



Our vision 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.

ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our priorities and desired outcomes for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for the Assets and Infrastructure Service. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Service provides a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to, and on behalf of, the community. The eight service areas within Assets and Infrastructure help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values, and priorities. Our vision is to effectively manage the Comhairle's property, roads and IT infrastructure, maintaining serviceability and maximising improvements from available resources.
- 1.3. **Assets, Property Management and Maintenance** - It is vitally important that the Comhairle makes the best possible use of its current assets, understands the maintenance requirements, and has a vision of what is required in the future. Assets, Property Management and Maintenance will collate and manage key asset information across Comhairle Departments. This information will be the basis used to enable operational efficiencies to be realised and strategic decisions on investment to be made. There is significant potential in rationalising assets, making a reduction in the number of buildings required and benefiting financially from the surplus assets in terms of capital receipt and a reduction in maintenance costs. The service is currently organised around two operational areas and support services:
 - **Property Maintenance** is responsible for undertaking maintenance works on Comhairle property and grounds. This involves close liaison with Departmental clients and the organisation of work delivered by in house trades persons or external contractors.
 - **Property Management** is responsible for the operational management of Comhairle's property assets. This includes ensuring that appropriate maintenance and investment is identified and undertaken and that the Service Department's requirements are met in terms of condition and suitability, all within available resources.
 - **Service Delivery** provides business support across all areas of the service.
- 1.4. **Building Projects** is responsible for designing, procuring, and overseeing the construction of major and minor building projects for the Comhairle together with providing a project management and Construction and Design Management (CDM) advisory service for Comhairle.
- 1.5. **Civil Engineering** oversees the management and maintenance of the Comhairle's Road Network; management and delivery of the Comhairle's Flood Risk Management Plan; and the design and construction of civil engineering projects.
- 1.6. **Energy and Net Zero** are responsible for reducing the Comhairle's carbon emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable practices across the Comhairle's estate. All of which, contribute towards meeting the Comhairle's net zero target of 2045.
- 1.7. **Environmental Health and Trading Standards** aims to deliver the Comhairle's statutory functions relating to environmental health, health & safety in the private sector, private water supplies, food & feed safety, animal health & welfare, trading standards and the administration and issuing of various licences and registrations. The Consumer & Environmental Services Manager also administers and monitors the outcomes from the grant given to the Western Isles Citizens Advice Service.

- 1.8. **Information Technology** develops, implements and maintains information technology related strategies and policies and manages the technical infrastructure over which the Comhairle transacts its business.
- 1.9. **Marine Operations** oversees the management and ongoing maintenance of Comhairle owned piers and harbours. Discharging the Comhairle's roles and responsibilities as statutory Harbour Authority. Provision of marine support and advice to Comhairle colleagues. Providing fuel services at several fishery piers. Discharging the Comhairle's role as Local Lighthouse Authority.
- 1.10. **Municipal Services** mission is to provide quality services which are recognised for excellence and efficiency. The service is currently organised around four operational areas:
- **Cleansing** aims to deliver the core municipal services of refuse collection; recycling collection; inter-island waste transfer; bulky waste uplift services; community skips; community managed household waste recycling centres; street cleansing; burial grounds; public conveniences and operates a seasonal abattoir in Stornoway.
 - **Environmental Management** aims to deliver the core municipal services of waste disposal and recycling processing and treatment, including the direct management of Comhairle household waste recycling centres.
 - **Garage & Fleet** aims to provide a one stop facility which covers maintenance, repairs, 24-hour recovery and insurance claim management for Comhairle owned vehicles as well as facilitating the purchase, hire and lease of vehicles used by the Comhairle. The Garage and Fleet Manager is also the Duty Holder for the Comhairle's HGV Transport Operators Licence.
 - **Transport** aims to provide public transport that is responsible for the day-to-day delivery and monitoring of school and public transport contracts across the islands; Public Service Obligation (PSO) contracted air services; and preparing, tendering awarding and monitoring approximately 90 contracts for school and public bus services for both internal and external clients and Community Transport. The Transport Manager is also responsible for the strategic and day to day management of Bus na Comhairle.

Calum Mackenzie
Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level)

6 risks identified will be reduced:

- AFRIT01 Loss of Data.
 - *Risk Action:* Request for capital spend to purchase a third layer of data back-up.
- AFRIT02 Loss of access to computer systems due to a disaster situation at the Comhairle
 - *Risk Action:* Advance the draft Disaster Recovery Plan.
- AFRIT06 Switch off of analogue by BT.
 - *Risk Action:* BT have compiled list of sites and numbers. IT can then identify services associated with analogue numbers and discuss potential impact with services. Separate risk assessments may have to be undertaken at service level.
- AFRPI09 Inadequate operational resources.
 - *Risk Action:* Carry out a review of resources required across service areas and restructure as necessary.
- MS008 The ban on landfilling of Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) Disposal, post 1 January 2026.
 - *Risk Action:* Secure haulage and disposal of 6000 tonnes of BMW to approved EfW plants.
- MS009 Shortage of Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCV) drivers.
 - *Risk Action:* Look at options for supporting training for PCV drivers from other Services' staff.

2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

3.1 Assets and Infrastructure contribute to the strategic outcomes listed in Table 1 to support the delivery of the Comhairle’s Strategic Priorities.

Table 1: Service alignment to Strategic Outcomes

LOIP	Strategic Priorities	Strategic Outcomes
1. Local Economy and Employment	1.1 Strengthen the local economy	1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development. 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source

LOIP	Strategic Priorities	Strategic Outcomes
2. Population and Connectivity	2.1 Support children, families, and young people	2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community.
3. Housing and Community	3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life	3.1.1 The Gaelic language, natural heritage and cultural of our communities is supported and promoted. 3.1.3 Planning and infrastructure meet the needs of our communities. 3.1.4 Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient.
4. Governance Framework	4.1 Deliver Community Leadership	4.1.2 Reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero. 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased. 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community. 4.1.5 Effective governance of the Comhairle is in place.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the ten strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 2 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the Service Business Plan (SBP) and to achieve Best Value.

Table 2: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Comhairle will be 'Technology Aware', at the forefront of efficiencies, and alert to security risks. The service demonstrates its aim for betterment and efficiency. Working together, the service ensures a focused team approach with deliverables that are clearly understood. The service provides Customer Excellence, including open communications and managed expectations. The service provides professional and efficient Consumer and Environmental services to facilitate the economic, environmental, and social development of the Outer Hebrides.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils' plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), "councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation." The Commission's [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that "Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever."
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle's performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Service are detailed in Tables 3 - 11.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle's mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 12 - 17.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy 'Measures of Success' Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle's [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority **1.1 Strengthen the local economy.**

Strategic Outcome: **1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development.**

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.2.CS01 - CD131 (DD075) (LGBF: ECON8 / SLAED:IG8): The percentage of residential and non-residential addresses where superfast broadband is available.	2019/20 83.1%	Scottish Average	Scottish Average	Assets and Infrastructure
1.1.2.CS02 - CD130 (SLAED:IG7): Percentage of residential and non-residential premises unable to access 10Mbps/s Broadband.	2019 6.4%	5%	5%	Assets and Infrastructure
1.1.2.CS03 - CD137 (SHS7.1): Percentage of Households with home internet access.	2019 81%	85%	85%	Assets and Infrastructure

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.3.CS02 - TS001 (LGBF: CORPAM1): Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use.	2019/20 76%	77%	80%	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
1.1.3.CS03a - TS009ii (LGBF: ENV4a): Condition of the roads network: Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads (both capital and revenue costs).	2019/20 £4,354	£5,451	£5,018	Civil Engineering
1.1.3.CS03b - TS010 (LGBF: ENV4b): Condition of the roads network: Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment.	2018-20 34%	33%	30%	Civil Engineering
1.1.3.CS03c - TS011 (LGBF: ENV4c): Condition of the roads network: Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment.	2018-20 37%	36%	30%	Civil Engineering
1.1.3.CS03d - TS012 (LGBF: ENV4d): Condition of the roads network: Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment.	2018-19 48%	44%	35%	Civil Engineering
1.1.3.CS03e - TS013 (SPI2: ENV4e): Condition of the roads network: Percentage of Unclassified class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment.	2016-20 44%	49%	45%	Civil Engineering
1.1.3.CS08: CD141: Marine sector – GVA: Na H-Eileanan Siar. (Trend)	2018 £49m	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations
1.1.3.CS09 – CD142: Marine sector - Turnover: Na H-Eileanan Siar. (Trend)	2018 £123m	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations
1.1.3.CS10 - CD143: Marine sector - Employment (000's): Na H-Eileanan Siar. (Trend)	2018 1.4	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations
1.1.3.CS11 - CD144: Fishing – (£M) GVA by Local Authority of vessel registration: Na H-Eileanan Siar. (Trend)	2018 £6.9	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations
1.1.3.CS12 - CD145: Fishing – (£M) value of landings by Local Authority of vessel registration: Na H-Eileanan Siar. (Trend)	2018 £13.9	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations
1.1.3.CS13 - CD146: Fishing – Employment headcount by Local Authority of vessel registration: Na H-Eileanan Siar. (Trend)	2018 303	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations
1.1.3.CS14 - CD147: Freight water transport - All freight traffic through Scottish ports by Scottish Marine Region: Outer Hebrides. (Trend)	2018 189,000T	N/A	N/A	Marine Operations

Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community.

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.3.CS02 - ECS201: The proportion of Primary schools reported as being in a good or satisfactory condition (measures the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security).	2020 100%	90%	90%	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
2.1.3.CS03 - ECS202: The proportion of Secondary schools reported as being in a good or satisfactory condition (measures the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security).	2020 75%	75%	90%	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
Measure (KPI title) – Capital Projects*	Baseline 2013-18	Outturn 2018-23	Budget 2023-28	Service
2.1.3.CS06 - Number of school capital projects completed / underway / started.	2013-18 26	56	48	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
2.1.3.CS07 - Percentage completion of school capital projects budget spent.	2013-18 85%	76%	TBA	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
2.1.3.CS08 - Percentage of school capital projects completed that are within budget.	2013-18 90%	100%	TBA	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance

* Removed from CS KPI Progress Report, as performance against budget is presented periodically to the Policy and Resources Committee in the Capital Monitoring Reports.

Strategic Priority 3.1 Support resilient communities and quality of life

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

Table 6: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.1.CS01 – CE175: Number of assets in community ownership (Trend).	2019 59	N/A	N/A	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
3.1.1.CS06 – CE176: Number of Community Asset Transfer (CAT) applications (received in any year) still to be determined as at 31 March (Trend).	2020/21 1	N/A	N/A	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance

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

Table 7: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.3.CS05 - CD033 (TS020/TS021): Number of bus passengers recorded on all Outer Hebrides routes.	2019/20 326,488	320,000	320,000	Municipal Services - Transport

Bus passenger numbers take account of the slow return to normality post COVID-19. There was also a service reduction following the 2019 tender, so passenger number may not reach the 2019 baseline.

Strategic Priority 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 8: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.2.CS03 - CD164: The amount (Tonnes) of household waste generated.	2019/20 13,710	14,300	14,700	Municipal Services - Environmental Management
4.1.2.CS04 - TS014 (LGBF: ENV06): Percentage of total household waste arising that is recycled.	2019/20 21%	36%	40%	Municipal Services - Environmental Management
4.1.2.CS05 - CD165: The amount (kilograms) of household waste generated and managed per person.	2019/20 513kg	540kg	550kg	Municipal Services - Environmental Management

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased.

Table 9: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Trend 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.3.CS05 – CE166: Accessible transport: Number of concessionary fare passes issued to older people (60+). (Trend)	2020 8154	N/A	N/A	Municipal Services - Transport
4.1.3.CS05 – CE186: Accessible transport: Number of concessionary fare passes issued to people aged under 22. (Trend)	2022 1462	N/A	N/A	Municipal Services - Transport
4.1.3.CS06 – CE168: Accessible transport: Number of concessionary fare passes issued to disabled and visually impaired people, including companion. (Trend)	2020 329	N/A	N/A	Municipal Services - Transport

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Table 10: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.4. CD133 (DD001) (LGBF: ENV05): Cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health per 1,000 population.	2019/20 £36,302	£40,000	£37,000	Environmental Health and Trading Standards
4.1.4. CD132 (DD003) (LGBF: ENV05a): Cost of Trading Standards per 1,000 population.	2019/20 £12,537	£15,000	£13,000	Environmental Health and Trading Standards
4.1.4. CD135 (DD002) (SPI2: ENV05b): Cost of Environmental Health per 1,000 population.	2019/20 £23,765	£25,000	£24,000	Environmental Health and Trading Standards

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

Table 11: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.5. - AFR004: Percentage of system availability Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm (A).	2014/15 98%	95%	95%	Information Technology
4.1.5. - AFR005: Percentage (avg.) of Helpdesk calls responded to within agreed time.	2014/15 87%	95%	95%	Information Technology
4.1.5. - AFR066: Percentage of Customers satisfied with IT Services	2021/22 75%	85%	90%	Information Technology

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 – Strengthen the local economy

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development.

Table 12: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.2.1 Continue to lobby government for full fibre rollout to every community.	Information Technology

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source

Table 13: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.3.2 Deliver approved investment in the Comhairle's property estate.	Building Projects
1.1.3.7 Compile Roads Asset Status and Options Report Annually	Civil Engineering
1.1.3.8 Assess Condition and Suitability of Comhairle properties to inform investment requirements.	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
1.1.3.9 Manage WISP operating contract and lifecycle fund delivery	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
1.1.3.11 Manage service contracts to provide best value to Comhairle	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
1.1.3.12 Manage operational handover process of new assets	Assets, Property Management and Maintenance
1.1.3.13 Develop IT solutions to enable flexible working and digitalisation of systems	Information Technology

Strategic Priority 3.1 Support resilient communities and quality of life

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

Table 14: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.3.5 Manage Marine Infrastructure within Port Marine Safety Code	Marine Operations

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

Table 15: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.4.3 Deliver the Consumer and Environmental Services Annual Plan.	Environmental Health and Trading Standards
3.1.4.9 Report on Progress with Local Road Safety Implementation Plan	Civil Engineering

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 16: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.2.1 Implement a waste management plan which meets the environmental considerations of the Outer Hebrides.	Municipal Services - Environmental Management

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

Table 17: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.5.14 Manage corporate IT security and disaster recovery	Information Technology

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 18 - 20 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 Assets and Infrastructure has a Net Revenue Budget of £22,980,750, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 18.

Table 18: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£	%
Assets, Property Management and Maintenance	3,196,826	13.91
Building Projects	26,571	0.12
Civil Engineering	4,509,859	19.62
Energy and Net Zero	-270,228	-1.18
Environmental Health and Trading Standards	906,272	3.94
Information Technology	1,640,389	7.14
Marine Operations	-527,309	-2.29
Municipal Services	13,498,370	58.74
Total	22,980,750	100

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 The Service has a Capital Budget of £9,899k which is allocated within the Service across the projects listed in Table 19.

