

## **OUTCOME DELIVERY REPORT: ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Report by Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure

### **PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to present the half-year progress of the 2024/25 Departmental Strategic Priorities for the Assets and Infrastructure Business Unit.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This Report provides a 2024/25 half-year progress report on the strategic priorities aligned to the Business Unit. An update on 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 is one key area of strategic risk identified with a High rating, and three risk rated Medium. One risk remains High after risk actions have been implemented and this is in relation to Climate Change Adaptation. 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. 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 Assets and Infrastructure section 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 The Assets and Infrastructure Section has a Net Revenue Budget of £21m 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.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

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Background Papers: Corporate Strategy 2022-27

## IMPLICATIONS

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

<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Financial	There are no financial implications associated with this Report
Legal	There are no legal implications associated with this Report
Staffing	There are no staffing implications associated with this Report
Assets and Property	There are no asset and property implications associated with this Report
<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Risk	Risk Management associated with the Assets and Infrastructure Business Plan is identified at paragraph 6 of the Report
Equalities	There are no identified equality issues within this Report
Corporate Strategy	The Assets and Infrastructure Business Plan is aligned with the Corporate Strategy 2022-27.
Environmental Impact	There are no identified environmental impacts within this Report
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 Business Unit is aligned to. The Report includes an update on 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 twenty strategic outcomes.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Comhairle has identified fifteen strategic threats and four are monitored by the Assets and Infrastructure Business Unit (SR11, SR16, SR19 and SR20). One risk is rated High and three rated Medium.

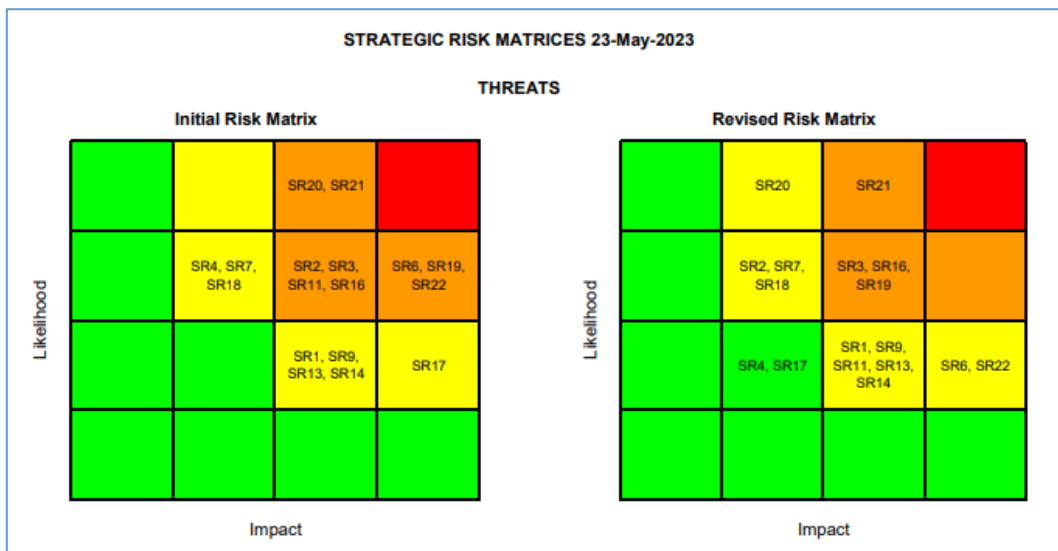
6.2 The risk remaining as High after controls are implemented is:

- SR16: 4.1.2. Failure to adapt to the effects of Climate Change

6.3 This risk is aligned to one of the Comhairle's strategic priorities: to support caring and resilient communities and quality of life; and it has the potential to impact achievement of the following strategic outcome:

- 3.1.3 Planning and Infrastructure meet the needs of our communities.

