

Agenda Item	13.
Report No	CPPB/8/26



**Highland**  
Community  
Planning  
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas  
Dealbhadh  
Coimhearsnachd

**na Gàidhealtachd**

## Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 10 March 2026

### Title of report – Strategic Risk Register

Report by – Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager

#### Report Classification (tick as appropriate):

Strategic Priority:  People  Place  Prosperity

#### Cross-Cutting Theme (tick all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connecting People and Places                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment / Employability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Family and Community-Based Approaches | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shared Approaches to Commissioning          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Wealth Building  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aligning Partnership Practices              |  |

#### Report Purpose (tick as appropriate):

For Noting  For Approval  For Decision

#### Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- i) Note the Strategic Risk Register update as at March 2026 and the work undertaken by the Risk Sub-Group.
- ii) Agree the revised approach to the CPP Strategic Risk Register, including the new Strategic Risk Appetite Statement and its application across all CPP strategic risks.

#### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the review of the CPP Strategic Risk Register as at March 2026. Following discussions at the CPP Board in late 2025, members identified that the existing Strategic Risk Register required a comprehensive refresh, improved consistency, and clearer alignment with the refreshed Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) 2024–2027. In response, the Board agreed a Risk Register Sub-Group to undertake a full review of risk descriptions, scoring, mitigations, and governance processes.

Between October 2025 and February 2026, the Sub-Group met on several occasions to analyse the existing Register, compare practice across partners, and identify areas requiring restructuring. A key output of this work has been the development of a new Risk Appetite Framework, modelled on partner best practice, and organised around thematic categories.

The updated Strategic Risk Register now incorporates improved clarity in risk descriptions, more accurate scoring, consistent use of inherent/residual scoring, and alignment with appetite statements. Further updates will follow as partners finalise mitigations and monitoring arrangements.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>
1.1	<p>At the CPP Board meeting in late 2025, members expressed concern that the Strategic Risk Register needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearer structure</li> <li>• more consistent scoring</li> <li>• stronger alignment with HOIP outcomes</li> <li>• more robust governance</li> <li>• improved transparency for the Board</li> </ul> <p>As a result, the Board agreed to establish a Risk Register Sub-Group to take forward a full review. This decision was based on the recognition that the existing Register mixed different formats, contained legacy risks, and did not fully reflect current partnership pressures.</p>
1.2	<p>The Sub-Group, comprising officers from key partners, was tasked with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing the structure and presentation of the Register</li> <li>• updating risk descriptions to reflect current strategic pressures</li> <li>• ensuring consistency with partner risk frameworks</li> <li>• developing a CPP-specific Risk Appetite Statement</li> <li>• improving clarity around controls, planned actions, and ownership</li> <li>• strengthening the basis for future Board scrutiny</li> </ul>
1.3	<p>During meetings the group reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partner risk models</li> <li>• Board report templates</li> <li>• reporting schedules</li> <li>• appetite frameworks from partners</li> <li>• HOIP delivery plan reporting requirements</li> <li>• previous CPP risk registers and scoring approaches</li> </ul> <p>Key areas of focus included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial sustainability pressures</li> <li>• organisational capacity constraints</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital and service access challenges</li> <li>• consistency in mitigations and action ownership</li> <li>• need for a separate, standalone Risk Appetite Statement</li> <li>• standardised Board-ready formatting</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>The review found that several risks required more precise wording to capture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• macro-level financial instability</li> <li>• recruitment and skills shortages</li> <li>• digital exclusion and connectivity issues</li> <li>• organisational prioritisation challenges</li> <li>• national policy implementation pressures</li> </ul>
2.2	<p>Existing scoring did not always:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distinguish between inherent and residual risk</li> <li>• align with current controls</li> <li>• reflect realistic likelihood or impact</li> <li>• correspond to updated appetite positions</li> </ul>
2.3	<p>The Board emphasised the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a clear CPP appetite across thematic categories</li> <li>• a method for identifying when a risk is above appetite</li> <li>• a clearer distinction between corporate and non-corporate risks</li> <li>• escalation routes to the Board and Senior Officers Group</li> </ul>
2.4	<p>The group agreed the Register should adopt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a refreshed column layout</li> <li>• clearer ownership and review dates</li> <li>• consistency with the CPP Board report format</li> <li>• ability to track movement of risk scores over time</li> </ul>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Process Undertaken</b>
3.1	<p>Officers reviewed the former Strategic Risk Register and the Reporting Schedule, then copied/realigned mitigations into the updated template.</p>
3.2	<p>Risk descriptions were rewritten to reflect the current strategic landscape, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial volatility</li> <li>• workforce pressures</li> <li>• policy demands</li> <li>• digital capability and community access</li> <li>• engagement and trust challenges</li> </ul>

