



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

2023/24

Public Performance Report



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1. Introduction

Welcome to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Public Performance Report (PPR) for 2024 which covers the 2023/24 period. The PPR provides a summary of the Comhairle's performance for the year and how this has supported delivery of the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy, as detailed in the 2023/24 Service Business Plans (SBPs). It is one of the means used to keep our communities informed and to invite comments on service delivery and other matters. Further information can be provided on request or can be accessed on the Comhairle's [website](#).

The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. The Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2027 was approved in October 2021 and reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle.

The Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 was approved in December 2023. It sets out the Comhairle's programme of strategic-level ambition and action to the end of the electoral term in 2027. It is complementary to the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership's (OHCPP) Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2027 in terms of priorities and aspiration and the Comhairle has a contribution to make to achieving some of the outcomes outlined in the LOIP, as appropriate, in partnership.

The Comhairle's vision for this Corporate Strategy is "to have a sustainable population and socially and economically thriving communities with a focus on our quality of life, natural heritage, and Gàidhlig language and culture."

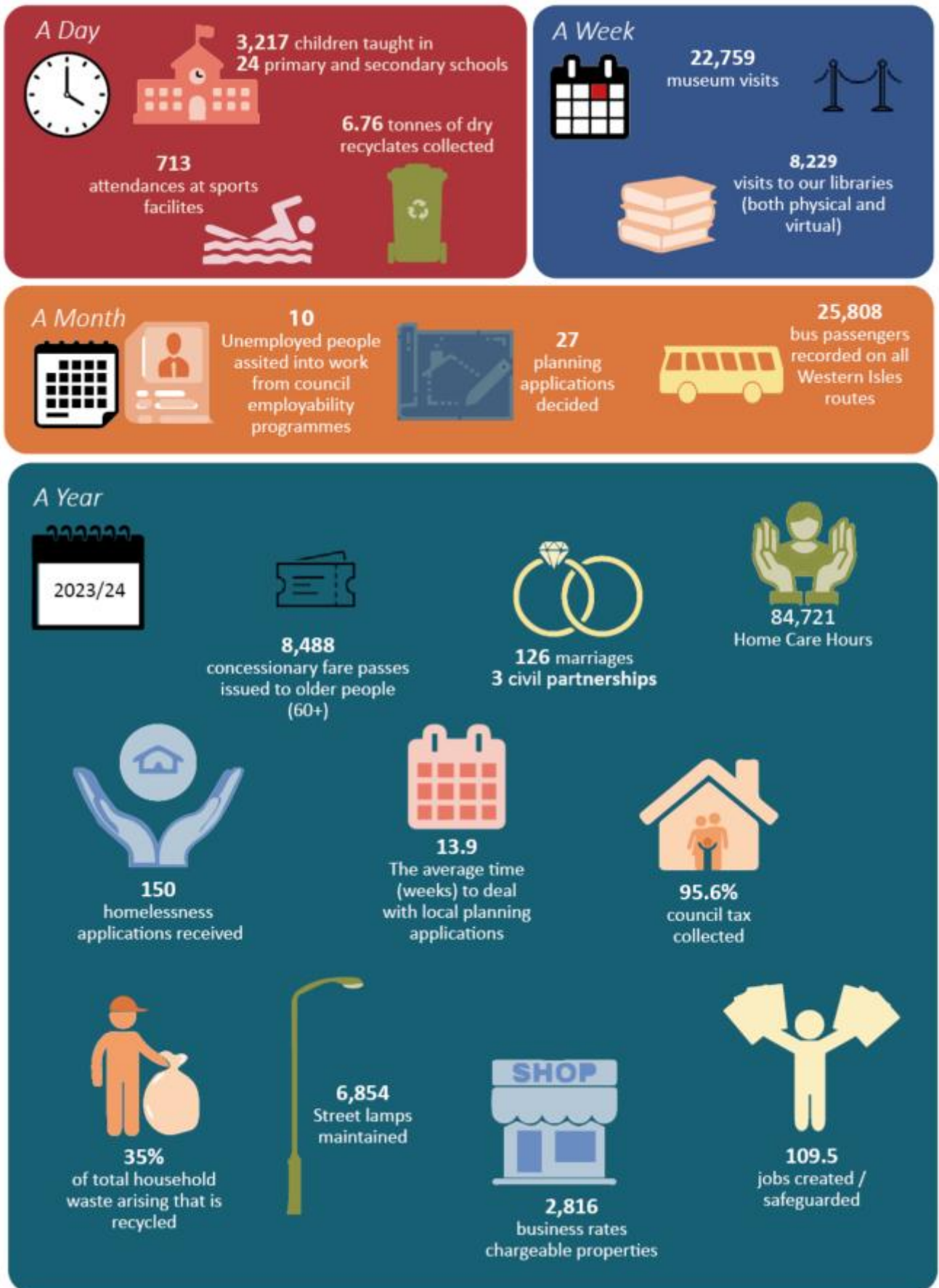
Councils have a duty under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to report publicly their performance in delivering their services. Comhairle policymaking and decisions are delivered through a committee structure which was reviewed in early 2022. All decisions are made by the Comhairle other than those matters specifically delegated to other statutory or quasi-judicial committees and in relation to human resources matters affecting individual employees. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee forms part of the Comhairle's decision-making structure and is fully compliant with Audit Committee principles. The Committee undertakes the core functions of an Audit Committee as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities by providing independent and high-level assurance on the adequacy of the risk-management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance process.

A more detailed report on the Comhairle's performance is available in the [Annual Accounts](#) Report. The Report provides information of the Comhairle's financial performance for the year and how this has supported delivery of the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy, as detailed in the 2023/24 SBPs. It also outlines the Comhairle's forward budget strategy and the challenges and risks the Comhairle faces in future years in delivering its objectives for the Outer Hebrides, particularly in the context of diminishing funding.

