

Highland Council

Information on council performance comes from statutory performance indicators, value for money and other reports. **All** of these must be taken into account in considering how a council is performing. Further details about all of the information below are available in Section 1 of this document.

Contextual data

- total resident population 208,140
- number of households 88,760
- Grant Aided Expenditure for 2003/2004 (£'000) 345,171
- Band D Council Tax for 2003/2004 (£) 989

Statutory Performance Indicators - summary information

The council's performance worsened by 5% or more on 14 measures, and improved by 5% or more on 19 measures.

	Measures that worsened by...			Measures that improved by...		
	>15%	10-14%	5-9%	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Scotland	7.3	2.7	4.0	5.1	2.8	11.8
Highland	5	-	9	2	1	16

A full set of the SPI measures used for this analysis is included at the end of the profile.

In 2000/01 this council had a ranking of 25 or below in indicators 12, 13, 15, 22, 42, 52, 53, 55 and 56. By 2002/03, they had not improved by at least 5% in the following indicator:

Indicator number	Indicator definition
22	Noise complaints - the percentage of noise complaints requiring further investigation that were dealt with in three days

Progress towards Best Value

Between 1999 and 2002, the Accounts Commission's Performance Management and Planning (PMP) audit assessed the arrangements that councils' had in place to manage their performance under Best Value. It examined the extent to which councils and their various services had in place the basic building blocks for Best Value, in particular the key management processes required. Comment on the findings of the PMP Audit for the council may be found in the Profiles for 2001/02.

The PMP audits are now being superseded by a cyclical programme of Best Value and Community Planning audits. This programme began in early 2004 and aims to cover all 32 councils over three years.

Accounts Commission/Audit Scotland reports (April 2002 to December 2003)

- There were no Accounts Commission statutory reports published on this council during the time period
- The appointed auditor's report on the council's financial statement for the year was unqualified
- The following Value for Money reports were published during the time period and looked at the comparative performance of all councils:
 - *'Bye now, pay later? A follow-up review of the management of early retirement'* (June 2003). This report made no specific mention of Highland Council.
 - *'Dealing with offending by young people A follow-up report'* (November 2003). This report mentioned Highland Council as:
 - o appearing to maintain a reasonable level of service to children despite a high level of vacancies for qualified social workers in children's services.

More information about the work of the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

Inspectorates (April 2002 to December 2003)

- HM Inspectorate of Education did not undertake a QMiE inspection of the council's education department during this time period. In relation to this council, they published the report 'Community learning and development in West Inverness, Highland Council' (May 2003)
- The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate completed an inspection of this council in October 2001. More information is available at www.bfi.gov.uk
- The Social Work Services Inspectorate included a section on this council in their annual report 'Growth & Development' (November 2002). More information is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/socialwork/swsi
- The Food Standards Agency completed audits of this council's food law enforcement services as part of their audit scheme years 2 (April 2002 to March 2003) and 3 (April 2003 to March 2004). More information is available at www.foodstandards.gov.uk

For more information on the work of Inspectorates in general, please refer to Section 1 of this report.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (April 2002 to December 2003)

- There was a finding of maladministration against planning services in this council during the time period.

More information on the work of the Ombudsman is available at www.scottishombudsman.org.uk

