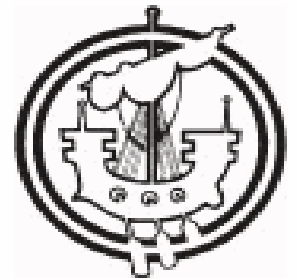


Comhairle nan Eilean Siar



Action and KPI Progress Report

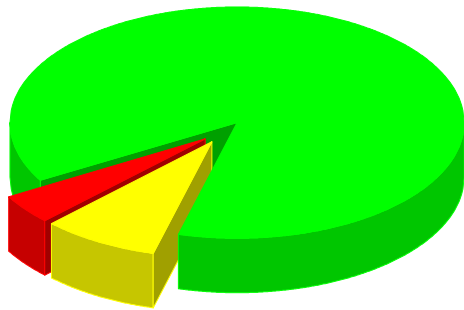
April 2024 - December 2024

*CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT: Economic and
Community Regeneration*

OVERALL PERFORMANCE - CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION

Actions

■ On Track	87.5%
■ Monitoring Required	8.3%
■ Off Track	4.2%
■ No Targets Set/ Ongoing	0.0%
Total:	100.0%

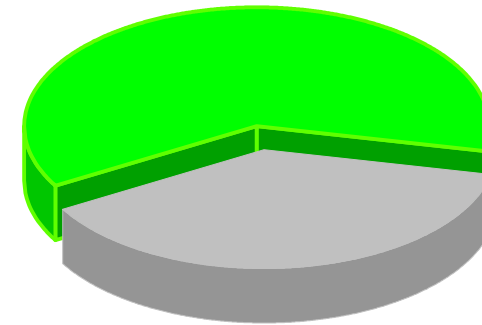


24 Actions reported on

- 21 Actions with at least 100% of target
- 2 Actions greater than 79 and less than 100% of target
- 1 Actions with less or equal to 79% of target
- 0 Actions with no target set / ongoing

KPIs

■ On Track	61.5%
■ Monitoring Required	0.0%
■ Off Track	0.0%
■ Annual	38.5%
Total:	100.0%



13 KPIs reported on

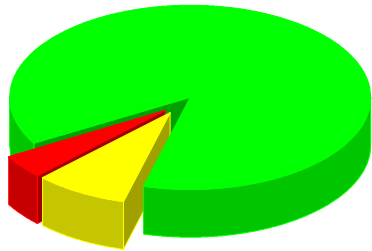
- 8 KPIs on track
- 0 KPIs monitoring required
- 0 KPIs off track
- 5 KPIs NA

Economic and Community Regeneration

Business Unit Overall Performance - Economic and Community Regeneration

Actions

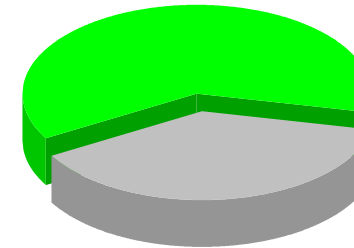
■ On Track	87.5%
■ Monitoring Required	8.3%
■ Off Track	4.2%
■ No Targets Set / Ongoing	0.0%
Total:	100.0%



24	Actions reported on
21	Actions with at least 100% of target
2	Actions greater than 79 and less than 100% of target
1	Actions with less or equal to 79% of target
0	Actions with no target set / ongoing

KPIs

■ On Track	61.5%
■ Monitoring Required	0.0%
■ Off Track	0.0%
■ Annual	38.5%
Total:	100.0%



13	KPIs reported on
8	KPIs on track
0	KPIs monitoring required
0	KPIs off track
5	KPIs NA

Comments - Economic and Community Regeneration

2024/25 Quarter 3 Progress Comment:

During Quarter 3, service activity continued to be delivered in line with statutory and business plan requirements.

Continued progress was made towards rebuilding systems to support Building Standards and Planning Services. Building Standards performance remained on track despite the loss of systems. Development Management made progress through a significant volume and complexity of caseload in Q3.

Following impact of staff absences in 2024 on the overall housing service, an updated project plan for the Local Housing Strategy was prepared. This aims to submit the completed LHS to the Comhairle in September 2025, and to the Scottish Government in October 2025. Work re-commenced on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) in Q3. The SHIP will be submitted to Comhairle for approval in February and Scottish Government thereafter.

Spaceport enabling infrastructure commenced on site. Number of meetings with other Islands Deal projects as part of reviewing overall deliverability. Comhairle working jointly with Orkney and Shetland Council to commission consultancy to test and develop Visitor Levy proposals.

Encouraging number of Business Gateway enquiries, start-ups and number of growth businesses supported in Q3. Seven Business Gateway funding schemes running currently: 'Micro Business Loan'; 'Business Loans'; 'Fisheries Investment Scheme'; 'OHBDS'; 'OHYESS'; and 'OHYEP'; and including more recently a new short life UKSPF digital scheme 'OHDSS'. Applications were slow in coming through during the first half of 2024 25, but increased in Q3 as a result of press coverage, Facebook and other promotional efforts.

Work continued to support investment in primary industries infrastructure through Islands Growth Deal and other funding sources. Vatersay Gear Storage: planning consent has been granted and a Crown Estate lease is awaited, with the project anticipated to commence when a lease is granted. Kallin Harbour Development: plans have been prepared for a new building sited on an area which was cleared in 2023 which will improve facilities at that Harbour.

