



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.

SCHOOLS AND EARLY EDUCATION SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

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INTRODUCTION

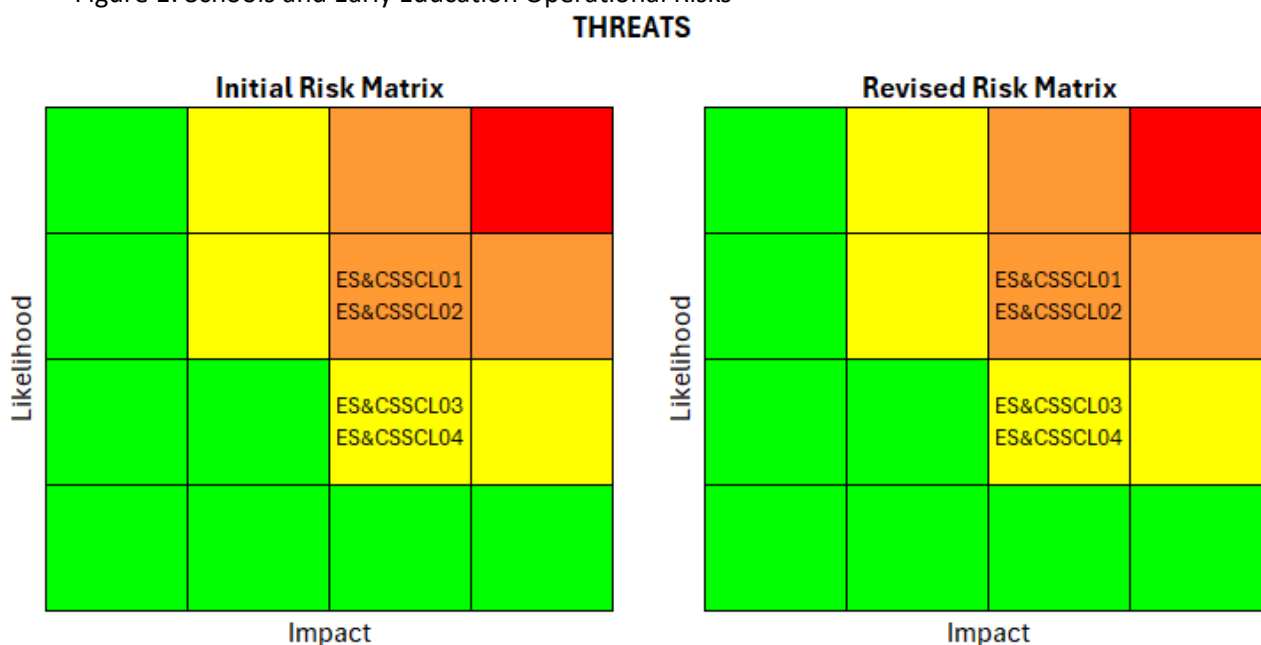
- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce the Service Business Plan for 2024/25 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. This is the main annual business planning document for the service. It reflects the Comhairle's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and provides an overview of the service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. Schools and Early Education 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 three services within Schools and Early 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. **Educational Psychology** – Psychological Services undertake five main roles within the Western Isles. These are: 'Consultation' (providing advice early and to a range of stakeholders regarding children experiencing all types of barriers to learning). 'Assessment' (providing specialist assessments of need that require a certain level of qualification or training). 'Intervention' (providing guidance on evidence-based interventions and developing robust monitoring systems to ensure they meet the child's needs, and in cases that require the highest level of support carrying out the intervention). 'Training' (providing specialist training to a range of stakeholders to build capacity in all of those who support the needs of children and families). 'Research' (undertaking research to examine how children respond to certain interventions and to help ensure both evidence-based practice and best-value practice in the work carried out within the department).
- 1.4. **Multi Media** – The Multi Media service provides website development and supports Gaelic Medium Education by producing resource materials that are web-based and promotional materials.
- 1.5. **Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education** – School and Pre-school provide education, learning and teaching support for all children from birth-3 years and 3-18 years. Additional Support for Learning Services support for Learning provides a wide range of resources and support to children with additional support needs. 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.