Statutory Performance Indicators – list of measures

	Measure	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse X since 00/01		
		1-32	✓1-8 X 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Benefits administration									
1	Administration costs - the overall gross administration cost (£) per council tax or housing benefit application	28	X	-	57.44	70.54			
2	New claims - the average time (days) taken to process new claims	14		-	37	44			
3	Changes of circumstances - the average time (days) taken to process notifications of changes of circumstances	1	✓	-	6	5			
4	Renewal claims - the percentage of renewal claims processed on time	25	X	-	68.7	64.3			
Building control									
5	Percentage of requests for a building warrant responded to within 15 days	20		-	-	53.6			
6	Average time (days) taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate	27	X	-	-	8			
7	Percentage of building warrants issued (or an application otherwise determined) within 6 days	15		-	-	89.1			
8	Percentage of completion certificates issued (or an application otherwise determined) within 3 days	14		-	-	88.7			
Corporate issues									
9	Sickness absence - the percentage of working days lost through sickness absence for chief officers, administrative, professional, technical and clerical staff			<u>4.9</u>	4.0	<u>4.2</u>			
10	Sickness absence - the percentage of working days lost through sickness absence for craft and manual employees			<u>5.2</u>	5.4	<u>6.0</u>			
11	Sickness absence - the percentage of working days lost through sickness absence for teachers	2	✓	<u>2.5</u>	2.6	2.7	X		
12	Equal opportunities - the percentage of chief official employees, who are female	24		4.8	5.0	11.8			✓
13	Equal opportunities - the percentage of senior professionals, who are female	30	X	9.9	10.3	12.8			✓

Highland

	Measure	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse X since 00/01		
		1-32	✓1-8 X 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Education									
14	Pre-school provision - the percentage of children in their pre-school year who received pre-school education	1	✓	98.2	99.4	100.0			
15	Pre-school provision - the percentage of children in their ante-pre-school year who received pre-school education	16		80.5	94.6	98.6			✓
16	Primary schools - the percentage of classes with P1 to P3 pupils, with no more than 30 pupils	18		98.8	99.5	99.5			
17	Primary schools - the percentage of schools in which the ratio of pupils to available places is between 61% and 100%	23		58.7	61.0	54.3	X		
18	Secondary schools - the percentage of schools in which the ratio of pupils to available places is between 61% and 100%	22		64.3	67.9	65.5			
19	Special educational needs - the average number of weeks taken to complete an assessment of special educational needs	15		18	26	23			X
Environmental health									
20	Food hygiene - the percentage of premises with a minimum inspection frequency of 12 months or less, that were inspected on time	10		98.0	96.8	97.8			
21	Noise complaints - the percentage of initial noise complaints that were dealt with in one day	25	X	91.5	81.0	85.7	X		
22	Noise complaints - the percentage of noise complaints requiring further investigation that were dealt with in three days	29	X	82.9	90.1	78.2	X		
23	Pest control - the percentage of responses to requests for high-priority pest control services within two days	15		92.1	96.1	96.9			✓
24	Pest control - the percentage of responses to requests for low-priority pest control services within five days	7	✓	95.4	98.3	99.2			
Environmental services									
25	Refuse collection - the gross cost of refuse collection per property (£) (see note 2)	22		49.21	51.55	53.70	X		
26	Refuse collection - the gross cost of refuse disposal per property (£) (see note 2)	9		45.24	43.15	47.70	X		
27	Refuse collection - the percentage of special uplifts of bulky domestic refuse completed within five days	24		Note	96.7	66.8			
28	Recycling - of the household, commercial and industrial waste collected by the authority, the percentage that was recycled	32	X	-	2.0	3.5			
Finance									
29	Council tax - the gross cost of collecting council tax per dwelling (£) (see note 2)	23		-	-	15.84			
30	Council tax - the percentage of council tax income for the year that was collected in the year (see note 2)	19		91.4	92.2	92.6			
31	Percentage of income due from non-domestic rates that was received by the end of the year	14		-	-	96.4			
32	Invoice payment - the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days or other agreed time period	6	✓	88.9	87.4	87.7			

