

**Highland Council: Questions: 26 June 2025****Member Questions****1. Mr A Christie****To the Leader of the Council**

Please could the Leader detail the key topics discussed as well as the position reached on them on at the last two meetings of the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (CoHI) and Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP)?

**RESPONSE**

I have provided the following information: -

**Convention of the Highlands and Islands**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Substantive Discussion Items</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
07/10/24	HIREP Economic Strategy	<a href="#">Convention of the Highlands and Islands minutes: October 2024</a>
	Housing Discussion	<a href="#">Convention of the Highlands and Islands minutes: October 2024</a>
	Digital Infrastructure	<a href="#">Convention of the Highlands and Islands minutes: October 2024</a>
12/05/25	Regional Transformation Opportunities	Minutes have not yet been published by the Scottish Government
	Digital	Minutes have not yet been published by the Scottish Government

**Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Substantive Discussion Items</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
28/11/24	HIREP Regional Economic Strategy	Four local authorities endorsed the strategy: others to follow.
	Regional Transformational Opportunities (RTO) Research	Early findings presented. Additional meeting scheduled for Feb 2025 to review final report.
	Rural Delivery Plan (RDP) and National Islands Plan (NIP)	HIREP to maintain oversight and ensure alignment with HIREP Strategy. RDP/NIP to become regular agenda items.
	Local Visitor Levy	Concerns raised about VAT implications for small businesses. Draft letter to

		HMRC to be prepared and discussed in March 2025.
31/03/25	RTO Research – Executive Summary	Report received. Final feedback to be shared with HIE from members. SG roundtable proposed. HIREP officers to prepare for COHI presentation.
	Childcare in Rural and Island Communities – Evidence Report	Report endorsed with revisions (e.g., Gaelic language considerations). To be shared with SG and COHI. Restricted item.
	Regional Economic Strategy – Final Draft and Delivery Planning approach	Endorsed by all members.
	Local Authority Leaders Paper – HIREP Governance and Delivery	Agreed to review HIREP operations and governance. Move toward a 24-month delivery plan. Terms of Reference to be reviewed.
	Visitor Levy – Representation to HMRC	Letter and appendix approved. Officers to liaise with comms/media before sending.
	Rural Delivery Plan Survey and Subgroup Updates	Updates noted. SG Skills Planning Reform paper shared for information.

## 2. Mr A Christie

### To the Leader of the Council

By vacant post please could you detail, explain and provide key statistics including the impact on service users for the People Cluster, Place Cluster and Corporate Cluster in relation to the current situation on staff vacancies?

### RESPONSE

Where vacancies are expected to have an impact on service delivery and immediate cover is required, managers will consider matters such as reprioritisation of resources, acting up and secondment opportunities. The Council is adopting more creative recruitment methods to attract staff including use of local radio advertising campaigns, social media and targeted advertising in specialist publications and websites. Recruitment of graduates for example in engineering and surveyors and other specialist posts can support service delivery as well as recruitment of apprentices to fill trades post and trainee schemes to ‘grow our own’ staff for hard to fill positions.

The Council’s Workforce Planning aims to identify current and future workforce challenges regarding difficult to recruit posts and skills shortages and actions to mitigate these. The Talent Management Strategy, as part of the updated People Strategy approved at Corporate Resources Committee on 5 June 25, also supports the strong focus on attraction and retention of staff, establishing the Highland Council as an employer of choice.

The table details the posts advertised at the time of writing. It was not possible to provide details of all current vacancies in the time available, however work is underway to collate that information, and we will arrange to provide this information to all to Members as soon as we can.

### **3. Mr D Gregg**

#### **To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

Residents of Hilton and Milton have submitted numerous concerns to the council about the state of their paths, such as those on Oldtown Road and Oldtown Place. These are made up of slabs, many of which are uneven and make trips with buggies or wheelchairs difficult, and for our elderly and vulnerable residents, make every trip to the shops a journey where they risk tripping and breaking an arm. They continue to deteriorate season by season.

