



Highland Choices Roghainnean Gàidhealach

Your Voice - Your Council - Your Future

Ur Guth - Ur Comhairle - Ur n-Àm ri Teachd



The Highlands

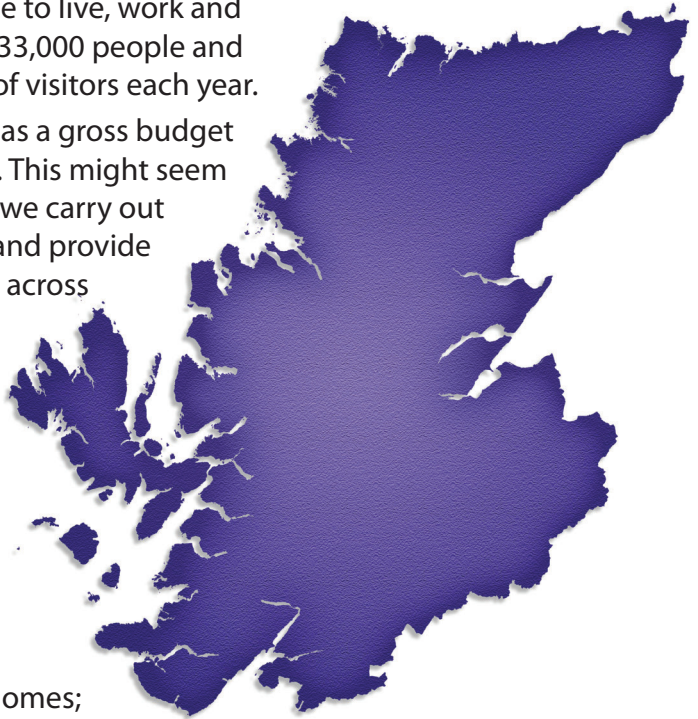
Highland is a great place to live, work and do business, home to 233,000 people and welcoming thousands of visitors each year.

The Highland Council has a gross budget of **£616.2m** in 2018/19. This might seem like a lot of money, but we carry out hundreds of functions and provide many essential services across a region covering a third of Scotland.

Your Council

We have:

- **31,000** pupils;
- **203** schools;
- **1,400** bridges;
- **14,000** council homes;
- **100** harbours and marine facilities;
- **4,000 miles** of local roads;
- over **1,000 miles** of footpaths;
- **120,000** households and businesses we collect waste from.



Your Voice - a Listening Council

We are looking forward as an organisation and seeking the views and opinions from communities across Highland about what is important to you. We want to know what you believe we should be focusing on, what is working well within your local community and what is not working so well. We want to hear your thoughts on how you think we should spend our money, and what we could do differently, or stop doing. We are listening so that for the future we go forward with an ambitious shared vision - shaped by your voice.

Our priorities

Making the best of our resources

We know we will have less money in future and we want to focus our resources getting the best possible outcomes for our key priorities:



Our community

Making the Highlands a prosperous, healthy and safe place to live and learn. Supporting the most vulnerable and developing excellent opportunities for everyone to reach their potential.



Our environment

Making the Highlands an attractive place to live, with good, affordable housing, good infrastructure, efficient transport, culture and leisure facilities, waste management and protecting our beautiful landscape.



Our economy

Making the Highlands a place for business to thrive; creating jobs, developing skills, attracting investment, digital connectivity and good air links. Making Highland a welcoming place to visit.



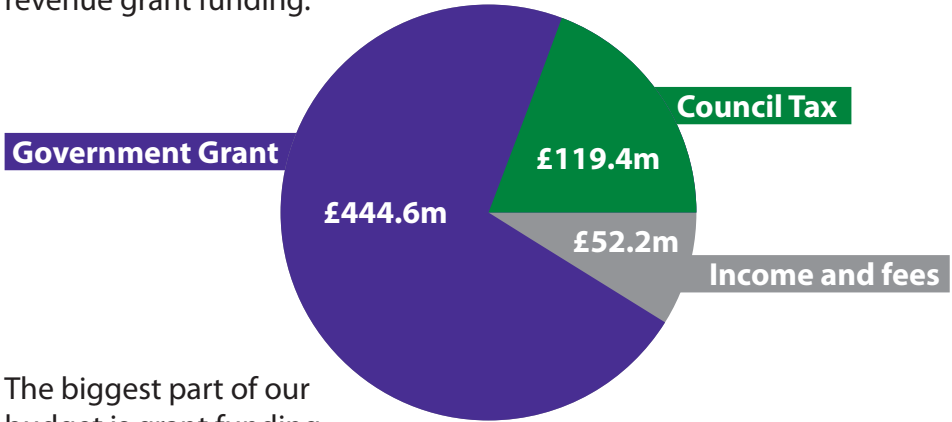
Our staff

Developing a talented, skilled and flexible workforce to work with you to help promote Highland and ensure a successful future.

What is important to you ?

How our budget is made up

Our budget is made up from 3 main sources of funding. Council Tax; income from fees and charges; and Scottish Government revenue grant funding.

