

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CP/08/24

Committee: Communities & Place

Date: 22 May 2024

Report Title: Communities and Place – Service Performance Reporting for Q4
1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides performance information on:

- Corporate Indicators
- Contribution to the Corporate Plan
- Service Plan Progress
- Mitigation of Service Risks
- Service updates outwith the Corporate Indicators or Service Plan

The content and structure is intended to:

- assist Member scrutiny and performance management
- inform decision making to aid continuous improvement, and
- provide transparency and accessibility

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Scrutinise** the Service's performance and risk information.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource:

There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.2 Legal:

This report contributes to the Council's statutory duties to report performance and secure best value in terms of; Section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992, and Section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, respectively.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island):

There are no Community implications arising from this report.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever:

There are no relevant implications arising from this report.

3.5 Risk:

There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):
There are no immediate health and safety implications arising from this report.

3.7 Gaelic:

There are no implications for Gaelic arising from this report.

4. Service Performance – Corporate Indicators

4.1 Service performance in relation to Absence, Complaints, FOIs, and Invoice Payments are set out in the following sub-sections.

4.2 Service Attendance Management

Staff absence is a nationally benchmarked indicator. Effective absence management supports staff, maintains productivity, and contributes to the Council's benchmarked performance. In Quarter 4 the Service lost an average of 4.31 days per employee compared to an average of 3.48 for the Council as a whole.

Communities and Place

Average number working days per employee lost through sickness absence

Average Days Lost	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
Communities and Place	3.42	3.45	2.74	3.60	3.80	4.27	4.38	4.31
Highland Council	2.24	1.58	1.89	2.88	2.48	2.08	3.35	3.48

4.3 The Service will continue to focus on increased engagement and support to staff utilising all HR Policies available to improve this area. This includes fully utilising the Occupational Health services and critically appraising the range of data to better understand the reasons for absence and how best to support staff back into work wherever practicable. Common reasons for absence include viral (cold, flu) and musculoskeletal-related (strains, back pain). The HR Attendance Support Officers continue to play an important role in assisting both managers and employees and their support extends to situations where absence has become very complex or when an employee faces a life changing or terminal diagnosis.

4.4 Service Complaints Response Times

Monitoring complaints provides important feedback which can facilitate decision-making and service design. Services are responsible for responding to complaints which are issued on their behalf by the Customer and Resolution Improvement Team ('CRIT').

Performance for complaints during Quarter 4 against a corporate target of 80% was as follows:

Complaints - Communities and Place

Number of closed complaints and the % compliant with the legislative timescale

Frontline Resolution within 5 days

	Q1 22/23		Q2 22/23		Q3 22/23		Q4 22/23		Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24	
Communities and Place	71	70 %	64	94 %	33	100 %	22	95 %	64	97 %	37	92 %	36	89 %	57	82 %
Highland Council	170	61 %	163	90 %	137	93 %	101	90 %	159	92 %	132	78 %	150	80 %	189	76 %

Investigation Resolution within 20 days

	Q1 22/23		Q2 22/23		Q3 22/23		Q4 22/23		Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24	
Communities and Place	6	17 %	4	100 %	2	50 %	4	0 %	11	36 %	8	38 %	2	100 %	7	43 %
Highland Council	65	46 %	54	31 %	49	47 %	63	41 %	97	63 %	85	49 %	67	48 %	98	46 %

Escalated Resolution within 20 days

	Q1 22/23		Q2 22/23		Q3 22/23		Q4 22/23		Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24	
Communities and Place	6	33 %	5	20 %	3	33 %	2	50 %	8	75 %	4	75 %	5	80 %	4	75 %
Highland Council	38	18 %	34	32 %	22	36 %	15	33 %	32	50 %	32	41 %	28	57 %	34	35 %

4.5 Reflecting the frontline nature of many of the services Communities and Place deliver, the Service recognises the importance of this area and performance overall is positive. The majority of complaints are in the 5 days frontline resolution category and the Service continues to perform above the target of 80% with the average number of days to respond at 3.5 days. Complaints in the other categories are generally very complex and therefore require more time to respond.

4.6 Service Freedom of Information ('FOI') Response Times
FOI requests are co-ordinated by CRIT in collaboration with the Service teams which may hold information relevant to the request.