3.3	The Sub-Group produced a standalone Risk Appetite Framework, fully aligned to best practice and partner templates. Appetite levels (averse, cautious, moderate, open) were assigned per category.
3.4	<p>The Sub-Group prepared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Strategic Risk Register – Appendix 1</li> <li>• New Risk Appetite Statement document – Appendix 2</li> </ul> <p>The CPP’s new Risk Appetite Statement (March 2026) has been applied to the updated Strategic Risk Register. As this is the first baseline version of the refreshed Strategic Risk Register, risk appetite positions will be formally assessed and quantified for the next reporting cycle. Initial review indicates that some risks currently sit above appetite, particularly in relation to financial sustainability, policy implementation capacity, and data-sharing and analytics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Risk Register Summary – Appendix 3</li> </ul> <p>Not fully populated as this is the first instance of utilising the Summary against the new baseline Strategic Risk Register.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Risks and Mitigations</b>
4.1	<p>Early review suggests that risks relating to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial sustainability</li> <li>• policy implementation capacity</li> <li>• data-sharing and analytics</li> </ul> <p>remain above appetite and require continued focus.</p>
4.2	Mitigations have been updated using the Reporting Schedule and from partner inputs. Several require further development.
4.3	The Sub-Group will continue reviewing scores against appetite, and present a further update at the next Board meeting.

<p><b>Impact Assessment</b></p> <p>The revised Strategic Risk Register enhances transparency and strengthens partnership oversight. Key anticipated impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved governance</li> <li>• clearer decision-making support</li> <li>• strengthened alignment with HOIP priorities</li> <li>• better identification of partnership capacity gaps</li> <li>• enabling prioritisation of collective action</li> </ul>
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The Sub-Group will continue to monitor equality, human rights, and community impacts arising from the Register.

**Author(s):** Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager, Highland Community Planning Partnership

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Appendices:** Strategic Risk Register – Appendix 1  
Risk Appetite Document – Appendix 2  
Board Risk Summary Report – Appendix 3

Highland Community Planning Partnership  
Strategic Risk Register  
As at January 2026

