

## OUTCOME DELIVERY REPORT

Report by Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services

### PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to present the half-year progress of the 2024/25 Departmental Strategic Priorities for the Education, Skills and Children's Services (ES&CS) Department.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides a 2024/25 half year progress report on the strategic priorities aligned to the department. An update on departmental key areas of strategic risk is included, progress on the strategic outcomes and the resources identified to implement the business plan.
- 2.2 Strategic risk is aligned with the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027. There are no departmental key areas of strategic risk identified for the ES&CS Department. Strategic risk is monitored on Interplan and reported externally via the Comhairle's website. Graphical representation of the Comhairle's strategic risk is provided at paragraph 6.
- 2.3 The business plan is aligned to all four strategic priorities, and three service areas within the department contribute to the achievement of nine strategic outcomes. Progress on the outcome delivery plans is detailed in the main body of the report at paragraph 7.
- 2.4 Full detail in regard to business plan progress for the ES&CS Department can be viewed at: [Service Business Plan Progress Reports](#). In line with Audit Scotland's recommendations, Elected Members are also encouraged to access the Comhairle's online performance monitoring and reporting system Interplan, which contains all departmental Business Plans. Interplan can be accessed at: [Interplan](#).
- 2.5 As a consequence of the on-going impacts of the cyber-attack, it has not been possible to provide appraisal or review of the department's financial position for this report. It will be made available at the next meeting immediately following reinstatement of access to the service.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle notes the half-year progress of the 2024/25 Departmental Outcome Delivery Plans.**

Contact Officer: Donald Macleod, Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services  
Background Papers:

## IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	The Education and Children’s Services Business Plan is aligned with the Corporate Strategy 2022-27.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	There is no consultation associated with this Report. The Business Plan and the quarterly progress updates are published on the Comhairle’s webpages.

## BACKGROUND

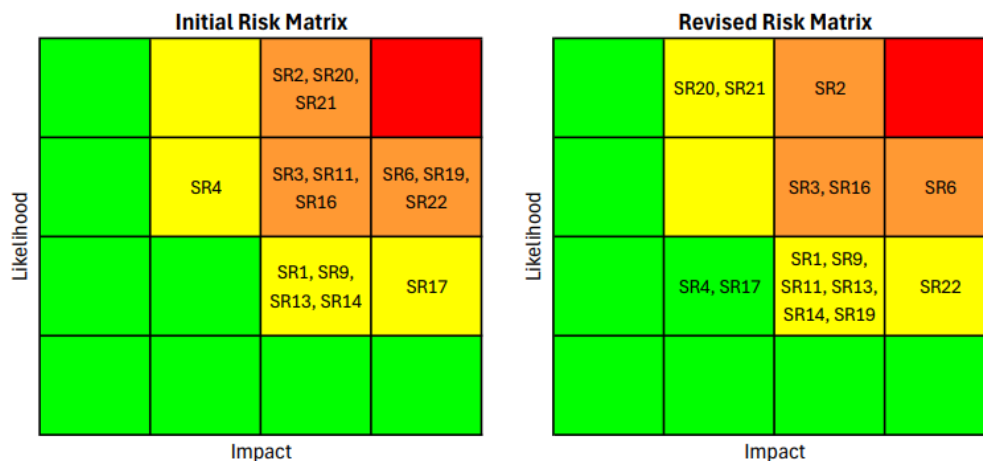
- 5.1 While previous quarterly reporting provided an update on business plan progress, this report is designed to provide Members with information on progress of the strategic priorities that the department is aligned to. The report includes an update on departmental key areas of strategic risk, progress on the strategic outcomes that the department contribute to, and the resources identified to implement the business plan.
- 5.2 The Corporate Strategy has four strategic priorities and 20 strategic outcomes.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Comhairle has identified 15 strategic threats. There are no departmental key areas of strategic risk identified for the ES&CS Department.
- 6.4 The full risk register details can be accessed via the [Interplan Risk Management Module](#).

