Highland Council: Questions: 18 September 2025

Public Questions

1. Mr D Anderson

To the Leader of the Council

After a year of no progress after contacting the Highways department and councillors, would the council look into the safety of the residents of Clephanton, regarding the B9091, particularly to the east of the crossroads that run towards Nairn, this stretch of road is dangerous to walk along, for two specific reasons.

Number one, being that the majority of the cars speed excessively with no regard of the 20mph limit and the volume of traffic at weekday rush hour is high because is it used as a rat run from Nairn to Inverness, also with on going road works and regular accidents on the A96 it is the chosen diversion.

Point two, there is no footpath through the village, so as a pedestrian, to walk to the path on the outskirts of the village to Cawdor or to the play area/playing field, residents have to walk up the road.

Could the council carry out a survey and look install traffic calming measures to reduce speed, such as speed bumps or a chicane type of passing place like the ones in Auldearn, Croy etc? Maybe a footpath?

It really does feel like an accident waiting to happen.

RESPONSE

The speed data that the Road Safety Team hold for this location of road is showing that post 20mph implementation, the Mean Average Speed was 26.4mph. This is higher than we would wish to see in a 20mph speed limit, however there are technically not enough dwellings to meet the criteria for a 20mph speed limit. However, the team is taking the following actions to try and help reduce these mean average speeds

20mph Roundels
A programme of 20mph roundel carriageway lining is being implemented to support the introduction of the 20mph speed limits. The contractor started delivering this work in Caithness and they will start the lining works in this area this month.

Speed Indication Device Signage
The Road Safety team has completed the procurement process for the supply of Speed Indication Device Signs - there are currently over 100 being manufactured for use across the Highland Area. It is intended that a Speed Indication Device Sign will be located in Clephanton. Speed data results are being used to inform the location for this device.

2. Mr D MacKenzie

To the Leader of the Council

Following the recent community council convention, convened by Councillor Helen Crawford, when community councils representing the majority of rural highland residents called for a moratorium on any more energy projects, will Highland Council listen to the people and cease granting any further schemes?

RESPONSE

A decision to cease processing applications or consultations on energy projects carries significant risk for the Council.

The Council has statutory timescales in which to decide on an application or come to a view on a consultation. Where it fails to do so, the decision is likely be taken out of Council control, either through an appeal or through Scottish Ministers taking a decision without a response from the Council.

From a practical point of view, it is also necessary for officers to appropriately manage this workstream, to avoid creating a backlog of applications and consultations with consequential impacts on Councillor and officer time.

3. Mr M Ayre

To the Leader of the Council

Request For Explanation - Motion on Major Electricity Development Applications & Community Engagement

At its meeting on 19 September 2024 (reconvened on 30 September 2024), the meeting of Full Council approved a Motion under this title.

The section of that Motion relevant to my Question reads as follows:-

"**THEREFORE** this Council **AGREES**:

1 REAL TIME MAPPING - To produce a real-time map, publicly available online, showing *all the major renewable energy related developments* within Council's knowledge, existing and proposed, including those which are or will come to the Council for planning and or the Energy Consents Unit, be they operational permitted developments or otherwise. [*My italics*]

Several energy-related developments of which the Council is fully aware are omitted from the current online map. These include, for example, proposed sites for large worker accommodation camps and lay-down & storage areas for windfarm components. I am aware of at least three such instances within 3km of the small village of Broadford, in South Skye, where I live. There may be others further afield of which I am not aware. The developers of these proposals have described them in their planning applications as being "integral" to associated renewable energy developments. The Council, as planning authority, has designated them as 'major developments'. Although

such developments are not site-specific (i.e. they could be located elsewhere on other sites to fulfil their purpose) the only reason they would exist at all is to support renewable energy projects in the Highland Council's area.

These developments clearly fall within the definition of "**all the major renewable energy related projects**" as described in the Motion. The purpose of the online map, as set out in the Motion, is to provide "a holistic overview" of all that is taking place in the Highland Council area with regard to electricity generation and transmission.

Will the Leader of the Council explain why some energy-related project developments, which are deemed both major and essential, are nevertheless being omitted from the map?

RESPONSE

The map was prepared to illustrate the full cumulative picture of electricity generation and transmission projects across Highland. It is not intended to cover all development related to the build out of that. 'Related' was not meant to be used in that context, but to differentiate between generation and transmission projects.

Electricity generation and transmission projects have a specific development type, and it is this that is used to pull the application data through to the map. If other development types were added, the original purpose would be lost, and the cumulative mapping would become too complex and lose its originally intended purpose.

Member Questions

1. **Mr A Christie**

To the Leader of the Council

With the establishment of the Poverty Commission, which I welcome, will the Leader confirm that the Administration will make significant funds available to support the recommendations and findings of the Commission?

RESPONSE

I am grateful for your support of the Highland Poverty and Equality Commission, and I look forward to seeing their recommendations next year. It will be for the Council to consider those recommendations and how they can best be taken forward. As demonstrated in the Section 95 Officer's Financial Strategy report, the Council must live within its budget and so if funding is required to implement any of the recommendations, the Council will need to identify where those funds should come from. As you will know from our discussions with the Co-Chairs of the Commission, they are fully aware that the recommendations coming forward need to be sustainable, deliverable and within the Council's budget envelope.

2. Mr A Christie

To the Leader of the Council

At the last Council meeting as part of the Housing Challenge report it was stated that the 24,000 target for house building over the next 10 years will achieve investment of £3bn into Highland – ensuring a secure and sustained programme of building over this period. The report also stated that in the section "Call for Development Sites" most locations are across the Inner Moray Firth area, particularly Inverness where need and demand is greatest. Please could the Leader publish what plans the Administration has to mitigate the issues caused through rapid expansion in the Inverness area such as:

- Inverness Schools to be able to cope with extra students
- For houses to be quickly connected for utilities considering current difficulties facing developers.
- The supply and demand issues on insufficient GP Surgeries near some of the housing sites.
- The provision of sustainable public transport to service the new developments.
- The importance of protecting green space in and around the City.