The Comhairle was subjected to a cyber-attack on 7 November 2023, which resulted in a loss of systems and data across the Comhairle. The impacts have been far reaching and still continue to cause issues a year later, particularly with the main financial systems, which have required to be rebuilt. In the immediate period following the attack, temporary solutions were put in place to ensure that suppliers and staff were paid and that some form of financial monitoring could be undertaken. The nature of these processes meant that the collation of the data required to complete the Annual Accounts in line with the 30 June deadline was not possible.

The data which was lost has not been recovered and the financial records have been rebuilt from a variety of sources, and this would not have been possible without the knowledge and skills of the staff involved and they are commended for the manner in which they dealt with a very complex situation, to ensure that services were maintained. It is acknowledged that there may be gaps in the data and that inevitably, there will be matters arising from the annual audit. The loss of systems and data will also have impacted on performance against SBPs targets and performance indicators as the priority for all services was to maintain front line services.

2. What Comhairle nan Eilean Siar does – a snapshot in numbers



3. Summary of Corporate Plan progress

The following provides an overview of the progress made to deliver the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy through its SBPs. For more detailed information please refer to the Annual Accounts Report and the SBP Progress Reports on the Comhairle's [website](#).

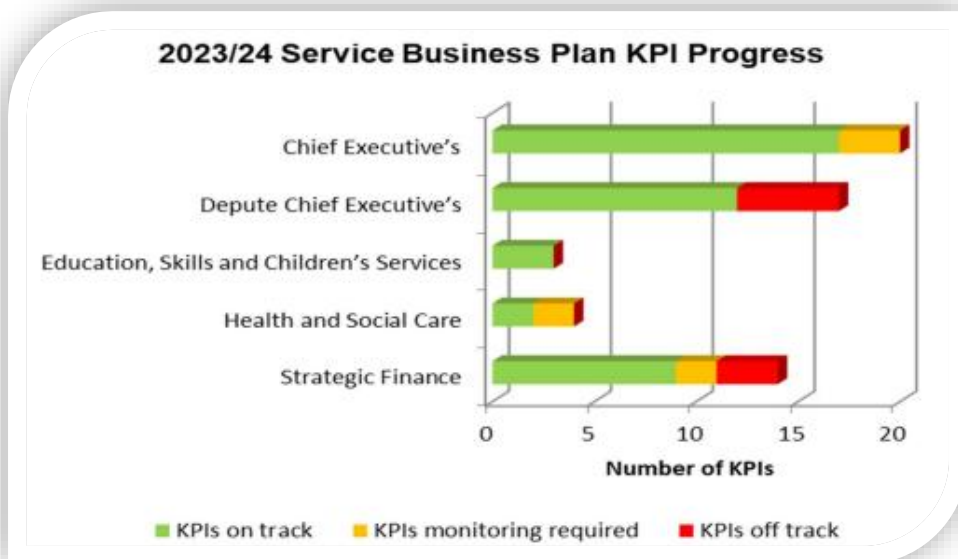
In 2023/24 the Comhairle's five departments reported on 121 actions. During the year 68% of these were completed, 12% were largely completed and 20% were not completed. A breakdown of actions by department is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Business Plan Actions