What plans, including budgets and timeframes if they exist, has the council made to repair the footpaths in Hilton and Milton?’

#### **RESPONSE**

The Housing Service is responsible for carrying out repairs to footpaths in Council house estates which are held on the Housing Revenue Account. In relation to the question, the Council is responsible for footpaths in Oldtown Road while Oldtown Place is the responsibility of Cairn Housing Association. For footpaths on the Housing Account, tenants and residents are encouraged to report these repairs using the same reporting processes as for individual Council house repairs. Housing recently carried out repairs to the footpath between 92 and 138 Oldtown Road. These repairs have been inspected by the Maintenance Officer and have been completed satisfactorily. There are no other outstanding footpath repairs that have been reported to the Council. This is information you should be aware of as ward councillor.

### **4. Mr M Reiss**

#### **To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

Highland Council have announced that it is anticipated that the newly established Road Marking Team envisage treating 340 km of public roads this summer. Approximately how many kilometres of the Highland Council's 6785 km of roads will still require new white lines after this summer's work is completed by the team of four operatives, using 2 lorries?

#### **RESPONSE**

The full extent of road markings requiring renewal across the network is currently being assessed. Since markings naturally wear over time, many that are acceptable now may need to be refreshed within the next 2–3 years. Renewal will be an ongoing process, particularly in areas where surface treatments have been applied. While an estimate was made for this year's programme, progress depends heavily on weather conditions and traffic usage. A more accurate picture of what can be achieved will emerge after the first season, and this will likely vary from year to year.

## 5. Mr D Macpherson

### To the Chair of Education

The Highland Council recently introduced the 'Improving Relationships and Behaviour in Schools Action Plan'.

How many pupil behaviour incidents of a violent nature, committed by pupils against teachers and teaching staff, have been submitted and reported by teaching staff and recorded by the Education Department in the Highland Council area during the last two academic years?

The Council's recording system does not record 'violent' incidents. Staff log whether an incident is verbal, physical or both. A physical incident may involve only the individual pupil themselves and/or an object of some sort. The latter includes examples of things being thrown for example – a sock, a pencil, an eraser and so on and are more representative of a child experiencing frustration than an intention to be violent towards another individual.

For session 2022-23, data cannot be provided because there was a change in reporting process during the session which led to the use of two parallel systems and duplicate reporting which means the data lacks veracity.

Last school session there were 613 children involved in pupil-staff incidents across Highland. Across schools and ELCs this represents less than 2% of children. Of those children, 94 were in special schools and overall, 85% of incidents involved children with additional support needs characterised specifically with learning difficulties; neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism; communication difficulties; family issues; or social and emotional needs. In many cases their language, communication and cognitive skills were poorly developed.

Most of these reports were made by PSAs rather than teaching staff.

The age where there is the highest level of pupil-staff incidents in Highland is P1 (28% of incidents are recorded in relation to 3–5-year-olds). This is similar to other local authorities. Our understanding of this is that very young children haven't yet developed their language skills or understanding of social situations to enable them to positively engage in busy early years spaces or to communicate their needs well. After P1 the number of reported incidents fall, indicating the developmental nature of this issue.

A full report was presented to the Education Committee on 5 June 2025 and a link can be found [here](#)

## 6. Mr C Ballance

### To the Chair of Communities and Place

The Council's website points out that "Volunteering brings many health benefits" and it is also a crucial part of Community Wealth Building. Community Volunteering is something which I hope we would all support.

So is it reasonable that volunteers who offer their services to Youth and Adult services and who used to be able to claim expenses when the service was with High Life Highland, are no longer able to claim for necessary expenses incurred to volunteer now the service has transferred to the Council?

## **RESPONSE**

It is agreed that volunteers are valued across the Council, however there is no policy in place within Highland Council that allows for payment of expenses and as such it is important that all volunteers are treated equally.