Donald A. Macleod
Chief Officer for Education, Skills 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 Service Business Plans; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of service business plan actions, and Schools and Early 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: Schools and Early 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 schools to the required levels
- ES&CSSCL02 Inability to recruit GME secondary teachers and other non-teaching support staff.
- 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 Schools and Early Education contribute to the strategic outcomes listed below to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priorities.
- 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve;
 - 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe;
 - 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 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 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 Accounts Commission's [Best Value in Scotland](#) Report (2023) highlights "the pressures and spending constraints facing councils - increasing demand for services and a real-terms reduction in funding. In this context it is more critical than ever that councils secure and demonstrate Best Value." The performance measures for Schools and Early Education are detailed in Tables 2-5.
- 4.2 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 6-9.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.3 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.

- 4.4 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2024/25, and the aspirational target for 2030.

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 2024/25	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%	70%	75%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	72%	76%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	95%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	90%	95%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.1.CS06 - ECS183: Percentage of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or above.	2019/20 70.1%	71.5%	74%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.1.CS07 - ECS005 (LGBF: CHN4): Percentage of secondary school pupils gaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 5.	2018/19 61%	70.5%	75%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.1.CS08 - ECS006 (LGBF: CHN5): Percentage of secondary school pupils gaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 6.	2018/19 33%	35.3%	37%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.1.CS10 - ECS130 (LGBF: CHN19a): School Attendance Rate (per 100 pupils).	2018/19 94%	95%	97%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.1.CS11 - ECS132 (LGBF: CHN20a): School Exclusion Rate (per 1,000 pupils).	2010/11 27%	15%	5%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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, Pre-School and Early Years Education

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 2024/25	Target 2030	Service
2.1.2.CS01 - ECS184: Pupil teacher ratio, all sectors excluding Early Learning Centres.	2019/20 10.6	10.5	11	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	70%	72%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.2.CS03 - ECS125 (LGBF-CHN17): Percentage of children meeting developmental milestones at their 27–30-month review.	2019/20 82%	85%	86%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education

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

Table 4: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2024/25	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%	26%	30%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.5.CS02 - ECS187: Percentage of Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres in the Outer Hebrides.	2019/20 78%	80%	80%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education
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%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years 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 5: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2024/25	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, Pre-School and Early Years Education

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Target 2030	Service
3.1.1.CS08 - ECS030: Percentage of children in Gaelic Medium Education (GME)	2019/20 40%	45%	47%	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education

What actions we will take

- 4.5 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
2.1.1.1 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, Pre-School and Early Years Education
2.1.1.3 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of multi media resources	Multi Media

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

Table 7: 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.	Educational Psychology

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

Table 8: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.5.1 Support the provision of childcare across the Western Isles	Schools, Pre-School and Early Years 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 9: SBP Actions

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

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP is summarised in Tables 10 and 11 as per the budget approved by Comhairle in February 2024 and the annual budget setting salary estimates exercise.

Revenue Budget 2024/25

- 5.2 Schools and Early Education has a Net Revenue Budget of £41.8m, which is allocated across the service within the sections detailed in Table 10.

Table 10: Net Revenue Budget 2024/25 by Service Profile

Detail	£'000	%
Multi Media	0.106	0.25
Educational Psychology	0.254	0.61
Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education	41.446	99.14
Total	41.806	100%

Capital Budget 2024/25

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for the Schools and Early Education.

Service Employees

- 5.4 Schools and Early Education have 611.11 FTE employees working across the service within the sections listed in Table 11. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

Table 11: FTE Employees

Service Profile	Number of FTE employees
Multi Media	4.5
Educational Psychology	3
Schools, Pre-School and Early Years Education	603.61
Total	611.11