



Ro-innleachd Chorporra 2017-2021

Corporate Strategy 2017-2021

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Our vision is to work with our partners and governments to strengthen our local economy and our communities, help our young people achieve their potential and gain sustainable employment, and promote and support healthier lifestyles within safe and caring communities.

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1. FOREWORD BY LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Welcome to the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy which sets out the priorities and strategic direction of the Comhairle for the period 2017-21. The external environment in which the Comhairle delivers its services is constantly changing and while some factors present ongoing challenges such as population, economy, legislative change and public sector financial constraints, some developments are new such as Brexit, some present new ways of working such as Health and Social Care integration and some could lead to greater autonomy and new opportunities through Public Sector Reform, 'Our Islands Our Future', the Islands Deal and the Islands Bill. While these are challenging times, we must try and meet and exceed communities' expectations of public services through sound financial management and the best use of our resources. These are also times of opportunity and we must ensure that we have a fit for purpose organisation which both proactively addresses challenges and capitalises on opportunities.

The period of this Corporate Strategy will be a time of change but we must manage that change and find ways of working smarter, more efficiently and effectively in serving our communities. We must work with Scottish and UK Government, our national and regional partners and our Community Planning Partners to achieve our objectives. The Islands Deal and the Islands Bill are significant steps forward in terms of securing greater local democracy and control over our own assets and resources to achieve our economic potential and our aim over the course of the next council term will be to realise some of these aspirations.

We must address depopulation, population sparsity and demographic imbalance by creating jobs and educational, apprenticeship and training opportunities locally that retain our young people and an economically active population and sustain a vibrant education and training sector. We must support our SMEs and our own local construction industry in major local capital projects. We must strive to strengthen our communities through the provision of quality affordable housing and through improved infrastructural and digital connectivity. We must develop our growth sectors such as renewables which can bring about transformational economic change and we will promote healthier lifestyles and support our elderly people at their time of need.

The Comhairle has a record of success despite financial pressures. In the last Comhairle term, Daliburgh School in South Uist, Sir E Scott School in Harris, The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway and Sgoil Uibhist a' Tuath were completed. This represents a significant investment in the education of our young people. Harris House, a state of the art Care Home and the Acres, a purpose built temporary accommodation unit for the homeless, were completed in 2014. The Comhairle continued to capitalise on European funding with the opening of the Lews Castle Museum and Archive in 2016, a £19 million partnership project led by the Comhairle, which includes a range of heritage and hospitality facilities which are set to make it an essential family friendly destination.

Over the next four years, we will go forward as a council with ambition and vision, engaging with and empowering communities, encouraging local decisions and solutions which secure the best possible outcomes for the people of the Western Isles. We will also ensure that these islands' interests are effectively represented at UK and Scottish Government level in all discussions around future regional policy and funding post-Brexit.

Roddie MacKay

Leader

Malcolm Burr

Chief Executive

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Population

Future population projections from 2014 predict a severe decline in the population of the Western Isles of 13.7% in the next 25 years, the largest in Scotland. This includes projections of a 28% decline in the 0-15 year age group, the largest decline in Scotland; a 21% decline in the working age population, the largest in Scotland; and an 11% increase in those of pensionable age. The demographic imbalance in particular brings pressures on health and social care. This strategy aims to ensure that the Western Isles is an attractive place to invest, live and work and to create and sustain the social economic conditions which encourage our young people to remain on the islands and to retain and maintain an economically active population. It aims to provide a safe environment in which to pursue healthy and active lifestyles, and to support caring communities which look after our elderly and support independent living.

Economy

While structural and geographic difficulties will always impact on the local economy, the Comhairle believes that economic regeneration is vital to strengthening our communities, sustaining population and securing the future of the Western Isles. Post-Brexit and through community engagement, participation and empowerment, there may be greater autonomy and scope for the Comhairle and partners to address our economic priorities, with increased powers and resources, and pursue necessary improvements in infrastructural and digital connectivity, transport, development of existing industries and investment in growth sectors, and expansion of training and employment opportunities, all of which help to retain an economically active working population. The creation of jobs is a major challenge and the Comhairle and partners should aim to achieve the number of sustainable jobs which can have a significant positive impact on population growth. The Islands Deal target is an additional 1700 people over ten years.