### **7. Ms K Willis**

#### **To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

The arrangements for the local/strategic split of parking income are detailed in the Parking Strategy 2021 Report (ECI/50/21) approved at the December 2021 Economy and Infrastructure Committee. The Strategy requires that where new tariffs are introduced at legacy carparks (or have been introduced since October 2019) during the Council budget process they will be subject to a local/strategic split of 50:50, once costs are deducted, so that the income can be distributed locally by Area Committees.

At the March 2024 Council budget meeting and the May 2024 Lochaber Area Committee (LAC), members agreed to increase short-term and long-term stay parking tariffs respectively. Six new mandatory Pay and Display carparks in Lochaber have also been approved by LAC members.

Please can the Chair advise when the Lochaber Area Committee will receive the local split of the income generated from the legacy carpark tariff increases (as per the 2021 Parking Strategy) and the new Pay and Display carparks in Lochaber?

## **RESPONSE**

The Parking Strategy 2021 paper presented to the E&I Committee was predicated on the basis that the parking services budget would be rebased in the March 2022 budget paper to allow a standing start for the service to enable a local split of all parking charges on existing car parks. Paragraph 7.4 set out that "...clearly if the Council budget for car parking is reviewed as part of the Council budget setting process, any "rebased" of the budget will allow a greater degree of flexibility, and this can be considered at that point. Given the financial position of the Council in March 2022, that rebasing did not take place, and the parking budget is still under significant strain. Indeed, the last revenue position showed a potential shortfall of £368k. As a result, that additional split has not happened, and the existing arrangements remain in place – i.e. the new car parks from that date (2021) are subject to the "split". In addition, the rolling out of mandatory car parking charges in all areas of the Council area has not been agreed, which was also part of the overall strategy presented in the paper.

**8. Mr R MacKintosh**

**To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

Does the Council have a formal mechanism in place for recording of potential breaches of Tree Preservation Orders across Highland?

**RESPONSE**

Breaches in relation to TPOs are recorded by the Council's Forestry Officers and investigated, although these are not currently in a format of a public register. The Forestry Team, with assistance of the Planning Enforcement Team, is in the process of considering the use of the existing enforcement register as a means to formalise recording and allow the public to search for such breaches of planning control.

**9. Mr A Baxter**

**To the Leader of the Council**

Given widespread concern across Highland communities about the deteriorating condition and loss of access to woodland paths and trails — including designated Core Paths — as a result of Forestry and Land Scotland's failure to carry out routine maintenance due to budgetary decisions, what representations has the Highland Council made to Forestry and Land Scotland and to Scottish Ministers to demand urgent action and ensure these vital local and visitor routes are properly maintained?

**RESPONSE**

Representations and discussion regarding the condition, maintenance and lack of promotion of trails more generally have to date been informal, although Access officers are in regular contact with Forestry and Land Scotland about such matters and, where possible, work with local Forestry and Land Scotland staff to mitigate the impacts on local communities and visitors of, for example, bridge closures and poor condition of path infrastructure, including boardwalks.

**10. Mrs I MacKenzie**

**To the Leader of the Council**

We know there is an increasing concern regarding the impact of Short Term Lets (STLs) on the availability of housing for Highland and Islands residents. It is known that the original draft of the STL Licensing Order included overprovision powers, which were later removed in favour of planning-based controls such as STLCAs (Short-Term Let Control Areas), which does not seem to have helped the situation. Here in the Highlands one size fits all approach does not adequately reflect local housing pressures.

When will Highland Council recognise that there are areas with overprovision of STLs and contact the Scottish Government to request revision to the legislation that would enable the council to refuse STL licence applications where the number of lets is excessive, and contributing to a shortage of permanent homes?

## **RESPONSE**

The Scottish Government confirmed in November 2024 through the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee that there is no current intention to revisit overprovision through the licensing regime as the Scottish Government consider this issue is already covered by planning legislation.

If there was to be reform this would effectively provide a statutory ground to refuse a licensing application on the grounds of overprovision. However, in order to do so, the Council would have to have a licensing overprovision policy in place. This would require a significant assessment of numbers of short term lets and densities within localities across The Highland Council and an agreed position on whether there was overprovision and, if so, what percentage in a particular ward was acceptable, for example. Importantly any change is unlikely to have retrospective effect, meaning it would only cover future applications and not existing operators.