Contact with Marine Scotland in order to ensure that a share of additional fishing quota is allocated to the Outer Hebrides through a locally managed Community Quota Scheme. Consultation with Marine Scotland around local fisheries management measures and related socio economic impacts of Protected Marine Features (PMFs), in addition to PMAs, continued both online and in person. Scottish Government opened a consultation on the future management of Offshore Marine Protected Areas. The Comhairle responded to this consultation and submitted a report to the Sustainable Development committee during Q3.

The Museum Forward Plan and required policies for regaining museum accreditation were completed in Q3 and approval will be sought from the Comhairle at the February series, prior to their submission to Museum Galleries Scotland.

In line with the Comhairle's Gaelic First Policy and a key, strategic aim in the Comhairle's Gaelic Plan 2023–2028, the Chief Executive, Sgioba na Gàidhlig and Education officers commenced discussions at Member and officer level in November about the merits of establishing a Gaelic secondary school for the islands. Financial support is currently being sought towards a feasibility study to investigate the possibility of establishing Gaelic medium secondary provision in the Western Isles.

Additional CLLD revenue funding was allocated to the Outer Hebrides LAG in November, allowing an application round to be opened pre-Christmas. An allocation for CLLD was confirmed in the Scottish Government budget announcement although the allocation to the Outer Hebrides is to be confirmed, Assurances have been given that staff can be retained.

SSEN Transmission are now committed to construction of the new 1.8GW Transmission Link for delivery by 2030. Work starts on site in Spring 2026 and the Major Developments Forum is now meeting in plenary and through sub groups on Worker Accommodation, Supply Chain, Skills, Freight / Logistics and Project Comms. Onshore Wind Farm developers will commence construction in 2027 and Offshore Wind developers will follow in 2028. Shared Ownership and Community Benefit agreements are being taken forward at pace.

Anne Murray, Chief Officer, Economic & Community Regeneration, 20 January 2025

Action Progress - Economic and Community Regeneration

Strategic


1.1.1. Development projects associated with the Islands Deal are delivered.



Strategic

Service Profile

Planning and Building Standards

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
1.1.1.2. Identify and support new energy sector opportunities for the Outer Hebrides.	John Cunningham - Chief Planning Officer	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2030	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

The Comhairle continues to pursue future energy solutions, principally the production of Green Hydrogen for local demand and export. Funding of £11m from the Islands Growth Deal is in place for the proposed Outer Hebrides Energy Hub, to be delivered in two phases: Phase 1 (2025 to 2030) – production of Green Hydrogen for local industry, transport and conversion of the Stornoway Town Centre Gas Network; and, Phase 2 (2031 onwards) – production of Green Hydrogen and Hydrogen derivatives for large scale export, by ship initially and later by subsea pipeline. Discussions with a number of Hydrogen developers are ongoing with a view to Hydrogen Allocation Round 3 applications being submitted during 2025.

Service Profile

Economic and Community Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
1.1.1.3. Deliver Primary Industries strand of Islands Deal Programme.	Domhnall MacDonald - Economic Development Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Vatersay Gear Storage - plans have been prepared with planning consent in place and the project is expected to commence during Q4. This project will facilitate diversification of fishing activities in the area and help bolster a remote fishing fleet.


Work to identify where new Food Hub projects can be located and developed continues, with several proposals being investigated. Efforts are also being made to secure match-funding from a range of sources to enable existing projects to proceed as proposed. The Project Board is due to meet again in January.

Strategic 1.1.5. Growth in small and medium sized businesses demonstrated.

Objective:

Service Profile

Business Gateway

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
1.1.5.1. Deliver Business Gateway services to support business start-up and growth.	Domhnall MacDonald - Economic Development Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

The year-to-date has been challenging, though encouraging in some areas. The number of enquiries received is encouraging – up by 27%. The number of start-ups to date is the same as last year but anticipated to be lower at the year end. More positively, the number of growth businesses supported to date is double in comparison with the same period last year. One reason for the heightened activity is the boost in promotional efforts, including: extensive press coverage; social media engagement; and mailouts.

The Workshop Programme is being cut back due to a lack of demand and the increase in the national programme of BG Webinars.

HIE and BG are now running joint drop-in sessions across the islands, which appear to be well received, with very positive engagement and feedback.

Enquiries per 10k working-age population occupies the number-one spot across the whole of Scotland. To-date it is 203.9, with the next closest 92.37, a significant difference.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – The 'Outer Hebrides Young Enterprise Programme' (OHYEP) aims to support young people in business, focussing on aftercare/ mentoring and provision of small revenue grants. However, uptake has been very low to date. A new Digital scheme was also launched in November to help boost activity and UKSPF spend.


A new Business Gateway funding programme - the 'Outer Hebrides Business Development Scheme' - was launched during 2024-25.

Additional funding was also received from HIE, enabling the continuation of the 'OHYESS' joint initiative for a further two years.

Service Profile



Business Gateway

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
1.1.5.2.Deliver internal and external business support funding programmes.	Domhnall MacDonald - Economic Development Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Seven Business Gateway funding schemes are running currently: 'Micro Business Loan'; 'Business Loans'; 'Fisheries Investment Scheme'; 'OHBDS'; 'OHYESS'; and 'OHYEP'; and including more recently a new short-life UKSPF digital scheme - 'OHDSS'. Applications to these have been slow in coming through during the first half of 2024-25, though a recent press coverage - and an ongoing Facebook campaign - appeared to be generating more interest, resulting in an increased number of applications during Q3. 20 applications for funding were made between Q1 & Q3 for both loan and grant assistance (£95,919).