Finance

The Comhairle is operating in a prolonged period of economic austerity and public sector funding constraints. It is the largest employer in the Western Isles with a current workforce of 1612 full time equivalents. Its budget for 2017/18 is £105m compared to £117 million in 2012/13. The Comhairle's forward projections anticipate that savings in the region of £12m could be required over the two year period 2018-20 and up to £20m by 2022/23. There remains considerable uncertainty about Scottish Government funding for councils with the likelihood of further reductions in resources, offset by ring-fenced funding for new initiatives. This represents a significant challenge for the Comhairle which will need to continue to find efficiency savings, transform service delivery, grow business and make choices about services to achieve a balanced budget.

Brexit

While all thirty two local authority areas in Scotland voted for the UK to remain in the EU, on current information, the UK is due to exit from the EU in March 2019. The Western Isles has received significant levels of EU investment in the last twenty five years, possibly as much as £90 million. This has made a huge difference to local communities, businesses, research and development, rural development, economic development and poverty and social inclusion. Although current 2014-2020 EU programmes are likely to see out their life cycles, EU Structural Funds support will cease post-Brexit. The Comhairle and regional partners will work collectively towards the development of a regional policy which addresses the priorities and challenges of the region, targets areas, geographically and sectorally, where there is evidence of need (and also opportunities) and which aims to reduce regional economic disparities and promote regional competitiveness. It is vital that any new regional policy has relevance and impact locally and the Comhairle will try to ensure that the region continues to benefit from repatriated EU funding.

Health and Social Care



The Western Isles Integration Joint Board was formally brought into being by the Scottish Parliament on the 21st September 2015. Its job is to integrate health and social care services by managing a combined budget from the Comhairle and NHS Western Isles. Its aim is to improve service user outcomes and ensure a high quality care experience.

The Integration Joint Board has four over-arching responsibilities:

- To develop and implement a Strategic Plan which sets out how services will change and develop over time to meet the needs of the population;
- To put in place robust financial planning arrangements to ensure that services are delivered within budget;
- To support the development of Locality Planning Groups, which will help to plan services for local communities; and
- To oversee the delivery of all of the services delegated to it by the Local Authority and the Health Board

[Strategic Plan: Cùram Is Slàinte nan Eilean Siar](#)

In light of public sector funding constraints, the successful integration of services and the efficiencies realised from shared services and resources will be key to strengthening and sustaining our public sector.

Our Islands:Our Future

Over the course of the last council term, the Comhairle and its counterpart local authorities in Shetland and Orkney engaged with UK and Scottish Governments in leading the *Our Islands:Our Future* (OIOF) campaign. The recent focus of OIOF has been on the development of a “Deal for the Islands” and lobbying for the Islands Bill which was introduced at the Scottish Parliament in June 2017. The Deal will be with both Scottish and UK Governments and has two strands: ‘Enhancing Local Democracy’ and ‘Achieving our Islands’ Full Economic Potential’, the latter of which will focus on the two themes of innovation and connectivity. The Bill’s proposals include a requirement to island proof future legislation and policies; strategies and service delivery; the creation of a National Islands Plan; statutory protection for na h-Eileanan an Iar Scottish parliamentary constituency boundary; greater flexibility around councillor representation within island communities; and extended powers to Islands Councils in relation to marine licensing. Central to the success of the campaign will be regular dialogue and collaboration with all interested parties. Further information on the Islands Bill can be found below:

Islands Bill

An historic bill has been introduced to Parliament to meet the unique needs of Scotland’s islands now and in the future. The Islands (Scotland) Bill published on 12 June 2017 will help create the right environment for sustainable growth and empowered communities.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/576.aspx>

E-connectivity can be a driver for engagement, communication and development, supporting the potential of being ‘peripherally at the centre’, being at the forefront and in a position of advantage to capitalise on economic, social and health opportunities.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Community Planning and the Local Improvement Outcome Plan

The Comhairle is one of the five “lead” partners of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP), together with NHS Western Isles, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The OHCPP consists of key local, regional and national public agencies as well as local third sector and community representation. The OHCPP undertook an extensive public consultation throughout the islands early in 2017 using the Place Standard Tool with a view to identifying and setting out its strategic priorities for the next ten to twenty years. This forms the basis of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which has replaced the Single Outcome Agreement.