### **11. Mr R Gale**

#### **To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

The Scottish Government guidance for touring caravans on sites (which includes Camper Vans) states that the minimum distance between units should be 6M for residential units and 5M for touring units. Given that Camper vans that park overnight in Highland Council car parks are parked less than two metres apart when will the Council enact the guidance and provide clear separation of 5M between Camper vans in Car parks?

## **RESPONSE**

Caravan Site licensing is managed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. The five metre spacing is within the model standards for licence sites. A regulated public car park being used for limited overnight parking would not require a site licence.

Cluster	Job Title
Corporate	Clerical Assistant 2 (35 hpw) (Fixed Term for 12 months), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Corporate	Clerical Assistant 2 (35 hpw) (Fixed Term for 23 Months), Flexible Location
Corporate	ICT Operations Manager - Service (35 hpw), Flexible Location
Corporate	ICT Operations Manager - Technical (35 hpw), Flexible Location
Corporate	Project Manager - Strategic Improvement (35 hpw) (Fixed Term for 23 Months), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Corporate	Clerical Assistant 2 (10 hpw) (Fixed Term until 31 October 2025), Ferry House, Fort William
Corporate	Clerical Assistant 2 (35 hpw) (Fixed Term for 18 Months), Charles Kennedy Buildings, Fort William
Corporate	Clerical Assistant 2 (35 hpw), Portree
Corporate	HR Officer (Investigations), Inverness
Corporate	Learning and Development Adviser (35 hpw), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness (Hybrid)
Corporate	Modern Apprentice - Business & Administration (Fixed Term for 12 - 18 Months)
People	Gaelic Language Assistant Tutor - Relief, Various Locations (HGH03156)
People	Gaelic Language Tutor - Relief, Various Locations (HGH03155)
People	Breakfast Auxiliary (5 hpw) (Fixed term Until 02 July 2026) Central Primary School
People	Casual Posts - Early Years Practitioner, Support Worker (ELC) & Out of School Care Auxiliary, Mid Area (Easter Ross & Black Isle)
People	Casual Posts - Early Years Practitioner, Support Worker (ELC) & Out of School Care Auxiliary, North Area (Caithness & Sutherland)
People	Casual Posts - Early Years Practitioner, Support Worker (ELC) & Out of School Care Auxiliary, South Area (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey)
People	Casual Posts - Early Years Practitioner, Support Worker (ELC) & Out of School Care Auxiliary, West Area (Wester Ross, Skye & Lochaber)
People	Clerical Assistant (Valuation Joint Board), Wick
People	Clerical Assistant 2 (Schools) (19 hpw), Milton Primary School
People	Clerical Assistant 2 (Schools) (21.5 hpw) (Maternity Cover) (Fixed Term until 15 May 2026), Charleston Academy
People	Clerical Assistant 2 (Schools) (28hpw), Croy Primary School, Inverness
People	Counsellor (3 Posts) (Various Hours) (Fixed Term for 12 Months), Various Locations
People	Early Years Practitioner (Gaelic) (32 hpw), Acharacle Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner (14 hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026) Pennyland Primary School, Thurso
People	Early Years Practitioner (18 hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Lybster Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner (30 hpw) (Gaelic) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Dingwall Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner (30 hpw), Kingussie Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner (30 hpw), Smithton Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner (30hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Balloch Primary School, Inverness
People	Early Years Practitioner (30hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Inverie Primary School, Mallaig
People	Early Years Practitioner (32 hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Merkinch Primary School, Inverness
People	Early Years Practitioner (32 hpw) (Fixed Term until 23 December 2025), Kyle Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner (Gaelic) (32hpw) (Fixed Term until 06 January 2026), Broadford Primary School , Isle of Skye
People	Early Years Practitioner 1 (Gaelic) (32 hpw) Plockton Primary School
People	Early Years Practitioner 2 (30 hpw), Durness Primary School
People	General Auxiliary (9 hpw) (Fixed term Until 09 July 2026) Loch Duich Primary
People	Head Teacher (Primary), Miller Academy Primary, HGH18582
People	Out of School Care Assistant (20 hpw) (Fixed Term until 03 July 2025), Park Primary School, Invergordon
People	Out of School Care Assistant (20 hpw) Hilton Primary School
People	Playground Supervisor (5 hpw) Strathpeffer Primary School