RESPONSE

The Local Development Plan already sets out requirements for infrastructure related to the development of the city. This is being updated at present, and a full appraisal of infrastructure needs for the future is informing the preparation of the Plan. As part of meeting the Housing Challenge, there will also be a number of Masterplan Consent Areas, which again will involve a detailed appraisal of infrastructure needs for particular site, including those referred to above. The Council uses school roll forecasts to inform these infrastructure needs, and to inform the implementation of the Council's approved Developer Contribution Guidance.

Discussions with partner agencies, including NHS Highland, also inform planning and investment strategies. The Highland Property Partnership Board is an important part of that process. Engagement is also taking place at a national level with utilities providers to ensure that delivery of development is not stalled due to available capacity in the network not being available.

3. Mr M Reiss

To the Leader of the Council

What is the average financial cost during this Administration of by elections in the Highland Council area?

RESPONSE

The costs of the by-elections are set out below. The costs of holding by-elections fluctuates as it is dependent on the size of the electorate.

Election	Nos of Vacancies	Date	Value	Average per Year
Ward 7 Tain and Easter Ross	1	28/09/2023	45,679	45,679
Ward 14 Inverness South	1	11/04/2024	49,795	46,016
Ward 7 Tain and Easter Ross	1	13/06/2024	47,733	
Ward 6 Cromarty Firth	2	26/09/2024	69,170	
Ward 14 Inverness Central	1	26/09/2024		
Ward 21 Fort William and Ardnamurchan	1	21/11/2024	63,380	
Ward 6 Cromarty Firth	1	19/06/2025	106,120	53,060
Ward 10 Eilean a Cheo	1	19/06/2025		

4. Mr D Macpherson

To the Leader of the Council

On 27th June 2024 Highland Council announced:-
"It is anticipated that 24,000 new houses will be required in Highland in the next ten years. This is around double that which would normally be built. The future demand for housing is based on an updated ten-year Housing Needs Demand Assessment, which incorporates economic modelling based on potential increases in jobs connected to the development of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Free Port".

The Highland Council Leader and Chief Executive have repeatedly announced publicly that throughout the next 10 years the Highland Council area of responsibility requires to build 24,000 new homes to deal with the Council's own stated 'Housing Challenge' (that's equivalent to 200 completed new homes in each and every month for the next 120 months).

Can you please give an accurate estimate of how many new homes are expected to be built across the Highland Council area in this calendar year up to and including the 31st December 2025?

RESPONSE

The Highland Housing Challenge 24,000 housing target is an ambitious one, founded upon achieving a step-change in development industry activity to help enable employment-led housing growth in Highland. It is not based on past trends in house completions, population or household data.

Achieving such a target will require a collaborative effort but one necessary to meet existing and likely future economic activity and better meet the backlog of housing need within Highland.

The figure is an increase from that already established through the Council's Local Housing Strategy approved in April 2023, which set a target of 18,400 homes over 10 years. For comparison purposes, past (1999-2024) annual house completions totals have varied from around a minimum of 800 units to 1,800. The long-term average over that period is around 1,000 units per annum.

Setting an ambitious target is necessary to create sufficient confidence in Highland to attract additional public and private investment. Conversely, setting a target based solely on past data will put Highland at a disadvantage relative to other areas particularly with recent data suggesting a decline in births and increase in deaths within Highland. We must set an ambitious target to set a more positive agenda and counter the risk of a static or declining population.

For the 2004/2025 financial year there were 1001 house completions across the Highland area, so far, this financial year (April to June) there have been 306 completions. It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the number of houses that will be built this year as this depends on a range of factors such land availability, contractor availability and capacity and the decisions of developers.

5. **Mrs I Campbell**

To the Leader of the Council

Will the Leader of Highland Council write to the Scottish Government to ask for funding to bring the Infrastructure to Kishorn Port and surrounding area fit for purpose in view of the £24 million invested by the Scottish Government to extend the drydock in Kishorn Port.

RESPONSE

Early discussions have taken place between officials from the Council and other public agencies about the establishment of a "Kishorn Task Force" to ensure that supporting infrastructure is considered to support the continued growth of the Yard. I am happy to write to both the Scottish Government and UK Government to seek their support and involvement.

6. **Dr M Gregson**

To the Leader of the Council

Can the Council Leader and Education Committee Chair please advise on progress towards the implementation of the Council's instruction to schools to consult with a view to remove mobile phones from classrooms?

RESPONSE

160 of all Highland schools have taken a position on mobile phones in schools.

There are 35 schools working towards a position as detailed below:

- 2 are currently undertaking a consultation with their school community
- 23 are planning to undertake a consultation in session 2025-26
- 10 will take a position on mobile phones in Term 1 2025-26

7. **Mr R Cross**

To the Leader of the Council

Given that Invergordon appears to be recognised as a “deprived area” along with parts of Alness in my own ward, and in other recognised parts of The Highland Council area, what specific policies does the Council adhere to to address the deprivation?

RESPONSE

Addressing poverty and inequality runs throughout all services of the Council, from welfare benefits, to education, to early learning and childcare, to housing, economic development and transport. It is embedded into policies across the organisation and service delivery considerations. This takes into account geographical communities as well as individuals who are of greater risk of poverty.

As part of the development of the new Integrated Impact Assessment approach, socio-economic disadvantage/poverty is one of the core areas assessed for impact. This is undertaken as part of any new policy/strategy development, service change or redesign or the introduction of a new service. This ensures that approaches that address poverty are embedded within what the Council does.

8. **Mrs I MacKenzie**

To the Leader of the Council

We have all heard of the closure of the Spectrum Centre. It is important to maintain community access to meeting and activity space.

What is the Council’s plan to prevent this key city centre facility lying empty and how will they keep local members properly updated and involved?

RESPONSE

The Council will carry out an options appraisal on the future use of the centre and ensure that the local members are informed on a regular basis.

9. Mrs H Crawford

To the Leader of the Council

Update Request - Motion on Major Electricity Development Applications & Community Engagement

It is one year since the undernoted Motion was approved by this Full Council with the backing of over 60 Community Councils across The Highlands and cross-party support.

The Motion requires that you, as Leader, are obliged to engage with the Scottish Government to bring an end to what's known as "salami slicing". Specifically it requires you to "*continue dialogue with the Scottish Government to ensure that the full cumulative aspect of developments, including the potential grid connection, is considered within the submission of an application under S36 of the Electricity Act for an energy generation station, and for all BESS applications of whatever scale, and the Leader to report regularly to Group Leaders regarding progress*".