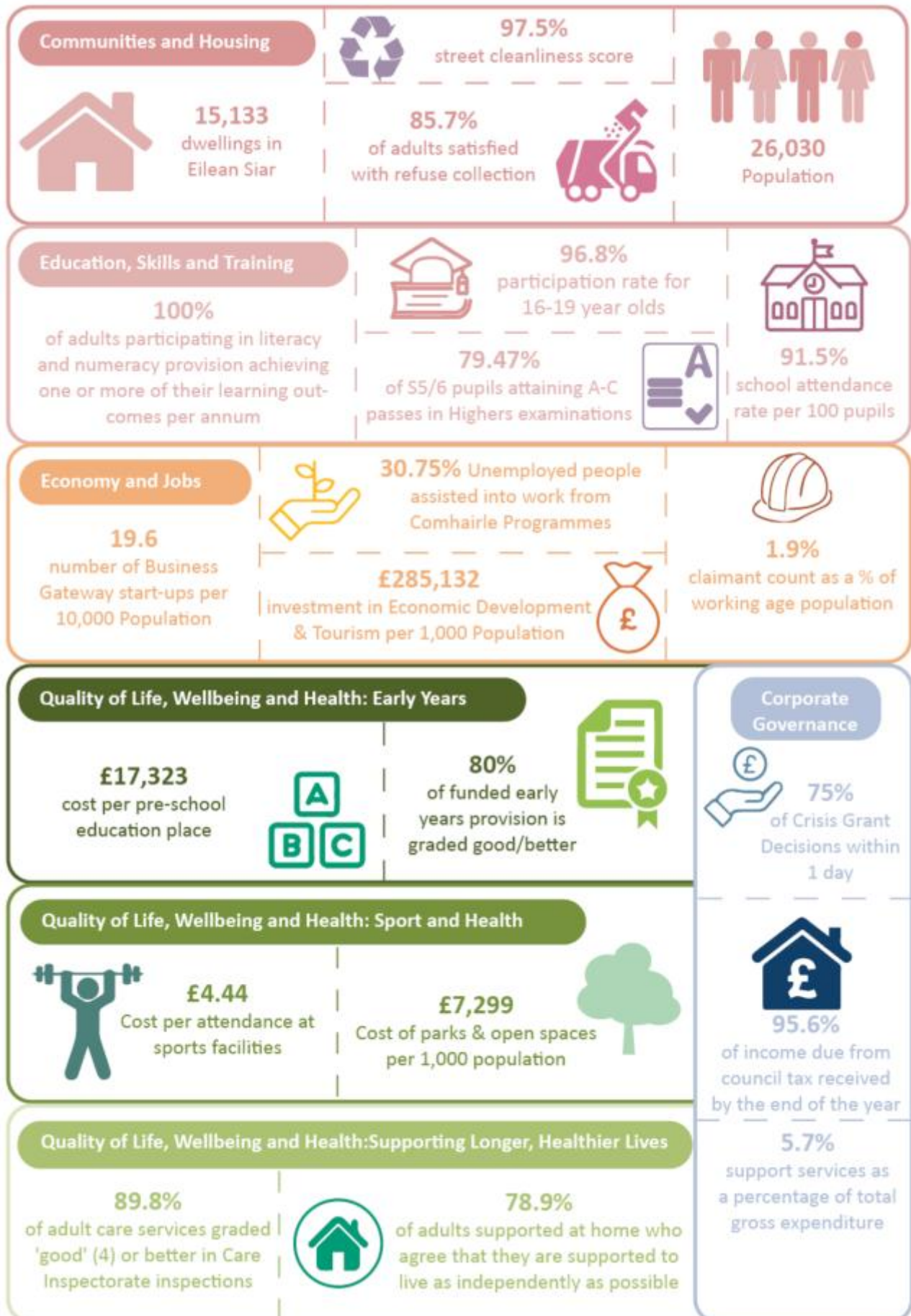


The Comhairle also reports on 58 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For the 2023/24 year 77% of these were on target, 9% were close to their target and 14% were off track. An analysis of KPIs by department is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Business Plan Key Performance Indicators



3.1 Summary of the highlights achieved in 2023/24



3.2 Where we need to improve / develop

The Comhairle use the Public Services Improvement Framework (PSIF) self-assessment tool to identify areas for improvement, to inform the proposals and to facilitate effective benchmarking with other authorities. Further details of this approach is available on the Comhairle’s website within the Best Value Continuous Improvement web page. The areas for future development and the priority recommendations identified from corporate self-assessments completed since March 2020 have been allocated to services through the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, to take forward within their business plans and are also included in the Continuous Improvement Action Plan (CIAP) for effective challenge and scrutiny by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

From 2023, the Comhairle improved its approach to self-assessment based on feedback received from Audit Scotland. Self-assessments now include strategic assessments undertaken by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) with improvements reported to the Comhairle, service level self-assessments for operational improvements undertaken by Chief Officers with improvements undertaken reported via business plans, and operational cross cutting self-assessments undertaken by the Best Value Action Planning (BVAP) Team with recommendations reported to the CMT.

3.3 Linking to the National Performance Framework (NPF)



The NPF measures Scotland’s progress against the national outcomes. To do this, it uses national indicators. These indicators give a measure of national wellbeing. They include a range of economic, social and environmental indicators. Our activities listed below are aligned to the NPF.



- Ensure** that air and ferry services provide appropriate capacity to facilitate economic growth.
- Support** our small and medium sized businesses to be established and grow, in part through greater use of Gaelic as an asset.
- Develop** a local approach to digitalisation that supports infrastructure, customer engagement and business development.
- Deliver** the development projects associated with the Islands Deal.



- Provide** services to people visiting our Islands.
- Establish** The Outer Hebrides as a must visit destination for the emerging marine tourism market.
- Work** with partners to shape the developments, impacts and opportunities that the growth of the visitor economy presents.
- Achieve** greater collaboration between the islands and international educational establishments.
- Test** and develop emerging opportunities in the space market.



- Nurture** the safety and resilience of our communities.
- Reduce** fuel poverty by delivering on the Outer Hebrides Fuel Poverty Action Plan.



- Explore** the concept of a Local Energy Economy for the Outer Hebrides.
- Work** with partners to reduce child poverty and improve early intervention.
- Ensure** that residents across the Outer Hebrides have equal access to high-quality, low-cost housing.



Continue to promote excellence in our schools.

Empower young people to find their voice and be active in decision making.

Raise ambition and attainment to address inequalities.



Invest in early intervention and work closely with families and the community to ensure that targeted support is available when it is required.

Work with the Scottish Government to provide the levels of childcare that will enable those with young children to access work if they wish to.

Invest in the school estate and commit to continuing a programme of capital investment.

Ensure that our young people are leaving school with the skills that employers are looking for and have ambition in developing areas of the economy such as the green agenda and digitalisation.



Improve the level of skills across our communities and workforce.

Ensure that the Outer Hebrides are recognised as an attractive place to live, work, study, invest and visit.

Improve transport and digital connectivity to encourage businesses and individuals to relocate to the Outer Hebrides.

Continue to work on sustaining our services and supporting recruitment, apprenticeships, and career grades in hard to fill areas.



Support the health and wellbeing of the local population.

Ensure those who are elderly or in need receive the care and support they need to live healthy and independent lives.

Support children and their families to be healthy and active.

Provide a safe environment in which to pursue healthy and active lifestyles.

Support caring communities which look after our elderly.



Protect our natural heritage, with its unique habitats and coastlines, with adaptation in place as necessary to reduce climate change impacts.

Support the natural and cultural heritage of the islands, including the access to services through the medium of Gaelic.

Committed to reducing the impact we have on the global environment and on minimising any environmental damage and pollution to our islands.

Protect our natural environment and reduce our carbon footprint.



Assist capacity and resilience within the existing community ownership sector.

Expand community ownership into the marine environment.

Support community projects that contribute to local regeneration and sustainable development.



Embed the effective management of equality, diversity, inclusion and sustainability in our practices, policies, reports, and procedures.

Value the diversity of our employees and communities.

Promote fairness and equality for all.

Tackle the causes and effects of inequality and poverty.

Lobby for “Fair fares” that help equalise costs for island businesses.

4. How do we compare?

The Accounts Commission has a statutory power to define the performance information that councils must publish for performance comparison and benchmarking purposes. Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) 1 of the Publication of Information (Standards of Performance) Direction 2021 requires Scottish Local Authorities (SLAs) to report how they are improving local services and local outcomes. In doing so, the Commission requires the Comhairle to report such information to allow comparison over time and with other similar bodies. In expecting councils to make use of benchmarking information in reporting to the public, the Commission continue their interest in the further development of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF).