Service Profile

Business Gateway

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
1.1.5.3.Support growth and resilience within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.	Domhnall MacDonald - Economic Development Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	70%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Vatersay Gear Storage: planning consent has been granted and a Crown Estate lease is awaited, with the project anticipated to commence when a lease is granted. This project will facilitate diversification of fishing activities in the area and help bolster a remote fishing fleet.

Kallin Harbour Development: plans have been prepared for a new building - sited on an area which was cleared in 2023 - which will improve facilities at that Harbour.

The Comhairle is also in contact with Marine Scotland in order to ensure that a share of additional fishing quota is allocated to the Outer Hebrides through a locally-managed Community Quota Scheme.

Consultation with Marine Scotland around local fisheries management measures and related socio-economic impacts of Protected Marine Features (PMFs), in addition to PMAs, continued both online and in-person.

Scottish Government opened a consultation on the future management of Offshore Marine Protected Areas. The Comhairle responded to this consultation and submitted a report to the Sustainable Development committee during Q3.

Consultation and engagement is expected in Q4 around the proposals for 186 sites for future management plans in the inshore waters with the vast majority being situated in the west of Scotland and the outer Hebrides.

Strategic 3.1.1. The Gaelic language, natural heritage and culture of our communities is supported and promoted.

Objective:

Service Profile

Economic and Community Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.1.Implement the Comhairle's Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Murdo MacKay - Dev - Development Manager	In Progress	31/03/2021	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN


ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Officers were working with Nature Scot to deliver projects through the Nature Restoration Fund, unfortunately that particular funding stream was withdrawn at short notice. On hold currently awaiting budget anticipated in future years. Planning a meeting with NS to discuss new Biodiversity 30/30 plans introduced by SG, some additional mapping and Nature Networks will be required to meet the 2030 targets.



Service Profile

Economic and Community Development


ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.3.Support the local tourism industry develop a new visitor strategy up to 2030	Murdo MacKay - Dev - Development Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	77%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Officers are working with colleagues in Orkney and Shetland to procure consultancy works to investigate feasibility of introducing the Transient Visitor Levy across the Islands. COnsultations with the sector will commence early in the New Year.

Service Profile

Economic and Community Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.4.Support the local Crofting and Agricultural sector through expected transition to new subsidy and net zero future schemes.	Domhnall MacDonald - Economic Development Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS


Utilising Scottish Government Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Programme 2023-24 funding, the Comhairle commissioned a study into Rural and Agricultural Development - as a collaboration project - jointly with Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, HIE and the three island areas' CLLD LAGs. The study focused on how the new Agricultural Bill would affect Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides uniquely, in order to maximise its potential across the three islands areas. The report was published and workshops held at the Comhairle subsequently to discuss its findings.

Comhairle representatives attend meetings of the Scottish Government Cross-Party Group on Crofting - which includes MSPs, Crofters Commission representatives and other relevant stakeholders/ agencies - in order to represent the views of the Outer Hebrides crofting sector at these meetings.

The Comhairle continues to work with partners - including SCF and HIASG (Highlands & Islands Agriculture Support Group) in order to ensure any emerging replacement schemes deliver benefits for the Outer Hebrides Crofting sector. A consultation on a new Crofting Bill was released and officers attended consultation meetings held across the islands, in addition to responding to the consultation. A report on the consultation was presented to the Primary Industries MOWG and Sustainable Development committee. The Comhairle recently formed an Abattoir Member Officer Working Group in order to support and improve the Stornoway abattoir operation and assist the wider crofting and agriculture sector in the Western Isles. The next meeting of the Primary Industries MOWG is scheduled in Q4 (January).

Service Profile

Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.8.Review Archive Accreditation Scheme guidance and ensure policies, procedures and plans are in place in preparation for application submission.	Colin George Morrison - Team Leader - Heritage and Culture	Completed	01/04/2022	30/09/2024	100%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

A Report on Tasglann nan Eilean's Forward Plan and suite of policies to guide the delivery and strategic objectives of Tasglann nan Eilean (the archive service) over the next four years was submitted to the Sustainable Development Committee on 24 September 2024 and approved by Comhairle.


The report detailed that when Tasglann nan Eilean relaunched at Lews Castle in 2016 it had been an ambition to apply for Archive Service Accreditation, but due to the level of resource which has been available to the service in terms of budget and staffing, this is not currently a realistic aspiration. The detrimental effect of the cyber-attack on data and information systems also makes accreditation an unrealistic goal at present. As this SBP Action cannot be taken forward it has, therefore, been marked as complete.

Delivering the archive service is very labour intensive and includes:

- Taking in archives offered by members of the public or which are part of CnES archive, processing and accessioning these, listing, cataloguing and adding records to the database;
- Responding to archive enquiries from the public;
- Responding to requests for archive research visits from the public; • Undertaking preservation and conservation measures on the collections;
- Assisting with museum exhibitions;
- Delivering externally-funded projects which have deadlines and therefore need to take precedence (e.g. Cinema Sgìre project).