At Full Council on 27th March 2025, I asked you to confirm what action you have taken to discharge the requirement placed upon you. You replied, "I'll review the information we have and come back to you on that." I subsequently emailed an Open Letter to you on 6th May 2025 seeking this information. I have received no response to either my verbal or written requests for an update.

Can you please now confirm what dialogue you, as Leader of this Council, have had with the Scottish Government as required in terms of this Motion, including details of all relevant meetings, letters, emails and other communications, together with relevant dates, and when you intend to update our Group Leaders?

Note Referred To:

"**MOTION - MAJOR ELECTRICITY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

This Council:

NOTES there are a number of major proposed electricity generation, storage and transmission developments, which have been or are likely to be presented to The Highland Council for planning permission, or for a response as a Consultee, in the near future.

ACKNOWLEDGES that, without prejudice to future determinations, such major infrastructure developments are very likely to have significant scheme specific and cumulative environmental and socio-economic impacts upon communities and landscapes within the Highlands.

RECOGNISES it is desirable that communities across Highland are fully engaged in the consultation and planning process and are suitably empowered to respond on an equal basis given the resources deployed by the developers, SSEN and statutory consultees.

NOTES that currently these major development applications are not considered in a Highland wide context, rather they are lodged individually in a piecemeal, fragmented fashion and therefore considered individually, without reference to

the effects from the entirety of developments across Highland being considered and therefore with a lack of understanding as to what the totality will mean for our communities and our environment.

THEREFORE, this Council **AGREES**:

(1) **REAL TIME MAPPING** - To produce a real time map, publicly available online, showing all the major renewable energy related developments within Council's knowledge, existing and proposed, including those which are or will come to Council for planning and or the Energy Consents Unit, be they operational, permitted developments or otherwise. In so far as legally permissible, the map will also include an indication of anonymised approaches made to Highland Council for pre-planning advice. This map will therefore present a holistic overview of the applications that are currently in the pipeline, including but not limited to, all proposed electricity generation, storage and transmission developments, grid connection, energy generation stations, BESS, and wind farms.

(2) **THE APPROACH TO APPLICATIONS**

(i) The Leader will continue dialogue with the Scottish Government to ensure that the full cumulative aspect of developments, including the potential grid connection, is considered within the submission of an application under S36 of the Electricity Act for an energy generation station, and for all BESS applications of whatever scale, and the Leader to report regularly to Group Leaders regarding progress, and

(ii) If an increase in the MW threshold for applications under S36 of the Electricity Act is implemented so that some additional generating stations would fall within the Town and Country Planning Acts, the Council will update its Planning Guidance for such developments to ensure that the cumulative impacts are considered in full, including the grid connection aspects of a development.

(3) **COMMUNITY COUNCIL MAJOR APPLICATION PLANNING TRAINING**
To take urgent action to better equip communities regarding the planning process and how to present their case, by providing planning training to Community Councils by the Planning Advisory Service and external experts specifically regarding such major applications.

(4) **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
Without ever expressing a prior opinion on the determination of any application, to engage with our communities regarding the anticipated environmental and socio-economic impacts, given that some within our communities are concerned about a wide range of issues, and to review what actions the Council can legally take to further ensure that local community views are considered in the planning process and for Officers to present a paper to the next Full Council for consideration.

Proposer: Cllr Helen Crawford, Aird & Loch Ness Ward"

RESPONSE

I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy on 3 December 2024 highlighting the cumulative impacts on energy infrastructure proposals as set out in the motion agreed at Council. and the Cabinet Secretary replied on 24 January 2025. Those letters had been placed on the bulletin page of the Members Intranet as is normal practice https://www.highland.gov.uk/membersintranet/info/3/protocols_and_guidance/7/bulletins_for_members.

An update on implementing the motion was provided to the Council at its meeting on 15 March 2025.

10. **Mr S Coghill**

To the Leader of the Council

Given that members are charged with strategic oversight of the Highland Council when might members have sight of a full Highland Council staff structure to assist with both transparency and said oversight?

RESPONSE

Members can access the Know Your Council document which is available online. Also, by clicking on individuals' profiles in Microsoft Teams or Outlook and then clicking 'organisation' this will show their line manager and direct reports.

Council wide structure charts are also currently being designed and should be circulated to Members by the end of September.

11. **Ms K Willis**

To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure

A ban on pavement parking came into force in Highland in December 2023. Please can the Chair provide a breakdown of the number of infringements and revenue raised in each area of Highland since the ban was introduced.

RESPONSE

The information on the Penalty Charge Notices issued is published monthly on the Council's website. The information that is attached is an extract of that information which relates to the new legislation regarding pavement parking that came into effect at the end of 2023.

12. Mr A Baxter

To the Chair of Education

Could you provide a breakdown of the number of unfilled teaching posts in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) listed by school and subject at the beginning of the current academic year (2025/26)?

RESPONSE

The table below details STEM Teaching Vacancies within secondary schools across Highland at the start of session 25/26.

Post	School
Principal Teacher of Maths	Ullapool High School
Teacher of Maths	Ullapool High School
Teacher of Maths	Kilchuimen Academy
Teacher of Maths (Maternity Leave)	Millburn Academy
Teacher of Home Economics (Maternity leave)	Tain Royal Academy
Teacher of Biology	Invergordon Academy
Teacher of Craft, Design and Technology	Kinlochleven High School
Teacher of Craft, Design and Technology	Dingwall Academy

13. Mr J Edmondson

To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure

For each of the last five financial years, could you provide, broken down by Area Committee area, the total value of identified road repairs or programmed works requiring capital spending that remained unfunded within the budget allocation for that area committee?

RESPONSE

The Roads Service does not keep the information requested for the whole adopted road network. However, reports are provided to Area Committees on surface treatment schemes which are programmed and then completed each year. Additionally, SCOTS produces the ‘Headline backlog’ figure which is the amount required to treat all ‘red and amber’ carriageway sections in one year, as identified in the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey. The SCOTS Highland backlog figure for 2023 was £233,631,000 and the steady state figure was £33,990,000 (they are calculated every 2 years).

