLP3 commitments through PRMS. ✓ Regular and positive key partnership engagement activity. ✓ Commitment to review Vision and Strategy recognising Highland as the largest provider of Gaelic Education in Scotland. ✓ Digital adaptations creating legacy resources for learning and professional development. ✓ Adapted Gaelic Adult learning and family classes delivered as live sessions online. ✓ Adapted Gaelic 0-3 groups to online networks. ✓ Bilingual press releases, provided for matters relating to Gaelic, now appear in Gaelic first on the Council's website.	❖ Review funding agreements with partner's delivering outcomes of GLP3. ❖ Further develop the use of networks to collaborate and enhance impact and resources available. ❖ Review parental engagement with 0-5 groups and Gaelic awareness activity to mitigate recent drop in ELC enrolment. ❖ Support Members to undertake effective scrutiny and develop cross-working on Gaelic education with the Education Committee. ❖ Support schools to include website information on Gaelic Medium provision and Gaelic visibility in communication. ❖ Engage with stakeholders to begin a 3-18 GME feasibility study in Inverness. ❖ Complete review of Highland Vision and Strategy for Gaelic Development. ❖ Support the Royal National Mod in Inverness October 2021. ❖ Enhance corporate presence of Gaelic across all Council services and increase number of staff learning and using Gaelic.

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Corporate Communications & Resilience	✓ Initiated and maintained the emergency response to COVID-19 based on the Council's Resilience framework. ✓ Delivered COVID-19 messaging externally and internally. ✓ Successful partnership work with LRP to address risks. ✓ Delivery of off-site plans for COMAH and Nuclear sites. ✓ Successful Office of Nuclear Radiation (ONR) audit. ✓ Delivery of Resilience training use of social media to reach wider audiences (eg TikTok). ✓ Introduction of Staff Connections engagement sessions and online access to information. ✓ Enhanced digital communications (video productions).	❖ Further develop learning from debriefs to inform policies and response. ❖ Develop resilience training packages. ❖ Further develop training in Plain English across Council. ❖ Develop staff and public information resources through film unit with enhanced focus on digital and visual/audio communications. ❖ Develop a central coordinated marketing and campaigns resource.

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Corporate Leadership Support/Policy Development	✓ Established and supported virtual all-Member Covid-19 briefings. ✓ Undertook lobbying activity on a range of issues. ✓ Good practice guidance for governance arrangements during COVID-19. ✓ Restructured the Corporate Leadership Support Team to provide effective support to senior officers. ✓ Member Development Programme designed. ✓ Support for Members workshops and seminars. ✓ Supported Tactical and Gold COVID-19 meetings. ✓ Introduced new Member expenses system.	❖ Establish new Policy Unit. ❖ Review Programme for Government and identify lobbying/influencing opportunities. ❖ Enhance capacity to support corporate objectives. ❖ Delivery of the Member development programme. ❖ Design and deliver new Member induction 2022. ❖ Support new Administration and development of new Council Programme 2022. ❖ Work with the Chief Executive other Directorates to develop and deliver the Leadership Development Programme

	Successes	Areas for Improvement and Development
Elections	✓ Delivery of a successful by-election under COVID-19 conditions. ✓ Delivery of a successful Scottish Parliament elections across three count centres under COVID safe conditions. ✓ Enhanced communication through use of electronic information screens and live You Tube coverage through communications team.	❖ Undertake full review and lessons learned from Scottish Parliamentary Election. ❖ Seek to improve engagement with the Boundary Commission. ❖ Review of polling districts following outcome of Boundary Commission Review. ❖ Engagement with Crofting Commission elections in 2022. ❖ Preparation for local government elections in 2022 and e-count.