Table 19: Capital Budget

Projects Capital Programme 2025/26	£000	%
Analogue to Digital Transformation	500	5
Burial Grounds	50	1
Information Technology	125	1
Marine Infrastructure	63	1
Property	930	9
Roads Maintenance	5,330	54
Scalpay Bridge	2,901	29
Total	9,899	100

Service Employees

- 5.4 Assets and Infrastructure have 233.44 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 20. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 20: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Assets, Property Management and Maintenance	28.46	12
Building Projects	10.31	4
Civil Engineering	31.63	14
Energy and Net Zero	2.00	1
Environmental Health and Trading Standards	16.54	7
Information Technology	16.00	7
Marine Operations	4.41	2
Municipal Services	124.09	53
Total	233.44	100



Our vision 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.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN**

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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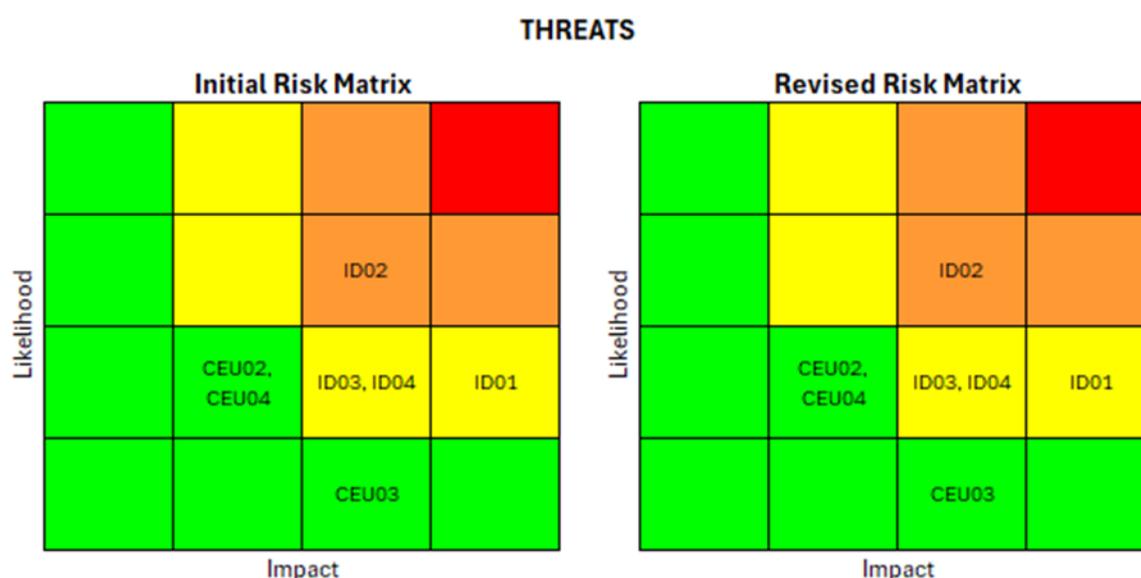
INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our priorities and desired outcomes for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for the Chief Executive's Directorate. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Service provides a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to, and on behalf of, the community. There are two service areas within the Service, the Chief Executive's Office and the Community Engagement Unit. Both services help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each Service is essential to the running of the Comhairle and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities.
- 1.3. The **Chief Executive's Office** provides the necessary support to the Chief Executive, the Convener and Leader and provides the link between the political and organisational elements of the Comhairle. The Chief Executive is Head of the Paid Service of the Comhairle and is the Comhairle's chief policy adviser. He works with all Services to provide sound, objective advice to the Comhairle, its Committees, Working Groups, and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP); to develop and maintain effective leadership; to provide strategic thinking and forward planning; to develop and support quality assurance; to represent and promote the Comhairle and the CPP; to promote continuous improvement; and to act as Returning Officer for all elections.
- 1.4. The Chief Executive's Office also provides a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to the community and helps to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment. The Service collaborates with other Comhairle Services and external partner agencies in the efficient and effective development and delivery of corporate strategies and policies, internal and external, affecting the Western Isles and beyond, and to support delivery of major infrastructure investment projects developed through the Comhairle's Capital Programme 2023-2028 and by other partners. At a Strategic level, the Service provides professional technical advice and support in relation to the delivery of infrastructure projects as part of the Growth Deal for the Islands and UK Government's Community Renewal Partnership.
- 1.5. The **Community Engagement Unit** works with community groups and provides support and equity across the Western Isles to strengthen the local economy, support resilient communities and quality of life. The key areas of focus for the year ahead include engagement with community area forums and the continued development of Area Forums and other area wide mapping of community engagement services. There are four elements to the Community Engagement service: Communications; Community Learning and Development; Community Planning; and Community Wealth Building.
- 1.6. The Communications Team is responsible for Implementation of the Comhairle's Communications Strategy and media relations for the Comhairle and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP). The Community Learning and Development section focuses on Youth Work and Capacity Building, which are two of the national priority areas. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires the OHCPP to prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) which sets out local priorities, aims, objectives and projected outcomes, and is also supported by the Strategy, and Governance and Elections, teams to plan and deliver better services which make a difference to people's lives. The Comhairle is represented on the OHCPP Board by Elected Members and the Chief Executive. Community Wealth Building supports the delivery of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) and other Government Funds, economic development community projects and, in doing so, supports the provision and maintenance of socially and economically thriving communities of the Outer Hebrides.

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to SBPs; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and the Chief Executive's Directorate has identified significant risks for the coming year which shall be reviewed periodically throughout the year.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of the Service, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Chief Executive's Directorate Operational Risk Matrices



- 2.4 The Service has identified seven significant threats, and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

6 risks are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored.

- CEU02 Unable to meet funding deadlines.
- CEU03 Incorrect advice given to Community groups.
- CEU04 CLD statutory provision outcomes are weakened.
- ID01 Project objectives relating to safety, cost, programme and customer expectations are not met.
- ID03 Long-term absence or loss of staffing resource from Investment Delivery.
- ID04 Poor performance of external consultants; including lack of continuity of key personnel; external workforce issues outwith control of Investment Delivery.

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level)

1 risks will be reduced:

- ID02 Unable to secure competitive and affordable construction tenders; reduced positive contribution to local economy.
 - *Risk Action:* Ensure project scope is creditable under scrutiny. Demonstrate robust market testing to inform effective liaison with partners/Government by Members and senior officers with respect to securing funding.

Note that this risk remains Highly rated even once Risk Actions are implemented.

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 The Chief Executive's Directorate contributes to strategic outcomes 1.1.3: Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding sources, 3.1.3 Planning and infrastructure meet the needs of our communities, 3.1.4: Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient and 4.1.1: Communities are empowered and continue to be at the heart of our decision making.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the four strategic outcomes, the Service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chief Executive's Directorate demonstrates the highest standards of integrity and transparency.• The Service communicates and collaborates effectively with colleagues, stakeholders and the communities in which we live and work.• Our customers receive quality technical and commercial advice in the development and delivery of major investment programmes and projects.• The Service demonstrates effective management of health, safety and welfare in the design, specification, procurement, construction and commissioning of major assets and infrastructure.• The Service demonstrates high standards of community engagement and community empowerment.• The workforce has the skills, flexibility, capacity and knowledge to provide infrastructure funding support to our communities.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils’ plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), “councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation.” The Commission’s [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that “Scotland’s councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever.”

4.2 In December 2024, the Account’s Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle’s performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Chief Executive’s Directorate are detailed in Tables 2 - 4.

4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle’s mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 5 - 7.

How we will measure our performance

4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy ‘Measures of Success’ Strategic Outcome KPIs that the Service contributes to and the LPIs chosen by the Service to strengthen its focus on improvement. There are no service prioritisation Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs aligned to the Chief Executive’s Directorate.

4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle’s [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority 1.1 Strengthen the local economy.

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.3: Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source.

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.3. IDU001: Safety Management – Number of RIDDOR incidents.	2019/20 0	0	0	Chief Executive's Office

Strategic Priority 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Trend KPI	Target 2030	Service
3.1.3.CS01 - CE120: Percentage of respondents who felt lonely some, most, or all of the time during the last week (Trend).	2018 17.2%	N/A	N/A	Community Engagement Unit
3.1.3.CS02 - CE121: Proportion of adults who live within a 5-minute walk of their local green or blue space (Trend).	2019 82.6%	N/A	N/A	Community Engagement Unit
3.1.3.CS03 - CE122: Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that there are places where people can meet up and socialise (Trend).	2019 49.1%	N/A	N/A	Community Engagement Unit

Strategic Priority 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership

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

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Trend KPI	Target 2030	Service
4.1.1.CS01 - CE123: 'Have Your Say' Consultations completed (Trend KPI)	2019 9	N/A	N/A	Community Engagement Unit
4.1.1.CS02 - CE124: 'Have Your Say' Community Participation Requests received (Trend KPI)	2017/18 1	N/A	N/A	Community Engagement Unit
4.1.1. CE001b: Number of Local Media press releases (Trend KPI).	2019/20 241	N/A	N/A	Community Engagement Unit

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of risk identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 – Strengthen the local economy.

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.3: Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source.

Table 5: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.3.1 Support delivery of RCGF (Regeneration Capital Grant Fund) economic development projects.	Community Engagement Unit
1.1.3.14 Support delivery of Island's Programme Funding, Island's Growth Deal – Destination Development and eligible Comhairle funding bids on behalf of community bodies.	Community Engagement Unit
1.1.3.15 Development and delivery of major infrastructure projects, meeting targets associated with safety management, programme, cost and quality.	Chief Executive's Office

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 6: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.4.1 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of Youth and Community Work services to support the outcomes of the Community Learning and Development Plan	Community Engagement Unit
3.1.4.19 Implement and Deliver the Community Learning Development (CLD) Plan 2024 – 2027	Community Engagement Unit

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership

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

Table 7: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.1.2 Support the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Locality Plans.	Community Engagement Unit
4.1.1.4 Review and deliver the Comhairle's Communication Strategy	Community Engagement Unit
4.1.1.7 Support delivery of the Comhairle's Community Engagement Strategy including Youth Voice and Community Voice opportunities.	Community Engagement Unit

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 8 and 9 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 The Chief Executive's Directorate has a Net Revenue Budget of £1,237k, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 8.

Table 8: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£'000	%
Chief Executive's Office	329	27
Community Engagement Unit	908	73
Total	1,237	100

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for the Service.

Service Employees

- 5.4 The Service has 16.7 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 9. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 9: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Chief Executive's Office	3.5	21
Community Engagement Unit	13.2	79
Total	16.7	100



Our vision 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.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

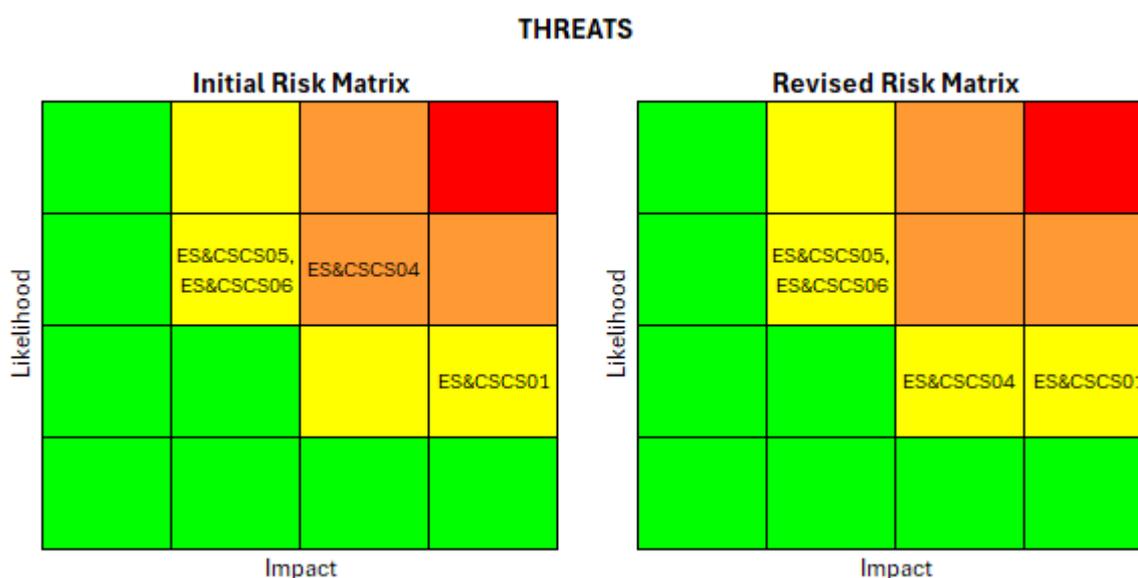
- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. The SBPs are the main annual business planning document for Children's Services. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. Children's Services have a statutory responsibility to deliver targeted services to ensure that the Comhairle 'Gets it Right for Every Child'. The Service aspires to provide very good if not better support and protection to vulnerable children and young people through targeted interventions. This will be achieved through good partnership working. The Service will further embed a culture of continuous improvement.
- 1.3. There are three service areas within the Service, Children & Families, Fostering & Adoption and Extended Learning. All three services help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities.
- 1.4. Children's Services will respond to emerging issues such as the response to supporting and protecting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.
- 1.5. Children's Services covers the provision of responding to child protection concerns; services for children with/and affected by disabilities; throughcare and aftercare services; services that help to reduce offending and support children disengaged from mainstream education; management and delivery of Kinship, Fostering and Adoption, Residential, Respite, Throughcare and Aftercare and Supported Lodgings Services; and the day to day co-ordination and delivery of additional support needs through the Extended Learning provision.
- 1.6. Keeping The Promise, adhering to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and taking a trauma informed approach to all areas of work will be key priorities for the Service going forward.

Jack Libby
Chief Officer, Children's Services and Chief Social Work Officer

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to SBPs; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and the Service has identified significant risks for the coming year which shall be reviewed periodically.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of Children's Services, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Children's Services Operational Risks



- 2.4 The Service has identified 4 threats, and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

3 risk identified is at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored:

- ES&CSCS01 Clients are at risk of significant harm.
- ES&CSCS05 Statutory assessments are not completed in time.
- ES&CSCS06 Elements of a Child's Plan fail to be delivered.

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level)

- ES&CSCS04 Lack of sufficient local placements
 - Risk Action: Review existing service delivery model through the use of WFWF in order to manage and reduce the number of referrals coming to Children & Families.
 - Risk Action: Review the current fee paid fostering scheme.

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle's performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Children’s Services contribute to strategic outcomes 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve and 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe. Both outcomes support the delivery of the Comhairle’s Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the two strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care experience children in the Western Isles to have loving, supportive, and nurturing relationships which act as the foundation stone for a sense of safety, healthy development and mutual respect.• Young people are able to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.• Children and young people’s rights are respected.• All children and young people are supported to maintain good physical and mental health and wellbeing.• There is a concentration on the strengths and assets of children, young people and their families, with an awareness of adverse traumatic experiences, helping them find solutions that work for them.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils’ plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), “councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation.” The Commission’s [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that “Scotland’s councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever.”
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account’s Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle’s performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Service are detailed in Tables 2 - 3.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the

appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle’s mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Table 4.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy 2024-27 ‘Measures of Success’ Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle’s [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve.

