

Motions: 11 December 2025

1. The Council Parking Strategy (2021) requires revision to improve clarity around income generation and allocation, and investment in carparking infrastructure across Highland.

Currently, legacy carparks in Highland are not generating income for their local areas and are instead subsidising parking, enforcement, and other costs for carparks across Highland that do not charge for parking. Car parking revenue is also not currently used to maintain and repair carparks or invest in capital works.

Council requests a review of the Parking Strategy, with the review to consider the following:

- Local/strategic revenue allocation following tariff increases in legacy carparks,
- Local/strategic revenue allocation from new carparks,
- Local/strategic revenue allocation from on-street parking,
- A Highland wide strategy to implement parking tariffs,
- A repair and maintenance strategy for all carparks,
- A Highland-wide strategy to implement new Pay & Display carparks.

Council requests that a Member workshop is held to help develop the Strategy, and that the revised Parking Strategy is reported to the May 2026 meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is not anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council. Although there is no financial impact anticipated directly from this motion, there would be officer time implications in progressing work. Consideration would need be given to any implications for existing agreed budget and income targets arising from a review.

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. There is no anticipated impact from the motion which requests that a review of the parking strategy is undertaken. If agreed, a screening for impact should be undertaken as part of any review.

2. Fireworks

Fireworks are often used at different events during the year. While bringing much enjoyment to many people, they can also cause distress and anxiety to people, domestic pets, farm livestock, and wildlife. Animals may suffer injuries if they try to avoid the noise.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Urge organisers of all public firework displays within the Highland Council area to advertise them in advance, allowing residents to take precautions for themselves and their animals.
2. Promote public awareness of the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare, and provide advice on precautions to reduce the impact.
3. Investigate the use of quieter or silent fireworks at displays organised directly by the Highland Council.
4. Write to the Scottish Government urging them to investigate reduction of the maximum noise level (120 dB) for consumer fireworks.
5. Encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock quieter consumer fireworks.

Signed: Mr A Graham
Mr A Baxter

Mrs J McEwan
Mr R Gunn

Mrs T Robertson
Mrs A MacLean

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 implications associated with the actions resulting from the motion, and while these might impact other current workload and priorities, this would not represent a financial cost. It is assumed that any promotional and awareness raising activity could rely on social media, Council press release and other mediums that would not represent additional cost.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	Potential Positive <i>Summary of assessment:</i> Evidence suggests that the noise from fireworks can have a negative impact on some people with disabilities. The proposals within the motion aim to raise awareness of fireworks taking place and reduce the impact of the noise from fireworks.
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. It is anticipated that the motion could have a positive impact on some disabled people as a result of raising greater awareness of firework displays taking place or reducing the noise of fireworks.

3. STV

This council supports Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce's campaign to save STV North.

Plans to cut or centralise STV North will destroy local journalism, cost vital jobs, and strip away our ability to make decisions about how our stories are told.

Local news isn't just about headlines, it's about community, democracy, and identity. Without a strong regional newsroom, people across the Highlands and north east Scotland will lose representation, visibility, and trust in the media that serves them.

We therefore mandate our Council Leader to contact Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce to express our support and to write to STV and Ofcom to call on them to stop these cuts and protect STV North's independence and investment in regional journalism.

And we ask Corporate Comms to publicise this motion internally and encourage members and staff to sign the petition at [Petition · Save STV North - Aberdeen, United Kingdom · Change.org](https://www.change.org/petition/save-stv-north-aberdeen)

Signed: Mr C Ballance

Ms K Willis

Dr M Gregson

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is not anticipated to have a financial implication.

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. There is no impact from the proposed motion.

AMENDMENT

Replace paragraph 4 with the following:

therefore ask the Leader for the Council to note the points made by the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce to express the concerns of The Highland Council in writing to, Ofcom and the First Minister of Scotland regarding STV's plan to downgrade their commitment to local news reporting in Highland

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This amendment is not anticipated to have a financial implication.

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. There is no impact from the proposed amendment.

4. That a special meeting of the Health Social Care be convened by mid-January 2026 to review and discuss the domestic abuse interventions strategy for the Highland Council Region and always to reduce domestic violence generally.

Signed: Mrs J McEwan
Mrs A MacLean

Mrs T Robertson

Mr M Reiss

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is anticipated to have a financial implication. Unless a special meeting was scheduled to coincide with other Council business (to minimise member travel and expense costs), there would be expected to be additional costs of member travel and expense costs arising. This could be in the region of £700 to £1,200 of additional cost per meeting based on an average of costs over the year. There will also be additional officer time associated with the organisation and preparation of the meeting and agendas and reports.