The priorities for the OHCPP over the next 10 - 20 years are:

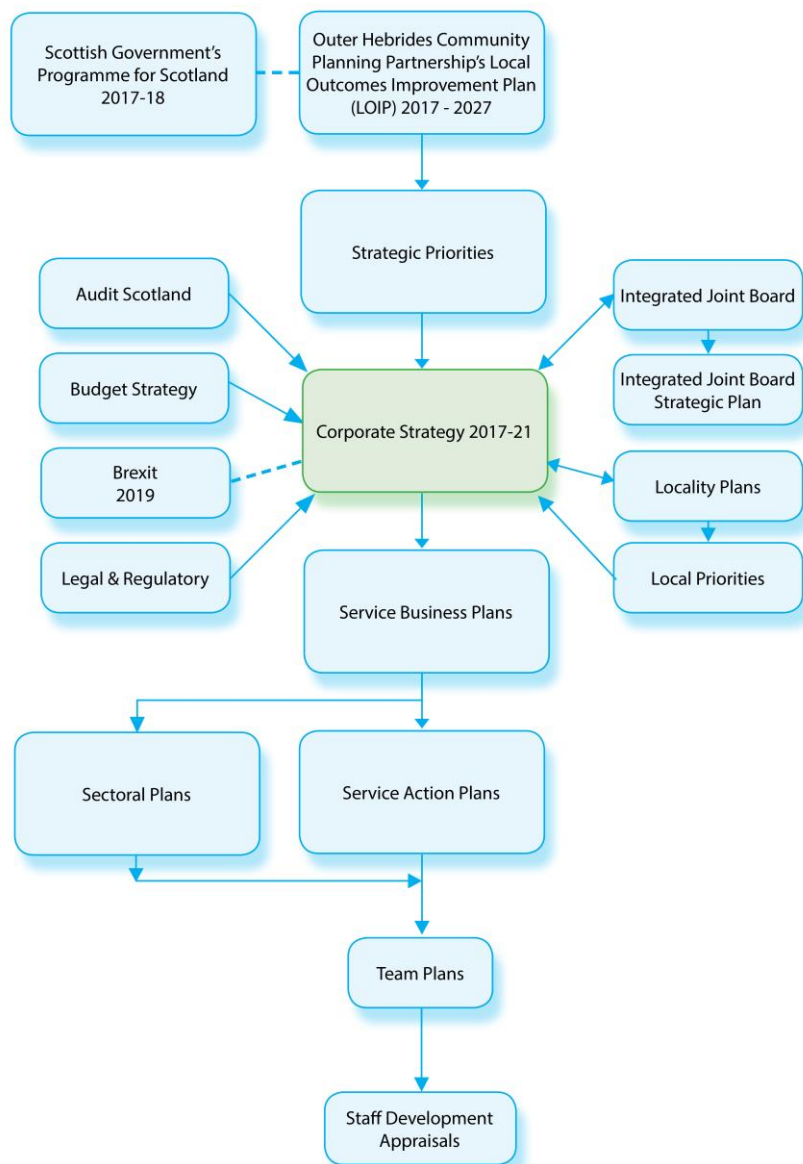
- The Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to ensure a sustainable population
- The Outer Hebrides has sustainable economic growth and all our people have access to appropriate employment opportunities

- The islands offer attractive opportunities that improve the quality of life, wellbeing and health for all our people

How the Corporate Strategy fits in

It is acknowledged that the Comhairle cannot do everything. It has its statutory duties and, as with other partners, must deliver its core business and services. However, to draw a distinction between the LOIP and the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy, the LOIP outlines what the OHCPP will aim to achieve for the Western Isles and the added value achieved by joint resourcing and working together in the longer term while the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy outlines its own strategic priorities and how the Comhairle will work towards achieving some of the objectives set out in the LOIP over the next four years.