The Council has committed additional capital investment through a multi-year programme to reduce the infrastructure works backlog. This funding supports resurfacing, surface dressing and renewal of all road related assets, not just carriageways.

14. Mr A Graham

To the Leader of the Council

HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Debt.

Please provide, if possible in tabular form, for each year since 1996:-

Opening balance
Amount borrowed
Amount repaid
Closing balance

RESPONSE

The requested data has been provided in the attached spreadsheet which goes back as far as 2003/04. It should be noted that the 2024/25 borrowing figure is still subject to auditing

15. Mr P Logue

To the Chair of Education

For each of the last five academic years could you provide:-

a.) The number of pupils with identified Additional Support Needs (ASN), broken down by Associated School Group; and

RESPONSE

The information requested is in the attached spreadsheet 'ASN Pupil Count by ASG 5 Year'

b.) The total annual funding provision for ASN-associated staff in each of these years?

RESPONSE

The total annual funding provision for ASN-associated staff in each of these years is as follows.

25/26 - £43.4m

24/25 - £42.1m

23/24 - £40.3m

22/23 - £36.7m

21/22 - £32.1m

16. Mr R Gale

To the Chair of Education

For each of the last five academic years could you state, the average waiting time for a child or young person to receive an Additional Support Needs (ASN) assessment following referral and the longest individual waiting time recorded in each of those years?

RESPONSE

It is not possible to answer this question because it pre-supposes that there is a single assessment process for Additional Support Needs which is not the case given the wide variety of needs that we are aware of that require different types of support and assessment.

Number of TSA 2019 PCNs issued by The Highland Council since going Live Dec 2023													
	Jan-24	**Feb-24**	**Mar-24**	**Apr-24**	**May-24**	**Jun-24**	**Jul-24**	**Aug-24**	**Sep-24**	**Oct-24**	**Nov-24**	**Dec-24**	**Total 2024**
Inverness	0	78	78	35	20	27	21	15	19	19	35	15	362
Lochaber	0	5	2	3	2	5	3	1	2	1	1	4	29
Skye	0	1	14	15	23	8	12	12	2	2	1	3	93
Wick	0	2	2	2	1	9	9	4	8	7	11	9	64
Thurso	0	2	8	3	1	2	6	3	6	3	4	1	39
Dingwall	0	2	2	15	4	2	0	7	3	4	1	2	42
Nairn	0	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	15
Other	0	23	30	24	25	15	36	13	16	3	5	2	192
TOTAL Issued	0	117	137	99	77	68	87	55	57	42	61	36	836
Issued Value	£0	£7,400	£9,850	£6,850	£5,600	£4,300	£6,050	£3,500	£3,750	£3,100	£4,300	£2,850	£57,550
Cancelled or Written Off Value	£0	£800	£950	£800	£1,000	£800	£900	£500	£150	£400	£950	£200	£7,450
Net Received to date	£0	£5,450	£6,909	£4,525	£3,100	£2,804	£4,850	£2,400	£2,850	£2,100	£3,050	£2,050	£40,087

	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Total 2025
Inverness	13	27	34	20	29	41	59						223
Lochaber	2	2	1	4	2	2	0						13
Skye	2	4	4	10	14	5	2						41
Wick	5	4	1	5	8	10	3						36
Thurso	2	6	3	2	5	0	3						21
Dingwall	0	2	3	0	1	2	21						29
Nairn	0	3	1	3	0	0	0						7
Other	1	10	4	15	13	11	69						123
TOTAL Issued	25	58	51	59	72	71	157	0	0	0	0	0	493
Issued Value	£1,650	£4,100	£3,950	£4,050	£4,850	£4,250	£8,600						£31,450
Cancelled or Written Off Value	£200	£350	£500	£1,250	£300	£250	£550						£3,400
Net Received to date	£1,150	£2,850	£2,450	£2,050	£3,550	£3,000	£5,950						£21,000

HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Debt.

	Opening Balance	Amount Borrowed	Amount Repaid	Closing Balance
2003/04	184,235,595.19	-2,337,753.20	6,973,793.80	174,924,048.19
2004/05	174,924,048.19		7,492,542.54	167,431,505.65
2005/06	167,431,505.65		7,168,392.63	160,263,113.02
2006/07	160,263,113.02		6,903,099.96	153,360,013.06
2007/08	153,360,013.06		7,055,978.55	146,304,034.51
2008/09	146,304,034.51	1,178,123.12	6,931,203.92	140,550,953.71
2009/10	140,550,953.71	5,077,826.89	6,407,806.92	139,220,973.68
2010/11	139,220,973.68	7,054,020.77	6,392,385.72	139,882,608.73
2011/12	139,882,608.73	12,352,747.72	6,326,786.07	145,908,570.38
2012/13	145,908,570.38	21,717,258.53	6,181,159.41	161,444,669.50
2013/14	161,444,669.50	29,665,936.79	6,270,025.82	184,840,580.47
2014/15	184,840,580.47	27,436,070.89	7,033,817.72	205,242,833.64
2015/16	205,242,833.64	36,311,702.65	7,404,567.77	234,149,968.52
2016/17	234,149,968.52	8,887,499.82	8,630,193.77	234,407,274.57
2017/18	234,407,274.57	17,182,472.37	7,820,390.26	243,769,356.68
2018/19	243,769,356.68	28,619,864.84	7,610,732.50	264,778,489.02
2019/20	264,778,489.02	32,274,960.57	9,244,938.37	287,808,511.22
2020/21	287,808,511.22	24,225,442.55	9,610,413.08	302,423,540.69
2021/22	302,423,540.69	45,324,537.98	11,944,251.29	335,803,827.38
2022/23	335,803,827.38	39,723,796.92	10,293,644.93	365,233,979.37
2023/24	365,233,979.37	43,052,933.29	8,729,477.42	399,557,435.24
2024/25	399,557,435.24	40,557,171.92	10,773,644.01	429,340,963.15

Note 1: Details requested prior to 2003/04 no longer held due to software system and record retention changes from c20years ago.

Note 2: “Amount Borrowed” represents net HRA capital expenditure in the year financed from borrowing.