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 motion asks for a meeting to take place therefore there is no anticipated impact.

AMENDMENT

That we do not hold a special meeting of HSC&W in January 2026, but instead the scheduled meeting on 4th February 2026 will include the agenda item:-

“Update on the Highland Domestic Abuse Service – procurement progress and next steps, including refuge review and support for victim-survivors.”

Signed: Mr D Fraser

Mrs M Cockburn

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is not anticipated to have a financial implication.

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. There is no anticipated impact.

5. The Council notes that:

- 0.025% of Scotland's population own 67% of Scotland's rural land. Just over 400 people.
- The Highland Council area has many of Scotland's largest estates and highly concentrated land ownership.
- Such ownership patterns concentrate wealth, influence and power in very few hands and limit opportunities for communities to be more in control of their circumstances and natural resources.
- The Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar council area has in recent decades seen the ownership of most of its land area transfer into community ownership, bringing greater local democratisation of land decisions and allowing the resources the land can earn to be shared widely and retained locally – contributing significantly to community wealth building and a more inclusive economy.
- The Highland Council area has seen only a fraction of the transfer of land the Western Isles has enjoyed but is home to a number of remarkable community owners, such as in Eigg and Knoydart, which stand as an example of what could be more widely achieved.
- A dysfunctional land market – as evidenced recently in the Scatwell Estate sale, in Strathconon, where 3525 hectares sold for £25,200,000 (£7149 per hectare) – makes community buyouts all but impossible.
- An increasing number of 'Green Lairds', often supported by external investor capital, have been buying up land in the Highlands to deliver private earnings from carbon credits and speculating on a future biodiversity credits market to extract wealth from the Highlands, or to allow them to continue the carbon emissions they create elsewhere.
- Land ownership attracts many tax breaks and grants access to substantial public subsidy and many argue that reforming taxation will be an important part of future land reform.
- The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands made clear during the recent debate passing the latest piece of land reform legislation that much more beyond the further steps the Bill enabled was needed to further the cause of diversifying Scotland's land ownership patterns.

The Council resolves that:

- It shares the view of the Cabinet Secretary that further action on land reform to diversify land ownership is needed.
- It wishes to see a significantly and progressively greater number of Highland communities owning land and thus controlling and retaining locally the earnings from that land, to achieve their economic potential.
- Land ownership patterns need to be fairer and more accountable.
- Recognising the imbalances in power that can arise from accumulating landholdings which may be non-contiguous, enabling acquisitive landowners to avoid provisions of the existing law, will be an important issue to address further.
- It must become easier for entry into farming and crofting to take place, and more 'Starter Farms' should be established.
- The Scottish Land Fund is an essential part of the picture and the Council supports its maintenance by the Scottish Government and expansion when resources allow.
- The public interest should drive land policy and a public interest test should also be applied to the buyers of significant areas of land, under which their intentions for the land can be publicly examined.

- It should engage with the Scottish Land Commission and develop a comprehensive policy on how it can assist in bringing about land reform that empowers more communities across the Highland Council area to own and control land and build community wealth, seeing such policy development as a major contributor to future economic development policy. The Council further instructs Officers to report further on the issues with proposals upon which the Council can then engage with a range of interested parties prior to finally agreeing its policy.

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

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

Although there is no financial impact anticipated from this motion there would be officer time implications around the review of the policy and any associated actions.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	Not known
Poverty	Not known
Human Rights	Not known
Children's Rights	Not known
Data Rights	Not known
Rural/Island	Not known
Climate Change	Not known

Summary of Assessment:

A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. At present the impact of this is not known. The motion seeks the Council to work with the Scottish Land Commission to develop a policy to assist bringing about land reform and for officers to come forward with a report on the issues and proposals. Any work should incorporate an IIA screening into the process.

6. Council commits to:

- Designating a named lead Highland Council contact for each care home in the area to act as a clear point of contact for residents and relatives to contact with concerns, issues or question.
- Creating a document which explains the rights of residents and relatives within a care home. This document should include clear information on how concerns can be raised to the council and external regulatory bodies (Care Inspectorate, professional regulators, Disclosure Scotland, police).
- All relatives/residents within the relevant care home, and all councillors, to be notified of the publication of Care Inspectorate reports within 7 working days of that report being received by the council.
- All relatives/residents within the relevant care home to be notified that a Large Scale Investigation has commenced within 7 working days, and all councillors to be notified at the next full council meeting.
- All Care Inspectorate reports to be formally presented to the Health & Social Care Committee, in public or private session at discretion of the committee chair, with councillors being given chance to ask questions on the report.
- When a care home ceases to be under an improvement notice from the Care Inspectorate, a 'Lessons Learned' report will be presented first to the Health & Social Care Committee and then before the full council to detail what improvements were made while under the Care Inspectorate improvement notice, and any recommendations which should be made to improve practice across Highland care homes.