6.4 The full risk register details can be accessed via the [Interplan Risk Management Module](#).



## OUTCOME DELIVERY PLANS

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

### Priority 1.1: Strengthen the local economy

#### Outcome 1.1.2 Digital investment delivers outcomes for the community

- 7.2 Comhairle officers continue to meet with OFCOM, R100 Delivery Team, Shared Rural Network, and other delivery partners at regular intervals to push for progress with delivery of full fibre to every community in the Outer Hebrides. The Uist Repopulation Zone project is also working closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and specifically supporting a survey of all properties in South Uist to establish the level of full fibre service available in the area.
- 7.3 The R100 North Lot Planned Build still envisages the next suite of exchange builds in the Outer Hebrides being in 2025 and 2026. Under the Scottish 4G Infill programme fifty-five new sites have been completed across Scotland with four in the Outer Hebrides. This has significantly improved local mobile coverage.

#### Outcome 1.1.3 Investment in our buildings and infrastructure

- 7.4 Identified investment requirements across the Comhairle's estate are significantly more than the available capital and revenue. Structures are in place to prioritise the available resources into where the greatest needs are required.
- 7.5 The Lewis Residential Care Home (Taigh Shiphoint) and Housing with Extra Care provision (Valtos and Bremner Court) have been completed and occupied by the former residents of the Dun Berisay and Dun Eisdean Care Homes. Dun Eisdean has been sold to a private developer and Dun Berisay is under offer. This is a considerable step forward in the Comhairle's provision of care services. Further investment requirements have been identified at St Brendan's (Barra), TACUN (South Uist) and Trianaid (North Uist).
- 7.6 As a consequence of the closure of Blar Buidhe Nursing Home, the Comhairle is looking to adapt premises to accommodate the current residents.

- 7.7 Investment requirements within the School Estate have been identified. The highest priority is the replacement of Castlebay School, which has been developed as a community campus project along with a replacement care facility, and until recently a replacement hospital. Due to a budget shortfall further options are being considered which may enable the project to be progressed within budget. Further priority projects are being progressed at Castlebay and The Nicolson Institute in relation to Additional Support Needs, at Stornoway Primary in relation to sporting facilities and at various sites in relation to the provision of Universal Free School Meals.
- 7.8 An extension to Lochmaddy Pier to accommodate the proposed new vessels for the Little Minch is complete. Further works to the linkspan may be required as the initial scope was for the Glen Rosa, which is being deployed elsewhere and replaced with two Islay Class vessels currently being constructed in Turkey. Initial scoping works have commenced in relation to replacement vessels and infrastructure on the Sound of Barra and Sound of Harris.
- 7.9 Investment in roads infrastructure is limited to priority repairs, assessed on an annual basis. £6.6m of additional money towards bridge capital maintenance is in the process of being delivered. Works are completed at Loch an Obbe (Barra) and Scalpay Bridge Bearing Replacement is scheduled to commence in December 2024. A seminar was held in relation to Fixed Links which agreed as a first step to undertake wider consultation.

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

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

- 7.10 Although there has been significant improvement in the condition of the school estate through the delivery of WISP (Western Isles Schools Project) and subsequently Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath, condition and suitability of the remaining schools is deteriorating due to reductions in capital and revenue funding. Castlebay School is the highest priority for investment and included within the scope of the Barra and Vatersay Community Campus.
- 7.11 Funding has been provided for undertaking improvements at Lionel School to encourage the use of developing the Gaelic language at a community level.
- 7.12 Scottish Government funding is to be made available to make free school meals available to all primary children. Required investment in specific schools is currently being quantified.

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

#### **Outcome 3.1.4: Our communities are safe, inclusive, and resilient**

- 7.13 Consumer and Environmental Services continue to deliver on their annual service plan and are on course to deliver most of the priorities and targets for the year. The services have carried out one hundred and fifty food interventions and dealt with over three hundred service requests. The service also issued over three hundred and fifty licences and registrations.
- 7.14 Although the Outer Hebrides Road Safety Strategy is yet to be compiled, the Comhairle has aligned itself to the Scottish Government Road Safety Framework to 2030. Learning is shared across the North of Scotland Area with other Local Authorities and partner organisations such as Police Scotland, NHS and Transport Scotland.
- 7.15 Active Travel Masterplans have been compiled for the main settlements in the Outer Hebrides and are now being refined to Delivery Plans. Active Travel initiatives have a direct impact on Road Safety in improving the interactions between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

