

**(iv)Mr A Baxter**

**To the Leader of the Council**

**'In response to Councillor Mackie on 30th July, you stated that further enquiries would be made as to why the Council had not used the Furlough Scheme. Will you publish the details of the enquiries you made and the additional information you indicated would be provided to Members?'**

Legal advice obtained by the Council at the time stated to furlough local authority staff may go against the spirit of the legislation and was unlikely to be legally robust. An early decision was taken to deploy staff into alternative work for those who were no longer able to undertake their normal duties due to COVID-19 restrictions. These staff were deployed mainly to Community Hubs, Childcare Hubs, Shielding Help desk, Business Grants team, Temporary Morgue, Recycling Centers and Waste Collection. Council Trades Staff continued to work throughout lockdown as the Housing and Property Service continued to carry out emergency repairs.

Organisations who are receiving public funding specifically to provide services necessary to respond to COVID-19 were not expected to furlough staff. In a small number of cases, for example where funding was not primarily directly through Government, and whose staff cannot be redeployed to assist with the coronavirus response, the furlough scheme could be used. Highlife Highland were required to close their facilities and assessed over 1,900 staff as eligible for furlough which took place mid-April.