Note 3: “Amount Repaid” represents annual instalments charged to the HRA via Loans Charges in line with relevant accounting guidance (Loan Charges in total consist of instalments plus interest/expenses).

Note 4: The closing balance shown represents the cumulative year end capital expenditure funding requirement for the HRA, covered by borrowing for capital purposes.

Pupils with Additional Support Needs					
ASG	**2024/25**	**2023/24**	**2022/23**	**2021/22**	**2020/21**
Alness	585	554	598	562	491
Ardnamurchan	76	75	71	66	71
Charleston	722	780	855	835	832
Culloden	886	947	944	911	868
Dingwall	909	894	902	886	850
Dornoch	191	161	147	154	133
Farr	64	63	66	73	73
Fortrose	508	524	591	598	518
Gairloch	97	102	114	110	97
Glen Urquhart	220	214	203	191	192
Golspie	288	288	268	271	274
Grantown	327	301	309	312	340
Invergordon	363	379	462	491	489
Inverness High	825	863	936	917	918
Inverness Royal	1155	1190	1093	1110	1130
Kilchuimen	44	50	68	59	60
Kingussie	482	503	469	477	474
Kinlochbervie	38	27	34	39	42
Kinlochleven	123	133	139	129	117
Lochaber	855	897	855	900	873
Mallaig	108	102	90	74	75
Millburn	1055	1140	1137	1123	1044
Nairn	607	658	684	685	701
Plockton	248	209	193	184	159
Portree	346	335	364	352	327
Special	184	181	172	168	157
Tain	480	512	535	522	512
Thurso	382	384	409	402	438
Ullapool	136	145	153	159	152
Wick	516	556	563	589	589
Highland Total	**12820**	**13167**	**13424**	**13349**	**12996**

Motions: 18 September 2025

1. Securing the Future of Social Care in the Highlands

Notwithstanding the current review of social care provision in Lochaber, the Highland Council agrees to take urgent action to address the deepening crisis in social care across the Highlands.

The Council recognises the following:

- The contribution to public debate of the comprehensive Highland Care Home Report produced by Angus MacDonald MP, following an 88% response rate to a survey of care home operators in the Highlands, and completed with the co-operation and assistance of the Highland Council and NHS Highland.
- The number of care homes for older people in the Highlands has fallen by 18% between 2014 and 2024, while the population aged 75 and over has increased by 71.9% over the same period, and is projected to rise by a further 34% by 2028.
- There are only 8 care homes remaining on the West Coast, with dangerously low capacity, resulting in a "social care desert" and long waiting lists for care placements.
- Delayed discharges in NHS Highland are at record levels, losing over 5,500 hospital bed days in December 2024 alone, costing millions annually (£22 million in delayed discharges last year) and placing further strain on the NHS.
- Staffing challenges are exacerbated by low pay, negative perceptions of the care sector, high living costs, and a chronic shortage of affordable housing for workers. For non-NHS (independent or private) care homes, staff challenges are further exacerbated by low pay.
- Care at home services are vital but cannot fully replace the need for a robust network of care homes to support those with complex and advanced care needs.

The Council therefore resolves to:

1. Reaffirm its commitment to a dual strategy of strengthening both care at home services and ensuring a sustainable, high-quality network of care homes across the Highlands, with particular focus on the West Coast where need is greatest.
2. Support the development of new large care home facilities with integrated staff accommodation in key locations such as Portree/Broadford, Fort Augustus, Ullapool, and Fort William to "future-proof" provision and retain skilled staff locally. The council will work with partners to commence the planning and design process for new care facilities in Lochaber to replace the Moss Park Care Home.
3. Call for a fundamental renegotiation of the National Care Home Contract to better reflect the true cost of providing care in remote and rural areas.
4. Seek measures to cap agency staff fees, to ensure that long-term financial sustainability is not undermined.
5. Advocate for the Care Inspectorate to streamline bureaucratic processes while maintaining quality standards, to support rather than hinder small and rural care providers.

Finally, the Council agrees to write to the Scottish Government to:

- Demand urgent financial support to fund the construction of new care homes and staff accommodation in the Highlands,
- Call for immediate financial relief to all social care providers, not just the NHS, to mitigate the rising cost pressures, including National Insurance increases and workforce costs,
- Press for a long-term, sustainable funding settlement for social care in the Highlands, recognising the acute rural challenges faced by our communities,
- Urgently address the linked crisis of delayed discharges and inadequate care capacity before the situation becomes irreversible.

The Highland Council further calls on COSLA and relevant national agencies to work in partnership with the Council to lobby for these necessary reforms.

Signed:	Mr A Baxter	Mrs T Robertson	Mrs A MacLean
	Mrs I Mackenzie	Mr M Reiss	Mr R Stewart

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion **is** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council.
The nature, extent and timing of a financial implication would need be subject to further detailed scoping of and consideration of how the specific resolutions of the Council, as set out within the motion above, were taken forward, and the consequence. The extent to which any Scottish Government financial support was or was not forthcoming, to support some of the resolutions within the motion, would also be a key consideration. Any additional financial implications, not met by additional Scottish Government support, could be a cost pressure on the Council and/or NHS Highland.

To give context to the anticipated financial implications which could arise:

- Resolution 1: assessment of potential financial implications are captured in the subsequent resolutions and comments below.

- Resolution 2: the nature of any Council support could take a number of forms, financial and non-financial. In relation to where financial implications could arise:

    - Officer time to support the resolutions. Significant officer input has been associated with Mains House and Moss Park care homes to date. In the main this has been through existing capacity but if the scale of activity was larger, which given the geography referred to could be the case, there may need be dedicated and additional Council officer capacity in place to support this.
    - The creation/building of in-house care home provision by the Council. Within the current Integration Scheme, the responsibility for capital investment associated with Adult Social Care rests with the Council. Were the development of new large care homes to be in-house provision, it may therefore be expected the capital costs of which would rest with the Council. This is not provided for in current capital investment plans with the Council having agreed the Highland Investment Plan. The nature of any additional capital cost related to this motion would ultimately be determined by the location and scope, amongst other factors, of any new or additional provision. Were no Scottish Government additional financial support to be forthcoming, any additional costs would be a cost pressure on the Council.