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.1.CS04 - ECS131 (LGBF: CHN19b): School Attendance Rates (Looked After Children).	2021/22 87%	90%	94%	Children’s Services

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.2.CS05 – ECS191: Percentage of children (0-17) with LAC status per 1,000 population. Figure for Scotland was 13.9 in 2020.	2020 10.4%	10%	9%	Children’s Services
2.1.2.CS06 – ECS192: Number of children referred to the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA), per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 15.8	15	10	Children’s Services
2.1.2.CS07a – ECS193: Number of children referred to the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) on care and protection grounds (non-offence), per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 10.8	10	8	Children’s Services
2.1.2.CS07b – ECS194: Number of children referred to the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) on offence grounds, per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 10.9	5	5	Children’s Services
2.1.2.CS08 – ECS195: Number of Children’s Hearings held, per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 25.9	23	20	Children’s Services
2.1.2.CS09 -ECS196: Number of children with a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) in force at 31 March, per 1,000 population aged under 16 years. (Trend)	2019/20 7.1	N/A	N/A	Children’s Services

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.2.CS13 – ECS128: Percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months.	2019/20 22.2%	10%	10%	Children's Services
2.1.2.CS14 - ECS129 (LGBF: CHN23): Percentage Looked After Children (LAC) with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July).	2019/20 20%	17%	13%	Children's Services
2.1.2 ECS002 (LGBF: CHN9): Balance of Care for looked after children: Percentage of "Looked After Children" (LAC) being cared for in the Community.	2020/21 80%	86%	90%	Children's Services
2.1.2. ECS197: Percentage of children who through the use of outcome measurement tools, have shown an improvement in their wellbeing after 6 months.	2024/25 77.50	80%	90%	Children's Services

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

Table 4: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.2.1 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of services that meet statutory duties and support the outcomes of the Integrated Children's Services Plan.	Children's Services

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised at 5.2 and 5.4 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 Children's Services has a Net Revenue Budget of £4,670,394.

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for Children's Services.

Service Employees

- 5.4 Children's Services have 29.6 FTE employees working across the service. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.



Our vision 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.

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN**

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for the service. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the service's principal areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Economic and Community Regeneration service provides a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to the community. The mission of the Service is to facilitate and support the economic, environmental, and social development of the Outer Hebrides through business, community and social enterprise support, maximising external funding from all available sources, and developing and delivering key innovative projects across the creative, cultural, tourism, and traditional sectors underpinned by forward thinking, professional and efficient Planning and Building Standards services.
- 1.3. The five service areas within Economic and Community Regeneration help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values, and priorities.
- 1.4. **Business Gateway** – The Outer Hebrides Business Gateway is a publicly funded service providing access to free business support / impartial advice to start-up and existing businesses in Scotland. The service aims to provide personalised, accessible and timesaving business support to businesses, so that they can improve at their own pace through actionable solutions and tools. A range of workshops and webinars are delivered with a focus on digital enablement and skills.

The Comhairle's Business Gateway service also administers a range of grant and loan initiatives aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs, fishery investment, business start-up and general business development.

- 1.5. **Economic and Community Development** develops and delivers strategy, programmes and programmes to stimulate economic growth, innovation and development. The Service consists of the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) Programme; Project & Sectoral Support focusing on Fisheries and Marine Resources, Crofting and Land Resources (including access and biodiversity), Space, Tourism, Renewable Energy, Cultural & Creative Industries, Islands Deal Projects; and management of a portfolio of Economic Development sites and properties.

The Service manages a range of funding streams to support economic regeneration and maximise leverage of external funding; develops strategic relations with business, external funding partners and agencies and the community; undertakes lobbying activity and responds to consultations and policy proposals on issues affecting the local economy.

- 1.6. **Gaelic, Heritage and Culture** is currently organised around two operational areas:
 - **Museums, archive and archaeology services** collects, documents, preserves and provides access to the heritage of the Outer Hebrides, holding the collections in trust for the community. Activities are delivered to professional standards which align with national policy and legislative requirements. Access to the collections to support learning and leisure is provided through programmes and activities that encourage increased participation and sustain community confidence in Gaelic language, heritage and culture. Services are provided across the Outer Hebrides.
 - **Sgioba na Gàidhlig** is responsible for the promotion and development of Gaelic, the preparation of the Comhairle's Gaelic Language Plan and submissions to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Gaelic Language

Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) for funding towards Gaelic development work. The team also provides translation services to Comhairle departments and Reports to Comataidh Buileachaidh Plana Cànan.

- 1.7. **Housing** – The Comhairle’s Housing Services Team provides an integrated housing service centred around the development, delivery, and review of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The LHS is the Comhairle’s key strategic document relating to Housing and supports and informs the Comhairle’s role as the Strategic Housing Authority for the area. The LHS sets out the Comhairle’s approach to Affordable Housing Programme (through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan), the provision of the statutory Homelessness Service, and Private Sector Housing matters relating to Empty Homes, house condition, medical adaptations and Fuel Poverty.

The Housing Service is responsible for a number of Statutory duties including the development of the LHS, the provision of a Homelessness Service, the provision of a Section 72 Statement (to articulate the strategy to address adaptations and Below Tolerable Standard houses) and the issuing of various Orders and Notices relating to Private Sector Housing condition.

- 1.8. **Planning and Building Standards** is currently organised around two operational areas:

- **Planning Services** – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar as the Planning Authority for the administrative area of the Western Isles has a statutory duty to deliver the planning functions enacted under the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (The Act) (as amended), and its related and subordinate legislation. The Act requires that every Planning Authority:
 - prepares and adopts a Local Development Plan;
 - make Planning Decisions in accordance with its Development Plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise); and
 - enforces the law of Planning, at its discretion, where it determines that it is in the public interest to do so.

The Planning Service is responsible for Development Planning, Development Management (Planning and related applications) and Enforcement. Tasks include preparing, monitoring and reviewing the Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance. The Service provides pre planning advice, determines planning and related applications and takes planning enforcement action as required.

Conservation and enhancement of built heritage resources is supported through advice and other measures. Staff provide advice and information on socio economic matters, have technical expertise in mapping and GIS, and undertake specific projects. The service participates in pre application advice, meets customers and conducts site visits for the purposes of the assessment and determination of approximately 550 planning and related applications per annum.

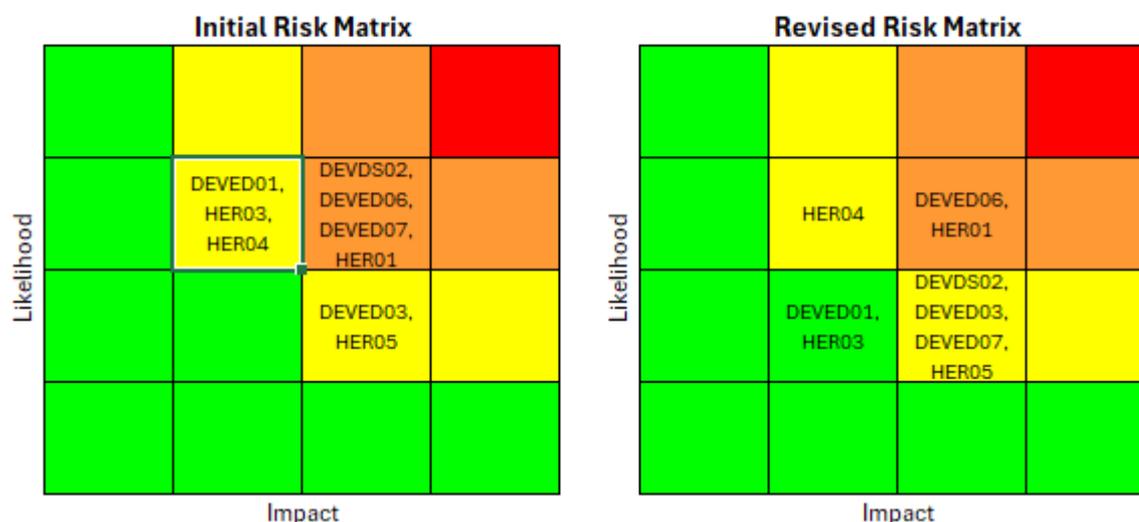
- **Building Standards** – The Building Standards team is responsible for determining Building Warrants and Certificates of Completion; ensuring the making safe or removal of dangerous buildings; providing a Building Standards advisory service to customers; supporting the Comhairle’s Private Sector Housing Scheme of Assistance; and, promoting improvements to sustainable building techniques and access for the disabled.

Anne Murray
Chief Officer, Economic & Community Regeneration

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk:
- Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle’s Corporate Strategy;
 - Operational risk aligned to Service Business Plans; and
 - Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 **Operational risks** represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and Economic and Community Regeneration has identified significant risks for the coming year, and these shall be reviewed periodically.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of the Service, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. Paragraph 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Economic and Community Regeneration Operational Risks
THREATS



- 2.4 The Service has identified 9 threats, and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

5 risk identified are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored:

- DEVED003 Proposed new grid connection to the Outer Hebrides does not materialise.
- DEVED006 Uncertainty of availability or access to External Funds or Funding Programmes.
- HER01 Comhairle unable to financially support Gaelic organisations in the Outer Hebrides at the current level.
- HER04 Unable to adequately capture historical archaeological finds.
- HER05 Fail to achieve Museum re-accreditation for Museum nan Eilean Lews Castle and Lionacleit, and accreditation for Tasglann nan Eilean.

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level)

4 risks identified will be reduced:

- DEVED001 Declining financial and staff resources to enable delivery of all Business Plan and service objectives.
 - *Risk action:* Prioritise workload as per the Sustainable Development Committee Work Plan.
- DEVDS002 Ongoing reliance on a small number of existing qualified staff.
 - *Risk action:* Development and implementation of workforce plan across services.

- DEVED007 Funding for Medical Adaptations is fully spent before the end of the Comhairle's 5-year Capital Programme.
 - *Risk action: Seek to increase the funding allocation in the Capital Programme.*
- HER03 The condition in which existing Museum nan Eilean collections are stored has detrimental impact on collections.
 - *Risk action: Seek funding for collections resource centre, identify other measures to improve environmental conditions in existing facilities.*

2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle's performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

3.1 Economic and Community Regeneration contribute to the strategic outcomes listed in Table 1 to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priorities.

Table 1: Service alignment to Strategic Outcomes

LOIP	Strategic Priorities	Strategic Outcomes
1. Local Economy and Employment	1.1 Strengthen the local economy	1.1.1 Development projects associated with the Islands Deal are delivered. 1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development. 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source. 1.1.5 Growth in small and medium sized businesses demonstrated.
2. Population and Connectivity	2.1 Support children, families, and young people	The Service does not directly contribute to the strategic outcomes within this priority.
3. Housing and Community	3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life	3.1.1 The Gaelic language, natural heritage and cultural of our communities is supported and promoted. 3.1.3 Planning and infrastructure meet the needs of our communities. 3.1.4 Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient. 3.1.5 Reduce inequality and poverty and promote social mobility.
4. Governance Framework	4.1 Deliver Community Leadership	4.1.1 Communities are empowered and continue to be at the heart of our decision making. 4.1.2 Reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the 10 strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 2 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 2: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <p>The service demonstrates that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• works with partners to provide support in Growth and Future Industries, through the Islands Deal;• proactively regenerates the Outer Hebrides' local economy and communities;• supports the development of business and community enterprises;• leads on strategic projects which contribute direct investment into the economic and social infrastructure across the Outer Hebrides;• provides the highest standards of integrity and inclusion, stimulate learning and improve cognitive function; and• plans strategically for meeting current and future housing need and demand.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils' plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), "councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation." The Commission's [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that "Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever."
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account's Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle's performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Service are detailed in Tables 3 - 9.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations, and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle's mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 10 - 17.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy ‘Measures of Success’ Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle’s [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority **1.1 Strengthen the local economy.**

Strategic Outcome: **1.1.1 Development projects associated with the Islands Deal are delivered.**

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.1.CD028 Proportion of Island’s Deal projects delivered.	2022/23 6.25%	14%	18%	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.CS01-2 - CD100ai (SLAED:I1): Economic Development and Tourism Expenditure (Capital Spend).	2019/20 £1,431	£1,000	£1,000	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.CS01-2 - CD100aai (SLAED:I1): Economic Development and Tourism Expenditure (Revenue Spend).	2019/20 £9,533k	£9,500k	£9,500k	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.CS05 - CE159: Match funding (£) received for Islands Growth Deal projects specific to the Outer Hebrides (3-island’s Target £235 million).	2023/24 £ 5.268m	£7.3m	£40m	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.CS06 - CE160: Number of sustainable jobs (FTE) created in the Outer Hebrides from Islands Growth Deal projects (3-Island’s Target 1300 12).	2023/24 3	5	250	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.CS07 - CE161: Percentage of Islands Growth Deal projects completed.	2023/24 0	5%	70%	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.CS08 - CE174 Percentage increase in economy from Outer Hebrides Islands Growth Deal sectoral projects (one KPI for each sectoral project).	GVA 2021 £584.9M	N/A	8%	Economic and Community Development

Strategic Outcome: **1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development.**

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.2.CS06 - CD138: Business Gateway: Number of Digital Health Checks undertaken. (Trend)	2020/21 28	N/A	N/A	Business Gateway
1.1.2.CS07 - CD139: Business Gateway: Number of businesses benefitting from intensive 1-2-1 digital support. (Trend)	2020/21 15	N/A	N/A	Business Gateway

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.2.CS08 - CD140: Business Gateway: Number of Digital Skills webinars delivered. (Trend)	2020/21 21	N/A	N/A	Business Gateway

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source.

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.3.CS01 - CD076 (DD076) (LGBF: ECON9, SLAED:OC8): Town Vacancy Rates.	2019/20 5.5%	5.5%	6%	Business and Regeneration Support

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

Table 6: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.5.CS01 - CD159 (SLAED: I2): Economic Development Staffing – estimated.	2019/20 36.56	24	24	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS02 – CD158 (SLAED OC4): New Business Starts per 10,000 Working Age Population. (Trend)	2019 48	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS03 - CD160 (SLAED:OC5): Business Survival Rate (min 3 Years).	2015-18 63%	62%	62%	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS04 - CD161 (SLAED: A1): Number of Attendees at Business Gateway Events. (Trend)	2019/20 459	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS05 - CD162 (SLAED: OP1): Number of Businesses Supported by Council Economic Development Activity. (Trend)	2019/20 340	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS06a - CD163a (SLAED: IG4b): Gross Value Added (GVA) by Growth Sector per head (Employment): Financial and Business Services.	2018 41,996	53,000	53,000	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS06b - CD163b (SLAED: IG4d): Gross Value Added (GVA) by Growth Sector per head (Employment): Energy (Trend).	2018 111,560	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS06c - CD163c (SLAED: IG4e): Gross Value Added (GVA) by Growth Sector per head (Employment): Sustainable Tourism.	2018 15,853	16,000	16,000	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5.CS06d - CD163d (SLAED: IG4f): Gross Value Added (GVA) by Growth Sector per head (Employment):	2018 47,643	50,000	50,000	Economic and Community Development

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
Creative Industries (incl. Digital)				
1.1.5.CS07 - CD119 (DD063a) (SLAED:OC9): Number of Business Gateway start-ups that are Trading (Trend).	2019/20 57	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5 - CD007: Business Gateway: Number of new business enquiries dealt with.	2021/22 1,340	280	280	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5 - CD014 (DD020): Number of jobs created/safeguarded.	2014/15 109	45	45	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5 - CD015 (DD019): Number of existing businesses supported to achieve growth.	2017/18 22	5	5	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5 - CD016 (DD021): Number of young people supported in business.	2017/18 16	40	40	Economic and Community Development
1.1.5 - CD017 (DD022): Number of new business start-ups.	2014/15 44	35	35	Economic and Community Development