The performance for FOI response times during Quarter 4 against a corporate target of 90% was as follows:

Freedom of Information Requests - Communities and Place

% of FOIs closed compliant with the legislative timescale

% FOIs Compliant - Communities and Place	Q1 22/23		Q2 22/23		Q3 22/23		Q4 22/23		Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24	
	77	84 %	63	92 %	101	86 %	96	84 %	63	90 %	58	95 %	56	95 %	103	87 %
% FOIs Compliant - Highland Council	Q1 22/23		Q2 22/23		Q3 22/23		Q4 22/23		Q1 23/24		Q2 23/24		Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24	
	462	73 %	364	82 %	478	81 %	536	75 %	399	84 %	333	88 %	338	89 %	548	77 %

Tables display the number of FOIs closed within the quarter and % of those that were compliant with the legislative timescale (20 working days) for the service and the Highland Council overall. The Scottish Information Commissioner requires the Council to achieve a minimum compliance rate of 90%.

Quarter 4 performance fell slightly short of the target of 90% although the Service continues to compare favourably to Council performance. It is noted that a higher than

average number of FOIs were dealt with during the quarter. For quarter 4, the top 3 applicant types account for the majority (84%) received in the Service. 55% of the FOIs were received from individuals, 21% from commercial organisations and 8% from the media.

4.7 Service Invoice Payment Times

Payment of invoices within 30 days of receipt is a Council Statutory Performance Indicator. The Council also monitors the number of invoices paid within 10 days of receipt.

The performance for invoice payment times within 30 days and 10 days during Quarter 3 against a target of 95% and 77%, respectively, was as follows:

Communities and Place - Invoice Payments

Invoice Payment within 30 days	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
Communities and Place	97.2 %	97.2 %	96.8 %	96.4 %	97.5 %	98.4 %	98.6 %	96.9 %
Highland Council	94.1 %	94.2 %	95.1 %	94.9 %	95.1 %	96.7 %	95.6 %	93.6 %

Invoice Payment less than 10 days	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
Communities and Place	78.1 %	78.6 %	75.2 %	72.7 %	81.2 %	90.6 %	89.2 %	86.0 %
Highland Council	67.5 %	73.4 %	70.4 %	71.6 %	72.8 %	80.9 %	75.3 %	69.7 %

The Service continues to achieve a high standard for Invoice Payments within 30 days achieving 96.9% and for Invoice payments less than 10 days we have paid 86%. Both exceed target and Council performance overall.

5. Service Contribution to the Corporate Plan

5.1

PIs/Actions in the Corporate Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Period	Data
Involved Communities: Area Place Plans for each Council area CP2.04/CP3.07/CP4.03/CP5.06	Q2 23/24	On Target	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target
Street Cleanliness Score CP2.07 ENV3c	FY 21/22	93.70 %	FY 22/23	96.10 %	FY 23/24	
Continue partnership with ILM CP4.06	Q2 23/24	On Target	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target
% Household waste recycled CP4.06 ENV6a	FY 21/22	37.4 %	FY 22/23	37.2 %	FY 23/24	
Increase areas identified for food growing and ecological benefit CP4.11	Q2 23/24	On Target	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target
ERDs being completed - CPL CP5.01	Q2 23/24	Some Slippage	Q3 23/24	Some Slippage	Q4 23/24	Some Slippage
The 'My Council' project CP5.03	Q2 23/24	On Target	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target
Supporting and engaging with Community Councils CP5.05	Q2 23/24	On Target	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target

5.2 Overall, progress against the PIs and actions are positive. Work continues to deliver ERDs across the Service in line with the new ERD process designed by HR.