People	Playground Supervisor (5 hpw), Culbokie Primary School
People	Principal Teacher (ASN), Start date 18/08/2025, Culloden Academy, HGH19050
People	Principal Teacher (Secondary), Maths, Start date 18/08/2025, Ullapool high School, HGH18991
People	Principal Teacher (Secondary), Maths/Technologies, Start Date 18/08/2025, Kinlochleven Combined School, HGH18931
People	Principal Teacher (Secondary), Science, Home Economics & Business Studies, Invergordon Academy, HGH18930
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (10 hpw) Nairn Academy
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (11 hpw) (Fixed Term Until 02 July 2026) Lochinver Primary School
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (11hpw) (Fixed term until 3 July 2026), Cromarty Primary School
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (14.5 hpw), Cromarty Primary School
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (18.65hpw), Nairn Academy
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (2 Posts) (27.5 hpw) Fixed Term from 18 Aug 2025 until 02 July 2026), Culloden Academy, Inverness
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (22 hpw) Drakies Primary School
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (27.5 hpw) Nairn Academy
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (27.5 hpw) Thurso High School
People	Pupil Support Assistant 1 (7 hpw) Glenelg Primary
People	Senior Early Years Practitioner (35 hpw) Avoch Primary School
People	Senior Early Years Practitioner (Gaelic) (35 hpw) Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh
People	Supp Worker (Early Learning & Childcare) (8 hpw), Fixed Term until 02 July 2026, Melvich Primary School
People	Support Worker (Early Learning & Childcare) (25 hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Tarbat Old Primary School
People	Support Worker (Early Learning & Childcare) (25 hpw) (Fixed Term Until 03 July 2026) Inshes Primary School
People	Support Worker (Early Learning & Childcare) (30 hpw)(Fixed Term until 02 July 2026) Pennyland Primary, Thurso
People	Support Worker (Early Learning & Childcare) (30hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Park Primary School, Invergordon
People	Support Worker (Early Learning & Childcare) (Gaelic) (30 hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh
People	Teacher (ASN), Maternity cover from 18/08/2025 until 02/07/2026, St Clement's School, HGH18731
People	Teacher (Secondary) Craft, Design & Technology, Dingwall Academy, HGH18782
People	Teacher (Secondary), Biology, Start Date 18/08/2025, Kingussie High School, HGH18933
People	Teacher (Secondary), Business Studies, Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, Fortrose Academy, HGH19044
People	Teacher (Secondary), Chemistry, Maternity Cover from 18/08/2025 to 02/06/2026, Culloden Academy, HGH18944
People	Teacher (Secondary), English, Fixed Term until 17/08/2026, Kinlochbervie High School, HGH18948
People	Teacher (Secondary), English, Fortrose Academy, Fortrose, HGH19054
People	Teacher (Secondary), English, Start Date 18/08/2025, Culloden Academy, HGH18932
People	Teacher (Secondary), French, Fixed Term from 18/08/2025 until 02/07/2026, Mallaig High School, HGH19012
People	Teacher (Secondary), French, Start date 18/08/2025, Gairloch High School, HGH18795
People	Teacher (Secondary), Gaelic, Alness Academy, HGH18726
People	Teacher (Secondary), History & Modern Studies, Maternity Cover until 02/07/2026, Fortrose Academy, HGH18960
People	Teacher (Secondary), Home Economics, Alness Academy, HGH18959
People	Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics, Start date 18/08/2025, Portree High School, HGH18992
People	Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics, Start Date 18/08/2025, Ullapool High School, HGH18946
People	Teacher (Secondary), Modern Languages, Maternity Cover from 01/09/2025 to 31/08/2026, Culloden Academy, HGH18942
People	Teacher (Secondary), Physics and Science, 28 hours per week, Fixed Term from 18/08/2025 until 17/04/2026, Lochaber High School, HGH18784
People	Teacher (Secondary), Science (Biology OR Chemistry OR Physics with Science, Start date 18/08/2025, Portree High School, HGH18439
People	Social Worker (Family Team), Alness
People	Relief Social Care Worker - Residential Childcare, Strathpeffer
People	Social Care Worker (37 hpw), Arach House, Strathpeffer
People	Social Care Worker, Arach (2 vacancies)
Place	Community Development Manager - North and East, Highland
Place	Community Works Operative 3 (Other) (37 hpw), Kilvean Cemetery, Inverness
Place	Community Works Operative 3 (Waste) (37 hpw), Ullapool
Place	Community Works Operative 3 (Waste), Wick
Place	Community Works Operative 4 (LGV) (37hpw), Portree
Place	Community Works Operative 4 (LGV) (37hpw), Wick
Place	Community Works Operative 4 (LGV), Alness