Service Profile

Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.9.Retain and renew formal partnerships with British Museum and National Museums Scotland, including loan agreements, and seek opportunities for partnerships with other museums and archives (local and national).	Colin George Morrison - Team Leader - Heritage and Culture	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN


ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Loans for the Emigration Exhibition for 2025 have now been approved by National Museums Scotland, Fleming Collection, the Scottish National Mining Museum and with the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry. We are working towards meeting their loan requirements for environmental conditions and secure cases.

Tasglann nan Eilean is working on a partnership project 'Following the Fish' with Highland Archive, Suffolk Archive and Norfolk Records Office to research the stories of the women who worked as Herring Girls, following their stories through their journeys with a view to ultimately creating a travelling and online exhibition. Tasglann staff have, this quarter, been contributing to the research phase.

Service Profile

Gaelic, Heritage and Culture


ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.10.Review Museums Accreditation Scheme guidance and ensure policies, procedures and plans are in place in preparation for re-accreditation application submission for Museum nan Eilean Lews Castle and Lionacleit.	Colin George Morrison - Team Leader - Heritage and Culture	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2025	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

An update report was sent to Committee in November 2024. Plans and policies have been completed and are due to be sent to Committee in for approval in Q4. We are on course to meet the Accreditation deadline for return

Service Profile

Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.11.Support the delivery of the Hebridean Homecoming 2023/24 Project in partnership with key heritage stakeholders.	Colin George Morrison - Team Leader - Heritage and Culture	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2025	75%	75%	 GREEN


ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Plans are being finalised for the Emigration Conference 30 September – 2 October 2025 which is the final planned event for Hebridean Homecoming. Speakers are being booked and it is hoped to finalise the programme and advertise in Q4.

The loans requests for the Emigration Exhibition have been agreed with NMS, Fleming Foundation and Scottish Diaspora Tapestry and case layouts have been agreed. The Heritage Team continue to work on gallery layouts, text panels, object labels and imagery. Install dates have been confirmed.

Service Profile

Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.12.Support the implementation of relevant actions from the Great Place Strategy Action Plan in partnership with the Great Place Steering Group and the Heritage Forum.	Colin George Morrison - Team Leader - Heritage and Culture	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2025	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS


Under Action 4.3 Resourcing the Heritage Network: the Heritage Team have been supporting the Forum to recruit staff for the funded posts and have been helping to advise on draw up job descriptions etc. Unfortunately not enough suitable candidates applied so the plan is now to readvertise in Q4.

Action 4.2: Partnership Project1 – Hebridean Homecoming. Work is continuing in planning events/ exhibition for 2025. Ongoing

A medium-term Action under Networked Community Heritage are Themed Heritage Trails. As the funding for this post comes to an end in May 2025 applications have been submitted to the Art Fund, MGS and HES for a new phase. Unfortunately all were unsuccessful due to high competition for grant funding.

Service Profile

Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.1.13.Review and deliver the Comhairle's Gaelic Language Plan	Dr Donald Weir - Gaelic Support Officer	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

From October onwards, Sgioba na Gàidhlig have been providing Gaelic translations for all Comhairle job advertisements. All Comhairle jobs are either Gaelic 'desirable' or 'essential', and this therefore represents a further development in terms of implementing the Comhairle's Gaelic Language Plan, which has a specific aim to, "Advertise Gaelic-essential posts in Gaelic only and Gaelic desirable posts in bilingual format. Sgioba na Gàidhlig will provide translations."

In line with the Comhairle's Gaelic First Policy and a key, strategic aim in the Comhairle's Gaelic Plan 2023–2028, the Chief Executive, Sgioba na Gàidhlig and Education officers commenced discussions at Member and officer level in November about the merits of establishing a Gaelic secondary school for the Isles. The proposal was universally supported by Members. A contributing factor to the lack of Gaelic medium uptake in the Senior Phase is that the curriculum offer lacks breadth and relevance. The solid foundations provided by Primary and BGE Gaelic medium education (GME) are consequently not built on in the Senior Phase, and the percentage of pupils taking GM SQA qualifications is very low year-on-year. Pupils' fluency in Gaelic declines and insufficient numbers are coming through the system capable of using the language in social, cultural, economic and community settings. The net effect of this disengagement is that Gaelic continues to decline and organisations struggle to recruit to jobs that are designated as Gaelic essential or desirable. The results of two Sgioba na Gàidhlig surveys of the opinions of young people in the Western Isles about Gaelic and GME demonstrate this clearly. The first survey, completed by 322 young people aged 16 to 25, showed that only 40.4% thought that the range of GM Senior Phase subjects on offer in school was appropriate for their interests and career aspirations. In the second survey of the views of Senior Phase pupils in all four island secondary schools, and completed by 382 pupils, a similar figure of only 39% thought that Gaelic Senior Phase courses were relevant to their needs. In addition, only 54% of Senior Phase pupils felt that the Gaelic ethos of their schools was strong. Strong support for a Gaelic secondary school also came from pupils themselves in the Senior Phase Gaelic survey, with 66% favouring the establishment of a Gaelic standalone secondary school in the Isles. It should be noted that even amongst pupils who had indicated little or no interest in Gaelic or pursuing a Gaelic career, a significant number, nevertheless, believed such a school would be a hugely positive development for Gaelic. The Comhairle will therefore carry out a feasibility study to investigate the possibility of establishing Gaelic medium secondary provision in the Western Isles. Financial support for the study is being sought from the Scottish Government and a report will be submitted to the February 2025 series of meetings. The aim of the feasibility study would be to produce a detailed report on the practicalities, costs and benefits of establishing dedicated Gaelic medium secondary provision in terms of education, culture, language and the economy of the islands. To enable people to

make informed contributions to the public consultation process, an online document outlining the pros and cons of the proposal, to which interested parties can contribute, will be circulated in due course.

