

## Report of community learning and development in The Highland Council

Following a visit to Highland in November 2021, HM Inspectors reported that The Highland Council and its Community Learning and Development (CLD) partners have been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing plans to support recovery. HM Inspectors noted that more time was required to take forward key areas for improvement, and asked for a report on progress within six months of the report publication. The Highland Council and the CLD Strategic Partnership (CLDSP) submitted a report in July 2022 and HM Inspectors met with them in August to discuss its content.

HM Inspectors have reviewed the progress report and engaged in professional dialogue with staff during the August meeting. It is clear that work is progressing to strengthen the alignment of local provision with strategic and area priorities. The CLDSP now have a shared sense of direction and are strengthening the governance of CLD. With partners from the CLD operations group, the CLDSP are working to improve joint evaluation and performance monitoring. The CLDSP are aware that this is an area requiring further work to ensure that they can better capture and report the impact of CLD across the Highlands.

CLD partners have strengthened their structures for partnership working and networking. This is improving communication, understanding and joint work between partners. CLD leaders have greater knowledge of the contribution made by third sector organisations. Voluntary organisations and community groups are now better represented in operational and strategic partnerships. The CLDSP are aware of the need to further strengthen the role of communities in local planning and decision making. Although the development of clear learning pathways for adults is still at an early stage, a more comprehensive range of key partners are now contributing to this work.

### What happens next?

Overall, the local authority and its CLD partners are taking appropriate steps to address the recommendations from the original inspection. As a result, we will make no further visits to The Highland Council and its CLD partners in connection with the original inspection.

Alona Murray  
HM Inspector  
September 2022