Place	Community Works Operative 4 (Other), (37 hpw), Wick
Place	Community Works Operative 4 (Plant Operator) (37 hpw), Longman Waste Transfer Station Stadium Road Inverness
Place	Crematorium Operative (37 hpw), Inverness Crematorium
Place	Customer Services Assistant (35hpw), Tain Service Point
Place	Customer Services Assistant, Thurso
Place	Environmental Health Officer, Inverness
Place	Foreperson 2, Dornoch
Place	Seasonal Grass Cutting Operatives, Badenoch & Strathspey x 5 vacancies
Place	Seasonal Grass Cutting Operatives, Caithness area x 8 vacancies
Place	Seasonal Grass Cutting Operatives, Inverness area x 24 vacancies
Place	Seasonal Grass Cutting Operatives, Nairn area x 4 vacancies
Place	Seasonal Grass Cutting Operatives, Sutherland area x 6 vacancies
Place	Community Work Operative 4 LGV (37 hpw) Tain Depot
Place	Community Works Operative 4 (LGV), Kinlochbervie (3 vacancies)
Place	Driver 1, Thurso
Place	Ecology Officer (Biodiversity), Inverness
Place	Electrician (Street Lighting), Thurso
Place	Forestry Officer, Inverness
Place	Project Manager (Economic Development) (Fixed Term for 23 months), Inverness
Place	Area Cook 1 (22.5 hpw) Base: Charleston Academy, Inverness
Place	Area Cook 1 (22.5 hpw) Base: Charleston Academy, Inverness
Place	Area Cook 3 (25 hpw), Base: Portree High School
Place	Area Cook 3 (32.5 hpw) Base: Merkinch Primary School, Inverness
Place	Building Maintenance Team Leader, Wick
Place	Catering Services Officer, Fort William
Place	Cleaning Operative 1 (10hpw), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Place	Cleaning Operative 2 (12.5 hpw), Kilmuir Primary School, Isle of Skye
Place	Cleaning Operative 2 (7.5 hpw), Durness Primary School, Durness
Place	Contracts Officer (35 hpw), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Place	Contracts Officer (35 hpw), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Place	Cook 1 (10 hpw), Dunvegan Primary School
Place	Cook 1 (11 hpw), Lady Lovat Primary School, Mallaig
Place	Cook 1 (12.5 hpw) (Fixed Term until 10 October 2025), Mount Pleasant Primary School, Thurso
Place	Cook 1 (13 hpw), Millburn Academy, Inverness
Place	Cook 1 (13.75 hpw)(Fixed Term for 1 Year), Cawdor Primary School, Nairn
Place	Cook 1 (20 hpw) (Fixed Term until 02 July 2026), Dingwall Academy
Place	Cook 1 (20 hpw), Ness Castle Primary School, Inverness
Place	Cook 1 (21.25hpw), Portree High School
Place	Cook 1 (Area) (15 hpw), Mallaig High School
Place	Cook 4 (30 hpw), Dornoch Academy
Place	Cook 4 (32.5 hpw), Portree High School
Place	Electrician (37 hpw), Fort William
Place	Electrician, Inverness
Place	Engineer (35 hpw), The Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Place	Engineer (Building Services) (4 Posts) (35 hpw), The Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Place	Engineering Officer (Maintenance) (35 hpw), Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness
Place	Facilities Assistant 2 (15hpw) Milton of Leys Primary, Inverness
Place	Facilities Assistant 2 (35hpw) Plockton High School
Place	Facilities Assistant 2 (35hpw), Inverness High School
Place	Facilities Assistant 2 (35hpw), Inverness High School
Place	Housing Management Assistant (17.5 hpw) Caithness House
Place	Housing Management Assistant (21hpw) (Fixed Term for 12 months), Drumbuie, Golspie
Place	Joiner, Fort William
Place	Operational Support Officer (Training and Compliance), Inverness
Place	Principal Engineer 1 (35 hpw), Headquarters, Inverness