Sgioba na Gàidhlig met with Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes, where a range of Gaelic development issues was discussed. The Deputy First Minister also made it very clear that she was more than willing to work very closely with the Comhairle going forward, in assisting in the implementation of the Comhairle's Gaelic Plan and in developing the use and learning of the language in the Isles.

In November, Sgioba na Gàidhlig attended a meeting of the inter-authority Gaelic Language and Development group (GLAD). The following, amongst other matters, was discussed: the different authorities' plans for Seachdain na Gàidhlig in February 2025; Gaelic awareness training programmes for staff that could be shared across authorities, and therefore assist in the implementation of different Gaelic Plans; workforce development strategies for the teaching or use of Gaelic amongst staff, and whether best practice could be shared; and what digital initiatives were being explored to engage young people in Gaelic and raise the profile of the language in that demographic group.


The Scottish Languages Bill currently going through the Scottish Parliament contains proposals to create 'Areas of Linguistic Significance', which will attract a greater share of funding and investment. Given the linguistic profile of the islands and the fact that the Comhairle has had a Gaelic language Plan in place for a number of years, we should benefit from such a designation. With the prospect of increased investment, however, comes greater accountability, and in December, in response to a Scottish Government request for an evidence of impact update regarding Gaelic spend across the Comhairle, Sgioba na Gàidhlig requested that Departments detailed what steps they had taken to implement the Gaelic First Policy and Gaelic Language Plan, with quantifiable evidence of impact. The results of this exercise will be put together in tabular form and returned to the Government by the end of December.

Strategic 3.1.3.Planning and infrastructure meet the needs of our communities.

Objective:

Service Profile

Planning and Building Standards

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.3.1.Prepare new and updated Supplementary Guidance to support the Development Plan.	Mairi MacIver - DS - Development Plan Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	55%	55%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Need for further Supplementary Guidance being assessed as part of preparation of LDP Evidence Report.


Work on new Mineral SG resumed with review of 2023 Mineral audit.

Marine Fish Farming - largely complete - awaiting policy update from Marine Scotland, who advise to draft policy is held currently.

Conservation Areas - brief for CACA drafted.

Service Profile

Housing

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.3.3.Develop, monitor and review the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2024-29	Iain Watson - Housing Services Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2029	40%	75%	 RED

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

The Local Housing Strategy 2024-2029 (LHS) is underway. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment which underpins the LHS was assessed as "robust and credible" by Scottish Government in October 2023. An Early Engagement Survey took place between December 2023 and January 2024 and the results were presented to Committee in April 2024. A Housing Supply Target was prepared and approved by Sustainable Development Committee in April 2024. In-person engagement commenced in Uist and Barra in May 2024, and a further engagement event was held with students and staff in UHI in May 2024. Two online engagement events were held with Uist/Barra and Lewis/Harris Community Councils in June 2024. Work is underway with Public Health Scotland in respect of preparing a Health Inequalities Impact Assessment, and with Health & Social Care colleagues in respect of preparing a Housing Contribution Statement. The Local Housing Strategy Steering Group meets roughly every six weeks to discuss and direct LHS work.




As of July 2024, LHS work has slowed owing to long-term absences within the Housing Services Team, though we anticipate that once the Team is back to full strength, pace will pick up again. Two months' slippage has been programmed into the LHS Project Plan, though this may need to be revised depending on circumstance.

As at October 2024, staff sickness absence is still having an impact on the over all timescale for completing the LHS. The overall timetable will be reviewed once the Housing Services Team is back to full strength.

As at December 2024, the updated project plan for the LHS aims to submit the completed LHS to the Comhairle in September 2025, and to the Scottish Government in October 2025.

Service Profile

Planning and Building Standards

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.3.7.Undertake preparatory work for new Local Development Plan.	Mairi MacIver - DS - Development Plan Manager	In Progress	01/04/2023	31/03/2027	55%	55%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Draft Infrastructure Capacity Study received and being reviewed , and work on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment underway.

Engagement with KAG group continues.

Policy review work underway.

Second area based workshop held covering Barra and South Uist,

Surveys issued to DM staff and Members.

LDP Monitoring progressed and data collation progressing.


Place workshop held with senior managers and key agency stakeholders.

Strategic 3.1.4. Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient.

Objective:

Service Profile

Planning and Building Standards

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.4.17.Support safe, inclusive, and resilient local communities by the maintenance of an effective building standards service as set out in the Scottish Government Verification Performance Framework and the Verification Operating Framework.	John A Gillies - Building Standards Manager	In Progress	01/04/2023	31/03/2027	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

The November 2023 cyber incident has severely disrupted monitoring and reporting due to the loss of the Uniform system. The loss of the building standards webpages has also impacted on our ability to provide the level of e-building standards and KPI reporting and publishing required by the Scottish Government. However, despite this, we are continuing to deliver an effective Building Standards Service in accordance with the Scottish Government Framework documents.