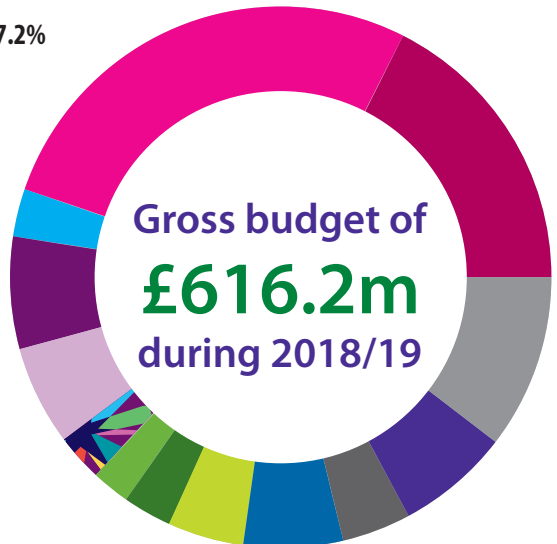


The biggest part of our budget is grant funding from the Scottish Government.

Over the last few years our budget has been reducing as a result of increased costs such as inflation, pay and fuel. At the same time we have tried to balance this by increasing our income.

How do we spend your money?

- Adult Social Care **17.3%**
- Schools (nursery, primary and secondary) **27.2%**
- Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management **2.9%**
- Additional Support Needs **6.7%**
- Children's Services **5.9%**
- High Life Highland **2.8%**
- Roads **2.3%**
- Transport **3.0%**
- Waste & Environmental Services **4.5%**
- Property **5.9%**
- Other frontline service spend **4.1%**
- Corporate & Support Functions **6.8%**
- Loans charges **10.4%**



Where the money goes



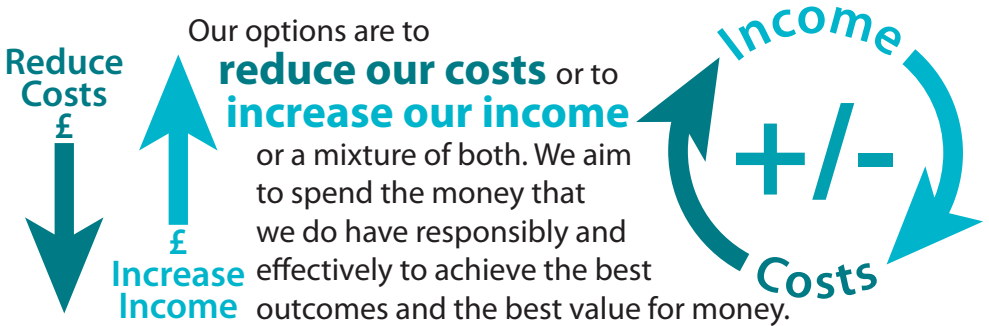
Investing in Highland

Over the last few years, we have been working with partners locally and nationally to invest in communities and in projects to boost the economy and create jobs. This includes projects such as the City-Region Deal, free wifi in 15 towns across the region from Aviemore to Thurso, new schools in Lochaber, Wick and Portree, the West Link and Highland sports facilities, new affordable homes, road and bridge improvements across the region, and the castle viewpoint. We are also working to support community funded projects.



Looking ahead

There is a significant budget challenge facing us over the next 3 years but we are confident we can meet that challenge by taking a range of actions:



We are working hard to save money, becoming more **efficient**, **simplifying processes** and **reducing waste** through **redesign** and **technology**.



We are also continuing to **reduce management** and **external costs**.

Increasing income is a key part of our budget. Many of you have told us that you would be prepared to pay a bit more to protect essential services and jobs.



We are also looking at new ways of raising money, including a **tourist levy** and making better use of things we own.



Change is inevitable

We need to find new ways of doing things and we can't do all the things we have always done with less money.

Moving forward together

We want to develop a shared sense of vision and purpose with our communities. These are challenging financial times - however we want to use this opportunity to reshape our priorities and focus our resources on achieving the best outcomes for Highland.

We want to hear from you about what is important to you, your family and your community. What are your local priorities and where do you believe investment should be made?

Alongside this, we want to know what is working well within your area and what could be improved. This might be about changing how we do something, or how we provide a service. It might be about doing something more efficiently or better. Or it may be about things you think we should stop doing.

How could we work better with our partners and with you as communities?

Change is inevitable, but shaping this in partnership with communities is the key to success and improved outcomes for all of Highland.

We want to hear your views - this will help us shape the priorities and vision for the organisation and decide how we will spend our money in the future.



A Listening Council

Throughout November, we want to hear from people across Highland about what is important to you. We will be listening to elected Members, to staff and to communities.

There are different ways that you can tell us what you think:

- We have an online survey that asks about your priorities, what's working in your communities and what isn't working.
- You can try out the online "Budget Challenge", which is an opportunity for you to prioritise where money is spent or saved to balance the Council's budget.
- We will be out in communities holding a series of short public sessions with our new Chief Executive and the Council's leadership team.
- We will be holding a series of facebook conversations around specific topics.

Details of how to have your say are all on the Council's website and this also provides details of when we will be out in communities:

www.highland.gov.uk/yourvoice

We will listen to what you tell us and report back in January to feedback on the key messages we have heard and to share and seek your views on specific budget proposals. This will help us to understand potential impacts and your views on these proposals.