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| Agenda Item | 8b |
| Report No | JMC/16/24 |

The Highland Council

Committee: Joint Monitoring Committee

Date: 25 September 2024

Report Title: Finance Report – Highland Council

Report By: Chief Officer – Corporate Finance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out for members of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), an update on the Council's overall financial position, and that related to Integrated Children's Services functions delivered by the Council through the Lead Agency arrangement.
- 1.2 The figures presented reflect the out-turn position for the prior 2023/24 financial year, which were not concluded at the time of the last Joint Monitoring Committee (the Council's financial year end is 30 June) and hence for completion are reflected within this report. The report also provides update in relation to the current 2024/25 financial year.
- 1.3 The traditional Quarter 1 financial analysis for 2024/25 that would typically be provided within this report, is not presented or available at this time. As has been reported through the Council's own Strategic Committees *"There is no quarter 1 financial information provided within this report. This is due to ongoing development work within a number of areas including budgeting and reporting in the new corporate financial system which was introduced in April. Good progress has been made in respect of this and it is anticipated that this work will contribute to improved budget monitoring and committee reporting over the remainder of the financial year."* Regular monitoring reports will be in place from Quarter 2 onwards.
- 1.4 The report also provides the Committee with an update in relation to the Highland Council's delivery plan which has important links in terms of the delivery for adult social care going forward. Members will recall that in terms of the budget agreed by the Highland Council for 2024/25 that a savings target of £7m was agreed for the year. To support the delivery of change and transformation within Adult Social Care, the Council set aside Council reserves of up to £20m over a three-year period. The intention is that such investment will support transformation in terms of the delivery of integrated social care services for adults consistent with the intentions of the Strategic Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note this report and update provided;
- ii. Note the out-turn position for Council and Integrated Children's Services for the 2023/24 financial year;
- iii. Note the financial update provided for the Council and Integrated Children's Services for the 2024/25 financial year;
- iv. Note the update provided regarding the Council's Delivery Plan.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – there are no specific recommendations with resource implications in this report.
- 3.2 Legal – no particular implications to highlight.
- 3.3 Risk – the report highlights a number of particular risk areas as they may impact on the revenue budget, in the current year and into future years. The report provides narrative relating to the current staffing and vacancy challenges facing aspects of the children's services activities, and status update on savings delivery including service redesign.
- 3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – no particular implications to highlight.
- 3.5 Gaelic – no implications.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Out-turn for 2023/24

- 5.1 The Highland Council's statutory deadline for preparation of Annual Accounts is 30 June and due to timing of the June Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), the final out-turn position and Annual Accounts had at the time of preparing those JMC reports, not been finalised. For completion therefore, this report sets out the near final out-turn for the year. **Annex A** provides an overview of the overall Council budgetary position, and **Annex B** provides a position for Integrated Children's Services.
- 5.2 The statement at Annex B reflects those elements of the structure of the Council's Health and Social Care service which include activity in this area. Where budget lines

relate to both children's and adult service areas (ie management and other central costs) no attempt has been made to split the costs between the two functions.

- 5.3 The Council overall returned a net underspend against budget of £1.122m. This contrasts with a forecast overspend as at Quarter 3 of £3.709m. An improvement in the overspend against Service budgets, and an underspend on loan Charges (capital financing costs), are the main factors in improvement relative to the Quarter 3 forecast. This underspend position needs seen in the context of an approved budget which was based on a £23.270m use of reserves for the year. Allowing for the planned use of reserves, and accounting flexibility adjustments relating to PPP/PFI contracts, this allowed the Council to increase its overall reserves position by £26.3m in net terms over the course of the year.
- 5.4 In relation to Integrated Children's Services, and Annex B, the out-turn position was a net overspend of £0.227m. As reflected in past reports, the main areas of variance were a net overspend across Looked After Children (£0.555m) and a net overspend against Other Services including unallocated savings (£0.892). These being largely offset by underspend on Family Teams (£1.110m) related mainly to staff vacancies.
- 5.5 Some further explanation and context to the out-turn position is shown below.
- There have been positive trends being shown in Looked After Children, with the relevant forecast showing that the number of children in out of authority residential provision is consistently at the lowest level it had been at for some years. The Home to Highland which forms part of the broader Families First initiative continues and in terms of that work the year-end figures and the reporting in terms of savings have shown savings of £1m in terms of the looked after children elements of the budget. Those are lines where historically the service has shown significant overspends and the out-turn position for the year is therefore a much reduced level of overspend relative to past years. Although there do remain significant challenges in terms of the Looked After Children spend – principally in terms of the in-house residential provision – there is significant ongoing work and a level of confidence that those figures which have improved over the course of 2023/24 will continue to do so.
 - Over recent years there has been an underspend position against the Family Teams budget heading. Those underspends arise as a result of the significant level of vacancies in those teams. The Committee are aware of actions being taken to (a) address some of the local and national challenges around recruitment, (b) redesign of the service and (c) re-alignment of the budget. The staff vacancies throughout the service are of significant concern and this remains particularly challenging in the Family Teams. The underspends in the Youth Action Team and in terms of Child Protection also represent staffing deficits. The Council's Corporate Risk Register reflects the risk relating to these staffing challenges. It is intended that ongoing budget realignments will reflect the shift towards the strategies developed not only by Families First but also as envisaged by the Whole Family Wellbeing Approach. This is part of the ongoing redesign being carried out by the service.