Improvement Actions for 2020/21

Gnìomhan Leasachaidh airson 2020/21

	Improvement Actions	How we will measure success
Corporate Performance	• Review the approach to performance monitoring reports to Strategic and Area Committees in collaboration with the Finance Team. • Develop dashboards to improve access and visualisation of the Council's performance. • Develop corporate and Public Performance Reporting (PPR) to include measuring progress against targets and benchmarks in line with BVAR recommendations. • Implement a Directorate Service Planning process based on data analysis to inform improvement activity and enable Strategic Committees to monitor progress. • Review the Council's approach to self-assessment and implement a new corporate approach. • Implement a Business Partner Model for Corporate Performance across the Council.	• Revised approach to financial and performance monitoring reports to Strategic and Area Committees for Q2 2021/22. • Performance dashboards accessible for SPIs, KPIs and the Corporate Plan by June 2021. • New Council Annual Performance Report format using measures and targets (October 2020 and annually). • New Directorate Service Plans submitted to Strategic Committees by June 2021. • New Corporate self-assessment process in place by December 2021. • % PRMS content overdue for update. • Annual report to Council on the delivery of the BVAR Improvement Plan. (September 2021 and annually). • ELT/SLT Workshop to embed the requirements of Best Value for Council's PPR by June 2021.

	Improvement Actions	How we will measure success
Internal Audit & Fraud	• Review of the Council's Financial Regulations. • Deliver the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan. • Develop online training modules for Members on their scrutiny role. • Campaign to promote good practice in the detection and prevention of fraud.	• Updated Financial Regulations approved by Audit & Scrutiny Committee by September 2021. • Quarterly progress reports to Audit & Scrutiny Committee on Internal Audit Plan. • Uptake of Members scrutiny training. • Develop Gantt Chart approach to managing Internal Audit Plan and timeline.
Corporate Risk Management	• Embed corporate risk processes into the new Council structure. • Review Corporate Risk Strategy to ensure effective scrutiny of risk (external audit action).	• Risk management forms part of new Directorate Service Plans and regular Directorate monitoring by June 2021. • All Directorate Risk Registers on PRMS by June 2021. • Corporate Risk Strategy review and approved by Audit & Scrutiny Committee by June 2021.
Directorate/Corporate Leadership Support	• Develop Policy and political engagement activity, including the preparation of lobbying plans for specific topics. • Review the Council's governance arrangements working with Members (target October 2021) (BVAR)	• Quarterly report to ELT and annual report to Council on lobbying activity as required by the Corporate Plan. • High level performance reports to the RIT Board, quarterly progress reports to relevant Committee.

	Improvement Actions	How we will measure success
	• Review the Council's sub-committees and working groups to ensure their effectiveness (December annually) (BVAR). • Support the Chief Executive to review the effectiveness of the new organisational restructure and ensure there are effective work force plans and Directorate - Learning Plan are in place. (target December 2021) (BVAR). • Deliver outcomes of the Recovery Improvement and Transformation Programme. • Deliver Members Training and Development Programme. • Prepare an Induction Programme for new Members.	• Delivery of the Members Training and Development Programme Target February 2022. • Induction Programme rollout – target May - July 2022. • Report on Member training uptake April/May annually.
Trading Standards	• Restart suspended activities including tobacco and age restricted sales and weights and measures. • Review, redesign and relaunch website www.deliverylaw.uk • Continue to advise business and enforce provisions relating to the pandemic and EU Exit.Promote post-pandemic economic recovery in the Highlands.	• Number of visits and number of test purchases carried out. • Number of machines tested, and calibration income raised. • Number of web hits, feedback from consumers, businesses and stakeholders. • Number of interventions with businesses, including advice, visits and investigations • Number of interventions with businesses.

	Improvement Actions	How we will measure success
Communications & Resilience	• Develop a centralised Council marketing resource to coordinate marketing and attain best value. • Develop a digital unit to increase digital communications. • Deliver and promote plain English training. • Develop and deliver Resilience and business continuity training	• Centralise all marketing budgets to achieve corporate saving of 5% • Engagement stats for promoted posts and web hits. • Number of views of productions. • Number of staff undertaking plain English training. • Number of staff undertaking Resilience training.