

*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

**CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION ..... 3

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD ..... 5

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE ..... 6

MEASURES AND ACTIONS..... 6

RESOURCING THE PLAN ..... 10

## 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, Linclate 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.

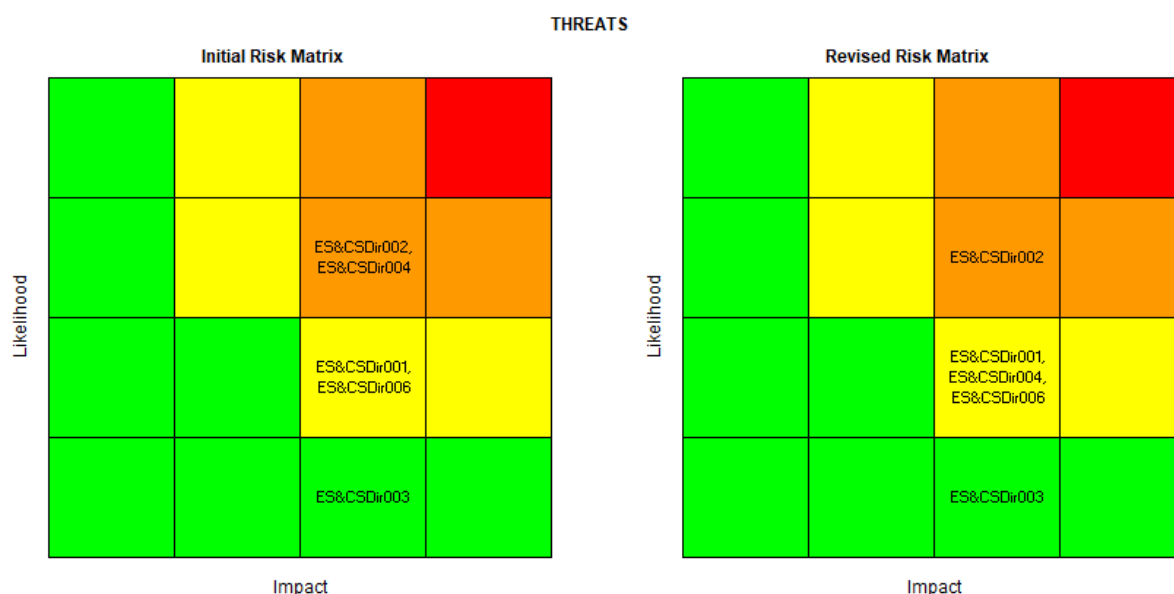
- 1.8. **Sport and Leisure** is responsible for creating a supported infrastructure for the development of sport and implementation of the national health improvement agenda. The Service works in partnership with local and national agencies to instigate and enhance sport and physical activity opportunities 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><b>Service Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital and IT services meet the needs of pupils and teachers.</li><li>• The workforce has the skills, flexibility and capacity to deliver the Education &amp; Children’s Services priorities.</li><li>• Adults have access to learning opportunities that reduce barriers to employment, volunteering or further education.</li><li>• School pupils have access to nutritional meals.</li><li>• People in the Western Isles have range of opportunities to access reading, learning and cultural opportunities.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• The service demonstrates high standards of governance and sound financial stewardship.</li></ul>

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,238,127</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>99.85</b>	<b>100%</b>