4.1 Local Government Benchmarking Framework

In order to assess and compare how well we are doing across Scotland, the LGBF “outcome focused” performance measures cover key service areas and enable SLAs to compare the data and understand why variations in cost and performance are occurring. Comparisons can be made across all 32 SLAs and also across ‘family groups’ of councils that are similar in terms of the type of population that they serve (e.g. relative deprivation and affluence) and the type of area in which they serve them (e.g. urban, semi-rural, rural) to share best practice and enhance learning and improvement. The LGBF results 2023/24 are made available to the public on the Comhairle’s Best Value Performance Reporting web page.

While the Accounts Commission do not use Direction 2021 to require reporting in specific areas, they expect that the climate emergency will feature in the local outcomes agreed between councils, their partners and their communities. The Comhairle’s Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027 was approved in September 2022 and made available to the public within the Policy Register web page. An internal Climate Change Group has been established to provide direction on climate change matters with representation from all relevant services. The Comhairle is committed to continuing to work with the OHCPP Climate Change Working Group to coordinate, plan and deliver climate change action across the Western Isles. The Climate Change Strategy Progress Report 2024 was made available to the public on the Climate Change web page.

4.1.1 – LGBF Performance Overview

The following LGBF graphs show the proportion of indicators that have improved (Green), deteriorated (Red) or stayed the same (Amber) over time.

Figure 3: Change from base year

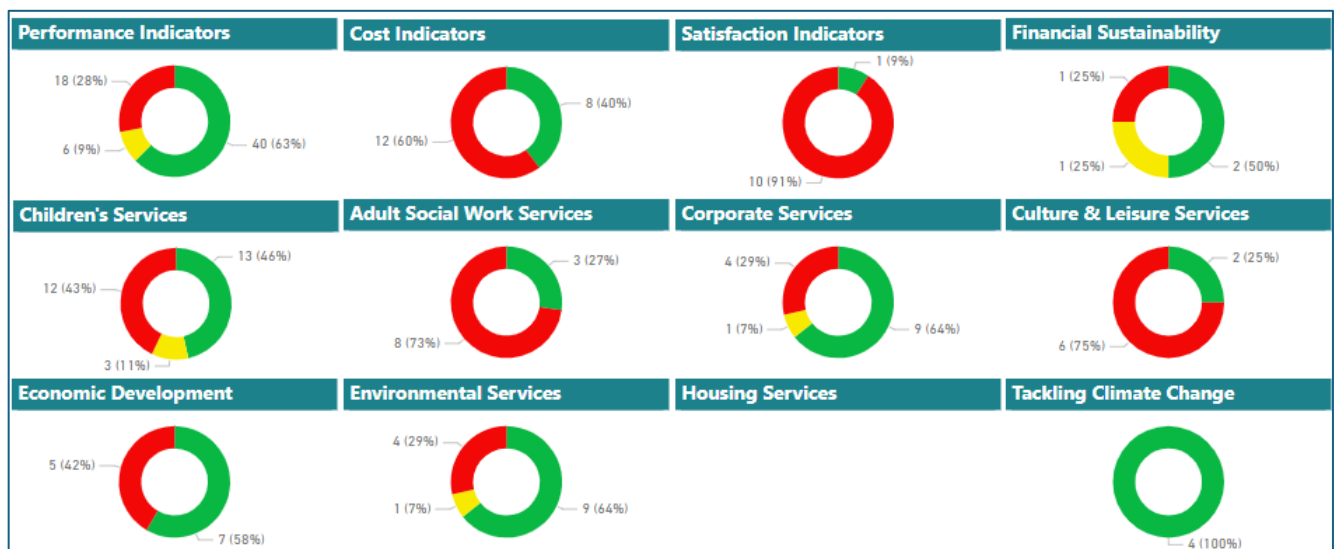
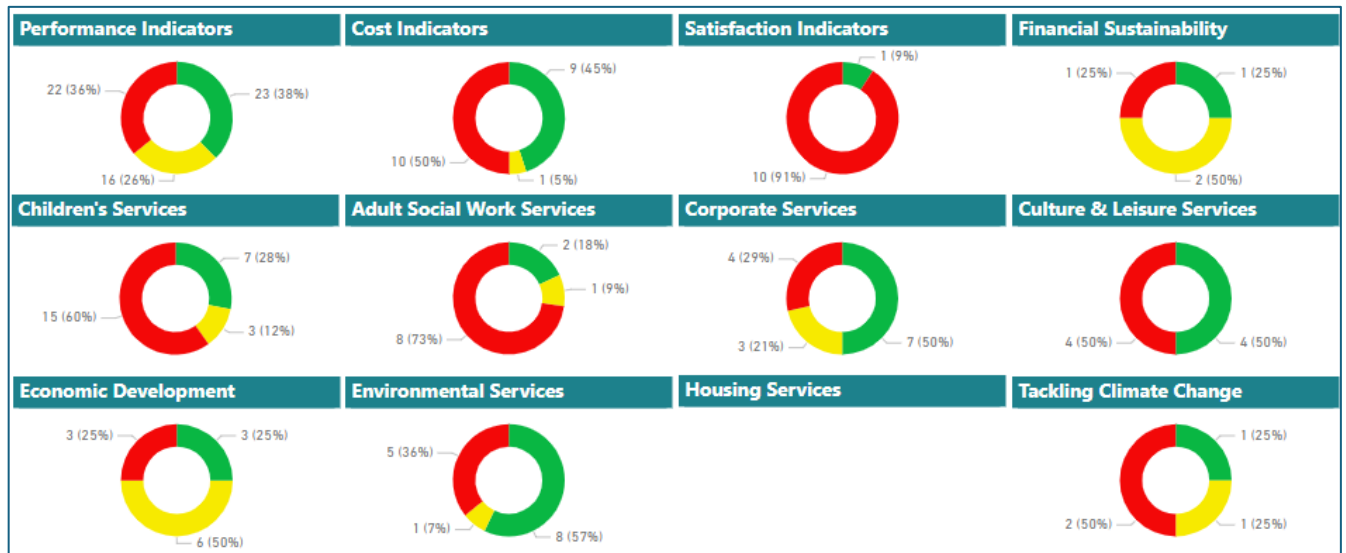


Figure 4: Change in most recent year



4.1.2 - Service Prioritisation for Improvement

In 2021, the Comhairle approved a suite of national indicators for service improvement in areas where the Comhairle has low performance against its LGBF Family Groups and to support delivery of policies, strategies, and plans. Services set milestone targets to enable their respective committees to scrutinise progress towards meeting their 2030 targets. Progress is reported by Chief Officers to service committees. The LGBF SPI 2023/24 Service Prioritisation Progress Report is published on the Comhairle’s website within the Best Value Performance Reporting web page.