6. 2024/25 Budget Position

- 6.1 The Council's budget for the year was approved on 29 February 2024, and **Annex C** sets out a summarised budget position for the year. As noted earlier at paragraph 1.3 the Council in April 2024 went live with a new Corporate Financial System and there

has been ongoing development work in relation to reporting dashboards and other tools over the summer period. This ongoing work has meant the traditional Quarter 1 reporting cycle has not operated internally for Council Committees. From Quarter 2 onwards such reports will be provided to Committees. Section 7 of this report provides a particular focus on the Council Delivery plan.

- 6.2 In relation to key risks and issues relating to the current financial year, at an organisational level these include pay and pressures. In relation to pay, these costs represent more than half of the Council's annual budgeted expenditure, and there remains a risk and uncertainty regarding pay awards for 2024/25. An offer has been made to the SJC pay group with feedback due in the coming weeks regarding the Trade Union's position on that offer. Scottish Government has committed to the provision of additional funding to support that offer, and this will take the form of a reduction in capital support to Councils in 2024/25 (with that funding re-directed to support the pay settlement) and additional Scottish Government revenue funding in 2024/25. Further assessment of funding implications will be required, and based on information to date, there is expected to be a direct cost pressure for the Council with the pay offer based on Councils meeting the first 3.2% of the offer. The unfunded cost pressure is expected to be up to £0.5m. There remains risk and uncertainty regarding whether this particular offer is accepted by Unions, and in turn what expectations and pressures may arise in relation to other pay groups.
- 6.3 In setting its budget for the year, the Council made provision for a range of budget pressures relating to inflation, cost increases, demand led services areas and other new burdens. Ongoing monitoring of pressures takes place through individual Service Clusters and Strategic Committees, and with Quarter 2 reports providing a forecast position across Services.
- 6.4 While interest rates and inflation levels have eased over the year and since the budget was set, it is important to note that generally inflation across all costs was not provided for in the budget, only by exception based on particular pressure areas. As such it is not expected that inflation reductions to date will represent savings, rather it may mitigate against pressures. In relation to interest rates, the Council's treasury and borrowing assumptions had been based on a forecast reduction in rates this year and to date there has only been a modest 0.25% reduction in Bank base rate.
- 6.5 In relation to Integrated Children's Services, financial pressure and risk areas relate primarily to Looked after Children where despite positive work as referred to in section 5, there remains financial risks and pressures related to costs of delivery and in particular the costs of residential provision. There are also redesign and saving delivery targets across a range of activity areas, with the next section giving more context in relation to the Delivery Plan.

7. Council Delivery Plan

- 7.1 The Council's approved delivery plan consists of 6 portfolios which set out how the Council will deliver on operational commitments to secure social and economic transformation for Highland communities. The Delivery plan sets out the key measures of success, and the activity to deliver outcomes. The Delivery Plan is supported by resourcing and investment to support the outcomes to be achieved, and with relevant savings targets and other financial measures defined within the Plan. The portfolio covers 4 themed workstreams relating to Family First, Adult Social Care, Digital Solutions and Capacity Building. Details of the Portfolio and the workstreams and projects sitting within it are attached as **Annex D** to this report.

- 7.2 In relation to those workstreams focused on Children's Services activity, the attached Delivery Plan describes these in further detail. Under the Family First workstream there are the following underlying projects which cover a number of outcome, activity and expenditure areas – Home to Highland, Kinship & Foster Care, Developing the Workforce and Efficiencies from Social Work procurement. The workstreams and projects also include Digital Solutions and how they can support health and social care services, Building Community capacity and Transitions.
- 7.3 The Head of Integration Adult Social Care is the Responsible Officer for those Adult Social Care projects which are managed via the Council's Portfolio Board. Both the Chief Officer and the Director of Adult Social Care for NHS Highland also sit on the Board. The Board makes decisions in relation to allocation of reserves from the allocated £20m funding available, consistent with the intentions set out in the workstreams and the Strategic Plan. The Committee will note that there are 3 projects. One of those projects is the improvement of transitions outcomes which does not contribute to a savings target nor does it necessarily attract funding. It is however key in terms of the Strategic Plan and the need for improved outcomes and given the role of Children's services is part of the Council's Delivery Plan.

Key in terms of investment are the projects designed to consider accommodation solutions and shifting the balance of care. The Committee should note that the Board has approved funding for the appointment of a programme manager who will be tasked with looking to commission a Shared Lives service for Highland. It is considered that such a service can play an important role in expanding the workforce in Highland who are delivering adult social care services and also improve the availability of respite services.

It is intended that there will be more detailed reporting in relation to the delivery of the plan at a later date of this Committee but pending that it is important for the Committee to note the role of the Portfolio Board and the associated investment to deliver change consistent with the Strategic Plan.