The Scottish Government Building Standards Division has been made aware of the situation and are we are holding regular meetings to keep them updated.

Strategic 3.1.5.Reduce inequality and poverty and promote social mobility.

Objective:

Service Profile

Economic and Community Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
3.1.5.2.Support the delivery of the Outer Hebrides Fuel Poverty Strategy and explore the concept of a Local Energy Economy for the Outer Hebrides.	John Cunningham - Chief Planning Officer	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2030	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS


The concept of a Local Energy Economy where local (renewable) generation supplies local demand is under consideration. Direct supply from turbine to home / business is not possible because the island electricity network cannot accept intermittent generation from wind turbines. The solution therefore may be for a locally-owned, not-for-profit Energy Supply Company to purchase, through the medium of the wholesale electricity market, electricity from a local (renewable) generator for onward sale at discount to local consumers. A detailed study of this opportunity is about to be tendered. Wider work around Fuel Poverty continues with the Comhairle fully engaged with Orkney and Shetland Island Councils in the 'Island Councils Affordable Energy Group' where initiatives like a discounted Island Tariff or VAT exemption for island fuels are under consideration.

Strategic 4.1.1. Communities are empowered and continue to be at the heart of our decision making.

Objective:

Service Profile

Planning and Building Standards

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
4.1.1.5.Undertake phased preparation of a Regional Marine Plan for the Outer Hebrides marine region.	Mairi MacIver - DS - Development Plan Manager	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2027	45%	55%	 YELLOW

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Work on Marine Planning not progressed further currently due to priority of progressing new LDP and wider pressure on Planning Service. Staff continue to engage on work to prepare National Marine Plan 2.

Liaison with other Marine Planning teams undertaken to inform Comhairle's approach.


Assess crossover with CE Seabed Pilot.

Preparatory work on recruitment initiated - this is primary action to progress RMP.

Initial assessment of data deficit

Service Profile

Economic and Community Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
4.1.1.6.Oversee the delivery of the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) Programme in accordance with grant obligations with the Scottish Government and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Action Group.	Domhnall MacDonald - Economic Development Manager	In Progress	01/06/2022	31/03/2025	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

Implementation of the 2024-25 programme continues successfully.

At the end of November, the Outer Hebrides LAG were offered a further £137,172.76 in revenue funding, in addition to £49,725 to be ring-fenced for Youth LAG (YLAG) activity. As with the initial allocation, all funds must be spent and activity completed by the end of March 2025.

The LAG and YLAG are currently determining how to allocate their additional allocations. Both have launched new funding rounds, to be allocated in January 2025, which are expected to make use of the majority of the additional budget. The LAG is also intending to hold an in-person planning meeting and the CLLD Coordinator intends to visit Uist and Barra to engage with


suitable organisations and partners there. The YLAG, in addition to their new funding round, are investigating the possibility of undertaking a leadership course and also intend to attend a Rural Youth Action Network (RYAN) residential in Inverness in February.
 In its budget announcement for 2025-26, SG allowed £9m for CLLD, which is a significant cut from previous years (normally in the region of £12m). This should be viewed in context of UK Government withdrawing support from the agricultural sector. Contrary to previous years, it is expected that the CLLD budget will be primarily for capital projects. Assurances have also been given that staff will be retained.

Strategic 4.1.2.Reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero.

Objective:

Service Profile

Economic and Community Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
4.1.2.3.Support renewable energy development, maximising local socio-economic benefit.	John Cunningham - Chief Planning Officer	In Progress	01/04/2022	31/03/2030	75%	75%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS


SSEN Transmission are now committed to construction of the new 1.8GW Transmission Link for delivery by 2030. Work starts on site in Spring 2026 and the Major Developments Forum is now meeting in plenary and through sub-groups on Worker Accommodation, Supply Chain, Skills, Freight / Logistics and Project Comms. Onshore Wind Farm developers will commence construction in 2027 and Offshore Wind developers will follow in 2028. Shared Ownership and Community Benefit agreements are being taken forward at pace.

Strategic 4.1.5.Effective governance of the Comhairle is in place.

Objective:

Service Profile

Planning and Building Standards

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
4.1.5.36.(4.1.1.113) CIAP: Implement the Planning Applications Internal Audit Follow Up Review (FU04-20/21) recommendations	Morag Ferguson - Planning Manager (Development Management)	Completed	17/08/2020	31/03/2025	100%	100%	 GREEN

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS

The Planning Applications internal audit (Aug'20) made five recommendations to be implemented by March 2021. The Follow-up review (Sep'21) found four still outstanding and management confirmed that, subject to the Scottish Government work programme being rescheduled that affect the completion of two of the four recommendations (2.1a and 2.1b), they would be implemented by March 2023. Two of the five recommendations were still outstanding at 31 March 2024 as the rescheduling of the Scottish Government (SG) work programme impacted on the completion of these and they were carried forward to the 2024/25 business plan for implementation. In October 2024, the Planning Manager (Development Management) confirmed that the Internal audit recommendations are now completed.