Strategic Planning Framework



4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Comhairle's Corporate Strategy 2017-21 four main strategic priorities are:

- Economy and Jobs
- Communities and Housing
- Education, Skills and Training
- Quality of Life, Wellbeing and Health

Economy and Jobs

Over the course of the next four years we will work with partners, Scottish and UK Government to strengthen our local economy and our communities.

By 2021, we aim to:

Branding

- Ensure that the Outer Hebrides are recognised as an attractive place to live, work, study, invest and visit.
- Establish the Outer Hebrides brand offer and ensure that its values are improved continuously and reiterated.
- Ensure that Gaelic language and culture are an intrinsic part of the Outer Hebrides brand.

Tourism

- Extend significantly the tourism season.
- Establish The Outer Hebrides as a must-visit destination for the emerging marine tourism market.
- Support local businesses so that the 'quality' of local tourism is improved.
- Develop and enhance the genealogical and archaeological tourism niche.

Energy

- Establish a sustainable support mechanism for island renewables projects.
- Work on a new £800m Grid connection for the Outer Hebrides.
- Work on the construction of 420MW of Onshore Wind generation.
- Increase significantly job opportunities in the local Energy supply chain.
- Establish a recycling niche is established within the Oil & Gas Decommissioning sector.
- Enable 'Hebrides Energy' to offer a bespoke Hebridean electricity tariff.

Transport

- Ensure that air and ferry services provide appropriate capacity to facilitate economic growth.
- Lobby for "Fair fares" that help equalise costs for island businesses.

Education, Science and Research

- Achieve significant growth in the number of students studying in the islands.
- Increase the capacity of student accommodation.

- Establish an Outer Hebrides Innovation Hub to support local R&D.
- Achieve greater collaboration between the islands and international educational establishments.
- Test and develop emerging opportunities in the space market.

Digital

- Achieve 100% high-speed broadband coverage throughout the Outer Hebrides.
- Achieve significant improvement in mobile connectivity throughout the islands.
- Roll-out of free Wi-Fi in the islands' main population centres.
- Increase significantly the presence online of local businesses.

Communities and Housing

We recognise the importance of strengthening and maintaining our rural communities. It is vital therefore that population stability and balance is improved, that more younger people choose to stay in the Western Isles and that a good balance is achieved between pre-school, school, working age and retired residents. Our key priority will be to focus policy and interventions on 'hard to reach' communities and to maintaining population in our most peripheral communities.

We must tap into the potential of communities through community empowerment to identify needs, develop new and creative responses to local need and participate in their delivery and evaluation through a greater sense of democratic participation in the whole process of service delivery to effect positive and lasting change.

By 2021 we aim to:

Community Ownership/Partnership

- Assist capacity and resilience within the existing community ownership sector.
- Expand community ownership into the marine environment.
- Pilot community-owned environmental designations to ensure an appropriate balance between environmental and community considerations.

Housing

- Deliver the aims and objectives of the Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy.
- Ensure that residents across the Outer Hebrides have equal access to high-quality, low-cost housing.
- Provide a housing mix that supports business growth.
- Reduce significantly fuel poverty by delivering on the Outer Hebrides Fuel Poverty Action Plan.
- Work with partners to ensure support mechanisms are in place to enable elderly people to remain in their own homes and communities.

Culture

- Ensure the Gaelic proofing of government policies as appropriate.
- Develop sustainable economic opportunities from our natural, cultural and historic resources.

Brexit

- Mitigate the implications of Brexit on community sustainability, particularly in relation to crofting, fishing, farming, forestry and agri-environment support.

Education, Skills and Training

The aim is to provide a first class bilingual education in high quality buildings using the best possible facilities and technologies to prepare our young people for further study, training or employment. We will work with Scottish Government, national and regional agencies as appropriate to create the conditions which enable our young people to study, train or work locally. We will work with employers and training providers to ensure that we have the skills to meet the needs of the local economy.