Designation: Chief Officer - Corporate Finance

Date: 12 September 2024

Author: Brian Porter, Chief Officer – Corporate Finance

Background Papers:

| General Fund Summary | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 April to 31 March 2024 (Near Final) | | | |
| | Annual Budget £000 | Near Final Out-turn £000 | Year End Variance £000 |
| By Service | | | |
| Communities & Place | 43,734 | 45,696 | 1,962 |
| Depute Chief Executive | 13,920 | 14,106 | 186 |
| Education & Learning | 248,982 | 248,907 | (75) |
| Health, Wellbeing & Social Care | 197,025 | 197,091 | 66 |
| Infrastructure & Environment and Economy | 46,462 | 50,253 | 3,791 |
| Performance & Governance | 6,771 | 5,898 | (873) |
| Property & Housing | 81,487 | 82,148 | 661 |
| Resources & Finance | 13,923 | 13,586 | (337) |
| Welfare Services | 7,131 | 7,378 | 247 |
| Service Total | 659,435 | 665,063 | 5,628 |
| Valuation Joint Board | 3,140 | 2,929 | (211) |
| Hi Trans | 91 | 91 | 0 |
| Green Freeport | 214 | 214 | 0 |
| Non Domestic Rates reliefs | 2,624 | 2,833 | 209 |
| Loan Charges | 60,176 | 56,549 | (3,627) |
| Unallocated Budget | 3,605 | 0 | (3,605) |
| Unallocated Corporate Savings | (1,080) | 0 | 1,080 |
| Total General Fund Budget | 728,205 | 727,679 | (526) |

Appropriations to Reserves

| | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Contribution to earmarked balances | 75,323 | 75,323 | 0 |
| Contribution to non-earmarked balances | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Affordable housing contribution from 2nd homes council tax | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Contribution to Other reserves | 1,435 | 1,435 | 0 |
| Total Contributions to Balances | 76,758 | 76,758 | 0 |

Financed By

| | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Aggregate External Finance as notified | 529,105 | 529,105 | 0 |
| Additional resources | 17,661 | 17,661 | 0 |
| Additional resources - GCG - Pay award | 9,425 | 9,425 | 0 |
| Council Tax | 143,563 | 144,159 | 596 |
| Use of Reserves and net surplus for year | 50,134 | 49,012 | (1,122) |
| Use of PPP Flexibility | 55,075 | 55,075 | 0 |
| Total Funding | 804,963 | 804,437 | (526) |

| Housing Revenue Account Summary | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 April to 31 March 2024 (Near Final) | | | |
| | Annual Budget £000 | Near Final Out-turn £000 | Year End Variance £000 |
| Staff Costs | 15,004 | 14,165 | (839) |
| Other Costs | 21,694 | 23,677 | 1,983 |
| Loan charges and interest | 26,291 | 24,307 | (1,984) |
| Gross Expenditure | 62,989 | 62,149 | (840) |
| House Rents | (59,333) | (59,425) | (92) |
| Other rents | (3,235) | (2,931) | 304 |
| Other income | (359) | (114) | 245 |
| Interest on Revenue Balances | (62) | (451) | (389) |
| Gross Income | (62,989) | (62,921) | 68 |
| Total HRA | 0 | (772) | (772) |

HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICE 2023/24 Out-turn Position

| | GROSS EXPENDITURE | | | GROSS INCOME | | | NET TOTAL | | | VARIANCE ANALYSIS | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | |
| | Annual Budget | Actual YTD | Year End Variance | Annual Budget | Actual YTD | Year End Variance | Annual Budget | Actual YTD | Year End Variance | Staffing Variance | Other Spend Variance | Income Variance | Total Variance |
| BY ACTIVITY | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Service Management and Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Management Team | 1,015 | 1,090 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,015 | 1,090 | 75 | -34 | 108 | 0 | 74 |
| Business Support | 1,489 | 1,281 | -209 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,489 | 1,281 | -209 | -176 | -33 | 0 | -209 |
| COVID-19 Response | 0 | 7 | 7 | 0 | -8 | -8 | 0 | -1 | -1 | 0 | 7 | -8 | -1 |
| Looked After Children | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fostering & Adoption | 6,986 | 6,983 | -3 | 0 | -81 | -81 | 6,986 | 6,902 | -84 | -89 | 86 | -81 | -84 |
| Residential, In house | 2,313 | 3,402 | 1,089 | 0 | -1,089 | -1,089 | 2,313 | 2,313 | 0 | 274 | 815 | -1,089 | 0 |
| Respite, In house | 1,709 | 1,941 | 231 | 0 | -431 | -431 | 1,709 | 1,510 | -200 | 277 | -45 | -431 | -199 |
| Independent and 3rd Sector placements | 7,893 | 8,641 | 748 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7,893 | 8,641 | 748 | 0 | 748 | 0 | 748 |
| Through care & aftercare | 1,773 | 1,568 | -205 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,773 | 1,568 | -205 | 265 | -470 | 0 | -205 |
| Home to Highland | 5,652 | 6,202 | 550 | -401 | -488 | -87 | 5,251 | 5,714 | 463 | 605 | -55 | -87 | 463 |
| LAC Management and Support | 684 | 516 | -168 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 684 | 515 | -168 | -176 | 8 | 0 | -168 |
| Family Teams | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Family Teams - North | 3,338 | 3,093 | -245 | 0 | -2 | -2 | 3,338 | 3,091 | -247 | -339 | 94 | -2 | -247 |
| Family Teams - Mid | 3,677 | 3,567 | -111 | 0 | -10 | -10 | 3,677 | 3,557 | -121 | -293 | 182 | -10 | -121 |
| Family Teams - West | 3,280 | 2,995 | -284 | 0 | -3 | -3 | 3,280 | 2,993 | -287 | -415 | 130 | -3 | -288 |
| Family Teams - South | 8,739 | 8,104 | -635 | -15 | -8 | 7 | 8,724 | 8,095 | -628 | -962 | 327 | 7 | -628 |
| Self Directed Support (Direct Payments) | 1,127 | 1,301 | 174 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,127 | 1,301 | 174 | -3 | 177 | 0 | 174 |
| Other Services for Children | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Child Protection | 955 | 918 | -38 | -124 | -230 | -106 | 831 | 688 | -144 | -98 | 60 | -106 | -144 |
| Health and Health Improvement | 1,524 | 1,363 | -161 | -658 | -575 | 83 | 865 | 788 | -77 | -110 | -51 | 83 | -78 |
| Allied Health Professionals | 3,888 | 3,995 | 107 | -11 | -31 | -19 | 3,877 | 3,964 | 88 | -1 | 108 | -19 | 88 |
| Primary Mental Health Workers | 607 | 620 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 607 | 620 | 14 | 18 | -5 | 0 | 13 |
| Specialist Services | 401 | 403 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 401 | 403 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Youth Action Services | 1,758 | 1,227 | -532 | 0 | -3 | -3 | 1,758 | 1,223 | -535 | -532 | 0 | -3 | -535 |
| Other Services for Children | 1,606 | 1,574 | -32 | -7 | -1 | 6 | 1,599 | 1,573 | -26 | -35 | 3 | 6 | -26 |
| Staff Training | 185 | 151 | -34 | 0 | -26 | -26 | 185 | 125 | -60 | -42 | 8 | -26 | -60 |
| Independent Funds | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | -4 | -4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | -4 | 0 |
| Unallocated Savings | -1,631 | 0 | 1,631 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1,631 | 0 | 1,631 | 1,615 | 17 | 0 | 1,632 |
| Children's Services income from NHS | 0 | 0 | 0 | -11,562 | -11,537 | 26 | -11,562 | -11,537 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 26 |
| TOTAL | 58,968 | 60,946 | 1,975 | -12,778 | -14,527 | -1,747 | 46,189 | 46,417 | 229 | -251 | 2,225 | -1,747 | 227 |