Recommendation 2.1b (Under the new Planning Act each planning authority will be required to establish a Chief Planning Officer post. Recommendation 2.1b required the Director for Communities to consider the guidance issued on the role of the Chief Planning Officer as well as any financial implications in good time ahead of making the required changes) remains outstanding. The National Guidance on the role and responsibilities of a Chief Planner initially expected towards the end of 2022, revised to Autumn 2023 has still not been published by the Scottish Government. It remains the case that the Comhairle Organisational Review has acknowledged the requirements to make provision for the role within the structure and the Depute Chief Executive will take forward the action once the National Guidance is available.

Update Q1 24/25 - The National Guidance on Chief Planning Officers was issued in March 2024. It contains statutory guidance. The appointment and role of the Chief Planning Officer became a statutory requirement in April 2024, to advise authorities on planning and other functions relating to development.

The Chief Planning Officer: Duties and Responsibilities
 Professional Adviser

The Chief Planning Officer should play a key role in the leadership, vision and strategic direction of the planning authority, carrying out a strategic role that works to

raise the profile of planning in authority decisions. The Chief Planning Officer is to be an ambassador for the profession of planning, advising the authority about the carrying out of the functions conferred on them by virtue of the planning Acts, and any function conferred on them by any other enactment related to development. They will be the professional adviser to the local authority as a whole on the spatial and place-based implications of decisions and investments in the short, medium, and longer term. This entails providing relevant professional planning advice and support to the authority's senior management team and elected members and assisting in developing corporate objectives and translating these into place based strategies.

Delivering National Planning Priorities

The Chief Planning Officer will work to deliver the current national priorities, policies or strategies, ensuring that local and national park authorities are aligned with national-level planning principles. They should contribute to the development and maintenance of plans and strategies which support the achievement of national planning priorities, promoting economic, environmental and social issues and ensuring the delivery of an inclusive and accessible planning system.

Champion of Place

The role will support place making ambitions within the authority. Acting as the authority's placemaking champion would support this and the ability to work collaboratively with other officers and members who share these championing responsibilities, developing and maintaining working relationships.

Head of Profession

The Chief Planning Officer will be the head of profession in the organisation, and the senior responsible officer for the organisation's planning service. This entails being a point of contact for key stakeholders of the organisation on planning and place, representing the planning authority externally as a respected ambassador of the profession, and leading the effective management and development of employees across the planning authority and ensuring they are consulted, empowered, skilled, valued and motivated to deliver a modern and effective planning service.

Performance and Improvement

The Chief Planning Officer will lead on ensuring that the planning authority embeds continuous improvement. In doing so they will ensure that the planning authority undertakes its obligations to publish an annual report on the performance of its functions and that this is submitted to Scottish Ministers and the National Planning Improvement Champion.

They will engage with the National Planning Improvement Champion to agree any areas of improvement and what steps might be taken to tackle them.

Update Q2 - 24/25

The post of Chief Planning Officer was advertised internally on 6 June 2024 with a closing date of 17 June 2024. An appointment has been made, with the post commencing on 1 August 2024.

Update Q3 - 24/25

A Chief Planning Officer has been appointed and is now in post

Recommendation 2.1b is therefore fully addressed

Update Q1 24/25 - consultation analysis on mandatory training for elected members was published on 4 April 2024
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-system-mandatory-training-elected-members-consultation-analysis/pages/2/>

Recommendation 2.1a required the Planning Manager to develop a structured plan as to how required changes introduced through the Planning Scotland Act 2019 will be implemented. The Scottish Government 'Transforming Planning in Practice: updated planning reform implementation programme', available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transforming-planning-practice-updated-planning-reform-implementation-programme/pages/6/>, was refreshed on 29 October 2021 and has not been updated since. Scottish Government are currently publishing implementation of isolated work packages as they are moving them forward. These are advised to Planning Authorities Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS). The planning managers maintain a close eye on Chief Planner letters, the Transforming Planning: Work Packages website: <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/planning-reform/work-packages/> and social media for updates.

Update Q2 - 24/25

Recent strands of work emanating from the Planning Scotland Act 2019 are primarily focussed upon Development Planning - upon supporting interpretation and delivery of NPF4 (improving Biodiversity) and the early stages of preparation of delivery of new Place Based Local Development Plans.

The Scottish Government Programme for Government 2023 to 2024 (Sep'23), available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2023-24/>, makes reference to only one strand flowing from the 2019 Act. Establishing an infrastructure levy per the powers contained in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. It proposed establishing a new Planning

Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group and the Scottish Government are currently preparing a discussion paper setting out options for the levy. This paper will inform the basis for engagement with stakeholders. The Scottish Government's aspiration is to implement the new infrastructure levy regulations by spring 2026. HoPS has set up a workshop for 28 August 2024 to seek input from planning authorities as to how a Levy could work.

The Scottish Government Digital Planning Programme is to be discontinued and a smaller revised programme and format established on account of the Scottish Government budget resetting.

Update Q3 - 24/25

The Scottish Government has closed the Transforming Planning Website on the basis that the key 'work packages' flowing from the 2019 Act have been completed. A Chief Planner letter 'Planning – work programme update: Chief Planner and Ministerial letter - September 2024' sets out the future plans and it is anticipated that a similar letter will form the basis of future updates on priorities.


The Digital [Planning] Programme has been closed in its original format and the Digital agenda transferred for development as part of the Scottish Government's wider Digital Strategy/delivery arm in partnership with other stakeholders.

Recommendation 2.1b is therefore addressed (as far as was possible within the constraints of Scottish Government project planning for 2019 Act implementation).

