



CORPORATE STRATEGY 2024-2027: DELIVERY OF KEY STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Report by Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to consider the delivery of key strategic outcomes within the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and measures required to progress these within the current term of the Comhairle.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Corporate Strategy for 2024-2027, approved by this Committee on 29 November 2023, contains four priority areas and a set of strategic outcomes. Actions required to deliver the strategic outcomes are set out in business plans, other corporate strategies, policies and procedures, and a set of outcome measures are used to report progress annually to the Comhairle and twice-yearly to the relevant Service Committees, including Policy and Resources Committee.
- 2.2 This report suggests identification of a number of strategic outcomes within the Corporate Strategy and asks whether these should be given an element of priority in the immediate period. Each of the strategic outcomes set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 6.2 below reflect Strategic Priorities within the Corporate Strategy, so no change to the Corporate Strategy is required. If approved, implementation and monitoring of progress would be undertaken through Budget and Strategy Board in the first instance, and Policy and Resources Committee and Service Committees, as appropriate. The report also provides information about co-working with Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils to take forward mutual strategic work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:

- (a) consider the advancement of the following specific strategic outcomes:
- (i) Western Isles Renewable Energy Dividend
 - (ii) Housing: Opportunities and Innovation
 - (iii) Gàidhlig
 - (iv) Family Friendly Support
 - (v) Connectivity Enhancement
 - (vi) Climate Resilient Infrastructure
- (b) notes that an implementation plan for advancement of these strategic outcomes will be submitted to the next meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board;
- (c) notes that the Comhairle will undertake joint work with Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils to take forward mutual strategic policy goals; and
- (d) authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, to engage Consultants, jointly with Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils, to provide focused political and communications activity.

Contact Officer: Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive
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 Appendix: None
 Background Papers: Corporate Strategy 2024-2027

IMPLICATIONS

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

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	Delivery of the identified strategic outcomes are largely covered within current revenue and capital budgets but may be dependent on some reallocation of financial resources, both internal and external. Delivery of all strategic outcomes within the Corporate Strategy is dependent on financial resources available via Scottish Government's Revenue and Capital Budgets and additional funding sourced for delivery of key projects.
Legal	There are no legal implications of this report
Staffing	There are no workforce implications of this report
Assets and Property	There are no assets or property implications of this report
Strategic Implications	
Risk	There are risks associated with non-delivery, or a delayed Corporate Strategy in terms of the impact on business planning. There are potential risks associated with not receiving the levels of funding required for delivery of the strategic outcomes of the Corporate Strategy.
Equalities	The Corporate Strategy provides detail on equalities and outcomes associated with reducing inequality. An Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken on the draft Strategy
Corporate Strategy	This report is entirely focused on delivery of the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy
Environmental Impact	A SWOT environmental analysis was undertaken to identify and assess the level of threat or opportunity issues may present and to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses within the Comhairle that may support or hinder the delivery of its commitments. An Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken on the Corporate Strategy.
Consultation	Full consultation via the Comhairle's website, and specifically with community councils and community planning partners was undertaken in preparing the current Corporate Strategy.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 sets out the Comhairle's policy ambitions, and translates national policy, community planning and other partnership strategies, including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, and key local needs and aspirations into realistic and deliverable outcomes for taking forward the Comhairle's own policy objectives and the planning and delivery of Comhairle services.
- 5.2 The Corporate Strategy is a strategic document and does not include individual operational actions to be undertaken; these are reflected in service business plans which contain a detailed set of actions, progress of which is reported annually to the Comhairle, and twice-yearly to each service committee, including Policy and Resources Committee.

KEY STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- 6.1 The strategic outcomes of the Corporate Strategy are aligned to the priority areas, with five outcomes set out for each of the four priorities. The outcomes set out what the Comhairle aims to achieve over the period of 2022-2027. They are broad enough to cover all areas of the Comhairle's business and yet are ambitious enough to stretch services to continuously improve. They do not set out how they will be achieved; it is the operational actions that set out that level of detail. Services set out through the business planning process how they will align to the strategic outcomes and report progress against these actions.
- 6.2 This report recommends that an Implementation Plan for the following six key strategic outcomes within the current Corporate Strategy is developed and submitted to the next meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board:
- (i) Western Isles Renewable Energy Dividend
 - (ii) Housing: Opportunities and Innovation
 - (iii) Gàidhlig
 - (iv) Family Friendly Support
 - (v) Connectivity Enhancement
 - (vi) Climate Resilient Infrastructure

ISLANDS COUNCILS CO-WORKING

- 7.1 The Leaders and Chief Executives of the Comhairle, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council have recently been considering how best to advance joint islands strategic interests at this mid-term point, and in advance of the Scottish Parliament Election in May 2026. It is considered that this is an opportune time to give a higher profile to cross-island issues regarding:
- (i) renewable energy: delivery, benefits, including specific issues such as mitigation of fuel poverty and the distribution of Crown Estate revenues;
 - (ii) public service reform and financial sustainability of the islands' public sector;
 - (iii) common service issues, including Health and Social Care, transport and connectivity; and
 - (iv) infrastructure improvements.
- 7.2 There remains a great deal of alignment among the three Islands Councils on these matters, and it is intended to use some consultancy support to provide focused political and communications activity throughout the course of 2026. The work will be directed by the three Councils, using consultancy capacity to support meetings, produce materials and undertake specific messaging, to supplement and assist in-house capacity. Costs can be met within current budgets.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report seeks to identify a number of key strategic outcomes which could be advanced for delivery of our Corporate Strategy within this term of the Comhairle. They each reflect at least one of the four Strategic Priorities set out within the Corporate Strategy and are both consistent with and complementary to these Strategic Priorities. If agreed, it is recommended that a brief Implementation Plan be submitted to the next meeting of the Budget and Strategy Board. The report also advises of further co-working with Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils to advance shared policy positions.