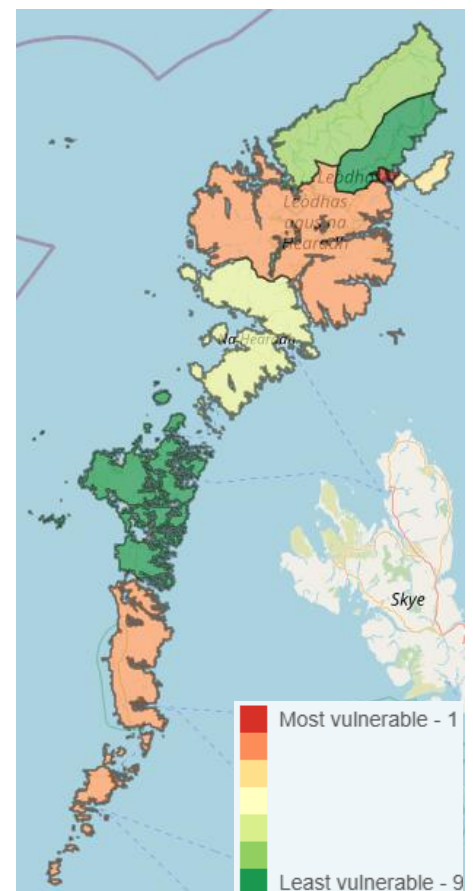
4.2. Community Planning Outcomes Profile

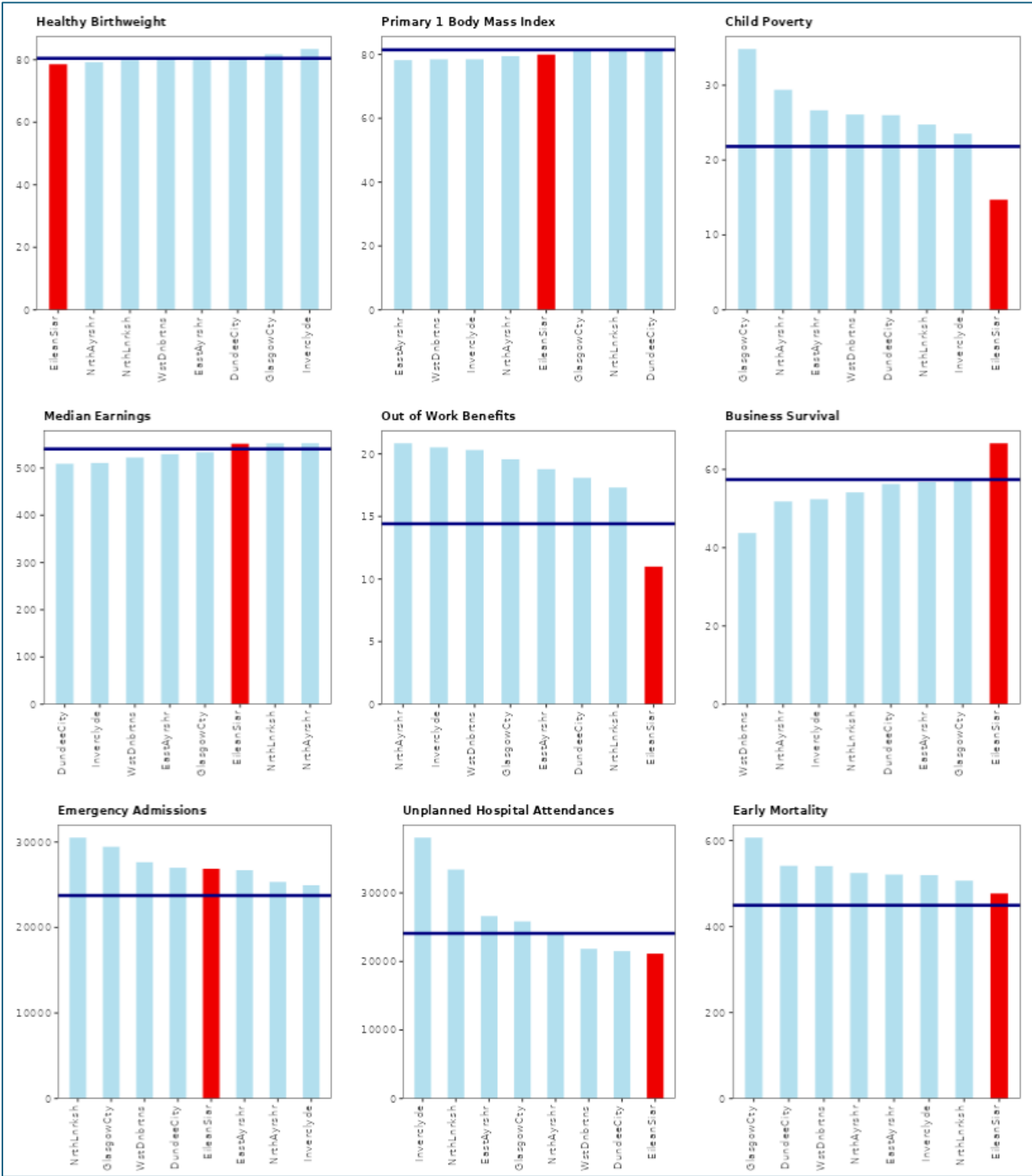
The LGBF benchmarking data should not be considered in isolation. To support this, there is a growing focus to better align the benchmarking data with outcomes.