### STRATEGIC RISK MATRICES - September 2024

#### THREATS



## OUTCOME DELIVERY PLANS

- 7.1 The department is aligned to all four Strategic Priorities and contributes to the fulfilment of nine Strategic Outcomes and progress on the Outcome Delivery Plans are reported below under each of these.

### Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

#### Outcome 2.1.1. Attainment rates continuously improve

- 7.2 Based on the teacher judgement survey of Broad General Education (BGE) for 2024, an average of 86.8% of curricular milestones were achieved across numeracy and literacy combined in Comhairle schools for P1, P4, P7 and S3. This compares to 87.5% in 2023, 83.2% in 2022 and 76.2% in 2021.

From a total of 2424 presentations, A-C passes at National 5 were 82.3%, followed by 71.9% at Higher and 72.2% at Advanced Higher. Results in the Western Isles continued to be above national averages for National 5 and mirrored the national trend of overall decreases on the previous year. 2024 saw important increases and gains in attainment at National 5 and Advanced Higher compared to 2023.

Each year, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) works with Scottish Government to collate and report on participation of all young people aged 16 to 19. The measure is defined as the percentage of young adults aged 16-19 participating in education, training or employment. It is a key national measure of the success of participation and outcomes for young people. It is reported in Q2 for the previous year. For young people in the Comhairle area, the Annual Participation Measure reports for 2023-24 that 96.8% of 16–19-year-olds are participating in education, training or employment. This represents a small decrease of 0.4% from that recorded in 2023. This continues to compare positively to the national participation rate of 92.7%.

The tables below provide a summary of current and historic data from the Annual Participation Measure

Year	CNES % Participation Total	National % Participation Total
2024	96.8	92.7
2023	97.2	92.6
2022	96.2	92.4
2021	95.6	92.2
2020	95.5	92.1
2019	95.5	91.6

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

- 7.3 The Department has extended an invitation to Health colleagues in order to review the wider GIRFEC procedures, including those relating to early intervention and prevention referral pathways. The group will update the Child Protection Committee, the Bairns Hoose Implementation Group and the Children and Young Persons Planning Partnership or agreed changes.

Good progress is being made through The Promise initiatives taking place within Room 19 and at The Kabin, particularly with work with children on the edge care. In addition to this, The Shed, through its intergenerational work and through Safe Families is providing impactful interventions with an increasing number of families with young children. Action for Children, through ADP funded projects, is working with a number of children involved in alcohol or substance misuse and/or youth offending/anti-social behaviours.

In general, social work services are more dependent than ever on 3rd sector services and allied public sector services to provide early intervention and prevention, with social work having to focus on statutory services i.e. child protection and care experienced children.

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

- 7.4 The Education and Children's Services Department implement and uphold the Comhairle School and Room Letting Policy and the Corporate Pitch Policy along with managing the operation of community facilities within schools such as Swimming Pools, Libraries and Sports Halls. Schools are available for community lets of rooms and internal facilities from between one and three nights per week depending on size and designation of school and all schools are available for let on Saturdays. The exception to this is the Sports Halls where the school forms part of the Comhairle Sports Facilities 'Slainte Mhath' scheme. This is now the case in Castlebay, Lionacleit and Sir E Scott schools.

School lets are booked centrally using an online booking system and booking forms have a safeguard built in to ensure lets have a 14 day notice period before allowing a let to be booked. Bookers wishing to book school lets at short notice must contact the Resources Section of the Department to ensure there will be staffing available to cover the event they are planning. The Department will endeavour to accommodate short notice room let bookings or school pitch bookings if at all possible and especially if it is an important community event or a rearranged football league or cup fixture.

#### Outcome 2.1.4. People are healthy and active

- 7.5 Lifeguard courses have been held at Castlebay and ISL during the period in an effort to top up our pool of relief Leisure Attendants. More courses are planned as well as the re-introduction of the Rookie Lifeguard Courses. An Apprentice Outdoor Learning Manager has been recruited along with 10 new relief Leisure Attendants who have helped increase our resilience across our leisure centre network.