This Recommendation has been met

Service Profile

Housing

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	% COMP.	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
4.1.5.69.CIAP: Implement the Homelessness Internal Audit Follow Up Review (FU08-23/24) recommendations.	Lorraine Graham - Homeless Services Manager	In Progress	22/09/2023	31/03/2025	70%	75%	 YELLOW

ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS



As per the Internal Audit Follow Up Review Homelessness Final Report – FU08-23/24 5 June 2024, Internal Audit note that out of the six follow up recommendations made in the original report four appear to have been fully implemented, and management have confirmed that the remaining two recommendations listed below will be implemented.

- Action 2.1 recommended that the Homeless Services Manager ensure that all cash received must be posted to the service user accounts at the end of each month and a reconciliation undertaken to identify any discrepancies that may not have been identified. The follow-up review (Jun'24) found that this action was initiated but has been hampered by a lack of debtor information since the cyber-attack. It will be resumed once systems are restored. As at 1 October 2024, no further progress until the debtors system is restored. As at 20 January 2025, following the reinstatement of a Debtors system, all debtor information is currently being input and/or updated and monthly reconciliations will commence from 1 February 2025.

- Action (2.5) recommended that the Homeless Services Manager proceed to follow up the issue of the emergency lighting that has been outstanding over a number of years and ensure that it is resolved. The follow-up review (Jun'24) found that this issue has been followed up with Assets and Infrastructure several times. The emergency lighting has been tested for compliance and there are issues with the fittings which require a resolution. Options are currently being explored by the Assets and Infrastructure service and were to be presented to the Homeless Services Manager shortly. As at 1 October 2024, this action is still outstanding as no resolution has been found. As at 20 January 25, this issue continues to be followed up with Assets and Infrastructure on a regular basis but has still not been resolved. Costs and some further information are being awaited from the contractor. It is anticipated that these are imminent and that works will commence thereafter.

Scorecard - Economic and Community Regeneration

2024/25 SBP PIs - Economic and Community Regeneration	Unit	Target	Actual	Indicator	Comments
1.1.1. - CD028 Proportion of Island's Deal projects delivered. Responsible Officer: Anne M Murray	%	10.00	Annual		The service have set milestone targets increasing year on year towards a target of 18 by 2030.
1.1.4.CD019 (DD018): Number of Business Enterprise Skills Workshops delivered. Responsible Officer: Domhnall MacDonald	#	5.00	5.00	 GREEN	Decided to reduce the number of workshops due to lack of demand. Attendance numbers this time round was much better.
1.1.5 - CD007: Business Gateway: Number of new business enquiries dealt with. Responsible Officer: Domhnall MacDonald	#	200.00	313.00	 GREEN	Enquiry numbers lower than previous month due to CRM issues and only being able to report 2 months - the third month will be rolled into the next quarter. 38 enquiries were pre-start and 29 existing businesses.
1.1.5 - CD014 (DD020): Number of jobs created/safeguarded. Responsible Officer: Domhnall MacDonald	#	33.75	53.00	 GREEN	Much higher job impacts to the same period last year. Overall, job impacts to date a little down on the same period last year.
1.1.5 - CD015 (DD019): Number of existing businesses supported to achieve growth. Responsible Officer: Domhnall MacDonald	#	3.75	17.00	 GREEN	All investments considered high value - key businesses. Overall, more growth businesses supported during the first three quarters than the same period last year.
1.1.5 - CD016 (DD021): Number of young people supported in business. Responsible Officer: Domhnall MacDonald	#	30.00	52.00	 GREEN	1 start-up and 9 business enquiries.
1.1.5 - CD017 (DD022): Number of new business start-ups. Responsible Officer: Domhnall MacDonald	#	26.25	31.00	 GREEN	Year to date - exactly the same number of start-ups supported as last year (Q1-Q3)
3.1.3.CD010A (DD065A): Percentage of building warrants and amendments to building warrant issued (following a first or subsequent report) within 10 working days (Annual). Responsible Officer: John A Gillies	%	90.00	Annual		
3.1.3.CD011A (DD067A): Percentage of first reports issued within 20 working days. (Annual). Responsible Officer: John A Gillies	%	95.00	Annual		
4.1.1.CD008 (DD079): The average time (weeks) to deal with major planning applications determined during the year. Responsible Officer: Morag Ferguson.	Weeks	17.33	Annual		Target set (17.33 avg. weeks) is the statutory timescale.
4.1.1.CD009 (DD080): The average time (weeks) to deal with local planning applications determined during the year, excluding EIAs. Responsible Officer: Morag Ferguson.	Weeks	8.67	Annual		Statutory target 8.67 weeks.

2024/25 SBP PIs - Economic and Community Regeneration	Unit	Target	Actual	Indicator	Comments
3.1.1 - CE032b: Level of funding secured from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, excluding the "Clasaichean Coimhearsnachd" project. Responsible Officer: Donald Weir	£	0.00	46,250.00	 GREEN	As of 2024/25, Bord na Gaidhlig funding is now provided as a 3-year funding package. The Comhairle has therefore received £157,500 for the period covering October 2024 to September 2028.
3.1.1. - CE028: Number of Organisations receiving financial assistance from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Small Grants Budget (Trend KPI). Responsible Officer: Dr. Donald Weir.	#	15.00	16.00	 GREEN	