By 2021, we aim to:

- Invest in young people's futures by providing apprenticeships which address skill shortages in the national and local economy and lead to sustainable jobs.
- Create a Skills Resource Centre and skills register which identifies and addresses local skills shortages.
- Establish programmes which facilitate apprenticeship opportunities which the local private sector cannot supply or finance, and work with Community Planning Partners to provide a joined approach to make this happen.
- Enable all apprenticeship training to be provided locally.
- Provide more proactive proposals to graduates such as low cost housing, business start-up grants, and business units made available for graduates setting up in business.
- Realise the social and economic benefits of Gaelic language and culture.
- Retain our young people by providing training in our traditional and growth industries.

Quality of Life, Wellbeing and Health

As part of the Health and Social Care Partnership, our vision is that by 2021, the people of the Western Isles will be living longer, healthier lives at home, or in a homely setting. We will have an integrated health and social care system which focuses on preventing ill-health, anticipating care needs and supporting recovery. We will work with people and communities to develop a framework of mutual responsibility for health and wellbeing, framing the rights and responsibilities that we all have as residents of the Western Isles. First class health and leisure facilities will be provided to ensure that the local population are empowered to stay healthy and independent.

Our care will be delivered by integrated teams, with the traditional roles of health and social care professionals changing and adapting over time to meet the needs of the population. Care will be provided to the highest standards of quality and safety, with the person who uses our services at the centre of all decisions. We will seek to personalise support arrangements, to maximise people's ability to exercise choice

and control over the lives they lead. We will build on the support arrangements and assets that people have in their lives and support unpaid carers as equal partners in care. We will prioritise support for people to stay at home or in a homely setting as long as this is appropriate, and avoid the need for unplanned or emergency admission to hospital wherever possible. When hospital treatment is required, and cannot be provided in a community setting, there will be a focus on ensuring that people get back into their home or community environment as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk of re-admission. Lengthy hospital stays will become a thing of the past.

Health and social care services will be planned and delivered as locally as possible. This means the day-to-day services that people rely on to support their personal independence will be organised and coordinated within localities. We will increasingly operate our local services from health and social care hubs, which bring together a range of services within a single campus. Other services, which people use more periodically to sustain their independence, or which require highly specialised input, will operate across localities or will be provided in centres of expertise on the mainland.

Caring for more people in the community will result in a shift in resources from hospitals to community-based care. This shift will be recognised as a positive improvement in the quality of our services, progress towards our vision and therefore the kind of service change we expect to see.

By 2021, we aim to:

- Provide further childcare facilities in rural areas and better access to childcare in all our communities.
- Provide a new deal for the Comhairle's home care workforce, ensuring that employees have predictable hours and security of employment.
- Invest in the social care estate to ensure that a first class care environment is provided for frail older people and disabled people.
- Improve support to unpaid family carers by offering formal support plans.
- Enable people who use services to exercise greater choice and control over their care packages.
- Work with our statutory partners to ensure that vulnerable adults continue to be identified, supported and afforded appropriate protection.
- Support frail older and disabled people to live independently at home by supporting adaptations, offering care and repair, and ensuring that home safety checks are carried out.
- Streamline assessment arrangements and information sharing across health and social care to ensure that a more responsive service can be offered to our local communities.
- Support the rehabilitation of offenders through sustainable employment and by supporting positive life choices.
- Continue to explore the most effective form of partnership for the delivery of health and social care in the Western Isles.