The Sports Development team completed their annual award winning Bikeability Level 2 programme to 260 P6 pupils, with all 20 Primary Schools participating. At the end of the summer term the team held the WIIGA School Sports for Lewis & Harris and Uist & Barra schools and the Charlie Nicolson Football tournament in Stornoway.

The Active Schools team provided PEPAS support, extra-curricular clubs and School Sports Awards, incorporating an approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. In quarter 1 six of our primary schools have achieved Gold School Sports Award – Balivanich; lochdar; Laxdale; Uibhist a Tuath; Stornoway; and Tong. A number of others have been working through Bronze and Silver levels with the intention of aiming for Gold during the 2024/25 school year. The Active Schools report for 2023-24 shows that 1098 pupils attended 798 sessions delivered by 105 deliverers, of which 83% were volunteers. The Sports Development team provided a Summer Motiv8 programme across the Outer Hebrides providing opportunities for young people to try out and take part in a wide range of sports and activities. The team worked with staff within Education and with groups and organisation to enhance the programme and enable those with additional needs to be included.

The introduction of Sporting Memories and activity sessions delivered in Harris is proving popular following successful pilot events in Stornoway and surrounding areas. Walking football is also growing in popularity with various groups becoming established across the islands. The Move More

programme ended on 31st July 2024 however, the service is doing what it can to maintain at least some of the classes and the support that was previously available, and will continue to do so, but with reduced levels of expertise.

The second tranche of Athlete Travel Award Scheme was awarded to 8 athletes, selected from a strong list of 17 athletes from across 6 sports. This funding is to be used towards travel costs in attending high level events or coaching.

Aberdeenshire Live has recently joined the LeisureLink scheme bringing the number of authority areas included to 10 (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Borders, Highland, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and Outer Hebrides). Our inclusion in the scheme adds substantial value to our Slainte Mhath membership, allowing members to use (at least) core services at facilities within the LeisureLink Scheme for no extra cost. Memberships at the end of Q2 stand at 2828, an increase of 6% from the same period last year.

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

- 7.6 The Early Learning and Childcare expansion to 1140 hours, with the inclusion of eligible 2-year-olds, has given parents the opportunity and choice to return to work, study, or training. This has been supported by offering varied and flexible childcare options across our settings affording parents a choice of options to meet their needs and that of their children. This has included maximising uptake of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2-year-olds, tackling childhood poverty and supporting the most disadvantaged families.

In order to achieve this currently across the Western Isles there are -

- 21 childcare provisions made up of nineteen local authority nurseries and two partner providers. There are nine settings offering 52-week childcare from 8.30am-5.30pm (8 LA and 1 partner), four of these settings also provide 0-3-year-old provision (3 LA and 1 partner). Of the remaining twelve term time settings, four are open from 8.30am-5.30pm and the others close at 3.30pm or 4.30pm.
- Since January 2024 we have supported our most vulnerable families by provided placements for 15 funded 2year olds across our settings.
- Presently there are nine registered Childminders across the Western Isles, 3 of whom are now working in partnership with CnES and can offer ELC funded places for parents.
- There is currently one childminder going through the Care Inspectorate application process in Barra which was one of our target recruitment areas.
- There is also an after-school club which is based in Stornoway Primary School providing care for up to 20 children.

We are continuing to strive to increase the number of childminders through Childminding recruitment campaigns (both CnES and in partnership with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and information sharing at our planned events and through our social media channels.

While increasing childcare provision we are continuing to ensure the implementation of high-quality early learning and childcare to support children to develop, achieve and reach their full potential.

### **Priority 3.1: Support resilient communities and quality of life**

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

- 7.7 Library Service - A Gaelic student on a five-week placement in September created Gaelic materials for the library and ran a number of Gaelic focused community events, as well as visiting the Nicolson to survey Gaelic-speaking students. The National Library of Scotland has completed the digitisation of

the Highland News West Coast Edition and the fragile print copies were deposited with Tasglann/Archives. The Library Service has recruited a Senior Librarian whose role will focus on Gaelic & Outreach. The Service has also submitted an application for funding to the Scottish Library and Information Fund to facilitate a series of literary arts workshops providing enhanced access to the service's Gaelic collection and the curation of new resources to celebrate Gaelic language, culture, and heritage.