6. Service Plan Progress

6.1

Community Development and Involvement Approaches Q4 23/24						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Agreement of new Allotments policy	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	Completed		Due to complete Q4 23/24
Involved Communities: Area Place Plans for each Council area CP2.04/CP3.07/CP4.03/CP5.06	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q3 25/26
Develop and implement a new integrated impact assessment tool	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q3 24/25
Develop a marketing approach to promote and increase civil ceremonies offering	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q1 24/25
Development of Community Benefits Policy Procured and Voluntary Benefits	Q3 23/24	Some Slippage	Q4 23/24	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 23/24
External Annual Examination by National Records of Scotland	CY 2022	96 %	CY 2023		98 %	annual update November
Implementation of new SPSO Child Friendly Complaints process – UNCRC	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 23/24
Review of the Community Council Scheme	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q3 25/26
Undertake Review of Customer Services process/operations and implement changes	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q1 24/25

6.2

Bereavement Services, Transforming Services for Significant Life Events Q4 23/24						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Bereavement: Progressing Lean review of burials	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q4 23/24
Delivery of Burial Ground Projects	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Targets set in project plan
Develop an approach for refurbishment /modernisation of Inverness crematorium	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	Completed		Review by Q4 23/24

6.3

Environmental Health Q4 23/24						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
95% of high risk private water supplies are inspected and sampled	FY 22/23	44 %	FY 23/24		95 %	annual update August
Business case to review resources re sampling private water supplies	Q3 23/24	Some Slippage	Q4 23/24	Completed		Due to complete Q3 23/24
Develop revised PI for food safety based on risk of premises	Q3 23/24	Completed	Q4 23/24			Complete Q3 23/24

6.4

Transforming our Approach to Community Spaces Q4 23/24						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Review playpark strategy	Q3 23/24	Completed	Q4 23/24			Completed Q3 23/24
Develop community volunteering policy	Q3 23/24	Some Slippage	Q4 23/24	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q3 23/24
Progress the workstreams in the Amenities Review	Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24			Completed Q2 23/24

6.5

Fleet Rationalisation [Sustainable Business Travel] Q4 23/24						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Continue low emission approach for provision of heavy fleet	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Review by Q4 23/24
Design Sustainable Business Travel Approach and Action Plan	Q3 23/24		Q4 23/24			Completed Q2 23/24

6.6

Waste Q4 23/24						
Actions PIs being Monitored in Service Plan	Period	Data	Period	Data	Target Value	Completion/ Update Date
Street Cleanliness Score CP2.07 ENV3c	FY 22/23	96.10 %	FY 23/24			annual update December
% Household waste recycled CP4.06 ENV6a	FY 22/23	37.2 %	FY 23/24			annual update September
Deliver RIF Project – Implementation [phased]	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q2 25/26
Deliver the Lochaber Waste Transfer Station Project	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	On Target		Due to complete Q3 24/25
Delivery Bulky Waste Shredders	Q3 23/24	On Target	Q4 23/24	Some Slippage		Due to complete Q1 24/25
Net Cost of Waste Collection per Premise ENV1a	FY 22/23	£ 87.72	FY 23/24			annual update November
Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise ENV2a	FY 22/23	£ 103.06	FY 23/24			annual update November
Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1000 popn ENV3a	FY 22/23	£ 9,880	FY 23/24			annual update November
% adults satisfied - refuse collection ENV7a	FY 22/23	92.0 %	FY 23/24			annual update December
% adults satisfied - street cleaning ENV7b	FY 22/23	69.7 %	FY 23/24			annual update December
Undertake feasibility assessment into Energy from Waste Plant	Q3 23/24	Completed	Q4 23/24			Completed Q3 23/24

6.7 Overall, progress against the PIs and actions is very positive and Members are reminded that this is being achieved within a financial environment including approved Service savings of £1.455m to be delivered.

6.8 There are 5 actions reporting some slippage. It is intended that the Community Benefits Policy will be reported to this Committee for Member consideration in Sept 24. In relation to the implementation of the Child Friendly Complaints process, the SPSO is finalising their guidance and process to be followed including the implementation date. The Council continues to work in preparation for this, engaging with and learning from other LAs who have been part of the pilot phase. Work also continues on the progression of lean review of burials with an anticipated completion date of Aug 24. The review of the Community Volunteering Policy is ongoing and is anticipated to complete by Oct 24. In relation to the Bulky Waste Shredders, we have received some guidance from SEPA which can help inform equipment specification and are undertaking some market testing to help finalise the specification. The intention is then to move to full procurement and complete by Dec 2024 if possible.

7. Service Risks Mitigation

- 7.1 The Service is further developing the administration of the Service Risk Register to be managed on PRMS. This includes delivery of key projects, availability of parts/stock/vehicles, finance and sustainable workforce.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate

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