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 7: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Target 2030	Service
3.1.1.CS02 - CE155: The percentage of adults who have attended or visited a cultural event or place in the last 12 months.	2019 63.1%	70	75	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.CS03 - CE156: The percentage of adults who participated in a cultural activity in the last 12 months.	2019 78.6%	82	90	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.CS04 - CE157 (SPI: C&L5c): Percentage of adults satisfied with museums and galleries.	2017-20 43%	80%	80%	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.CS09 - CD046iib (LGBF: C&L3): Number of Museum and Gallery Visits.	2019/20 83,787	94,000	100,000	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.CS11 - CE158: Percentage of the Eilean Siar population with no skills in Gaelic.	39% Census2011	42	45	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.CD046ii (LGBF: C&L3): Net cost per museum visit. (NB: 2020/21: £28.38)	2010/11 £4.27	£6	£4	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.CE028: Number of Organisations receiving financial assistance from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Small Grants Budget (Trend KPI).	2014/15 26	20	20	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Target 2030	Service
3.1.1.CE032b: Level of funding secured from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, excluding the “Clasaichean Coimhearsnachd” project. (Trend).	2014/15 £109,900	N/A	N/A	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture

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

Table 8: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.3.CS04 - DD061 (LGBF: ECON3): Average time (weeks) taken to deliver a commercial (business and industry) planning application decision.	2019/20 9.53 weeks (about 2 months)	*8.67 weeks	*8.67 weeks	Planning and Building Standards
3.1.3.CS06 - CE162: Total number of Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) approvals. (Trend)	2019/20 20	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.3.CS07 - CE163: Total number of AHSP site starts (point of contractor commencing on site). (Trend)	2019/20 165	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.3.CS08 - CE164: Total number of AHSP completions. (Trend)	2019/20 79	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.3.CS09 - CE165: Total number of AHSP actual spend (£m). (Trend)	2019/20 £8,393m	N/A	N/A	Housing
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.	2018/19 95%	90%	90%	Planning and Building Standards
3.1.3.CD011A (DD067A): Percentage of first reports issued within 20 working days.	2017/18 98%	95%	95%	Planning and Building Standards

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

Table 9: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.5.CS01 – CE166: Application assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. (Trend)	2019/20 122	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS02 – CE167: Households reassessed as homeless within one year, as a proportion of all households assessed as homeless.	2019/20 4%	3%	2.5%	Housing
3.1.5.CS03 - CE168: Number of households in temporary accommodation, as at 31 March.	2019/20 60	50	30	Housing
3.1.5.CS04 - CE169: Percentage of households in B&B temporary accommodation, as a prop of all households in temporary accommodation, as at 31 March.	2019/20 8%	0%	0%	Housing

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.5.CS05 - Number of households with children or pregnant women in temporary accommodation, as at 31 March. (Trend)	2019/20 15	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS05 - CE170: Number of children in temporary accommodation, as at 31 March. (Trend)	2019/20 25	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS07 - CE177: Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation, by household type: All (Trend)	2019/20 291 Days	200 days	120 days	Housing
3.1.5.CS08 - CE178: total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation, by household type: Single Person (Trend)	2019/20 296 Days	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS09 - CE179: Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation, by household type: Single Parent (Trend)	2019/20 243 Days	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS10 - CE180: Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation, by household type: Couple (Trend)	2019/20 408 Days	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS11 - Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation, by household type: Couple with Children (Trend)	2019/20 408 Days	N/A	N/A	Housing
3.1.5.CS12 - CE182: Proportion of households assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness securing settled accommodation - RSL (Housing Association).	2019/20 74%	77%	80%	Housing
3.1.5.CS13 - CE106: Percentage of households fuel poor (Trend).	2017-2019 40%	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
3.1.5.CS14 - CE183: Percentage of households extreme fuel poor (Trend).	2017-2019 24%	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
3.1.5.CS15 - CE184: The median fuel poverty gap for fuel poor households adjusted to 2015 fuel prices (annual amount that would be required to move the household out of fuel poverty (Trend).	2017-2019 £1,350	N/A	N/A	Economic and Community Development
3.1.5.CS16 - CE185: The proportion of households under-occupied with two or more bedrooms over the minimum Bedroom Standard requirement. (Trend)	2017-19 52%	N/A	N/A	Housing

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of risk identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 Strengthen the local economy.

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.1 Development projects associated with the Islands Deal are delivered.

Table 10: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.1.3 Deliver Primary Industries strand of Islands Deal Programme.	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.4 Progress Green Hydrogen production for on-island use in heat and transport through delivery of OH Energy Hub project.	Economic and Community Development
1.1.1.5 Lead the delivery of the Spaceport 1 project.	Economic and Community Development

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

Table 11: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.5.1 Deliver Business Gateway services to support business start-up and growth.	Business Gateway
1.1.5.2 Deliver internal and external business support funding programmes.	Business Gateway
1.1.5.3 Support growth and resilience within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.	Business Gateway

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 12: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.1.1 Implement the Comhairle's Local Biodiversity Action Plan.	Economic and Community Development
3.1.1.3 Support the local tourism industry develop a new visitor strategy up to 2030.	Economic and Community Development
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).	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.13 Review and deliver the Comhairle's Gaelic Language Plan	Gaelic, Heritage and Culture
3.1.1.15 Support growth and resilience within the local Crofting and Agricultural Sector	Economic and Community Development

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

Table 13: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.3.3 Develop, monitor, and review the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2024-2029.	Housing
3.1.3.7 Undertake preparatory work for new Local Development Plan.	Planning and Building Standards

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

Table 14: SBP Actions

Action	Service
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	Planning and Building Standards

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

Table 15: SBP Actions

Action	Service
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.	Economic and Community Development

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 16: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.1.8 In line with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 encourage communities to inform the Development Plan and participate in the Planning process by prompting preparation by communities of Local Place Plans.	Planning and Building Standards

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

Table 17: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.2.3 Support renewable energy development, maximising local socio-economic benefit.	Economic and Community Development

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 18 - 20 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 Economic and Community Regeneration has a Net Revenue Budget of £3,307,266, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 18.

Table 18: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£	%
Economic and Community Development, Business Gateway	818,022	25
Gaelic, Heritage and Culture	1,089,325	33
Housing	481,810	15
Planning and Building Standards	918,109	28
Total	3,307,266	100%

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 The Service has a Capital Budget of £4.49m which is allocated within the Service across the projects detailed in Table 19.

Table 19: Capital Budget

Capital Programme 2025/26 Projects	£ million	%
Regeneration Capital Grant fund	1.20	27
Gaelic Capital Fund – Cnoc Soilleir	1.80	40
Place Based Investment Programme	0.09	2
Islands Growth Deal (CNES Match Fund)	1.00	22
Medical Adaptation Grants (Major and Minor)	0.40	9
Total	4.49	100

Service Employees

- 5.4 Economic and Community Regeneration have 79.53 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 20. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 20: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Economic and Community Development & Business Gateway	19.17	24
Gaelic, Heritage and Culture	13.45	17
Housing	20.70	26
Planning and Building Standards	26.21	33
Total	79.53	100



Our vision 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.

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
DIRECTORATE
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN**

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our priorities and desired outcomes for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for the Chief Executive's Directorate. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Education and Children's Services Directorate provide a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to the community. The Directorate supports the Children's Services and Schools and Early Years Business Units through a business strategy that underpins all service areas, using the business resources required in the most efficient, effective and economic way.
- 1.3. The five service areas within the Education and Children's Services Directorate help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the Comhairle and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities.
- 1.4. **Libraries** – The mission of Leabharlann nan Eilean Siar / Western Isles Libraries is to inspire lifelong learning, promote knowledge and strengthen communities. This is accomplished through providing free and open access to a range of materials and information via physical and digital spaces and creating opportunities for sharing, enrichment and interaction through a range of reading, learning and cultural opportunities. The service is delivered through the main library/head office in Stornoway and three combined public/school libraries in Tarbert, Linciate and Castlebay. Along with a Mobile Library Service in Uist & Benbecula and Lewis & Harris, the service reaches residents across the whole of the authority.
- 1.5. **Multimedia** provides website development and supports Gaelic Medium Education by producing resource materials that are web-based and promotional materials. The service also ensures delivery, quality assurance and development of the Gaelic Action Plan and Comhairle Gaelic First Policy.
- 1.6. **Performance and Staffing (Education)** undertake the Strategic and Business function for all service areas in the Department, including assigned corporate responsibilities encompassing the following sections:
 - Administration provides administrative support function to the Education and Children's Services Department;
 - Performance Management provide business and performance management support to Education and Children's Services;
 - Teaching and Non-Teaching Staffing provide support to managers to implement HR and payroll procedures for school staff; and
 - The Adult Learning Service provide learning opportunities for adults, including those with significant barriers, to maximise their chances of achieving their potential. The service delivers Community Based Adult Learning, Literacy and Numeracy learning and English for Speakers of Other Languages.
- 1.7. **Resources (Education)** undertake the Strategic Financial Management and Monitoring for all service areas in the Department, including annual budget build and development of financial savings packages to meet CPL and other corporate requirements. The service also provides a financial support function for all service areas in the Department. The service now includes a variety of support services to schools, pupils and parents including assigned corporate responsibilities and encompasses the following sections:
 - Resources Section provide financial support in terms of business planning, pupil welfare and accounting for the Education, Skills and Children's Services Department. Estate function ensures that work in relation to the school estate is prioritised and commissioned as appropriate. School

transport management, Additional support needs (ASN) Transport delivery, pupil licencing and regulation, health and safety / fire safety, risk management, business continuity are also functions of this section;

- Schools ICT provide development and support for the delivery of digital education in Western Isles Schools ensuring that appropriate and robust ICT systems are in place to meet the needs of schools and pupils – hardware provision and development, software provisioning and licencing along with research and development work to provide a continuous pathway to improvement;
- Information Technology provide IT support, training and commissioning in relation to learning and teaching and Management Information Systems along with research and development work to support eSgoil, NELO (National e-Learning offer) and digital learning in schools along with implementing and managing national infrastructure such as GLOW and Groupcall. This section also manages school and pupil data and supplies this information to ScotXed (Scottish Exchange of Data) and the Scottish Government; and
- Catering and Cleaning provide a catering function for the Education, Skills and Children’s Services Department in relation to schools and nurseries and a cleaning service for all Comhairle Departments and services.

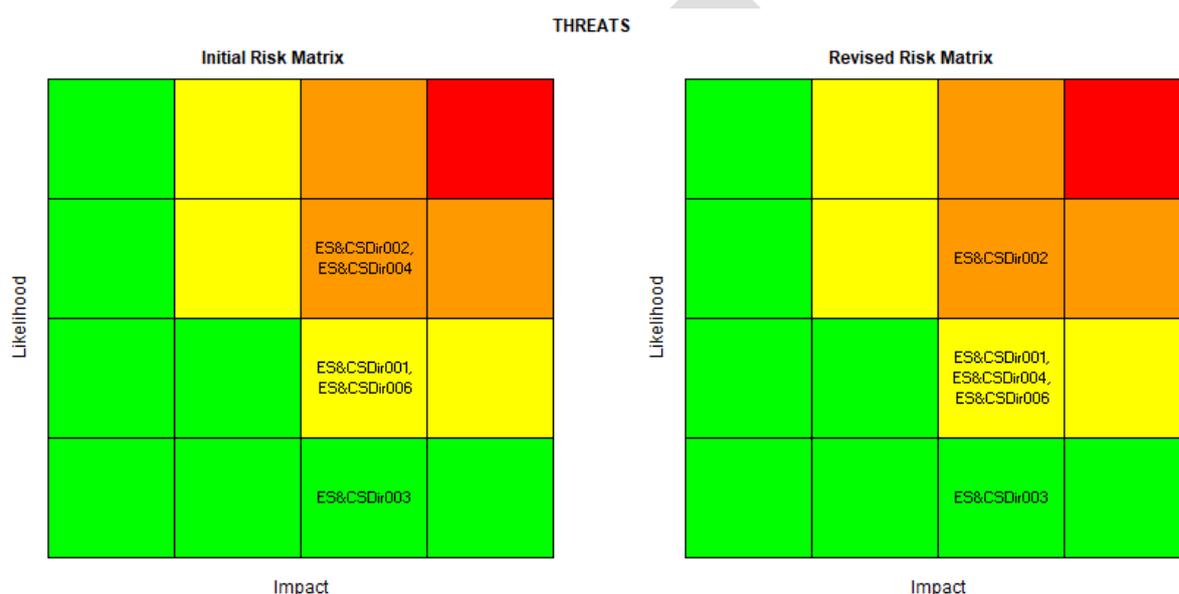
1.8. **Sport and Leisure** is responsible for creating a supported infrastructure for the development of sport and implementation of the national health improvement agenda. The Service works in partnership with local and national agencies to instigate and enhance sport and physical activity opportunities available to the population of the Outer Hebrides. The Service operates the Comhairle's sports facilities and delivers the sports development responsibilities, encompassing outdoor learning. Comhairle commitment is used to lever-in significant external funding and resources to deliver the Active Schools Network and Outdoor Learning, assist in the improvement of the sports infrastructure and meet the demands of supporting the personnel to sustain and enhance clubs and activities. This service meets the Comhairle's statutory duty to provide sports related leisure services.

Donald A. Macleod
Chief Officer, Education and Children’s Services

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle’s Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to SBPs; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and the Education and Children’s Services Directorate has identified significant risks for the coming year, and these will be reviewed periodically.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of the Service, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Education and Children’s Services Directorate Operational Risks



- 2.4 The Service has identified five threats, and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

4 risks identified are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored:

- ES&CSDir01 Management failure to implement planned savings.
- ES&CSDir02 High level of staff absence.
- ES&CSDir03 Incidents or Traffic accidents on home to school transport or ASN Transport
- ES&CSDir06 Staff required to carry heavy and awkward items up and down stairs.

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level)

1 risk identified will be reduced:

- ES&CSDir04 Lack of effective digital teaching and learning devices available for teachers or school pupils.
 - *Risk Action:* Replace Switches, Wi-Fi access points and digital devices in primary schools.

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 The Education and Children’s Services Directorate contribute to the strategic outcomes listed below to support the delivery of the Comhairle’s Strategic Priorities.
- 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve;
 - 2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community;
 - 2.1.4 People are healthy and active;
 - 3.1.1 The Gaelic language, natural heritage and cultural of our communities is supported and promoted;
 - 3.1.5 Reduce inequality and poverty and promote social mobility; and
 - 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the six strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital and IT services meet the needs of pupils and teachers.• The workforce has the skills, flexibility and capacity to deliver the Education & Children’s Services priorities.• Adults have access to learning opportunities that reduce barriers to employment, volunteering or further education.• School pupils have access to nutritional meals.• People in the Western Isles have range of opportunities to access reading, learning and cultural opportunities.• People in the Western Isles have access to a range of sport and leisure activities that support an active lifestyle and promote health and wellbeing.• The service demonstrates high standards of governance and sound financial stewardship.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils’ plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), “councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation.” The Commission’s [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that “Scotland’s councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever.”
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account’s Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way

that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle’s performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Directorate are detailed in Tables 2-5.

- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle’s mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 6-10.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy ‘Measures of Success’ Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle’s [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community.

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.3.CS02 - The proportion of Primary schools reported as being in a good or satisfactory condition (measures the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security).	2020 100%	90%	80%	Resources (Education)
2.1.3.CS03 - The proportion of Secondary schools reported as being in a good or satisfactory condition (measures the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security).	2020 75%	75%	75%	Resources (Education)
2.1.3.CS04 - The proportion of Primary schools receiving a good or satisfactory suitability rating (measures if a school is fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum).	2020 85.7%	85%	75%	Resources (Education)
2.1.3.CS05 - The proportion of Secondary schools receiving a good or satisfactory suitability rating (measures if a school is fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum).	2020 75%	75%	75%	Resources (Education)

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.4 People are healthy and active.