| |
|---|
| Revenue Budget Update - General Fund Summary |
|---|

| |
|--|
| Expenditure 1 April to 30 June 2024 |
|--|

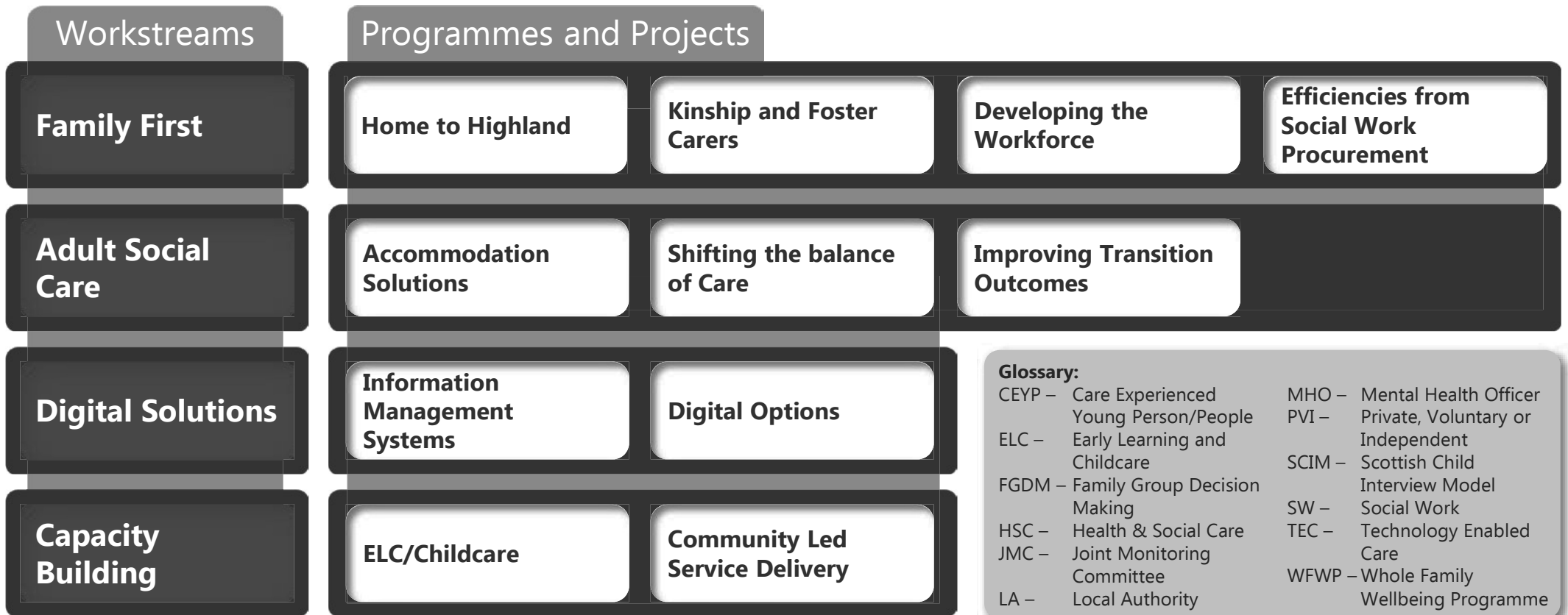
| | Annual Budget £000 | Actual Year to Date £000 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Communities & Place | 41,323 | 13,919 |
| ICT and Digital Transformation | 11,342 | 6,399 |
| Education & Learning | 268,543 | 57,037 |
| Health, Wellbeing & Social Care | 188,679 | 26,302 |
| Infrastructure & Environment and Economy | 39,569 | 8,969 |
| Performance & Governance | 6,311 | 2,834 |
| Property & Housing | 80,146 | 22,670 |
| Resources & Finance | 13,736 | 6,482 |
| Welfare Services | 7,833 | 4,043 |
| Service Total | 657,482 | 148,655 |
| Valuation Joint Board | 3,296 | 1,100 |
| Green Freeport | 458 | 458 |
| Non Domestic Rates reliefs | 1,725 | 1,818 |
| Loan Charges | 67,696 | 0 |
| Net Unallocated Budget | 19,700 | 0 |
| Total General Fund Budget | 750,357 | 152,031 |
| Housing Revenue Account HRA net budget | 0 | (4,305) |