**Motions: 26 June 2025****1. Policing in Highland**

New figures reveal that there are almost 1000 fewer police officers in Scotland than at the formation of Police Scotland in March 2013, there being 16,553 full-time-equivalent officers at present as compared with 17,496 twelve years ago.

Official Police statistics show a dramatic rise in crime in the Highlands, particularly in Antisocial Behaviour, Violence and Disorder, Serious Organised Crime, and Acquisitive Crime. The latter category has seen a 40.8% rise (818 more crimes) against the 5-year average.

While we applaud the efforts of all police officers in their work to respond to this wave of criminality, and we appreciate that the targeting of resources is undertaken with skill and professionalism, nevertheless we believe the Scottish Government must show greater support for the police service.

This being the case, this Council asks that the Leader write to the Scottish Government, expressing our concerns, and urging the First Minister to intervene and reinstate adequate funding for Police Scotland, in order that this most important service is able to protect and support Highland communities, as intended.

**Signed:** Dr M Gregson                      Mr A Christie

**Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:**

This motion is **not** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council.

**Integrated Impact Assessment:**

<b>Area for Assessment</b>	<b>Assessment Summary</b>
<b>Equality</b>	<i>No impact</i>
<b>Poverty</b>	<i>No impact</i>
<b>Human Rights</b>	<i>No impact</i>
<b>Children's Rights</b>	<i>No impact</i>
<b>Data Rights</b>	<i>No impact</i>
<b>Rural/Island</b>	<i>No impact</i>
<b>Climate Change</b>	<i>No impact</i>

**Summary of Assessment:**

The motion seeks the Leader to write to the Scottish Government. There is therefore no specific impact as a result of the motion.

**2. Short-Term Lets Control Zone**

- The Council notes that, while 7,011 Short Term Let licences have been granted across Highland, only 4 have been refused. Licensing legislation has limited criteria: in regard to location, character or condition of the premises, the nature and extent of the proposed activity, the kind of persons likely to be in the premises, the possibility of undue public nuisance, and public order & safety concerns. It is small wonder that virtually every license application is being granted. And the growth of short-term letting has taken place at an alarming rate.

- There are long-term detrimental effects of this trend on the housing and accommodation available. The private long-term rental market has shrunk disastrously: estate agents are withdrawing from letting out properties because of the shortage of properties available. Even taking into account the efforts of Highland Council and the Housing Associations, there is a shortage of affordable housing.
- At the same time, there are estimates of over 2,300 long-term empty homes in Highland, and 3,500 second homes. This exacerbates the Housing Emergency. Highland Council figures suggest that over 24,000 new homes are needed in the next 10 years. The Green Freeport, the increase in net zero electricity transmission, as well as the need to recruit key workers in health, education, social care, tourism and hospitality, depend on adequate housing across the region.
- Taking these factors into account, the Council recognises that the limited regulation of Short-term Lets is part of the problem and is removing too much accommodation from the market.
- We know that the original draft of the legislation included overprovision powers and therefore wish the Council to ask the Scottish Government to revisit the legislation, in order that the Council is enabled to refuse STL applications on 'overprovision' grounds, i.e. where the number of Short-term Lets is excessive and is contributing to a shortage of permanent homes.
- Failing that, Highland Council having had the experience of a Control Area, with Planning criteria, in Badenoch & Strathspey, this Council will ask the Scottish Government to allow Control Area status to Highland, where local interests demand.