The online interactive Community Planning Outcomes Profile (CPOP) tool provided by the Improvement Service links the LGBF with CPOP outcomes data. The CPOP is a resource which provides trend data on outcomes, both at a local authority level and at a locality level, on a core set of 18 outcome measures.

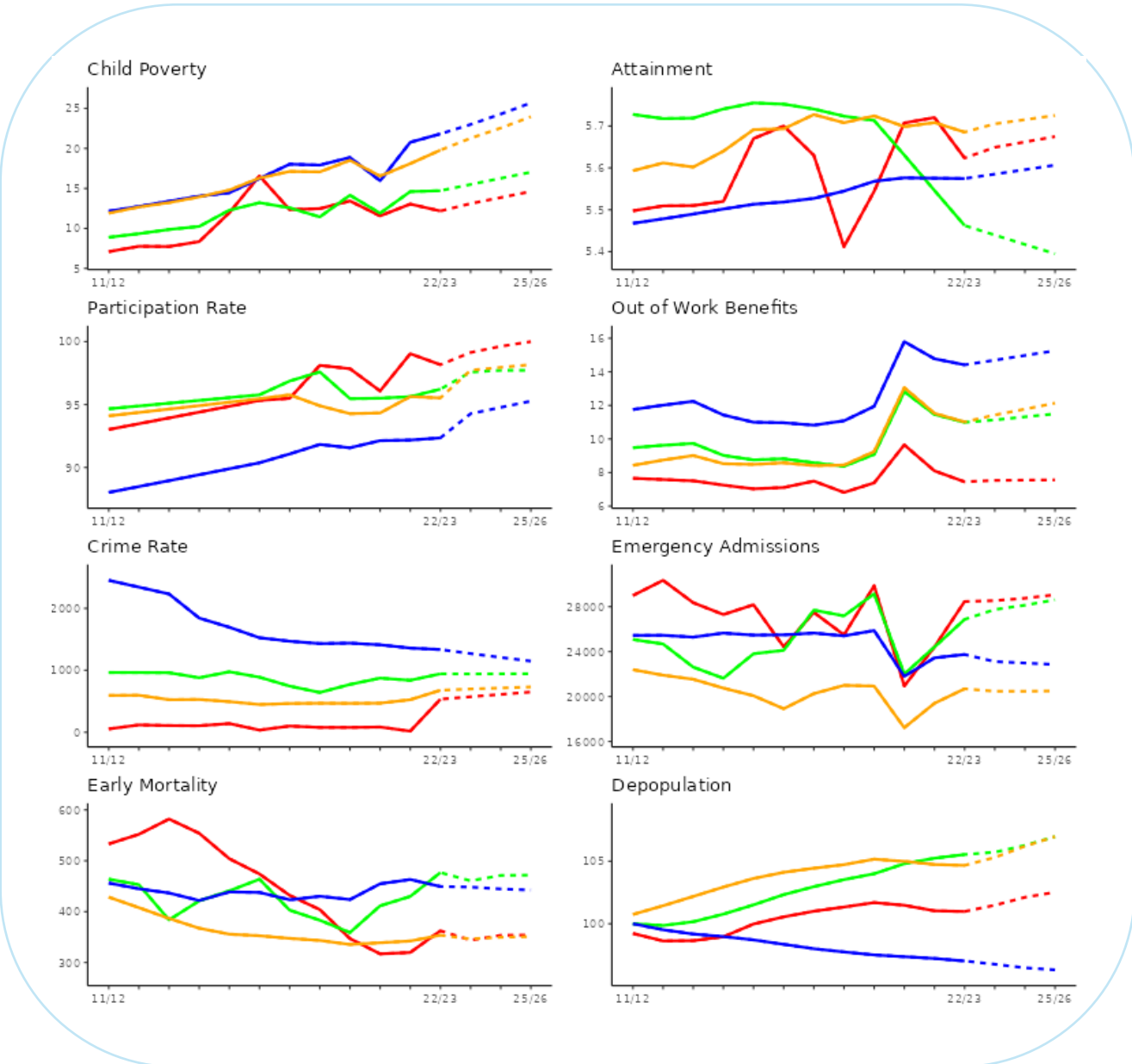
The CPOP can be used to explore the strategic data and support decision making. The most recent year of data available is for 2022/23.

The charts below illustrate how the OHCPP is performing against other similar CPPs in their Family Groups. When compared with similar CPPs, Eilean Siar have the highest performance for positive destinations, employment rate, business survival, and wellbeing rates. Although Eilean Siar are the lowest in their group for child poverty, out of work benefits, crime rate, unplanned hospital attendances, and early mortality, they have the lowest healthy birthweight and the highest fuel poverty.