Person centred solutions

Fuasglaidhean stèidhichte air neach

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Workstreams

Family First

Adult Social
Care

Digital
Solutions

Capacity
Building

Person centred solutions⁷⁴

Strengthening our approaches to enable families to sustain themselves.

Programme: Home to Highland

A programme to ensure that young people in formal care arrangements are looked after and nurtured as close as possible to their own community networks.

Project: Kinship and Foster Care

Building a stronger support system for families providing kinship care to young people and expanding our foster care capacity.

Project: Developing the Workforce

In recognition of our challenges in recruiting staff, we have a planned programme of activity to develop our future workforce with partners.

Project: Efficiencies from Social Work Procurement

In order to provide more sustainable support for care providers, we are establishing more effective mechanisms to commission partners.



Workstreams

**Adult Social
Care**

Digital
Solutions

Capacity
Building

Family First

Person centred solutions⁷⁵

Developing our approaches to ensuring that people live independently and well and are catered for in their communities.

Project: Accommodation Solutions

Providing more effective solutions to enable people to live independently and at home.

Programme: Shifting the balance of Care

Developing mechanisms to enable more local, community and family based care solutions for vulnerable people.

Project: Improving Transition Outcomes

Supporting more effective transitions across children - adults care services.



Workstreams

Digital Solutions

Capacity Building

Family First

Adult Social Care

Person centred solutions⁷⁶

Ensuring digital solutions support effective care provision.

Project: Information Management Systems

Ensuring our case management systems are effectively implemented and used.

Project: Digital Options

Enabling more effective digital solutions for individuals, to help sustain care packages that encourage independent living.



Workstreams

Capacity Building

Family First

Adult Social Care

Digital Solutions

Person centred solutions⁷⁷

Building our single care model for communities with key partners.

Project: ELC/Childcare

Increasing more effective childcare solutions for families across the Highland area.

Project: Community Led Service Delivery

Building community partnership capacity to support our developing single care model.



Workstream

Family First

Programme

Home to Highland

Responsible Officer:
Head of Social Work -
Children and Justice

Person centred solutions⁷⁸

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

We will retain children in, and return children to, local Highland provision to ensure better outcomes at less cost. We will strengthen whole system family support with enhanced community capacity, including through a Virtual School for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).

Project Elements

- 1 Strengthen local community solutions:
 - Scale up and sustain Family Group Decision Making.
 - Scale up and sustain Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM).
 - Develop a Children’s Rights & Participation Team.
 - Develop Family Support Roles.
- 2 Develop a Virtual School:
 - Ensure rigorous planning for CEYP & system effectiveness.

Measures of Success

- Reduce numbers of children in secure care.
- Reduce numbers in external residential provision.
- Increase proportion of children in kinship care.
- Increase number of siblings staying together.
- Increased community services and supports.
- All CEYP have an effective Education Plan.

Milestones

- 06/24:** Children’s Rights Team established.
- 08/24:** FGDM and SCIM team made permanent.
- 08/24:** Family teams model established.
- 12/24:** Recruit Virtual School Headteacher.
- 12/25:** Review progress & update annually.

Programme Theme: 1 A Fair and Caring Highland

Links to Performance Plan targets:

1.8
(ii)

1.8
(iv)-(vi)

Links to Programme:

- **Place** – Whole family approach.

Link to HOIP:

- **People** - People will access right support at right time through whole system approach.

Key Risks

1. High vacancy rates and challenge in service delivery.
2. Insufficient investment in early intervention.
3. Protracted time to establish infrastructure of community family support.

Ref: CS:22

Investment: £2m (approved)

Income Target: £2m

Workstream

Family First

Project

Kinship and Foster Carers

Responsible Officer:
Head of Social Work - Children and Justice

Person centred solutions⁷⁹

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

Children will achieve more sustainable family-based care through the development of a kinship team. This will increase the proportion of children in kinship care, and more foster carers will ensure Highland children remain with Highland families.

Project Elements

- Codesign new service with Kinship Carers & Children.
- Increase recruitment of Foster Carers using digital technology, marketing and comms strategies.
- Link with partners to develop support to improve support to kinship Carers & Foster Carers.

Measures of Success

- Increase the proportion of children in kinship care while reducing the number in residential care.
- Services/support offered is enhanced to promote stability of care.
- Higher numbers of brothers & sisters staying together.
- Fostering Recruitment annual target (8) will be achieved.