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.4.CS01 - ECS200 (LGBF: C&L5d): Percentage Adults satisfied with leisure facilities (3-year rolling avg.).	2017-20 58%	67%	70%	Sport and Leisure
2.1.4.CS03 - ECS206: Participation rate in physical activity and sport in the last 4 weeks (any sport incl. walking)	2019 54%	56%	58%	Sport and Leisure
2.1.4.CS04 - ECS096 (LGBF-C&L5b): Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces (3-year rolling avg.).	2017-20 38%	54%	60%	Sport and Leisure
2.1.4.CS05 - Percentage of P6-P7/S1-S6/SP pupils registered for free school meals.	2020 8%	8%	8%	Resources (Education)

Strategic Priority 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life

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

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.1.CS05 - ECS199 (LGBF: C&L5a): Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries (3-year rolling avg.).	2017-20 49%	80%	80%	Libraries
3.1.1.CS10 - ECS198 (LGBF: C&L2): Number of library visits.	2019/20 280k	320k	400k	Libraries

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

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.5.CS17 - ECS164: (LGBF: CHN24): Percentage of children living in relative poverty, after housing costs	2014/15 17%	Benchmark LGBF Family Group Avg.	Benchmark LGBF Family Group Avg.	Performance and Staffing
3.1.5 ECS079: Percentage of adults participating in literacy and numeracy provision achieving one or more of their learning outcomes per annum.	2014/15 80%	80%	80%	Performance and Staffing
3.1.5 ECS081: Percentage of adults participating in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision achieving one or more of their learning outcomes per Annum.	2014/15 80%	80%	80%	Performance and Staffing

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve.

Table 6: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.1.2 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of multi media resources.	Multimedia

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community.

Table 7: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.3.2 Support community access to school facilities and sports facilities within schools.	Resources (Education)

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.4 People are healthy and active.

Table 8: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.4.1 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of sporting and national health improvement activities in support of the Active Hebrides Strategy.	Sport and Leisure

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life

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

Table 9: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.1.5 Provide a Library and Information Service that meets the aims of the Scotland's Public Library Strategy.	Sport and Leisure

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Table 10: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.4.2 Provide business and administrative resources to support the delivery of the Education, Skills and Children's Services Department Business Plan.	Performance and Staffing (Education)

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 11 and 12 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 The Education and Children's Services Directorate has a Net Revenue Budget of £9,238,127, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 11.

Table 11: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£	%
Libraries	739,189	8.00
Multimedia	79,291	0.86
Performance & Staffing (Education)	849,268	9.19
Resources (Education)	5,623,334	60.87
Sport and Leisure	1,947,045	21.08
Total	9,238,127	100%

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 The deployment of the Capital Budget for Education and Children's Services is managed by the Education and Children's Services Directorate.

Service Employees

- 5.4 The Education and Children's Services Directorate have 99.85 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 12. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 12: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Libraries	11.80	11.82
Multimedia	3.00	3.00
Performance & Staffing (Education)	16.31	16.33
Resources (Education)	31.93	31.98
Sport and Leisure	36.81	36.87
Total	99.85	100%



Our vision 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.

EDUCATION
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

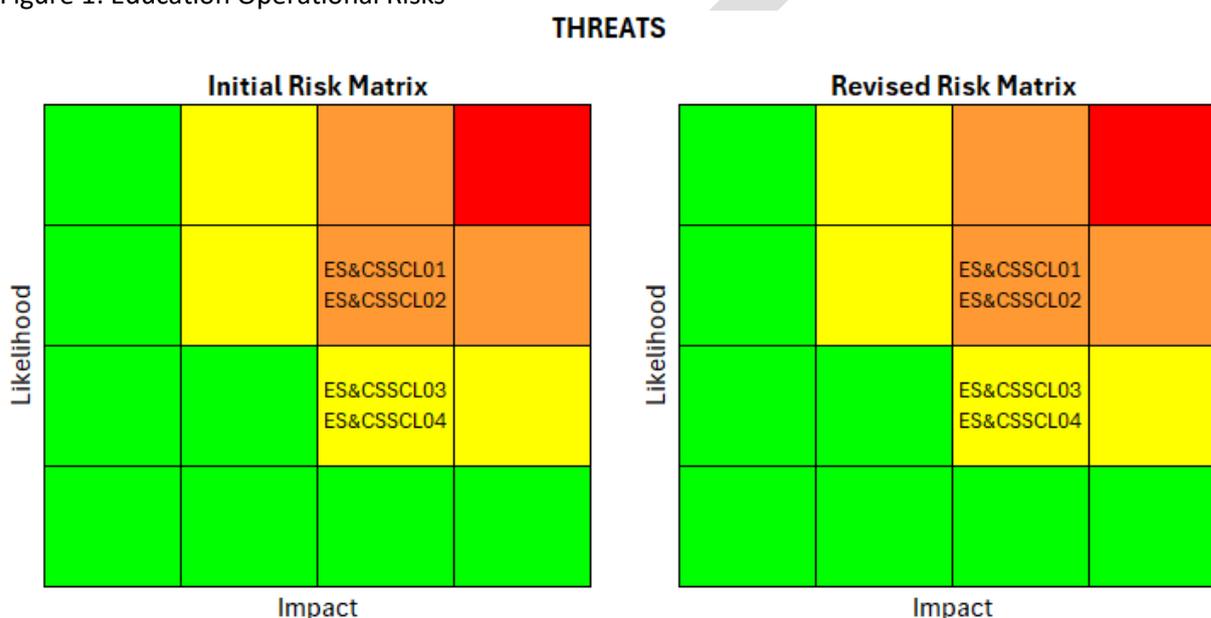
- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for the Education Service. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Service is committed to providing an excellent education for all children and young people in the Western Isles through high quality provision and experiences in learning and teaching for all children. This is supported by the use of a range of quality indicators and standards which enable the service to identify best practice and areas for development thus ensuring continuous improvement. The five service areas within Education help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities.
- 1.3. **Early Years and Pre-School** provide education, learning and teaching support for all children from birth to 5 years. Early Years leads on the Department's responsibilities for the effective implementation of the Early Years and Early Intervention Childcare Strategy, inclusive of Childcare provision, 3-5 years provision and family support.
- 1.4. **E-Sgoil** provides equitable access to high-quality interactive, online learning using technology to remove barriers and improve outcomes for young people. It seeks to support schools to offer a wide-ranging and resilient curricular offer in response to learner needs.
- 1.5. **Executive Headteachers** are an integral part of Western Isles Schools and are the leaders in teaching and learning for 3 geographical groups of primary schools along with being the line managers for the Heads of School and the remaining Head Teachers for these groups of primary schools.
- 1.6. **Quality Improvement (Secondary, Digital and Attainment)** provides support to schools to undertake quality assurance interventions designed to improve attainment and achievement.
- 1.7. **Schools** provide education, learning and teaching support for all children from 5 to 18 years covering the eight curriculum areas along with literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. This is split into the Broad General Education phase, up to Secondary 3, and the Senior Phase, up to Secondary 6. In the Senior Phase pupils choose the academic and vocational qualifications that they wish to pursue.

Donald A. Macleod
Chief Officer, Education Service

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle’s Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to SBPs; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and Education has identified significant risks for the coming year which shall be reviewed periodically throughout the year.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of the Service, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Education Operational Risks



- 2.4 The Service has identified four significant threats, and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

4 risks identified are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored:

- ES&CSSCL01 Inability to staff educational settings to the required levels.
- ES&CSSCL02 Inability to recruit GME secondary and primary teachers and other non-teaching support staff including those in ELC settings.
- ES&CSSCL03 e-Sgoil service reduces or stops.
- ES&CSSCL04 Gaelic Grant reduces or stops.

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Education contributes to the strategic outcomes listed below to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priorities.
- 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve;
 - 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe;
 - 2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community;
 - 2.1.4 People are healthy and active;
 - 2.1.5 Childcare facilities in place to meet the needs of working parents; and
 - 3.1.1 The Gaelic language, natural heritage and cultural of our communities is supported and promoted.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the six strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the Service Business Plan (SBP) and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
Service Outcomes High quality learning and teaching in all educational settings. School leavers achieve a positive destination. Effective and accountable leadership for all. Learners have equality of access to learning opportunities.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils' plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), "councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation." The Commission's [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that "Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever."
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account's Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle's performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for Education are detailed in Tables 2-7.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic

outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle's mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 8-11.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy 'Measures of Success' Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle's [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people.

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve.

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.1.CS01 - ECS105 (LGBF: CHN13a): Percentage of primary pupils achieving expected CfE levels in literacy (P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined).	2018/19 67.4%	71%	75%	Schools
2.1.1.CS02 - ECS106 (LGBF: CHN13b): Percentage of primary pupils achieving expected CfE levels in numeracy (P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined).	2018/19 70.6%	76%	76%	Schools
2.1.1.CS03 - ECS181: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving third level or better in all three literacy organisers (S3, 3rd level or better).	2018/19 92.4%	93.5%	95%	Schools
2.1.1.CS04 - ECS148: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving third level or better in numeracy (S3, 3rd level or better).	2018/19 84.1%	91%	95%	Schools
2.1.1.CS05 - ECS182: Percentage of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 5 or above.	2019/20 93.8%	94%	95%	Schools
2.1.1.CS06 - ECS183: Percentage of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or above.	2019/20 70.1%	72%	74%	Schools
2.1.1.CS07 - ECS005 (LGBF: CHN4): Percentage of secondary school pupils gaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 5.	2018/19 61%	71%	75%	Schools
2.1.1.CS08 - ECS006 (LGBF: CHN5): Percentage of secondary school pupils gaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 6.	2018/19 33%	35.5%	37%	Schools
2.1.1.CS09 - ECS004 (LGBF: CHN11): Percentage of pupils entering positive destinations upon leaving school.	2018/19 98.4%	98.5%	98.7%	Schools
2.1.1.CS10 - ECS130 (LGBF: CHN19a): School Attendance Rate (per 100 pupils).	2018/19 94%	95%	97%	Schools

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.1.CS11 - ECS132 (LGBF: CHN20a): School Exclusion Rate (per 1,000 pupils).	2010/11 27%	15%	5%	Schools
2.1.1.CS12 - ECS127 (LGBF-CHN21 SLAED-IG6): Percentage of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, training, employment or volunteering work.	2019/20 96%	97%	97.5%	Schools

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.2.CS01 - ECS184: Pupil teacher ratio, all sectors excluding Early Learning Centres.	2019/20 10.6	10.8	11	Schools
2.1.2.CS02 - ECS185: Percentage of evaluations from Local Authority School Inspection Reports published in the year (Jan-Dec) reporting good or above, excluding nurseries.	2019/20 70%	71%	72%	Schools
2.1.2.CS03 - ECS125 (LGBF-CHN17): Percentage of children meeting developmental milestones at their 27–30-month review.	2019/20 82%	85%	86%	Early Years and Pre-School

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.3 Schools are centres for lifelong learning and key assets for the community.

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.3.CS01 - Percentage of adults satisfied with local schools.	2017-20 62%	63%	70%	Schools

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.4 People are healthy and active.

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.4.CS06 – ECS208: Percentage of primary schools that met the 120 minutes per week target level of PE provision.	2019 100%	100%	100%	Schools
2.1.4.CS07 – ECS209: Percentage of secondary schools that met the 100 minutes per week target level of PE provision.	2019 100%	100%	100%	Schools

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.5 Childcare facilities in place to meet the needs of working parents.

Table 6: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.5.CS01 - ECS186: Percentage of evaluations from Local Authority Nursery Inspection Reports published reporting good or above on all grades received.	2019/20 45.5%	27%	30%	Early Years and Pre-School

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
2.1.5.CS02 - ECS187: Percentage of Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres in the Outer Hebrides.	2019/20 78%	80%	80%	Early Years and Pre-School
2.1.5.CS03 - ECS188: Percentage of pre-school children registered with a Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare facility (ELC) in the Outer Hebrides.	2020 84%	90%	95%	Early Years and Pre-School
2.1.5.CS04 - ECS189: The percentage of pre-school children registered with Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres whose home language is not English.	2019/20 2%	5%	5%	Early Years and Pre-School
2.1.5.CS05 - ECS190: The percentage of pre-school children registered with Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres with Additional Support Needs.	2020 9%	20%	20%	Early Years and Pre-School

Strategic Priority 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 7: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.1.CS07 – ECS025: Percentage of children enrolling in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) at P1	2019/20 47%	52%	54%	Schools
3.1.1.CS08 - ECS030: Percentage of children in Gaelic Medium Education (GME)	2019/20 40%	46%	47%	Schools

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 2.1 Support children, families, and young people.

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve.

Table 8: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.1.1 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of educational provision in accordance with Scotland's Curriculum, the National Improvement Framework and Local Improvement Plans (Including School Improvement Plans)	Schools

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

Table 9: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.2.2 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of Education Psychology Services that meet statutory duties and support the outcomes of the Integrated Children's Services Plan.	Schools

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.5 Childcare facilities in place to meet the needs of working parents.

Table 10: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.5.1 Support the provision of childcare across the Western Isles	Early Years and Pre-School

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 11: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.1.14 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of the Gaelic Action Plan and Comhairle Gaelic First Policy	Early Years and Pre-School

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 12 and 13 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 Education has a Net Revenue Budget of £42,635,917, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 12.

Table 12: Net Revenue Budget 2025/26 by Service Profile

Detail	£	%
Early Years and Pre-School	5,779,019	13.55
e-Sgoil	2,678	0.01
Executive Headteachers	377,598	0.89
Quality Improvement (Secondary, Digital and Attainment)	422,791	0.99
Schools	36,053,831	84.56
Total	42,635,917	100%

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for Education.

Service Employees

- 5.4 Education has 603.75 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 13. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 13: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Early Years and Pre-School	119.42	19.78
e-Sgoil	11.18	1.85
Executive Headteachers	2.60	0.43
Quality Improvement (Secondary, Digital and Attainment)	3.00	0.50
Schools	467.55	77.44
Total	603.75	100%



Our vision 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.

FINANCE
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our priorities and desired outcomes for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for Finance. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Service provides a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to the community and aims to ensure the effective management of the Comhairle's financial resources. The Service also ensures completion of financial and statistical returns to Government bodies, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), HM Treasury, National Fraud Initiative, etc., and submits claims to regulatory bodies on behalf of Comhairle departments involved in externally funded projects / programmes.
- 1.3. The five services within Finance help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities.
- 1.4. **Accountancy** is currently organised around two operational areas covering corporate and revenue activities:
 - Corporate - Monitoring of the expenditure on the Capital Programme for accounting purposes; monitoring of Capital Budgets; completion of capital and treasury elements of Annual Accounts; ensuring adequate insurance cover for the Comhairle's properties and employees and managing claims process; management of Treasury function which includes banking, cash flows, money market transactions and the portfolio of long-term debt. Co-ordination role with regards to the production of the Annual Accounts and the budget setting and monitoring processes; management and administration of the Financial Management System; and VAT accounting advice.
 - Revenue - Provision of service accountancy to departments and Members including provision of advice and support on a day-to-day basis, budget preparation and monitoring and year end processes leading up to the Annual Accounts. This team not only provides support to specific project teams and working groups as required by services but also provides support to Trading Operations.
- 1.5. **Payroll** provides a comprehensive and efficient business and resource management service to the Strategy Department, including the coordination of the Department's business planning process and budget preparation and monitoring. The Business Manager is also the departmental representative on a number of corporate groups, for instance, Best Value and Records Management Working Group. The Unit provides a range of services, including Payroll, Pensions, Systems Administration and Corporate Postage. Ensuring employees are paid, pension returns are submitted, and systems are updated, along with making sure that they are working effectively.
- 1.6. **Purchase to Pay** is responsible for the payment of all the Comhairle 's suppliers as well as other payments, such as Housing Benefits and grants and includes the management of the Civica system which enables department's to place orders / process payments.
- 1.7. **Registration and Customer Services** is comprised of staff from the Faire Service, the Comhairle Reception, Switchboard, Registration and Customer Service team located in Comhairle offices at Sandwick Road, Stornoway. They are complemented by the customer facing staff in the Balivanich, Castlebay and Tarbert area offices.