Signed: Mr D Gregg

Mr A Christie

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council.

The motion introduces new and additional workload and actions for the Council, in aspects of activity which under the Lead Agency Model for Adult Social Care would currently be a function of NHS Highland. For actions which are new and additional on Council officers, this would represent additional time commitments. Given under the Lead Agency model staffing with responsibility for Adult Social Care wholly transferred to NHS Highland, it is assumed that to provide the appropriate capacity, knowledge and specialism within the Council to fulfil the motion, would result in an additional staffing and cost impact. At this stage there is uncertainty as to what level of resource may be required, but with over 60 care homes for Adults across the Highlands, and circa 1900 residents, as a minimum it is considered that planning for 2FTE as an additional staffing provision would be appropriate, the cost of which is estimated as being £0.115m incl oncosts. There would be a need for further review and assessment to assess on an ongoing basis whether the level of resource is appropriate based on level of contact from residents and relatives with concerns, issues or questions.

Other aspects of the motion are assumed to be actions that would be fulfilled by NHS Highland staff under the Lead Agency Model for Adult Social Care, and may not be action which would need directly be for Council officers. These may also represent an additional time or cost commitment on staff involved. Given the Council provides funding to NHSH for Adult Social Care provision, any additional resource burden on NHS Highland might result in NHSH seeking additional funding from the

Council. Such discussions would need take place once it was determined if the motion was proceeding and more detailed discussion between the Council and NHS Highland regarding how the proposed actions would best be taken forward and the role of Council and NHS Highland staffing in fulfilling these actions.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	<p>Positive impact (Age, Disability); otherwise, no impact</p> <p><i>Summary of Assessment</i></p> <p>The impact on 1,900 older people and people with disabilities resident in 64 Care Homes in Highland will be positive. The proposal will enable residents and their relatives to raise any concerns or issues regarding their care with a named Highland Council contact and/or with external regulatory bodies. They will also have access to information regarding their Care Home including that relating to Care Inspectorate visits and investigations and the implementation of any required improvements.</p> <p>These measures will help to maintain, and where required, improve the standards of care and service in Care Homes in Highland.</p>
Poverty	No impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/ Island	<p>No impact</p> <p><i>Summary of Assessment</i></p> <p>The impact will be the same across Highland, including in island and rural communities.</p>
Climate Change	No impact

AMENDMENT

To replace the motion with the following amendment:

Under the Lead Agency Model it is NHS Highland that deliver Care Home services for adults by commissioning the private sector and providing inhouse care homes. They also commission the care at homes services. The regulator is the Care Inspectorate. Although adult social care is delegated to NHSH as part of the Lead Agency Model, the Chief Social Work Officer maintains statutory responsibility and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services.

With regard adult protection, governance and assurance is through the Adult Protection Committee. This then reports into the Highland Public Protection Chief Officers Group for the overarching governance across Highland.

Councillors receive twice annually assurance reports through the Health and Social Care Committee. The Chief Social Work Officer Annual report comes to Full Council and includes the care Inspectorate grades for all Care Home and Care at Home Services. Under the lead agency model the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) is key in terms of overseeing all partnership business and much of this material is provided there at the quarterly meetings.

In partnership with the NSH Highland as lead agents the Council undertakes to carry out a full review of the reporting structures related to the regulated services i.e. care homes and care at home. The review will articulate what and where governance currently lies and how this can be improved. One of the issues that will be looked at is how various committees and boards are given assurance when governance lies elsewhere and how the attendees then report back to other boards and committees. The review will also look at opportunities to share learning across Highland with a view to improving the overall standard of care. The report will include a section on access information about the Regulated Services and how the escalate concerns about a service.

The draft report will be discussed at the February 2026 meeting of the Health & Social Care Committee and a final draft report will then be taken to Full Council. The Final Report will be agreed at JMC.

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. There would be officer time associated with undertaking the review.

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 amendment proposes a review is undertaken of reporting structures and how to improve reporting arrangements and the opportunities to share learning with a view to improving the standard of care. At this stage there is therefore no impact from the amendment but the proposed review should consider impacts as part of that process and report this as part of the report to committee.