- Revenue costs associated with new/increased Care home provision. Whether this took the form of staffing and operating of in-house provision, or the contracting for independently operated provision, the revenue costs would directly be met by NHS Highland through the Lead Agency model. Consideration would need given as to how any increase in costs were to be funded by the Council/NHS Highland, with the risk that additional revenue cost falls on the Council, not currently provided for.

- Resolution 3: the nature of any financial implication would depend on the outcome of any such renegotiation of the national contract A key consideration would be whether, should the review lead to an increase in the rate paid (nationally or at a local level), Scottish Government would recognise this through the Budget and Grant Distribution mechanism, to provide some recognition/mitigation for Councils of any increase in cost that arises.

- Resolution 4: financial implications could be positive, if the approach leads to a reduction in cost of agency staffing. Under the Lead Agency model it would be NHS Highland who are the contracting party for Adult Social Care agency staffing, so any financial impact may directly be on NHS Highland, with consideration then as to implications for the Council through agreements in place.

- Resolution 5: is assumed to have potential officer/member time implications, rather than an additional financial cost impact.

- The final aspect of the motion relates to a letter to Scottish Government and partnering with Cosla and other bodies. Directly this would not be expected to represent a financial implication. There would be officer and member time associated with taking this approach forward. As noted earlier, financial support from Scottish Government would however be a key consideration and a risk related to other parts of the motion where financial implications could be expected to arise, and without additional funding could be a significant cost pressure for the Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	**Assessment Summary**
Equality	Potential positive and negative impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposal 1 - Commitment to Care at Home and Care Homes Age and Disability Positive - the proposal to reaffirm the commitment to care at home is likely to have a positive impact. This is consistent with the Adult Strategic Plan and, as articulated within this, has wider health and wellbeing benefits alongside delivering on people's desire to stay within their own home and community. Negative - the agreed approach of the partnership is to reduce the reliance on residential care home provision and enable people to remain in their homes and communities. If a decision is taken to increase care home provision, and accordingly resources prioritised at care homes, then this will limit the

	resources available for care at home - both financial and workforce. This could have a negative impact upon both older people and adults with disabilities and would not be consistent with the strategic approach agreed by the Partnership and the Council, to support health and wellbeing outcomes. Proposal 2 - New Care Homes with Staff Accommodation Age and Disability Positive – although the strategic plan seeks to reduce the need for care home places overall, there will always be a need for nursing care home provision for those with more complex needs. The proposal could therefore have a positive impact on such a cohort. Negative - the proposal to create large care home facilities could have a negative impact upon both older people and adults with disabilities as a result of resources requiring to be reallocated to focus on this type of care provision and not Care at Home.
Poverty	Potential positive and negative impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposal 2 - New Care Homes with Staff Accommodation Positive and Negative - The proposal could have a positive impact in relation to employment opportunities within rural areas and the proposal for integrated staff accommodation to support working there. There is also the potential for negative impact as creation of care homes could displace the already limited workforce focused on care at home. Integrated staff accommodation traditionally does not support people with families and is directed at single people who do not have a long term commitment to the area. There is the potential for negative impact upon rural communities as a result of this. Proposal 3 - Care Home Contract Positive - this is likely to have a positive impact upon rural areas as the current contract fails to recognise the need for smaller care homes in rural areas and said contract is predicated on homes operating on the basis of 50 residents which is not realistic in more rural areas. Proposal 4 - Cap Agency Fees Positive and Negative impact - the proposal is likely to have a positive financial impact organisationally and corresponding upon the resources available to deliver services to individuals. However, by capping agency fees, this could have a negative impact upon potential workers, who are attracted to work in rural areas as a result of the incentive of higher wages. Failure to attract these staff would result in being unable to staff and operate care at home and care homes within rural communities.

	Proposal 5 - Care Inspectorate Positive - this proposal has the potential for positive impact in rural areas by supporting and enabling a single care model and a rural workforce who wish to provide care across different care and age settings. This would provide a more flexible service offering with a positive socio-economic impact on rural care providers and on individual workers within communities.
Human Rights	Potential positive and negative impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposal 1 - Commitment to Care at Home and Care Homes Positive - the proposal to reaffirm the commitment to care at home is likely to have a positive impact. This is consistent with the Adult Strategic Plan and, as articulated within this, has wider health and wellbeing benefits alongside delivering on people's desire to stay within their own home. Negative - the agreed approach is to reduce the reliance on residential care home provision and enable people to remain in their homes and communities. If a decision is taken to grow care home provision, and accordingly resources prioritised at care homes, then this will limit the resources available for care at home - both financial and workforce. This could have a negative impact upon both older people and adults with disabilities. Proposal 2 - New Care Homes with Staff Accommodation Positive – although the strategic plan seeks to reduce the need for care home places overall, there will always be a need for nursing care home provision for those with more complex needs. The proposal could therefore have a positive impact on such a cohort. Negative - the proposal to create large care home facilities could have a negative impact upon both older people and adults with disabilities as a result of resources requiring to be reallocated to focus on this type of care provision and not Care at Home.
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	Potential positive and negative impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposal 2 - New Care Homes with Staff Accommodation Positive and Negative impact - The proposal could have a positive impact in relation to employment opportunities within rural areas and the proposal for integrated staff accommodation to support working there.

	There is also the potential for negative impact as creation of care homes could displace the already limited workforce focused on care at home. Integrated staff accommodation traditionally does not support people with families and is directed at people who do not have a long term commitment to the area. There is therefore the potential for negative impact upon rural communities as a result of this. Proposal 3 - Care Home Contract Positive impact- this is likely to have a positive impact upon rural areas as the current contract fails to recognise the need for smaller care homes in rural areas. Proposal 4 - Cap Agency Fees Negative impact - by capping agency fees, this could have a negative impact upon potential workers, who are attracted to work in rural areas as a result of the incentive of higher wages. Failure to attract these staff would result in being unable to staff and operate care at home and care homes within rural communities. Proposal 5 - Care Inspectorate Positive - this proposal has the potential for positive impact in rural areas by supporting and enabling a single care model and a rural workforce who wish to provide care across different care and age settings. This would provide a more flexible service offering with a positive socio-economic impact on rural care providers and on individual workers within communities.
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:
A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The assessment has focused on the 5 core proposals in the motion.