1.8. **Revenue and Benefits** is currently organised around two operational areas:

- The Revenues area of the service is responsible for the collection of Comhairle income for Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts, ensuring that: that local taxpayers are properly billed and that all debts are properly accounted for; all debts are pursued and recovered; and customers are assisted courteously and efficiently, in paying their debts and in seeking advice on revenues matters.
- The Benefits service are responsible for: receiving, assessing and paying claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit and the Welfare Fund; providing advice on claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefit; and also giving advice about claiming other related Welfare Benefits including Macmillan.

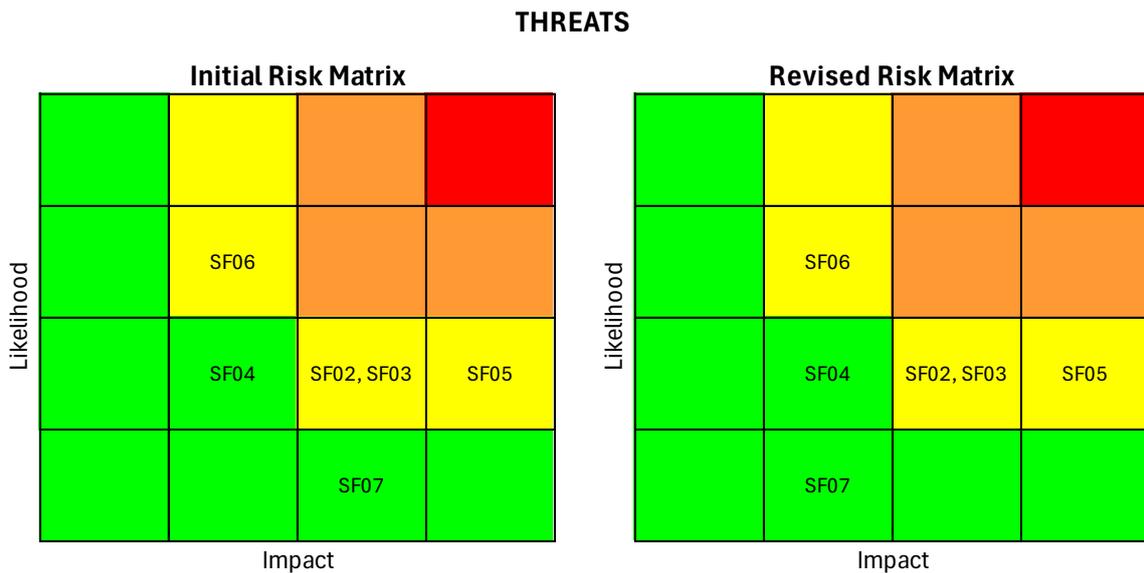
Finance also include Financial Inclusion staff who assist individuals to claim benefits to which they are entitled but which for some reason they have been unable to access. Similarly, the Macmillan Benefits officer assists cancer sufferers with accessing and maximising the benefits to which they are entitled, and Finance Assessment staff undertake social care financial assessments and billing in respect of residential care recipients.

Norman MacDonald
Chief Financial Officer

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle’s Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to SBPs; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and the Service has identified significant risks for the coming year which shall be reviewed periodically.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of the Service, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Finance Operational Risk Matrices



- 2.4 The Service has identified 6 threats which are within the Comhairle’s Risk Appetite and therefore no further action is being taken to reduce these risks:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

6 risks identified are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored.

- SF02 IT systems unavailable
- SF03 Breaching the threshold for VAT partial exemption.
- SF04 Inadequate cover for all Insurance risks
- SF05 Loss of cash resources
- SF06 Loss of expertise and knowledge due to staff turnover
- SF07 Payment made in error - creditors bank details, overpayment of hours/OT, use of procurement card.

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Finance contributes to the strategic outcomes: *1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source, 4.1.1 Communities are empowered and continue to be at the heart of our decision making, 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community, and 4.1.5 Effective governance of the Comhairle is in place to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priorities.*

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the four strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Finance service demonstrates the highest standards of integrity.• The Service, in partnership, achieve Best Value in the delivery of its services.• The Service demonstrates continuous improvement.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils' plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), "councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation." The Commission's [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that "Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever."
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account's Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle's performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Service are detailed in Tables 2-5.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle's mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 6.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy 'Measures of Success' Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle's [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 Strengthen the local economy.

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure maximises effectiveness of available internal and external funding source

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title) – Capital Projects*	Baseline 2013-18	Outturn 2018-23	Budget 2023-28	Service
1.1.3.CS04 - Capital projects expenditure (excluding community projects funded through capital grants).	£75.5m	£92.6m	£37m	Accountancy
1.1.3.CS05 - Number of capital projects completed / underway / started.	97	153	36	Accountancy
1.1.3.CS06 - Percentage completion of capital projects budget spent.	83%	84%	TBA	Accountancy
1.1.3.CS07 - Percentage of capital projects completed that are within budget.	93%	100%	TBA	Accountancy

* Removed from CS KPI Progress Report, as performance against budget is presented periodically to the Policy and Resources Committee in the Capital Monitoring Reports.

Strategic Priority 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.1. AFR029: Sundry Debts - Percentage collected in year.	2010/11 82%	87%	89%	Revenues and Benefits

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.4.CS09 - AFR036: Benefits administration – average processing times for new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims.	2019/20 30.49 Days	25 Days	23 Days	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4.CS10 – AFR037 (A): Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction – accuracy of processing.	2019/20 100%	100%	100%	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4.CS11 – AFR022 (A): Scottish Welfare Fund – Initial Processing Times (Working Days) for Crisis Grants Same working day.	2019/20 1.04	SG Target 2 Days	SG Target 2 Days	Revenues and Benefits

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.4.CS12 – AFR021 (LGBF: CORP10): Scottish Welfare Fund – Initial Processing Times (Working Days) for Community Care Grants, within 15 working days.	2019/20 82%	90%	90%	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4. AFR017 (LGBF: CORP8): Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days.	2021/22 90%	91%	92%	Payroll and Business Management
4.1.4. AFR026 (LGBF: CORP4): The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax.	2021/22 £20	£21	£25	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4. AFR008: Percentage of financial transactions paid on time to employees and members.	2014/15 100%	98%	98.5%	Payroll and Business Management
4.1.4. AFR023: Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) - Percentage collected in year.	2014/15 96.24%	97%	98%	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4. AFR027: The cost of collecting Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) per chargeable property.	2019/20 £59.83	£62	£65	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4. AFR028: Sundry Debts: cost per invoice.	2019/20 £15.90	£16.50	£15	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4. AFR030: Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction: YTD average number of days taken to process a change in circumstances.	2014/15 7 Days	DWP Target 10 Days	7 Days	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.4. AFR041: Annual accounts completed on time and number of qualifications zero.	2014/15 100%	100%	100%	Accountancy
4.1.4. AFR051: Cost of Payroll Service per transaction.	2014/15 £10.07	£11	£10.50	Payroll
4.1.4. AFR052: Cost of processing Creditors invoices (£ per inv.).	2014/15 £2.57	£3	£2.55	Payroll
4.1.4. AFR054: Comhairle budget set in line with timetable.	2014/15 100%	100%	100%	Accountancy
4.1.4. AFR065: Percentage of Registration entries without corrections (Jan-Dec).	2017/18 92%	94%	94%	Registration and Customer Services
4.1.4. AFR094: Average time taken to complete a financial assessment (Days).	2017/18 34 Days	34	30	Revenues and Benefits

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

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.5.CS01 - AFR050: Percentage of income due from council tax received by the end of the year.	2019/20 96.2%	97%	98%	Revenues and Benefits
4.1.5.CS02 - AFR006 (LGBF: CORP1): Support services as a % of total gross expenditure.	2019/20 5.8%	4.80%	4%	Accountancy
4.1.5.CS03 - Irrecoverable debts written off in financial year (£,000). (Trend)	2020/21 £109k	N/A	N/A	Accountancy
4.1.5.CS07 – AFR097 (LGBF-FINSUS1): Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue. (Trend)	2019/20 22.3%	N/A	N/A	Accountancy

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.5.CS08 - AFR098 (LGBF-FINSUS2): Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue (Trend)	2019/20 3.2%	N/A	N/A	Accountancy
4.1.5.CS09 - AFR099 (LGBF-FINSUS3): Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - General Fund. (Trend)	2019/20 8.43%	N/A	N/A	Accountancy
4.1.5.CS10 - AFR101 (LGBF-FINSUS5): Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure. (Trend)	2019/20 97.81%	N/A	N/A	Accountancy

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Table 6: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.4.3 Co-ordinate the production of the Comhairle's budget in line with the timetable	Accountancy
4.1.4.4 Produce Annual Accounts by the statutory deadline with no qualifications	Accountancy
4.1.4.19 Implement and monitor the 2023-28 Capital Programme.	Accountancy
4.1.4.21 Implementation and development of cloud-based version of Capita Revenue and Benefits	Revenue and Benefits
4.1.4.22 Implementation and development of cloud-based version of Zellis HR / Payroll System	Payroll
4.1.4.24 Review and develop the Customer Service Strategy for implementation within the Comhairle term, including the implementation of new IT solutions.	Registration and Customer Services

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 7 and 8 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 Finance has a Net Revenue Budget of just over £3.3M which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 7.

Table 7: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£	%
Accountancy	673,562	20
Payroll	394,310	12
Purchase to Pay	146,542	4
Registration and Customer Services	780,359	24
Revenue and Benefits	1,310,366	40
Total	3,305,139	100

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for the Finance Service.

Service Employees

- 5.4 Finance has 64.87 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 8. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 8: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Accountancy	12.85	20
Payroll	7.65	12
Purchase to Pay	3.46	5
Registration and Customer Services	19.56	30
Revenue and Benefits	21.35	33
Total	64.87	100



Our vision 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.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 puts in place arrangements for integrating health and social care to improve outcomes for patients, service users, carers and their families. As per the Act, the Comhairle and NHS Western Isles have adopted a 'body corporate integration model' to deliver quality, sustainable care services. The Integration Joint Board (IJB) was formally established in September 2015 and became fully operational from April 2016. The functions that must be delegated by the Local Authority to the IJB as per the Act are set out in [The Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Prescribed Local Authority Functions etc.\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2014](#).
- 1.2. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for Health and Social Care. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.3. In relation to Comhairle Health and Social Care services, these consist of four service areas within the Service: Adult Services Residential, Housing Support and Day Services; Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services; Care at Home and Reablement; and Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services. The Department also includes Allied Health Professions (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Dietetics and Podiatry). The governance for such matters is undertaken through NHS Western Isles service planning processes.
- 1.4. **Adult Services Residential, Housing Support and Day Services** provides a range of accommodation and support for adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems, sensory impairment, complex care support and autism and older people. We aim to deliver against individual personal plans which outline the range of needs that people have and what is important to them. All of our resources encourage service users to participate fully and as independently as possible.
- 1.5. **Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services** - There are various legislative duties within this portfolio of delegated services to the IJB. The duty to assess and provide personal care plans and support services within the context of eligibility criteria and risk assessment is central to all activity. The legislative context relates to individuals and self-identified carers. Local authorities have a duty under Section 12A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 to assess a person's community care needs and decide, in light of that assessment, whether to arrange any services and if so which services. Provision of assistance is based on a detailed assessment of the individual's care needs and their preferences in relation to outcomes they wish to achieve.

The Comhairle's statutory duties are undertaken in respect of Adult Support and Protection Services as required by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. The Service also provides specialist advice and support to other professionals in respect of the Comhairle's statutory duties, including issues such as Guardianship and related local authority statutory responsibilities in terms of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, along with duties within the Mental Health (Care & Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003.

This Service will also lead on the development of commissioning plans and practice; performance reporting; systems development and project management functions as delegated or prioritised by the Department. The Service will drive improved performance through partnerships with internal and external service providers, service users, potential service users, carers and communities. Working with the regulators such as the Care Inspectorate, Health and Safety Executive and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to enable strategic and operational planning and practice to be grounded on best practice.

Scottish local authorities have a legal duty to provide Justice Social Work services. These services are provided within the framework of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes and Standards. Our Justice Social Work service sits within the governance of the Integrated Joint Board.

Community Justice Partnerships were set up by the Scottish Government to ensure that a range of statutory and voluntary agencies work together to provide services that are aimed at reducing re-offending rates. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 sees all 32 Scottish local authorities creating their own independent Community Justice Partnerships. Our Service works in partnership with stakeholders, statutory services and voluntary organisations as a member of the local Community Justice Partnership.

The Justice Social Work Service aims to enhance community safety and public protection, reduce re-offending, and to support social inclusion to support desistance from offending. Funding for Justice social work services remain ring-fenced and is distributed by Scottish Government directly to local authorities. Responsibilities include court services, providing effective supervision of offenders in the community, tackling criminal behaviour to reduce reoffending, assisting offenders to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, their families, the community and others, assisting with problems that may contribute to offending, for example drug or alcohol misuse, assisting those released from prison to settle in to the community, and promoting community safety and public protection by reducing and managing risk.

The Justice Social Work services we provide include social work services in court; reports and risk assessments; diversion from prosecution; structured deferred sentence; community payback orders; drug testing & treatment orders; voluntary and statutory throughcare services; and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Within the Justice Social Work portfolio is the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counselling Service.

- 1.6. **Care at Home and Reablement** delivers a service compliant with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the associated national regulators, Care Inspectorate, SSSC and HSE. The Service delivers personalised support to meet assessed need incorporating all the legislative and regulatory duties. Personal care and medication administration are core services, and the workforce is skilled in supporting adults of all ages living with a range of conditions and levels of frailty. The care at home service works with service users and their families to provide consistent support in keeping with their wishes. In addition, the Service delivers the START service encompassing social care and allied health professional input to support individuals to retain or restore independent living skills within their own home or a care setting. This enables individuals and their families to be as independent as possible and works to enhance their confidence and skills in relation to self-care. This frontline service is regarded as a fundamental partner in terms of sustaining the capacity of the local health and social care system.
- 1.7. **Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services** this extensive portfolio of services delivers care within a range of setting across the islands. All services are compliant with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and subject to external scrutiny and regulatory powers by the Care Inspectorate, HSE and SSSC. The care home and residential respite services delivered in Uist are Taigh a'Chridhe Uile Naomh and Trianaid; in Harris, Harris House; and in Lewis, Taigh Shipoirt. In Lewis, the Service also provides Housing with Extra Care within Bremner Court. This affords tenants 24/7 care and support to meet planned or variable needs.

In Barra, all social care regulated services are integrated into one service structure, albeit all subject to independent assessment and scrutiny by the regulators. The care home, day care and care at home services work to provide flexible and responsive social care support to individuals and their families.