Highland

	Measure	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse X since 00/01		
		1-32	✓1-8 X 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Housing									
33	Tenancy changes - the percentage of rent loss due to unoccupied dwellings	14		1.84	2.31	2.26			X
34	Tenancy changes - the percentage of empty houses that were re-let within four weeks	17		39.2	39.6	38.6			
35	Rent arrears - current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year	12		6.6	6.6	6.3			
36	Rent arrears - the percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks' rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250	16		4.6	4.6	5.5			X
37	Council house sales - the percentage of sales completed within 26 weeks	18		53.8	57.8	55.3			
38	Homelessness - the number of homeless households in priority need provided with temporary accommodation in council-furnished dwellings, as a percentage of the total provided with temporary accommodation	26	X	16.1	16.1	13.5			X
Leisure & Recreation									
39	Leisure pools - the number of attendances per 1,000 population	9		1,755	1,802	1,829			
40	Traditional pools - the number of attendances per 1,000 population	13		2,079	2,257	2,723			✓
41	Indoor facilities - the number of attendances per 1,000 population	24		1,651	1,885	2,447			✓
Libraries									
42	Processing time - the average time (days) taken to satisfy library book requests	24		32	26	25			✓
43	Stock turnover – the percentage of the national target met for replenishing lending stock for children and teenagers	4	✓	80.8	86.6	116.4			✓
44	Stock turnover – the percentage of the national target met for replenishing lending stock for adults	5	✓	61.2	72.9	90.4			✓
45	Use of libraries – the number of borrowers as a percentage of the resident population	19		24.9	25.0	23.0		X	
46	Use of libraries – the average number of issues per borrower	4	✓	29.7	30.2	32.9			✓
Planning									
47	Processing time – the percentage of householder applications dealt with within two months	17		81.9	80.7	83.1			
48	Processing time – the percentage of non-householder applications dealt with within two months	22		54.5	50.5	50.4		X	
Roads & Lighting									
49	Traffic light repairs - the percentage of repairs completed within 48 hours	1	✓	96.0	100.0	100.0			
50	Street light repairs - the percentage of repairs completed within seven days	11		98.0	98.3	96.7			

Highland

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		1-32	✓1-8 X 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Social Work									
51	Child protection – the percentage of children being looked after by the council in community placements	25	X	85.4	84.5	82.5			
52	Number of home care clients receiving personal care as a rate per 1,000 population aged 65+	20		22.1	23.0	39.8			✓
53	Number of home care clients receiving care at weekends as a rate per 1,000 population aged 65+	24		21.5	22.8	26.3			✓
54	Number of home care clients receiving care in evenings/overnight as a rate per 1,000 population aged 65+	16		10.0	16.3	13.4			✓
55	Total hours as a rate per 1,000 population aged 65+	27	X	389.1	369.8	457.4			✓
56	Staff qualification – the percentage of staff in residential homes for children who are qualified	25	X	32	35	45			✓
57	Staff qualification – the percentage of staff in residential homes for older people who are qualified	17		27	33	37			✓
58	Staff qualification – the percentage of staff in residential homes for other adults who are qualified	21		34	26	31	X		
59	Social enquiry reports - the proportion of reports requested by the courts that were allocated to social work staff within 2 working days of receipt by the social work department	21		77.9	77.2	91.5			✓
60	Social enquiry reports - the proportion of reports submitted by the social work department to the courts by the due date	14		98.2	98.7	98.8			
61	Probation - the proportion of new probationers seen by a supervising officer within one week	28	X	91.0	60.6	35.6			X
62	Probation - the proportion of people subject to a probation order who were reported to the court for breach of probation during the year	12		16.0	18.7	15.6			
63	Community service - the average hours per week taken to complete community service orders	7	✓	3.7	3.8	4.4			✓
Trading Standards									
64	Consumer complaints - the percentage of complaints processed within 14 days of receipt	15		82.7	85.6	87.1			✓
65	Business advice requests - the percentage of requests dealt with within 14 days of receipt	18		95.1	94.3	96.2			
		✓1-8	10						
		X 25-32	12						

Data features	Symbol	00/01	01/02	02/03
No Service	(NS)	0	0	0
Failure to report	(FTR)	0	0	0
Unreliable data	(underlined)	3	0	2

Notes

1. An underlined measurement indicates unreliable data.
2. This measure is presented in family groups in Section 3.
3. Unreliable data has not been ranked.

Count of measures showing significant change since 2000/01	
Improvement	
5-9%	2
10-14%	1
>15%	16
Decline	
5-9%	9
10-14%	-
>15%	5