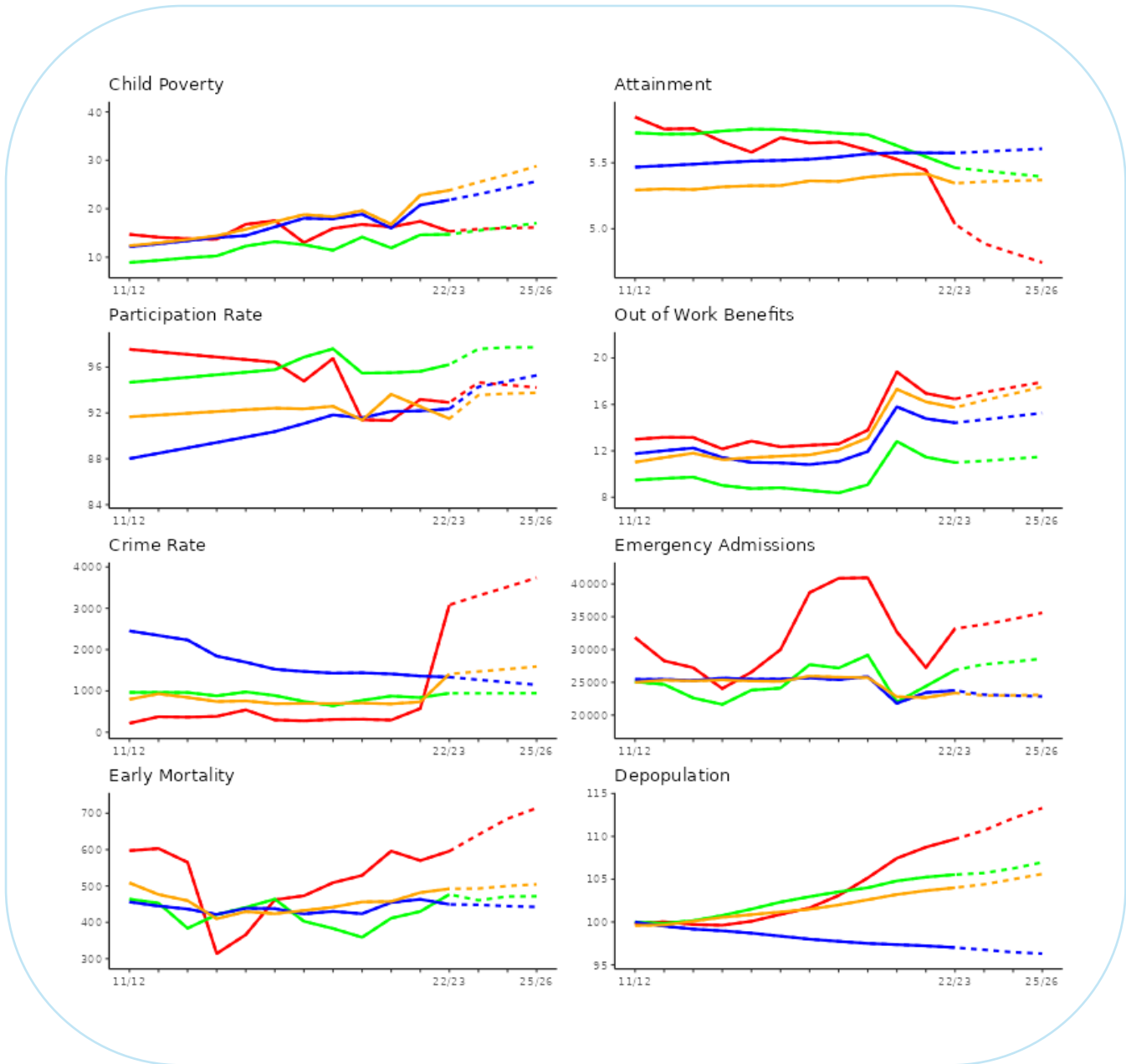


Benbecula and North Uist



Scotland	Eilean Siar	Group Average	Benbecula and North Uist	Projections
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Stornoway West



Scotland	Eilean Siar	Group Average	Stornoway West	Projections
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5. Financial Summary

The Comhairle is under a legal duty to set a balanced budget and in doing so must observe proper accounting practices and make arrangements which secure best value. The budget process is overseen by a Budget Board, which has Member representation from all wards and political groups, ensuring adequate coverage for all sectors of the community. A more detailed report is available in the Annual Accounts 2023/24 Report.

5.1 Budget 2023/24

In line with its financial strategy the Comhairle set a balanced budget for 2023/24. This comprised budgeted expenditure of £122.3m funded by £95.8m of General Revenue Grant, £9.1m of Non-domestic Rates, £12.4m of Council Tax and £3.2m of reserves. Planned business plan savings of £1.7m, were also incorporated in the budget.

5.2 Capital Programme 2023-2028

A £25m capital programme for the period 2023-2028 was approved by the Comhairle in February 2023. Additional funding awarded since then of £17m and projects carried forward from 2018-2023 of £28m, mean that the programme now stands at £70m. The programme is largely developed around the forecast level of General Revenue Grant from the Scottish Government, with this supplemented with other grants and contributions, through the 5-year period. Due to the pressures on the revenue budget, the opportunities to undertake borrowing, to supplement the programme, are limited, but this is kept under review.

5.3 Islands Deal

The Islands Growth Deal is a £100m Programme, jointly funded by both the UK and Scottish Governments. It is a 10-year package of investment that will seek to drive economic growth and the creation of sustainable jobs across Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides. The Deal was developed by the Comhairle, Orkney and Shetland Island Councils, with their partners in the public, academic, business and community sectors.

The Full Deal Agreement was signed, by the three councils and both Governments, in Orkney on 20 January 2023. The Deal will provide projects across the island regions, including three pan-island Programmes, and will lever in an additional £293m of match funding. Projects are aligned to three themes: Leading the Way to a Low Carbon Future; Supporting Growth and Future Industries; and Thriving, Sustainable Communities.

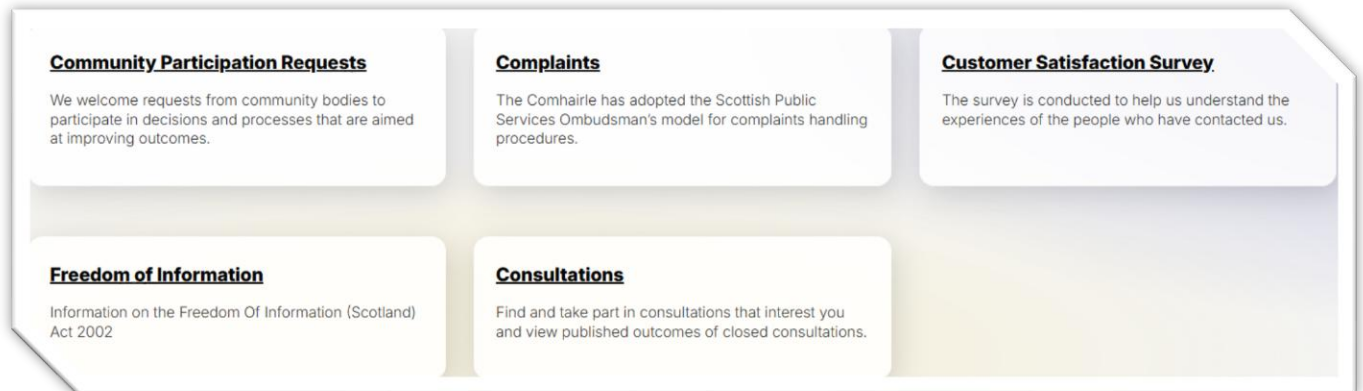
As part of the Deal, the Outer Hebrides will receive £33.3m, to be invested in a number of key developments, targeted at growing the economy through the establishment of Gateway tourism infrastructure throughout the islands; pioneering renewable energy and Spaceport facilities; enabling growth of sustainable skills for our population, through the UHI Outer Hebrides Campus Redevelopment Project and TalEntEd Programme; and investment in our key Primary and Creative Industries.