- *Risk action:* Enhance the opportunities for trainee and alternative routes to obtaining professional qualifications. Progress training for practice teacher qualifications to provide the necessary support and oversight capacity.
 - HSC02 Capacity of service workforce unable to fulfil service demand.
 - *Risk action:* Maximising existing budgetary provision to re-design career pathways utilising the Island's Deal; recruitment offers and investment in training and workforce support; external recurring funding has been dedicated to expansion of the START service to enhance workforce capacity.
 - *Risk action:* Maximise service user self-care and enable core services to be dedicated to on-going care provision; work with external providers to sustain capacity and address financial challenges directly impacting on the viability of the workforce and services.
 - HSC03 Unsustainable IJB budget provision impacting on internally and externally commissioned services.
 - *Risk Action:* Option appraisals to be produced by service managers in line with the requirements as directed by the Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer in the first instance.
 - HSC05 Ongoing impacts of Cyber-attack.
 - *Risk Action:* Staff and service compliance with cyber security monitored and address when necessary. Financial processes for recording, reporting and monitoring in place.
- 2.7 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle's performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Health and Social Care contribute to the strategic outcomes 3.1.2 *People receive the care and support they need to live healthy and independent lives;* 3.1.4 *Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient;* 4.1.3 *Equality of opportunity is increased;* and 4.1.4 *Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priorities.*

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the four strategic outcomes, the Service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Service will deploy the available resources to best effect, working with stakeholders to maximise the positive impact across our communities. ● The Service will demonstrate working proactively with individuals, their families and partner organisations to support individuals to meet their personal outcomes. ● The Service will demonstrate how it supports the Health and Well-being of our populations.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils' plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), "councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation." The Commission's [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that "Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever."
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account's Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle's performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for Health and Social Care are detailed in Tables 2-3.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle's mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 4-5.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy 'Measures of Success' Strategic Outcome KPIs that the Service contribute to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the Service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the Service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle's [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

Strategic Outcome: 3.1.2 People receive the care and support they need to live healthy and independent lives.

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.2.CS03 – IJB032 (LGBF: SW3a) Percentage of people aged 65 or over with long term care needs receiving personal care at home.	2019/20 62%	50%	60%	Care at Home and Reablement
3.1.2.CS04 - IJB036 (LGBF: SW6): Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges.	2019/20 110%	Under review	Under review	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.2.CS05 – IJB019 (LGBF: SW8): Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+).	2019/20 1,510	1,800	1,000	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.2.CS06 - IJB037 (LGBF: SW7): Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections.	2019/20 75%	85%	90%	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.2.CS07 – IJB031b (LGBF: SW4b) Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life.	2019/20 85.8%	70%	70%	Care at Home and Reablement
3.1.2.CS08 – IJB033 (LGBF: SW4c) Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible.	2019/20 80.6%	75%	75%	Care at Home and Reablement
3.1.2.CS09 – IJB035 (LGBF: SW4e) Percentage of carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role.	2019/20 39.4%	40%	40%	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.2 IJB011 (LGBF: SW2): Self Directed Support (Direct Payments) spend on adults 18+ as a %age of total social work spend on adults 18+.	2010/11 0.4%	2%	2%	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.2 IJB029 (LGBF: SW1): Older Persons (Over 65) Homecare Costs per Hour.	2019/20 £64.75	£95	£60	Care at Home and Reablement
3.1.2 IJB030 (LGBF: SW5): Net Cost of Residential Care Services per Older Adult (+65) per Week.	2019/20 £623.08	£1,200	£1,300	Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services
3.1.2 IJB034 (LGBF: SW4d): Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they had a say in how their help, care or support was provided.	2019/20 70.18%	70%	80%	Care at Home and Reablement

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

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
3.1.4.CS02 - IJB040 (CJSW): Proportion of community payback orders imposed per 10,000 population aged 16 to 70.	2019/20 22.4	22	22	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.4.CS03 - IJB041 (CJSW): Proportion of Criminal Justice Social Work reports submitted per 10,000 population aged 16 to 70.	2019/20 40.9	41	41	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.4 IJB042 (CJSW): Proportion of diversion from prosecution cases commenced per 10,000 population aged 16 to 70.	2019/20 3.4	3.4	3.4	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
3.1.4 IJB043 (CJSW): Proportion of drug treatment & testing orders imposed per 10,000 population aged 16 to 70.	2019/20 0	0	0	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased.

Table 4: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.3.7 Review resources available to support the associated workforce and consideration of alternative approaches to address vacancies within this service with a view to manage service demand.	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
4.1.3.8 Implement the key actions within the workforce plan to enable career progression and a revised staffing structure to provide a robust structure to aid recruitment and retention and balance the operational and strategic requirements of the statutory functions.	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
4.1.3.9 Consolidate the previous and current recruitment and retention improvements to inform further activity in relation to the service workforce plan in partnership with the associated professional disciplines.	Care at Home and Reablement
4.1.3.10 Support the transition of the residents and workforce as a result of the closure of an externally provided services and embed the new service to achieve the desired outcomes for the residents and a stabilised and integrated workforce.	Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services
4.1.3.11 Implement the workforce plan to enable opportunities to be achieved in respect of workforce development, and effective deployment of staffing resources to address service demand and support enhanced capacity for complex care.	Adult Services Residential, Housing Support and Day Services

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Table 5: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.4.25 Review and implement service improvement plans to include best practice reviews, regulator and internal self-evaluation findings to progress further actions related to scrutiny activity and service improvements through the appropriate governance processes.	Adult Services Residential, Housing Support and Day Services
4.1.4.26 Review and implement the service improvement plans to reflect the on-going service self-evaluation, regulator activity and audit findings to prioritise service developments and drive any further scrutiny activity to enhance service performance.	Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services
4.1.4.28 Include service options for evaluation as part of the commissioning arrangements supporting the IJB strategic planning priorities and the associated financial planning required to address the financial deficit.	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services
4.1.4.30 Refresh service improvement plans to reflect regulator, self-evaluation and audit activity, with prioritisation of actions aligned to workforce deployment.	Care at Home and Reablement
4.1.4.32 Implement the improvement plan building on the positive findings of the Progress Review with partners to inform a refreshed service improvement plans for all service areas that captures professional, regulator and service requirements.	Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 6 and 7 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025, the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise, and the budget delegated from the local authority for services within the IJB. This includes the finance for specific investment in services allocated through the local authority for spend across CnES, NHS and externally commissioned services.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 The Service has a Net Revenue Budget of £28,372,598, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 6. Projections for 2025/26 portray a deficit of approximately £4.4m to meet service requirements.

Table 6: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£	%
Adult Services Residential, Housing Support and Day Services	4,444,672	15.67
Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services	11,438,976	40.32
Care at Home and Reablement	7,813,815	27.54
Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services	4,675,135	16.47
Total	28,372,598	100

Service Employees

- 5.3 As per the budget staffing record 2025/26, Health and Social Care have 501.92 FTE posts across the service within the sections listed in Table 7. We support employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 7: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Adult Services Residential, Housing Support and Day Services	95.79	19.08
Adult Social Work, Commissioning and Justice Services	29.40	5.86
Care at Home and Reablement	160.77	32.03
Residential Care Services, Extra Care Housing and Integrated Social Care Services	215.96	43.03
Total	501.92	100



Our vision 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.

**HR, STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN**

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. This is the main annual business planning document for the HR, Strategy and Performance Service. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The HR, Strategy and Performance teams provide a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to the community. The services within HR, Strategy and Performance help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values, and priorities.
- 1.3. **Accredited Training** is responsible for all Accredited Training Programmes. This includes Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), employee training and apprenticeships – both national contracts such as Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships and Employability Programmes funded by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) alongside more bespoke apprenticeships through the Comhairle.
- 1.4. **Human Resources and Occupational Health** is currently organised around two operational areas:
 - **Human Resources** provides a full professional human resources advisory service to managers and employees. This is inclusive of recruitment and selection, contracts of employment, employee relations, employee remuneration and health and wellbeing.
 - **Occupational Health** is underpinned by a range of policies and procedures that support employee wellbeing and a positive work-life balance. Occupational health plays a vital role in supporting managers to reduce absence levels as well as improving the health and wellbeing of employees with a view to optimise staff performance and productivity
- 1.5. **Organisational Development** works with Services to support performance management and continuous improvement through business planning, business continuity, risk management, self-assessment, equalities monitoring, benchmarking, performance reporting, satisfaction surveys and management information.
- 1.6. **Resilience, Health and Safety, and Training** is currently organised around three operational areas:
 - **Resilience** work within the team ensures the Comhairle is prepared, in the form of contingency plans, to respond to and mitigate the effects of emergencies. This work is supported through close collaboration with partner agencies and extensive training exercises. The Resettlement Programme is a route where the Comhairle works with the Scottish Government and UK Government to support those identified as being in the greatest need by giving them protection and support in the UK.
 - **Health and Safety** promote workplace health and safety law, to ensure that every employee has the right to carry out their daily work in a safe environment. The Health and Safety team works to offer competent advice and guidance on a range of issues to ensure we meet our statutory obligations for the health, safety and welfare of our employees and anyone affected by our business.
 - **Training** aims to ensure that employees receive the Health and Safety, and corporate training required to support and develop them in their employment.
- 1.7. **Strategy and Policy** is responsible for policy development and strategic projects. The team works to assist the Comhairle in shaping future policy and strategies and responses to consultations and calls for evidence. For example, The Islands Growth Deal is a £100 million investment over a 10-year period, jointly funded by Scottish and UK Governments that will seek to drive economic growth across

Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides. The Comhairle is the Accountable Body for the Deal and responsible for the management and delivery of the funding.

In the Outer Hebrides, the Deal will invest £33.4M towards a suite of capital interventions throughout the Islands, built around the strategic themes of low carbon; supporting growth and future industries; and thriving sustainable communities. Additional pan-island Programmes delivered in co-operation with all three Island regions will also be implemented.

The Projects are focused on the need to retain and attract population, to develop new and high-value economic opportunities and to support key sectors, to add more value locally. Consideration has also been given to the wider social and wellbeing impacts of investment and the infrastructure required in the islands to support our existing and potential workforce and address some of the challenges of living, working and doing business in the Islands.

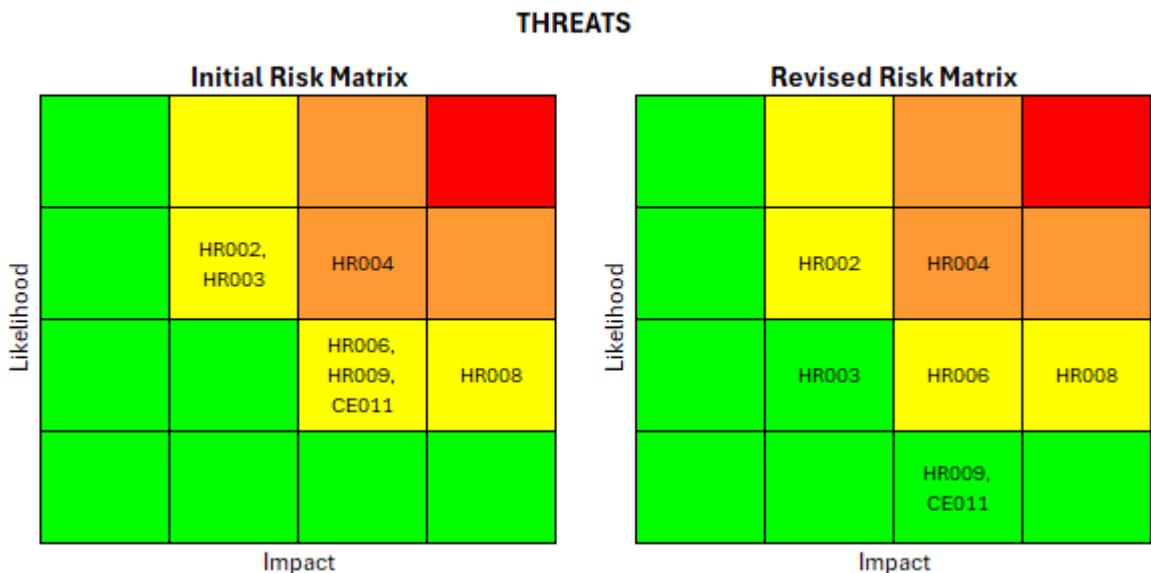
Norma Skinner
Chief Officer, HR, Strategy and Performance

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KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to SBPs; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of SBP actions, and the HR and Performance Service has identified significant risks for the coming year which shall be reviewed periodically.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of the Service, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: HR, Strategy and Performance Operational Risks



- 2.4 The Service has identified seven threats, and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

4 risks are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored:

- HR002 High level of staff absence
- HR004 Decrease in Employability Funding
- HR006 Equal Pay Claims
- HR008 Health and Safety Incident

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level):

3 risks will be reduced:

- HR003 Increased workload and pressure on the HR Team. Staff expertise is lost.
 - *Risk Action:* Ensure staff training and succession planning is in place.
 - *Risk Action:* Monitor KPIs to gauge efficiency of service. Look for efficiencies within processes.
- HR009 Unsuccessful implementation of the Case Management System Project
 - *Risk Action:* Ensure sufficient Project Management is in place.
- CE011 Negative mental health or social wellbeing impact on employees
 - *Risk Action:* Establish a Stress Audit Programme.

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle’s performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) Module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 HR, Strategy and Performance contribute to the strategic outcomes listed in Table 1 to support the delivery of the Comhairle’s Strategic Priorities.

Table 1: Service alignment to Strategic Outcomes

LOIP	Strategic Priorities	Strategic Outcomes
1. Local Economy and Employment	1.1 Strengthen the local economy.	<p>1.1.1 Development projects associated with the Islands Deal are delivered.</p> <p>1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development</p> <p>1.1.4 Increased level of skills across our communities and workforce</p>
2. Population and Connectivity	2.1 Support children, families, and young people	The Service does not directly contribute to the strategic outcomes within this priority.
3. Housing and Community	3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.	<p>3.1.3 Planning and infrastructure meet the needs of our communities.</p> <p>3.1.4 Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient.</p> <p>3.1.5 Reduce inequality and poverty and promote social mobility</p>
4. Governance Framework	4.1 Deliver Community Leadership	<p>4.1.1 Communities are empowered and continue to be at the heart of our decision making.</p> <p>4.1.2 Reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero.</p> <p>4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased.</p> <p>4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.</p> <p>4.1.5 Effective governance of the Comhairle is in place</p>

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the eleven strategic outcomes, the Service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 2 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 2: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our customers experience high-quality services.• The workforce has the skills, flexibility, and capacity to deliver the Comhairle’s priorities.• The Service demonstrates high standards of governance and sound financial stewardship.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils’ plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), “councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation.” The Commission’s [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that “Scotland’s councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever.”
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account’s Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle’s performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the HR, Strategy and Performance Service are detailed in Tables 3 - 8.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle’s mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 9 - 18.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy ‘Measures of Success’ Strategic Outcome (CS) KPIs that the Service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the Service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the Service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle’s [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 Strengthen the local economy.

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development.