Milestones

- 01/25:** Establish Kinship Team within whole system: Fostering, Adoption, Continuing Care & Kinship Care.
- 01/26:** Review progress against measures of success.
- 01/27:** Review progress against measures of success.

Programme Theme: 1 A Fair and Caring Highland

Links to Performance Plan targets:

1.8
(ii)

1.8
(iv)-(vi)

Links to Programme:

- **Place** – Whole family approach.

Link to HOIP:

- **People** - People will access right support at right time through whole system approach.

Key Risks

1. High vacancy rates and challenge in service delivery.
2. Insufficient investment in early intervention.
3. Length of time to establish infrastructure of community family support.

Ref: CS:22

Investment: £2m (approved)

Income Target: £2m

Workstream

Family First

Project

Developing the Workforce

Responsible Officer:
Strategic Lead
–Child Health

Programme Theme:

1 A Fair and Caring Highland

Links to Performance Plan targets:

1.8 (ii)

1.8 (iv)-(vi)

Links to Programme:

- **Place** – Whole family approach.

Link to HOIP:

- **People** – Children, young people and families will access right support at right time through whole system approach.

Person centred solutions⁸⁰

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

In light of our particular workforce challenges, we will develop a stronger and flexible workforce plan aligned to the 3 year National Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy: Three Year Workforce Plans (scot.nhs.uk) and Social Work Scotland's emerging workforce plan.

Project Elements

- Build community-based resource and workforce resilience through spread of the WFWP.
- Develop workforce initiatives (e.g. "grow your own"/higher education flow/apprenticeship schemes).
- Assertive partnership recruitment, retention drive to create sustainability, opportunity and stability across communities.
- Develop role of support staff across the directorates.
- Work with Higher Education to future proof service.

Measures of Success

- Attract to the Highland area, those seeking employment in the care sector with relevant skills.
- Develop community, voluntary & 3rd sector workforce.
- Increase investment for career development – uptake of opportunities to retrain for our roles.
- Reduce vacancies across the care services in Highland.

Milestones

- 08/24:** Support worker review & implementation of findings.
- 12/24:** Strengthened practice support for Grow Your Own Scheme for undergraduate Social Work and MHOs.
- 12/24:** Accelerate the postgraduate advanced nurse training.
- 04/25:** Implement a ready-now/ready-later in-work support pathway.
- 06/25:** Increased success in recruitment.
- 06/25:** Community resource building as part of WFWP.
- 06/25:** Increased proportion of workforce working in a hybrid model.
- 06/26:** Annual review and update.

Key Risks

1. Risk of Family and community breakdown.
2. Risk of service failure due to demand capacity gap.
3. Risk of the consequences of the rising impact of inequalities across communities.

Ref: CS:22

Investment: £2m (approved)

Savings: £2m

Workstream

Family First

Project

Efficiencies from Social Work Procurement

Responsible Officer:
Lead Officer
– Strategy, Performance & Quality Assurance

Person centred solutions⁸¹

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

The Shared Procurement and HSC Services will ensure that commissioned SW services and contracts fully comply with current procurement regulation and achieve improved outcomes and deliver Best Value.

Measures of Success

- Savings ≥ £0.600m.
- Provision of multi-year contracts with providers.
- Increase of community-based services.
- Increased Direct Payment spend.

Project Elements

- Review commissioned services with support from Shared Procurement Service to determine outcome achievement, cost benefit or otherwise.
- Develop a commissioning framework.
- Engage with current/future providers – outcomes focused.
- Enable the provision of longer-term contracts for providers.
- Shift from commissioning to direct payment to families where appropriate.

Milestones

- 06/24:** Category & contracts manager appointed.
- 12/24:** Contracts review complete.
- 01/25:** Savings identified across contracts.
- 04/25:** Model contracts offered to providers.
- 05/25:** Commissioning framework in place.
- 09/25:** Review progress against measures of success, annually and update.

Programme Theme: 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Links to Performance Plan targets:

2.5
(i), (ii)

Links to Programme:

Place – Support communities to help each other live well and independently.

Link to HOIP:

People – Improved access to services and support.
People – Benefit from good health & social wellbeing opportunities.

Key Risks

1. Negative impact on clients due to change process.
2. Failure to deliver Statutory Services due to social care staffing levels.
3. Providers resistance to framework changes.

Ref: CS:20

Investment: Nil

Savings Target: £0.600m Year 3

Workstream

Adult Social Care

Project

Accommodation Solutions

Responsible Officer:
Head of Integrated Adult Services

Person centred solutions ⁸²

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

- Through the JMC, deliver and monitor the outcomes set out in the Highland HSC Partnership Strategic Plan for Adults. We will:
- support people to live independently & well in their communities;
 - provide suitable and sustainable housing options;
 - identify and implement local community support solutions.

Measures of Success

- % of people over 65 being supported to remain in their own homes.
- Increased Direct Payments spend on adults.
- Reduced cost of Adult Social Care.
- Increased resources in local communities.
- Increase levels of direct spend on families.

Project Elements

- Work closely with NHS Highland as lead agency to develop a model of care for care at home, care homes and complex cases.
- Roll out extended handyperson scheme to support people to remain in their own homes longer.
- Housing solutions – including adaptations and monitoring
- Community Care solutions (including digital).