Should the motion be agreed, a full impact assessment would be required to be undertaken subject to further detailed scoping of and consideration of how the specific resolutions of the Council, as set out within the motion, were taken forward. In the event that the motion is agreed there will also require to be engagement with NHS Highland who are responsible for the delivery of adult social care as the lead agents.

AMENDMENT

To replace the motion with the following amendment:

The Council agrees:

1. To continue to support the implementation of the Highland health & Social Care Partnership Adult Services Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027. The stated aim of that plan is to enable people to lead their best lives and be able to live at home and as independently as possible for a long as possible.

2. To support the development of nursing and allied professional care provision across Highland and work with our third sector partners to support people to live in their own homes and communities.
3. To continue to support the third sector in their work with communities in the delivery of the Strategic Plan.
4. To continue to call for changes to the National Care Home Contract to better reflect the true cost of providing care in remote and rural areas.
5. Advocate for the care Inspectorate to develop processes which support small and rural care services whilst maintaining quality standards.

Signed: Mr D Fraser Mrs M Cockburn

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

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

The first three points within the motion are assessed as reflecting a continuation of current support and plans, and as such do not introduce additional financial commitments beyond existing Plans. For context, it is however the case that there remains significant financial pressure on the Adult Social Care budget and as has been highlighted in other reports to members, there remains the risk that this could in turn result in additional financial pressures or expectations on Council budgets.

Points 4 and 5 will have officer/member time implications. In relation to point 4, were there to be any financial implication at a future point, that would depend on the outcome of efforts to change the national contract and any resulting implications in terms of costs of the contract, and Scottish Government funding arrangements to Councils for those contract costs. These could only be assessed at a future point were there to be any change in national contract arrangements.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	**Assessment Summary**
Equality	Potential positive impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposals 1, 2 and 3 propose to continue to support the aim of keeping and supporting people to live independently within own homes, in line with the Adult Strategic Plan. This is likely to have a positive impact on older and disabled people as sustaining people within their homes has wider health and wellbeing benefits alongside delivering on people's desire to stay within their own home and community.
Poverty	Potential positive impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposal 4 – National Care Home Contract Positive - this is likely to have a positive impact upon rural areas as the current contract fails to recognise the need for smaller care homes in rural areas and said contract is

	predicated on homes operating on the basis of 50 residents which is not realistic in more rural areas. Proposal 5 - Care Inspectorate Positive - this proposal has the potential for positive impact in rural areas by supporting and enabling a single care model and a rural workforce who wish to provide care across different care and age settings. This would provide a more flexible service offering with a positive socio-economic impact on rural care providers and on individual workers within communities.
Human Rights	Potential positive impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposals 1, 2 and 3 propose to continue to support the aim of keeping and supporting people to live independently within own homes, in line with the Adult Strategic Plan. This is likely to have a positive impact upon the human rights of these individuals.
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	Potential positive impact *Summary of assessment:* Proposal 4 - Care Home Contract Positive impact- this is likely to have a positive impact upon rural areas as the current contract fails to recognise the need for smaller care homes in rural areas. Proposal 5 - Care Inspectorate Positive - this proposal has the potential for positive impact in rural areas by supporting and enabling a single care model and a rural workforce who wish to provide care across different care and age settings. This would provide a more flexible service offering with a positive socio-economic impact on rural care providers and on individual workers within communities.
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:
The screening has found a number of potential positive impacts from the motion, across the 5 different elements of the motion, including equality, poverty, rural and human rights.

2. That the Sutherland County Committee requests that the recent changes in staffing swiftly and recently imposed upon the Dornoch Service Point be reversed until a public consultation has been carried by Highland Council to fully explore the impact on the community.

Signed: Mr J McGillivray Mr M Baird Mr R Gale

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is not anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council. It would involve the re-assignment of staffing, rather than an increase or alteration to the overall costs of staffing cost for the Council.

There may however be a risk or impact going forward regarding staffing requirements at Golspie and meeting service levels there.

There would be an officer time impact to undertake the further public consultation proposed, it is however assumed this would be undertaken within existing officer time.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	**Assessment Summary**
Equality	Neutral and potential negative impact *Summary of assessment:* There is no anticipated impact on services in Dornoch as a result of the motion as the new service delivery model continues to provide access to the range of Council services. It is likely any reversal during a consultation phase would however cause confusion on the main users of the service – elderly/vulnerable – as this means a further service change. This would likely have a negative impact on elderly/disabled users of the Golspie office which is likely to have to reduce their opening hours without the staff resource that has been reassigned from Dornoch. Golspie is four times busier than Dornoch and therefore greater customer impact.
Poverty	Neutral and potential negative impact *Summary of assessment:* Many of the users of service points are on lower incomes. No anticipated impact on service users in Dornoch as the new service delivery model continues to provide access to all services.

	This would likely have a negative impact on users of the Golspie office which is likely to have to reduce their opening hours without the staff resource that has been reassigned from Dornoch. Golspie is four times busier than Dornoch and therefore greater customer impact.
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	Neutral and potential negative impact *Summary of assessment:* There is no anticipated impact on service users in Dornoch if there was to be a reversal when a consultation takes place as the new service delivery model continues to provide access to all services. It is likely there would be a potential negative impact on the community as a result of the confusion and uncertainty created in a further change to service delivery and potential reduction of services in Golspie where the resource is required and there is greater customer demand.
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:
A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above.

The motion proposes a consultation takes place to understand impact and that service delivery is reversed until that takes place. It is not anticipated that this would have an impact on local users in Dornoch given that the new service delivery model continues to provide access to the range of Council services.

However, any reversal is likely to have a negative impact relating to causing confusion amongst users, particularly older and vulnerable users of the service point.

It is also likely to have a negative impact on service users in Golspie, as the staffing resource not being available in Golspie would likely mean a reduction in opening hours for an office that is four times as busy. This would result in a direct customer impact.

AMENDMENT

To replace the motion with the following amendment:

Council notes that all existing services continue to be accessed through the Dornoch Service Point and that Council has committed to a review of the Service Delivery Model in 3 months time.