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.2.CS09 - Accredited Training: Number of businesses supported to upskill their current workforce with the skills to manage technology and data.	2021/22 25	60	80	Accredited Training
1.1.2.CS10 – CE112: Accredited Training: Number of individuals supported to acquire basic digital skills	2021/22 50	60	80	Accredited Training
1.1.2.CS11 - Accredited Training: Number of individuals provided with digital equipment to help improve their employment prospects.	2021/22 10	12	15	Accredited Training
1.1.2.CS04 - Percentage of Adults that are confident to use the internet to access public services online.	2019 65%	72%	80%	Accredited Training

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.4 Increased level of skills across our communities and workforce

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.4.CS03 - CE128 (SLAED: OC3): Employment Rate - Percentage of people aged 16-64 that are in employment.	2019/20 81.6%	71%	75%	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS04 - CD034 (LGBF: ECON12a): Percentage of people (Claimants) that were in Receipt of Out of Work Benefits.	2020 3%	7%	10%	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS10 - CE065 (LGBF: ECON1, SLAED: OC13): Percentage of Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council Funded/Operated Employability Programmes.	2019/20 25.67%	46%	48%	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS11 - Percentage of 16–19-year-olds entering Comhairle employability programmes achieving positive destination (those entering employment, further / higher education, and apprenticeships).	2018/19 98.41%	95%	96%	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS12 – CE081: Percentage of apprentices achieving target qualifications.	2019/20 78%	82%	82%	Accredited Training
1.1.4. CE115: Percentage of Comhairle apprentices enrolled on a social care apprenticeship.	2022/23 40%	49%	60%	Accredited Training
1.1.4. CE110: Percentage of Comhairle apprentices completing a social care apprenticeship.	2022/23 40%	54%	60%	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS13 – CE079: Percentage of customers satisfied with apprenticeship training programmes.	2019/20 80%	82%	90%	Accredited Training

Measure	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
1.1.4.CS14 – CE130: Number of sectors seeking upskilling/qualifications for employees.	2019/20 9	20%	20	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS15 - CE131: Employability Fund Outcome Achievement Rate.	2019/20 39.5%	62%	65%	Accredited Training
1.1.4.CS17 – CE132: Percentage of the population that is of working age.	2020 59%	59%	60%	Accredited Training

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.2. - CE111: Percentage of fleet mileage from Zero Direct Emissions vehicles.	2016/17 0%	29%	52.5%	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS04 - AFR102 (LGBF: CLIM01:): CO2 emissions area wide per capita (Tonne).	2019/20 14.9T	Scottish average	Scottish average	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS04 - AFR103 (LGBF: CLIM02:): CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of Local Authority per capita (Tonne).	2019/20 4.94T	Scottish average	Scottish average	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS04 - AFR105 (LGBF: CLIM03): CO2 emissions from transport per 1,000 population (Tonne).	2019/20 40.88T	Scottish average	Scottish average	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS04 - AFR106 (LGBF: CLIM04): CO2 emissions from electricity per 1,000 population (Tonne).	2019/20 104.50T	Scottish average	Scottish average	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS06 - Percentage of vehicles registered in the Islands which are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs).	0%	2%	4%	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS07 - Percentage completion of Island Route Map to Net Zero (Climate Change Strategy).	2021/22 0%	100%	100%	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS08 - £-investment secured for the development of low carbon solutions.	2021/22 £0	*	£100,000	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS09 - Carbon footprint emissions.	2019/20 12751 tCO2e	*	6708 tCO2e	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS10 - Total estimated annual carbon savings from all projects implemented in the report year.	2020 14 tCO2e	**	700 tCO2e	Strategy and Policy
4.1.2.CS11 - Number of electric vehicle charge points.	2021 14	**	30	Strategy and Policy

* Target is previous year's actual result to assess reduction in tCO2e.

** Target is previous year's actual result for benchmarking.

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased.

Table 6: Performance Measures

Measure	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.3.CS01 – (LGBF: CORP03b): Percentage of the highest paid 5% of earners among Comhairle employees, that are women (exc. Teachers).	2019/20 46.3%	48%	50%	Human Resources and Occupational Health
4.1.3. - CE053: Percentage of employees in the highest 10% of earners that are female (exc. Teachers).	2014/15 49.4%	51%	55%	Human Resources and Occupational Health
4.1.3.CS02 - CE066 (LGBF: CORP3c): The gender pay gap between average hourly rate of pay for male and female council employees.	2019/20 14.4%	11%	5.5%	Human Resources and Occupational Health

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community.

Table 7: Performance Measures

Measure	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.4.CS05 – Comhairle: Number of Corporate complaints received (Trend KPI)	2019/20 75	N/A	N/A	HR, Strategy and Performance
4.1.4.CS06 – Comhairle: Percentage of Corporate complaints closed at Stage One within 5 working days.	2019/20 74%	76%	80	HR, Strategy and Performance
4.1.4.CS07 – Comhairle: Percentage of Non-escalated corporate complaints closed at Stage Two within 20 working days.	2019/20 42%	60%	80	HR, Strategy and Performance
4.1.4.CS08 – Comhairle: Percentage of escalated corporate complaints closed within 20 working days.	2019/20 25%	77%	80	HR, Strategy and Performance

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

Table 8: Performance Measures

Measure	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.5. CE054 (LGBF: CORP06a): Sickness Absence Days per FTE Employee (Teachers).	2019/20 8.7 Days	6 Days	Scottish Average	Human Resources and Occupational Health
4.1.5. CE055 (LGBF: CORP06b): Sickness Absence Days per FTE Employee (exc. Teachers).	2019/20 13.7 Days	10 Days	Scottish Average	Human Resources and Occupational Health

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the LOIP. The actions take into consideration the key areas of risk identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 Strengthen the local economy

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.1 Development projects associated with the Islands Deal are delivered.

Table 9: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.1.1 Work with partners on the delivery of the Islands Deal projects.	Strategy and Policy

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.2 Digitalisation supports the local infrastructure, customer engagement and business development.

Table 10: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.2.4 Implement and monitor the Comhairle's Digitalisation Strategy 2022-2027.	Strategy and Policy

Strategic Outcome: 1.1.4 Increased level of skills across our communities and workforce

Table 11: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.4.3 Support delivery of the Comhairle and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Charter through review and implementation of the Employability Strategy.	Accredited Training

Strategic Priority: 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life.

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

Table 12: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.3.6 Work with partners to support strategic planning with our communities.	Strategy and Policy
3.1.3.8 Work with partners to review the Outer Hebrides Local Transport Strategy (OHLTS) 2020-2030.	Strategy and Policy

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

Table 13: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.4.18 Implement and monitor the Resilience Strategy 2023-2028, and update associated policies.	Resilience, Health & Safety, and Training

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

Table 14: SBP Actions

Action	Service
3.1.5.5 Support the work of the Community Planning Partnership's Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.	Strategy and Policy
3.1.5.6 Support young people and parents into work through Employability Programmes.	Accredited Training
3.1.5.7 Develop and implement a Learning and Development Strategy.	Accredited Training

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 15: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.1.9 Contribute to the development of a new Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).	Strategy and Policy

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

Table 16: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.2.7 Implement and monitor the Comhairle's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027.	Strategy and Policy

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased.

Table 17: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.3.4 implement and monitor the Corporate Workforce Plan.	Organisational Development

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

Table 18: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.5.64 Implement the Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2030.	Organisational Development

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 19 and 20 as per the Comhairle's budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 The HR, Strategy and Performance Service has a Net Revenue Budget of £2,646k, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 19.

Table 19: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£'000	%
Accredited Training	727	27
Human Resources and Occupational Health	710	27
Organisational Development	424	16
Resilience, Health & Safety, and Training	717	27
Strategy and Policy	68	3
Total	2,646	100

Capital Budget 2025/26

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for the HR, Strategy and Performance Service.

Service Employees

- 5.4 The HR, Strategy and Performance Service have 67.2 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 20. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 20: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Accredited Training	28.3	42
Human Resources and Occupational Health	11.5	17
Organisational Development	7.5	11
Resilience, Health & Safety, and Training	13.9	21
Strategy and Policy	6.0	9
Total	67.2	100



Our vision 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.

**LAW AND GOVERNANCE
SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN**

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan (SBP) for 2025/26 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. The SBP is the main annual business planning document for the Law and Governance Service. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the Service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. The Service provides a range of support both internally to the Comhairle and externally to the community. The following four service areas help to ensure that the Comhairle operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the Comhairle and the delivery of its vision, values, and priorities.
- 1.3. **Governance and Elections** is responsible for ensuring proper arrangements are in place for the governance of the Comhairle's decision-making process and the exercise of its statutory functions as required by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and associated legislation. The Service also administers elections locally, and provides procedural advice and support to Elected Members, Officers, Community Councils, outside bodies and the public. Member Services is responsible for providing administrative support to Elected Members.
- 1.4. **Internal Audit & Performance** - Internal Audit's role, as a statutory service, is to offer advice and to provide assurance on the adequacy of the system of internal control operating throughout the Comhairle. The principal mechanism by which this is achieved is by undertaking audits.
- 1.5. **Legal Services** provides a comprehensive legal advice and representation service to the Comhairle in support of the statutory governance requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and associated legislation and promotes the Comhairle's compliance with all relevant legislation in respect of its functions. It includes a licensing function which fulfils the Comhairle's statutory duties in respect of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. The service also deals with statutory compliance in respect of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002; the Data Protection Act 2018; and the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (records management). It also provides advice and assistance to some external bodies, for example, HITRANS.
- 1.6. **Procurement** is responsible for strategic and operational procurement advice and support to the Comhairle in its purchase of goods, services and works. The service promotes compliance with the Comhairle's statutory obligations in transparency and fairness within procurement, the sustainable procurement duty in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, community wealth-building (such as through increased local supplier engagement), and achieving best value in relation to expenditure.
- 1.7. The Head of Law and Governance is the Comhairle's Monitoring Officer, a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with responsibility to report in respect of breaches of law; he is also the Comhairle's Data Protection Officer, a statutory requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018 with responsibility to advise in respect of data protection matters.
- 1.8. The key areas of focus for the year ahead are continuing to provide an effective service in the context of budget reductions; assisting with and promoting compliance with existing and new legislation such as that relating to subsidy control (the UK successor to state aid); and addressing any novel or unusually complex legal issues. Procurement practices will be integral to drive improvement in relation to value for money and the statutory duty to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Tim Langley
Chief Officer, Law and Governance

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 The Law and Governance Service contribute to the following strategic outcomes to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priorities.
- 1.1.5: Growth in small and medium sized businesses demonstrated;
 - 4.1.1: Communities are empowered and continue to be at the heart of our decision making;
 - 4.1.2: Reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero;
 - 4.1.3: Equality of opportunity is increased; and
 - 4.1.5: Effective governance of the Comhairle is in place.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the five strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the SBP and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Law and Governance Service demonstrates the highest standards of integrity.• Our work ethics and processes are accountable, effective, efficient, and transparent.• The service demonstrates integrity, competence and due professional care, and quality and continuous improvement.• The service is objective and free from undue influence.• The service communicates effectively, provides risk-based assurance, is insightful, proactive and future-focused, and promotes organisational improvement.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The next Best Value thematic focus is transformation, and the Accounts Commission will be auditing councils' plans for transformation as part of the 2024/25 annual audit. As set out in their [Transformation in councils](#) report (2024), "councils must prioritise and progress the delivery of their plans for transformation." The Commission's [Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24](#) (2025) highlights that "Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures. The need to consult with communities, clearly communicate the impact on local services, whilst working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation, is more important than ever."
- 4.2 In December 2024, the Account's Commission published a new Statutory Performance Information Direction. [Direction 2024](#) requires the Comhairle to report information about its performance in a way that enables the council to draw comparisons and make judgements in relation to the Comhairle's performance over time in comparison to other councils. The performance measures for the Service are detailed in Tables 2 - 5.
- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy was reviewed in 2023 to ensure that it continues to state and communicate the ambition, aspirations and commitments of the Comhairle. The overarching aim and ambition of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 is to retain and increase the population of the Outer Hebrides. It

takes account of national priorities and local needs but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle’s mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Tables 6 - 7.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.4 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy ‘Measures of Success’ Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.
- 4.5 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2025/26, and the aspirational target for 2030. The latest corporate performance reports are available on the Comhairle’s [Best Value Performance Reporting](#) web page.

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.1.CS04 - CE151: Percentage of active Community Councils submitting Challenge fund applications. (Trend)	2018/19 44%	N/A	N/A	Governance Services

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

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.2.CS01 – CE102 (LGBF: ECON4): Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises	2019/20 37%	63%	70%	Legal and Procurement Services
4.1.2.CS02 - CE152: Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) score.	2019 64%	64%	70%	Legal and Procurement Services

Strategic Outcome: 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased.

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline 2021/22	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.3.CS03 - CE153: Accessible transport: Number of wheelchair accessible Taxi vehicles and Private hire cars across the Western Isles.	2020 4	6	10	Legal and Procurement Services
4.1.3.CS04 - CE118: Accessible transport: Percentage of Taxi vehicles and Private hire cars across the Western Isles that are wheelchair accessible.	2020 3.6%	6%	10%	Legal and Procurement Services

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

Table 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Target 2030	Service
4.1.5.CS06 - CE154: Uptake rate of training by Elected Members.	2024/25	60%	70%	Governance Services
4.1.5. - CE004: Percentage of taxi/private hire licences issued (Apr-Mar) within statutory time limits (9 months).	2014/15 100%	100%	100%	Legal Services
4.1.5. - CE005: Percentage of public entertainment licences issued within statutory time limits (9 months).	2014/15 100%	100%	100%	Legal Services
4.1.5. - CE033: Percentage of Minutes delivered within 10 working days of the meeting.	2014/15 100%	90%	95%	Governance and Elections
4.1.5. - CE099: External legal advice rate (%) to overall legal service cost.	2018/19 0.97%	1%	0.97%	Legal Services
4.1.5.CS04 - CE140: Percentage of Internal Audit recommendations found to be outstanding at the Follow-up Review.	42%	20%	20%	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE144: Percentage of Service Audit Reports followed up by individual Services.	100%	90%	90%	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE145: Percentage of audit recommendations accepted by management.	100%	90%	90%	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE146: Cost of Internal Audit per day recharged to the user.	£357	£670	£750	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE147: Percentage of Internal Audit client satisfaction surveys that were positive.	100%	90%	90%	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE148: Percentage of Internal Audit reports issued to management within 14 days of completion of field work.	89%	85%	85%	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE149: Percentage of Audit Plan completed.	96%	80%	80%	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5 CE150: Cost of Internal Audit per £1m of Net Expenditure	£1,619	£2,850	£3,250	Internal Audit & Performance

*Baseline changed from 2022/25 to 2024/25. Democratic Services is developing a training plan for elected members for roll-out in the 2024/25 period.

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The actions take into consideration the key areas of risk identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 1.1 – Strengthen the local economy

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

Table 6: SBP Actions

Action	Service
1.1.5.5 Support community wealth building through encouragement of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.	Procurement

Strategic Priority: 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership.

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

Table 7: SBP Actions

Action	Service
4.1.5.7 Provide a comprehensive and efficient legal service to the Comhairle	Legal Services
4.1.5.8 Support the Western Isles Licensing Board in relation to the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.	Legal Services
4.1.5.9 Provide a comprehensive and efficient service to Elected Members to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.	Governance and Elections
4.1.5.10 Provide a corporate travel facility	Legal Services
4.1.5.50 To independently review and report on the adequacy of controls in relation to the council's key risks.	Internal Audit & Performance
4.1.5.51 To prevent, detect and investigate fraud committed against the council.	Internal Audit & Performance

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 8 and 9 as per the Comhairle's budget approved by Comhairle in February 2025 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2025/26

- 5.2 The Law and Governance Service has a Net Revenue Budget of £2,348k, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 8.

Table 8: Net Revenue Budget by Service Profile 2025/26

Detail	£'000	%
Governance and Elections	374	17
Internal Audit & Performance	200	9
Legal Services	1,462	65
Procurement	212	9
Total	2,248	100%

Capital Budget 2025/26

5.3 There is no Capital Budget for Law and Governance.

Service Employees

5.4 The Law and Governance Service have 19.8 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 9. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 9: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees	%
Governance and Elections	7.3	37
Internal Audit & Performance	3	15
Legal Services	6.5	33
Procurement	3	15
Total	19.8	100