Education Service - The Comhairle continues to deliver its Gaelic Action Plan with funding support from Gaelic Specific Grant continuing in 2024/25. Work is ongoing at Departmental and school level to address the issue of the decrease in GME enrolments in August 2024 (42%), which was particularly affected by a large number of deferred entries to school this year. An Early Years sub-committee was established and meet monthly with clear targets and actions being implemented. In Uist & Barra, the Splaoid aig Deas initiative continues to engage with parents/carers at the 0-3 age group. The Gaelic Education Manager and Gaelic Early Years team have been working on a range of projects to promote GME, and to support parents in enrolling their children in GME, in addition to more effective partnership working with Gaelic development officers from other organisations across the Western Isles. During Q1, a number of schools and communities were supported as part of the Dileab project to commemorating 100 years since Lord Leverhulme gifted the estate to the Stornoway Trust. These events provided important opportunities to celebrate and develop Gaelic culture, music and history.

#### Outcome 3.1.5: Reduce inequality and poverty and promote social mobility

- 7.8 The Department continues to contribute to the completion of actions and meeting of targets within the Comhairle's Local Child Poverty Action Plan. This has been particularly in terms of the 'Cost of Living' theme through supporting families and reducing the routine cost of the school day. Schools are tasked with reducing or removing incidental costs placed upon families and are advised to reduce, redesign or seek new approaches to 'School Fund' or charitable fundraising. The ECS Department has provided direct financial support to families through three main schemes. Firstly, Free School Meals (FSM) has been made available to 217 children (approx. 7% - reduced since provision of universal FSM for P1-5). Secondly, Clothing Grants have been paid to 323 children, equating to a total grant sum of £42,990. Thirdly, 26 eligible young people are currently in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to support their continuation in education.

### **Priority 4.1: Be a sustainable and inclusive Council**

#### Outcome 4.1.4 Efficient and sustainable services are provided to the community

- 7.9 The deployment of resources across the service and the development and implementation of our workforce strategy, as referenced in section nine is inclusive and recognises the needs of employees and community in the delivery of services. The adoption of UNCRC and potential for increases in demand for Additional Support Needs provision do need to be considered in terms of ensure appropriate and efficient resources are available.

## **RESOURCING THE PLAN**

### **Financial Performance**

- 8.1 The Education & Children's Services Department has a Net Revenue Budget of £54.4m for 2024/25. Due to the impact of the 2023 cyber-attack on the Comhairle's systems, it has not been possible to provide a mid-year Revenue Monitoring Outturn Report at this stage and it is hoped this information will be available for the next series of meetings, subject to systems and access being fully restored.

## **Workforce Planning**

- 9.1 The annual Workforce Planning Exercise for the staffing of schools for both teaching and non-teaching staff for session 24-25 has now concluded. It was significantly complicated this year by the on-going national dispute regarding retention of teacher numbers. The service retained the same number of teachers this year as in 2023/24, but settlement has not yet been reached on payment of Scottish Government funding in respect of this policy.
- 9.2 Preparations are now under way for proposals for the Education Workforce Planning Strategy for 25/26. The review will assist the department to meet its saving and efficiency targets across the totality of its service.
- 9.3 Children's Services teams are currently operating to capacity and has one non-operational vacancy relating to Child Protection Co-ordination. External grant funding continues to provide important additionality to assist in retaining a full staffing complement. The service does face pressures in terms of increasing demand, especially in the Children and Families Team and is susceptible to depreciating resilience due to factors such potential sickness absence.
- 9.4 At the time of writing, a review of staffing and management structures in the Sport & Health section of the service is on-going and is expected to report to a future sitting of the Human Resources Sub-Committee.
- 9.5 The department continues to carefully manage and mitigate against workforce-related risks in terms of potential recruitment of skilled staff in senior positions and in the availability of fluent Gaelic speakers across key parts of the department's direct service delivery.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 This report provides an overview on the half-year progress of the 2024/25 Departmental Outcome Delivery Plans for Education and Children's Services.