Signed: Mr R Bremner Mrs M Ross

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This amendment is not anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council. As it would maintain the current staffing arrangements, and any implications arising from a future review could only be assessed at that point in time.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Summary of Assessment:
The screening has found that there is no impact from the proposed amendment. As part of the review, the screening undertaken as part of the service delivery changes will be updated.

3. Highland Visitor Levy

Highland Council notes the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Council's current work towards developing a scheme for implementation.
Council acknowledges:

- That the primary purpose of a Visitor Levy should be to sustain, support and develop the visitor economy, improving tourism infrastructure, strengthening off-season demand, and supporting communities.
- The commitment made by Officers and Members to public consultation, and the constructive responses received from Highland residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- That while there is support in principle for a levy, significant concerns remain over the form and method of implementation as currently proposed.

Council further notes particular concerns raised by businesses and representative bodies, including:

- The administrative burden of collection placed on accommodation providers.
- The risks and inequities of a percentage-based levy compared with a flat-fee model.
- The need for clear exemptions, e.g. for those staying for business or hospital appointments.
- The potential unintended consequence of small providers being forced into VAT registration.
- The detrimental impact of unregulated overnight parking by motorhomes and campervans on licensed businesses and communities.

Council recognises that unless substantial changes are made, the proposed levy risks damaging the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism and hospitality sectors in the Highlands.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Pause further progress towards local implementation of a Visitor Levy until the outcomes of the independent Economic Impact Assessment and further consultation with the sector are available.
2. Engage constructively with the Scottish Government, the Visitor Levy Reference Group, business representative bodies, and community stakeholders to seek necessary changes to the legislation and scheme design.
3. Explore alternative approaches to collection and administration, including:
   - A digital Visitor QR Code payment system paid directly to the Council; and
   - A vehicle-based charging mechanism.
4. Bring forward a revised report to Council, following the above engagement and assessment, setting out options for a workable, fair and effective Visitor Levy for the Highlands.

Signed: Dr M Gregson Mrs T Robertson

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is <u>not</u> anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council.

Insofar as the Council has not as yet made a financial or budgetary assumption or decision, or associated timeline, regarding the Levy, a pause in further progress is not assessed as directly resulting in a financial implication.

Regarding the further resolutions within the motion, being actions to be progressed while the pause was in place, these would require officer time to undertake the necessary engagement and other actions as outlined. Some of the actions required could be significant in regard to officer time commitments. This time cost may therefore be at the expense of other work or priorities.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Summary of Assessment:
A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The screening has found that there is no impact from the proposed motion however any future assessment of approaches to collection and administration and options for a Visitor Levy should have an impact assessment completed as part of that work.

AMENDMENT 1

To replace the motion with the following amendment:

Recognising that more than 4,000 consultation responses were received to the consultation on the Visitor Levy, the Council resolves to bring forward a report to Council in October 2025. This report will detail an overview of the independent work currently being undertaken by the external consultants appointed by the Council to complete an Economic Impact Assessment, Financial Forecasting, an analysis of the consultation responses and engagement with the Visitor Levy Reference Group, together with an Integrated Impact Assessment.

A further report will be considered by the Council in December 2025, setting out the findings from that work, including recommendations on the way ahead for the Visitor Levy for Highland area. In the meantime, Officers will continue to engage with the Scottish Government and stakeholders.

Signed: Mr R Bremner Ms S Atkin
Mr R Jones

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This amendment is not anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council. The work referred to and associated officer/external consultant activity is currently being undertaken, rather than representing new/additional activity or cost arising from the amendment.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Summary of Assessment:
The screening has found that there is no impact from the proposed amendment although it notes that financial and integrated impact assessments will come forward as part of the proposed paper to Council in October.

AMENDMENT 2

Highland Council notes the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Council's current work towards developing a scheme for implementation.

Highland Council notes the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Council's current work towards developing a scheme for implementation.
Council acknowledges:

- That the primary purpose of a Visitor Levy should be to sustain, support and develop the visitor economy, improving tourism infrastructure, strengthening off-season demand, and supporting communities.
- The commitment made by Officers and Members to public consultation, and the constructive responses received from Highland residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- That while there is support in principle for a levy, significant concerns remain over the form and method of implementation as currently proposed.

Delete all Following and Replace With:-

Council notes:-

That officers are analysing responses and preparing a report following the public consultation and requests that, in preparing their report for Council, officers consider:-

- the practicalities and potential costs of exempting stays essential for medical reasons and;
- alternative approaches to collection and administration and;
- any potential for small operators to be pushed into the VAT threshold.

Council further notes:

- the principle that VAT should not be charged on tax, and therefore asks the Leader of the Council to engage with HM Treasury and our representatives at Westminster to lobby for an end to this anomaly.
- the benefits of a Point of Entry mechanism for charging and urges the leader to write to the Transport Minister at the Scottish Government to urge them to expedite legislation to extend the levy to all visitors arriving in Highland on, for example, cruise ships, planes, ferries, and in motorhomes/campervans.
- the potential improvements that could be made to public services, affordable housing for tourism staff, infrastructure, and facilities in the Highlands through the introduction of such a tax.

Signed: Mr C Ballance Ms K Willis

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

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

The officer work referred to regarding analysis and preparation of report is current activity, rather than representing new/additional activity or cost arising from the amendment.

The points for further consideration relating to VAT/collection and administration/VAT arrangements, and the engagement/letter/lobbying points, represent activity which will require additional officer/member time and input, but are not assessed as representing additional cost implications at this time.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	**Assessment Summary**
Equality	Potential positive impact *Summary of assessment:* Considering exempting stays for medical purposes could have a potential positive impact on people with disabilities who may have to travel for medical appointments.
Poverty	Potential positive impact

	Summary of assessment: Considering exempting stays for medical purposes could have a potential positive impact on people on low incomes in rural areas who may have medical appointments and are required to travel to attend these appointments.
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	Potential positive impact *Summary of assessment:* Considering exempting stays for medical purposes could have a potential positive impact on people on low incomes in rural and island areas who may have medical appointments and are required to travel to attend these appointments.
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:
A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The screening has found that there could be a potential positive impact from specifically considering exempting stays for medical appointments from an equality, poverty and rural/island perspective. These points are likely to be considered as part of the integrated impact assessment being conducted as part of the Visitor Levy process.