Outline Business Cases for all projects have now been approved, with work now progressing on the submission and approval of Full Business Cases, in line with HM Treasury Green Book standards, where the key aim will be on achieving cost certainty through procurement and securing a full funding package to proceed to delivery stage. The early projects to proceed in the Outer Hebrides are the Island Centre for Net Zero, UHI Campus Development, Acarsaid Pier and Spaceport.

6. Have your say

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is committed to improving our services and it is important that we listen to what you, the community, say. We welcome your comments or suggestions for improvements for the Comhairle to consider at any time of the year, so please let us know. You can take part in consultations that interest or impact you and we welcome requests from community bodies to participate in decisions and processes that are aimed at improving outcomes.

In the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Comhairle received no participation requests, and 6 consultations invited community engagement. The following Have Your Say web pages are available to the public on the Comhairle's website, at: <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/council-and-committees/have-your-say>.



6.1. Contact Details

Contact us by email

[Online Enquiry Forms](#) continue to be developed and if no form is currently present, a list of email addresses to reach the service area you need directly is available on the Comhairle's [Contact us by email](#) web page.

General Enquiries: enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages: registrars@cne-siar.gov.uk

Freedom of Information Requests: foi@cne-siar.gov.uk

British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us directly by using contactSCOTLAND-BSL: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

Stornoway

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis HS1 2BW
Tel: 01851 600 501

Tarbert

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Old Primary School
Tarbert
Isle of Harris
HS3 3BG
Tel: 01851 600 501

Balivanich

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Balivanich
Isle of Benbecula
HS7 5LA
Tel: 01870 602425

Castlebay

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Castlebay
Isle of Barra
HS9 5XD
Tel: 01871 810431

Data Protection

The Comhairle's Data Protection Officer is:

Tim Langley, Chief Officer, Law and Governance

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Sandwick Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2BW

e-Mail: dataprotection@cne-siar.gov.uk

6.2. Out-of-Hours Emergency Situations

In case of emergency outwith office hours, please contact Faire on 01851 701702.

6.3. Young People and the Decision-Making Processes

We want to hear Young People's views also. Having a say isn't just for adults. Our young people are the future generation, and we want to hear your views too!

6.3.1 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs)

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. Their vision is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its young people, and the mission is to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign for changes to the nation that they live in.

Young people from across the Western Isles can contact their MSYPs to raise issues or get involved in campaigns. The Western Isles has two seats at the Scottish Youth Parliament. Ellie Denehy and Alannah Logue were elected in February 2024 as Scottish Youth Parliament members for the Western Isles. If you would like to contact the Members of Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) use the contact details below:

Ellie Denehy MSYP ellie.denehy.msyp@sypmail.org.uk

Alannah Logue MSYP alannah.logue.MSYP@sypmail.org.uk

Ellie and Alannah can also be contacted for further information on the Youth Climate Action Group Western Isles, which is open to young people aged 12+.

To find out more about youth voice locally and youth councils across the Western Isles, contact the Community Learning and Development Team, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar by emailing youngscot@cne-siar.gov.uk.

7. Where to Get More Information About Your Council

- The Comhairle's Constitutional documents, Corporate Strategy and Financial Information (Annual Report, Budgets and Business Plans) are all published on our website at: www.cne-siar.gov.uk.
- You can also access the Reports on our free public access computers located in all four Comhairle libraries listed below.

1. Stornoway Library 19 Cromwell Street, Stornoway, Tel: 01851 822744, e-mail: library.enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk
2. Tarbert Community Library (within Sir E Scott School) Tarbert, Isle of Harris HS3 3BG Tel: 01859 502971, e-mail: tarbertlibrary@cne-siar.gov.uk
3. Lionacleit Community Library (within Sgoil Lionacleit) Lionacleit, Isle of Benbecula HS7 5PJ Tel: 01870 603691, e-mail: lionacleitlibrary@cne-siar.gov.uk
4. Castlebay Community Library (within Castlebay School Castlebay), Castlebay, Isle of Barra, HS9 5XD Tel: 01871 817200, e-mail: castlebaylibrary@cne-siar.gov.uk

- Social Networks – You can follow us on:



https://x.com/cne_siar



Facebook www.facebook.com/comhairlenaneileansiar



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/comhairle-nan-eilean-siar/>

- The Comhairle's performance progress [reports](#) can be viewed on our website within the Strategy, Performance and Research section.
- The Improvement Service collect, present and compare the LGBF data across a range of council services for all Scottish councils. You can explore the results for the Comhairle and compare these against the other councils on the LGBF [Dashboard](#).
- Audit Scotland inspect all Scottish Local Authorities' performance. National and council specific audit reports can be found on their [website](#).
- The Care Inspectorate looks at the quality of care in Scotland to ensure it meets high standards. Where they find that improvements are needed, they support services to make positive changes. This includes services for adults, children and young people across the Outer Hebrides. All inspection reports can be accessed on their [website](#).
- Education Scotland is a Scottish Government executive agency charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education. Their inspection and review process evaluates the quality of learning and teaching in Scottish schools and education service. Inspection reports can be accessed on their [website](#).

This report can be provided in alternative formats or languages upon request. In order to be sustainable and to reduce printing costs, paper copies of the Annual Report are only available on request.