Milestones

- 06/24:** To be agreed by the JMC in terms of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- To be agreed by the JMC. Extended delivery of handyperson scheme.

Programme Theme: 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Links to Performance Plan targets:

2.5
(i), (ii)

Links to Programme:

Place – Support communities to help each other live well and independently.

Link to HOIP:

People – Improved access to services and support.
People – Benefit from good health & social wellbeing opportunities.

Key Risks

1. Meeting increasing demand and maximise the use of available investment to secure improvement in outcomes.
2. Delivering housing solutions because of workforce challenges
3. Failure by partners to transform the way services are delivered.
4. Agreeing terms with providers for extended roll out of handyperson scheme.

Ref: CS:29

Investment: £20m (approved)

Savings: £12.6m (NHSH)

Workstream

Adult Social Care

Programme

Shifting the balance of Care

Responsible Officer:
Head of Integrated Adult Services

Person centred solutions⁸³

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

To implement the Highland Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan for Adults. As part of this we will consider how we can work to support continuing solutions for people in need of support and identify and implement sustainable, community and local solutions.

Measures of Success

- Increase % of people remaining in their communities and where possible in the same placement.
- Increase direct payments spend on adults.
- Reduced cost of Adult Social Care.
- Increase deployment of resources in local communities to provide more choice of care solutions.

Project Elements

- Roll out of Shared Lives programme.
- Develop joint commissioning solutions with services across the Council including housing and employment services.
- Increased roll out of, and use of, SDS including direct payments to families.

Milestones

- To be agreed by the JMC in terms of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and adoption of Shared Lives programme.

Key Risks

1. Meeting increasing demand and lack of physical resources to enable person centred solutions.
2. Delivering Statutory Services due to social care staffing levels.
3. Failure to transform service delivered in terms of identifying joint commissioning solutions.
4. Failure to deliver shared lives programmes in terms of identifying people who can provide care.

Programme Theme: 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Links to Performance Plan targets:

2.5
(i), (ii)

Links to Programme:

Place – Support communities to help each other live well and independently.

Link to HOIP:

People – Improved access to services and support.
People – Benefit from good health & social wellbeing opportunities.

Ref: CS:29

Investment: £20m (approved)

Savings Target: £12.6m (NHSH)

Workstream

Adult Social Care

Project

Improving Transition Outcomes

Responsible Officer:
Head of Integrated Adult Services

Person centred solutions⁸⁴

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

Deliver the outcomes set out in the Highland Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan for Adults and the Integrated Children's Services Plan with particular reference to that cohort of young people transitioning from children's services – including an education only service – to an adult social care service. Identify and implement local solutions.

Project Elements

- Working closely with NHS Highland as lead agency in terms of model of care and support provision.
- Develop joint commissioning solutions with services across the Council including housing and employment services with a particular focus on young people transitioning to adult services.
- Develop digital / community-based solutions.
- The role of third sector providers clarified / systematised.

Measures of Success

- Increased % of people remaining in their communities and in placements which can be sustained beyond childhood where appropriate.
- Reduced cost of Adult Social Care.
- Increase resources in local communities to provide more choice and opportunities to young adults in receipt of adult social care.

Milestones

- To be agreed by the JMC in terms of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Key Risks

1. Failure to deliver Services due to increasing demand and lack of physical/ financial resources.
2. Failure to deliver Statutory Services due to social care staffing levels.
3. Failure by partners to transform delivery in terms of identifying joint commissioning solutions.
4. Challenges for young people who are in placements as children which cannot be made available to them as adults.

Programme Theme: 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Links to Performance Plan targets:

2.5
(i), (ii)

Links to Programme:

Place – Support communities to help each other live well and independently.

Link to HOIP:

People – Improved access to services and support.
People – Benefit from good health & social wellbeing opportunities.



Workstream

Digital Solutions

Project

Information Management Systems

Responsible Officer:
Lead Officer –
Performance and
Improvement

Person centred solutions ⁸⁵

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

Replace the current Case Management System (Carefirst) which will be obsolete in 2025. Seek opportunities to deploy digital solutions across the Service where there is a robust Business Case which demonstrates service efficiencies and/or performance improvements.

Project Elements

- Replace Carefirst with new Case Management System.
- With NHS, eHealth programme to digitalise Child Health Records.

Measures of Success

- Increased direct access to records.
- Reduced time spend on record management.

Milestones

- 12/24:** eHealth Business case, funding & implementation plan in place.
- 12/24:** Strategies in place for storage of records pending digital solution of Child Health Records.
- 06/25:** MORSE eRecord system in place.
- 06/25:** Replacement Case Management System procured.
- 01/26:** Replacement Case Management System implemented.
- 06/26:** Implementation of E-Child Health Surveillance system.

Programme Theme: 5 A Resilient and Sustainable Council

Links to Performance Plan targets:

5.4
(i), (ii)

Links to Programme:

- **People** – Redesign service delivery in response to constrained budgets.

Links to HOIP:

- **People** – Improved access to services and support.
- **Place** – Access to local support and services.

Key Risks

1. Failure to meet the needs of the service and potential breach of statutory duties.
2. Cost of the replacement System exceeds the budget allocated.
3. ICT Connectivity solution to join NHS and THC system, is not proven stable enough to support accessibility to MORSE as an ePlatform.
4. Funding for digitalisation of Child Health Records not secured from partners.