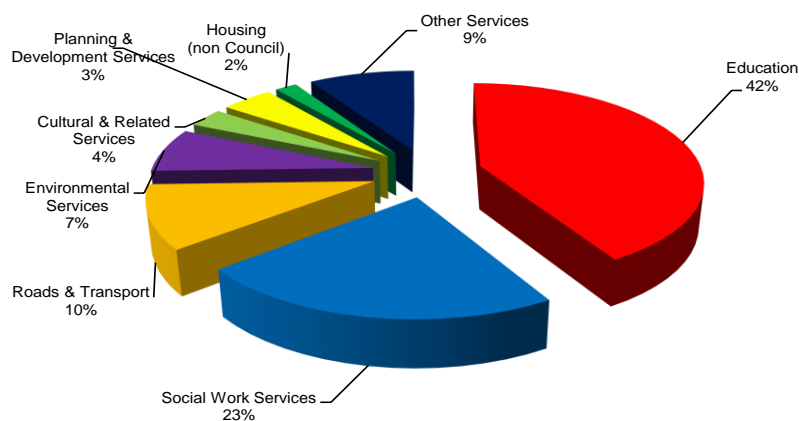
Monitoring, Reporting and Review

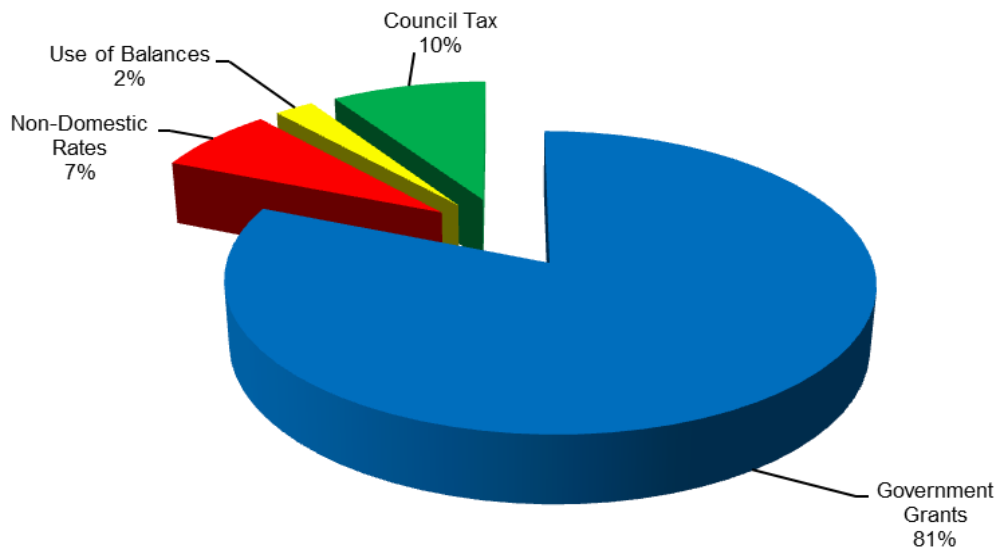
The Comhairle's Strategic Priorities will be supported by robust governance arrangements and underpinned by action plans and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be reported through service business plan monitoring on the Comhairle's performance management system and through Directors' performance monitoring presentations to Committee. Progress with the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy will be reviewed and reported annually.

Business Plans, Performance and Expenditure

The Comhairle's service business plans, progress reports and other performance information can be viewed [here](#).

The following charts show how the Comhairle's funding is allocated and where it comes from respectively in 2017/18.





For further information on the Corporate Strategy, contact:

Angus Murray
Corporate Policy Manager
Chief Executive's Department
Tel: 01851 822 616 or 01851 600501 - Ext: 211218
e-mail: Angus-murray@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Enquiries, Comments Suggestions

If you would like to make a general enquiry, request more information about a particular service we provide, comment on our existing services, or make a suggestion as to how our services could be improved, please contact the Comhairle offices below:

Council Offices

Open: 09.00am – 17.30pm Monday to Friday .E-mail: enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Stornoway

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2BW

Tel: 01851 600501
Fax:01851 705349

Balivanich

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Balivanich
Isle of Benbecula
HS7 5LA

Tel: 01870 602425
Fax:01870 602332

Tarbert

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Tarbert
Isle of Harris
HS3 3DF

Tel: 01859 502367
Fax:01859 502283

Castlebay

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Council Offices
Castlebay
Isle of Barra
HS9 5XD

Tel: 01871 810431
Fax:01871 810254

Out of Hours Emergency Situations

In case of emergency outwith office hours, please contact: 01851 701702.