**Signed:** Dr M Gregson

Mr D Macpherson

## **Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:**

This motion **is** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council. Were Scottish Government to progress over-provision powers, it is expected the Council would need develop an over-provision policy and undertake the appropriate information gathering to inform such a policy. While this would be expected to be predominantly undertaken by Council officers, there may also be a need to commission external advice and support to ensure the Council's approach was robust.

With regard to 'Control Area Status' for Highland, it is anticipated the Council would have to commission a study/evidence base to support the case for such status, and to protect the Council in the event of any challenge to such status. On an ongoing basis, were the status to be implemented, this would give rise to additional officer time in dealing with applications via the Planning process, but also fee income associated with such applications would be expected to arise. At this time no estimate of the potential officer time and income impact has been assessed, nor whether that may be a net positive or negative financial impact.

The scope of the study/evidence bases referred to, could provide information on the scoping of volumes of activity, and implications, including any financial implications.

**Integrated Impact Assessment:**

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	<i>No impact</i>
Poverty	<i>No impact</i>
Human Rights	<i>No impact</i>
Children's Rights	<i>No impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No impact</i>
Rural/Island	<i>No impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>No impact</i>

**Summary of Assessment:**

The motion seeks permission from the Scottish Government to amend the current short term lets legislation in relation to overprovision or, failing that, permission for Control Area status for Highland. There is therefore no specific impact at this stage as a result of the motion.

Should either of these requests be successful, an impact assessment would be required as part of any decision-making process to consider implementation of these powers.

**AMENDMENT**

Following the success of the Badenoch and Strathspey Short Term Let Control Area, Council asks officers to bring forward a paper to September Council outlining the process for implementing Short Term Let Control Areas, giving options for introducing STLCAs either on a Highland-wide basis, or by ward/area where the majority of members in the ward/area have voted for it; including the minimum timescales for implementation and, extrapolating from the experience of Badenoch and Strathspey, indicating the resource implications in terms of officer time for both options.

**Signed:** Mr K Gowans                      Mr I Brown

Please refer to Motion 3 for the Financial Impact Assessment and Integrated Impact Assessment.

**3. Short Term Let Control Areas**

Following the success of the Badenoch and Strathspey Short Term Let Control Area, Council asks officers to bring forward a paper to September Council outlining the process for implementing Short Term Let Control Areas, giving options for introducing STLCAs either on a Highland-wide basis, or by ward/area where the majority of members in the ward/area have voted for it; including the minimum timescales for implementation and, extrapolating from the experience of Badenoch and Strathspey, indicating the resource implications in terms of officer time for both options.

**Signed:** Mr C Ballance                      Ms K Willis                      Dr M Gregson  
Mr R Mackintosh

**Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:**

This motion is **not** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council. There would be officer time associated with the preparation of the paper as described.

**Integrated Impact Assessment:**

<b>Area for Assessment</b>	<b>Assessment Summary</b>
<b>Equality</b>	No impact
<b>Poverty</b>	No impact
<b>Human Rights</b>	No impact
<b>Children's Rights</b>	No impact
<b>Data Rights</b>	No impact
<b>Rural/Island</b>	No impact
<b>Climate Change</b>	No impact

**Summary of Assessment:**

The motion seeks a paper to be prepared on implementing Short Term Let Control Areas. There is therefore no specific impact as a result of the motion.

Any paper would require an impact assessment to support the decision making process.