Investment: Existing resources



Workstream

Digital Solutions

Project

Digital Options

Responsible Officer:
Lead Officer –
Strategy, Performance
& Quality Assurance

Person centred solutions ⁸⁶

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

Seek opportunities to deploy digital, data and marketing solutions across Health and Social Care, NHS Highland and Education and Learning to deliver services at less cost, working with industry leaders and learning from best practice.

Project Elements

- Pre-empting demand for adult services.
- Reducing care supply issues through digitally involving the community in care.
- In home TEC for adults requiring care and support.
- Keeping carers caring during the cost-of-living crisis.
- Paying for care in adult services based on actuals rather than commissioning.
- Finding new childminders, enabling those who want to work to work.
- Improved financial assessment and support for individuals.

Measures of Success

- Shift the balance of care to enable greater family and community-based care.
- Demonstrable impacts to service delivery and the care delivered within our communities.
- Improved financial assessment and debt recovery.

Milestones

- 03/25:** Highest priority solutions implemented within year one.
- 03/26:** High level solutions implemented within year two.

Programme Theme: 5 A Resilient and Sustainable Council

Links to Performance Plan targets:

5.4
(i), (ii)

Links to Programme:

- **People** – Redesign service delivery in response to constrained budgets.

Links to HOIP:

- **People** – Improved access to services and support.
- **Place** – Access to local support and services.

Key Risks

1. Failure to deliver on priority change ideas will result in greater cost, potentially making services unsustainable.
2. People within our communities not being enabled to live well locally.

Ref: CS:34

Investment: Linked to data and digital solutions projects; and NHSH £20m

Workstream

Capacity Building

Project

Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) / Childcare

Responsible Officer:
Head of Education Resources

Person centred solutions⁸⁷

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

Develop flexible, place-based, childcare solutions, rooted in the needs of local communities in collaboration with partners. Focus on sustainable delivery models. Address barriers to providing quality, flexible childcare solutions, including training, recruitment, regulation and business viability. Support communities and partners to bring forward childcare solutions (i.e. wraparound/blended approach). Work towards a single care model.

Project Elements

- Developing, supporting and commissioning childcare solutions.
- PVI viability, compliance and regulatory support.
- Service delivery in collaboration with partners.
- Single Care Model providing care to both adults and children.

Measures of Success

- Expand flexibility of childcare and ELC provision across Highland including addressing rural challenges.
- More sustainable delivery model including a shift in the balance of ELC delivery between LA and PVI.

Milestones

- 05/24:** Community and business engagement commences.
- 11/24:** Implementation Plan in place including gathering benchmarking data.
- 11/24:** Assertive Highland Campaign (Childcare Workforce).
- 02/25:** Support for business development and compliance in place.
- 05/25:** Community wealth building as part of increase in provision.
- 03/26:** Single Care Model launched.

Programme Theme: 5 A Resilient and Sustainable Council

Links to Performance Plan targets:

5.2
(i)

5.6

Links to Programme:

- **People** – Work with public and private sector partners to co-ordinate employment opportunities.
- **Place** – Develop place-based partnership strategies to coordinate investment and rural repopulation.

Links to HOIP:

- **Place** – Depopulation by addressing key barriers to childcare.
- **Prosperity** – Improved access to career development opportunities.

Key Risks

1. Insufficient flexible & affordable childcare prevents adults entering or returning to the workforce.
2. Cost of living pressures worsen with more families and children in poverty.

Ref: EL:13

Savings Target: £0.5m

Workstream

Capacity Building

Project

Community Led Service Delivery

Responsible Officer:
Head of Community Support & Engagement

Person centred solutions⁸⁸

Senior Responsible Officer:
Chief Officer

Portfolio Sponsor:
Assistant Chief Executive

Activity

This 3-year project will oversee the investment of £1.2m allocated to enable community led service delivery. The funding will provide direct capacity building resource on a thematic basis, in order to build service delivery capacity across the third and community sectors, delivered in partnership with HTSI and other community planning partners. This will support other strands of the Delivery Plan focused on creating stronger and sustainable commissioning frameworks, specifically adult commissioning, early learning and childcare and workforce for the future – tackling inequalities.

Project Elements

- Thematic led service delivery – specialist support to build community capacity in key thematic areas of service delivery e.g. health & social care, childcare.
- Support for Highland Volunteering Academy to deliver training and mentoring to enhance volunteering capacity which contributes to service delivery.
- Enable greater impact of third sector interventions to support employability.

Measures of Success

- People receiving support through Third Sector interventions.
- Volunteers trained and deployed.
- Impact of specific interventions for people measured by Outcome Star.
- People supported by Third Sector into jobs.
- Quantum of match funding achieved.

Milestones

- 06/24:** Create sector steering group.
- 08/24:** Scope / remit agreed with partners, including HTSI.
- 08/24:** Commissioning model approved.
- 05/25:** Annual review of progress.
- 05/26:** Annual review of progress.

Programme Theme: 2 Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Links to Performance Plan targets:

2.5 (i), (ii) 2.11 (ii)

Links to Programme:

Place – Support communities to help each other live independently and well.
Economy – Work with partners to develop community wealth building strategy.

Link to HOIP:

People – Improved access to services and support.
Prosperity – People will benefit from community wealth building approaches.

Key Risks

1. Failure to build third and community sector capacity and enable a network of service providers to deliver against key areas of service delivery.

Investment: £1.2m (funded)