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

### **Outcome 4.1.2 Reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero**

- 7.16 The development of the Comhairle's Waste Management Plan has been hampered by the delayed introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the suspension of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). Both schemes are designed to add an element of producer and consumer responsibility for the costs of collection and disposal of packaging wastes. It is expected that there will be a funding stream provided to Local Authorities from pEPR that will supplement existing budgets. However, it is not yet clear whether this will be in addition to current funding or simply a replacement. An announcement of the funding allocation is expected in November 2024, with payments due to commence in October 2025. DRS is now programmed for 2027 but will exclude glass bottles.
- 7.17 The change to a three-weekly waste and recycling collection regime in Lewis and Harris has allowed the extension of kerbside recycling services to all households. Initial review of collection tonnages suggests a significant reduction in waste to landfill (circa 10%), an increase in recycling participation and tonnage, plus an improvement in both quantity and quality of food and garden collections. The impact of improved quality (i.e., less contamination) is very important as the removal of contamination will also remove a similar quantity of recyclable feedstock.
- 7.18 Cell G at Bennadrove Landfill site is fully operational. Work to cap Cell F is underway, including a review of options to build the next cell in the area between Cell F and Cell G. This will maximise potential void space as it would link into existing cell infrastructure.
- 7.19 Cleansing Services have taken delivery of an electric Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV). This is still being set up to maximise range, driveability, and loading / compaction performance. It is the first of its type in the UK, so set up has taken longer than anticipated. This eRCV was fully funded from the Scottish Government Recycling Improvement Fund.
- 7.20 A successful bid for grant funding the Emerging Energy Technologies Fund has allowed the further development of hydrogen production at Creed Park Waste Management Facility. This project, in partnership with PlusZero and UHI-NWH, will allow green hydrogen and oxygen production to be re-established at a significantly higher output, using green electricity produced on site by the gas generated from food and garden waste or the wind turbine.
- 7.21 The Comhairle's carbon footprint is being monitored and updated. There are no specifically funded projects which have the primary scope of reducing the carbon footprint, however any residual benefits from operational changes and capital investment are being captured.

### **Outcome 4.1.3 Equality of opportunity is increased**

- 7.22 The Comhairle delivers and procures bus services for schools and public transport. All bus services are operated with fully Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) compliant vehicles.

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

- 7.23 In June 2021, the Comhairle approved the prioritisation of two LGBF indicators for the Service areas relevant to this Report:

#### **Community Safety Board**

- year-on-year reductions in the overall cost of Environmental and Trading Standards services per 1,000 population

### **Transportation and infrastructure Committee**

- achieve year-on-year improvements to recycling rates, working towards a 30% recycling rate by 2025

7.24 The relevant service areas continue to review budgets and activity with a view to achieving the outlined reductions and improvements.

### **Outcome 4.1.5 Effective governance of the Comhairle is in place**

7.25 Corporate IT security and disaster recovery is managed by the Corporate IT Section. Applications and processes are in place to minimise the threat of cyber-attack. Two factor authentication has been added for access to Comhairle systems to increase resilience. Further improvements have been made to systems and processes to protect data, systems and infrastructure from external threat.

## **RESOURCING THE PLAN**

### **Financial Performance**

8.1 The Assets and Infrastructure Section has a Net Revenue Budget of £21m 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.

### **Workforce Planning**

8.2 Workforce Plans have been compiled across each individual service area. These are presently being revised and finalised with the Corporate Workforce Panel.

## **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The Assets and Infrastructure Business Unit has maintained good controls on business planning, governance, and budget management the first two quarters of 2024 / 25. In addition to its core functions and responsibilities, the Business Unit's key tasks are working to review, update and implement the Comhairle's Corporate Strategies and political priorities while delivering efficient front line services on behalf of the community across a broad service portfolio and seeking to take best advantage of new and emerging opportunities.