Risk ID	Risk Title	Risk Description	Strategic Link to Outcome Improvement Plan	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score / Matrix Rating	Current Controls / Mitigations	Planned Actions	Responsible Group / Lead Partner	Monitoring Level
Unique identifier for each risk	A short, descriptive name for the risk.	Clear explanation of the nature of the risk using plain language.	How the risk relates to the 2024-2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan or Delivery Plan.	Assessment of how likely the risk is to occur.	Assessment of the potential consequences if the risk materialises.	Combined score based on likelihood and impact, aligned with the Council's new risk analysis framework.	Measures currently in place to manage or reduce the risk.	Future actions to further mitigate or manage the risk.	Person or organisation responsible for monitoring and managing the risk.	Frequency and depth of monitoring (e.g., quarterly, annually).
<b>Risk 01/26</b>	Failure to Deliver Against Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Strategic Priorities	There is a risk that the partnership may be unable to fully deliver the agreed Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) strategic priorities. This may arise from challenges such as limited or uncertain resources, insufficient cross partner coordination, competing organisational pressures, or weaknesses in performance management and monitoring arrangements. Failure to address these issues could result in reduced impact for communities, missed statutory or strategic commitments, and diminished confidence in the partnership's ability to drive improvement.	People, Place, Prosperity	4	3	12	HOIP delivery plan and governance structure established, providing clarity on responsibilities, reporting lines, and expected outcomes. Quarterly performance reporting to the CPP Board, ensuring ongoing oversight, visibility of progress, and early identification of issues. Senior officers assigned to each cross cutting theme, responsible for coordination, delivery, and escalation of risks or barriers across partner organisations.	Strengthen delivery oversight, including more frequent monitoring of priority actions and clearer escalation routes for underperformance. Identify and agree priority areas for focused action, ensuring resources are directed where they will have the greatest impact. Confirm agency leads for specific actions, ensuring accountability and enabling coordinated work across partners.	CPP Board	Quarterly
<b>Risk 02/26</b>	Financial Sustainability & Funding Alignment	There is a risk that the partnership may be unable to sustain long term financial viability or effectively align funding streams to support shared priorities. This risk may arise from reducing or unpredictable budgets, competing organisational demands, short term or ring fenced funding arrangements, and limited flexibility to redirect resources. If not managed, these pressures could constrain delivery of partnership outcomes, hinder strategic planning, and weaken the ability to invest in preventative or collaborative approaches.	People, Place, Prosperity	4	5	20	Multi year partnership funding agreement in place until 2027 to support the Partnership Development Team, providing medium term stability and protecting core capacity. Regular financial planning and monitoring across partners, ensuring early identification of emerging pressures and alignment with HOIP priorities.	Agree budget arrangements beyond May 2027, including confirmation of partner contributions and long term funding commitments. Review and align available funding streams to maximise flexibility, prevent duplication, and support priority HOIP programmes. Explore opportunities for joint investment, external funding bids, and pooled resources to strengthen financial sustainability.	CPP Senior Officers Group	Quarterly
<b>Risk 03/26</b>	Partnership Capacity & Skills	There is a risk that insufficient capacity and critical skills within the partnership will limit the ability to deliver services effectively and achieve strategic priorities. This may stem from recruitment and retention challenges, an ageing workforce, limited specialist expertise, and difficulties attracting talent to remote or rural areas. If unaddressed, these pressures could reduce service resilience, hinder innovation, and weaken the partnership's ability to meet current and future community needs.	People, Place, Prosperity	3	2	6	Induction Guidance and Toolkit developed to support consistent onboarding and strengthen understanding of partnership roles and responsibilities.	Board Induction Pack in place, providing key information to support effective leadership and governance across the CPP. Develop and implement a new Induction Module, enhancing consistency of training and supporting improved understanding of partnership priorities and ways of working. Review and update induction materials regularly to ensure content remains relevant, accessible, and aligned with evolving CPP requirements and HOIP priorities.	CPP Senior Officers Group	Annual
<b>Risk 04/26</b>	Access to and Awareness of Services	There is a risk that barriers to accessing services continue to be evident across Highland, particularly remote and rural communities. This may be caused by poor digital connectivity, limited access to technology, geographic isolation, workforce shortages, and financial pressures. This results in reduced engagement with services, widening inequalities, and slower progress toward HOIP priorities.	People, Place	3	3	9	Device and data access initiatives in place, supporting individuals and communities with low or no access to digital technology. Community access points established, enabling people to use digital services locally with support from partner organisations. Partner led digital support available, helping residents build confidence and skills to engage with online services.	Target communities with limited or no high speed internet or reliable mobile signal, ensuring outreach and support are focused where barriers are greatest. Support community broadband and connectivity projects, working with local groups and partners to improve digital access in remote and rural areas. Expand awareness campaigns, ensuring communities know what support is available and how to access it.	CPP Board	Quarterly
<b>Risk 05/26</b>	Cost of Living & Poverty	There is a risk that the ongoing cost of living crisis and persistent levels of poverty will increase demand for support services, negatively affect health and wellbeing, and further widen inequalities. These pressures may place additional strain on already limited partnership resources, reduce the capacity to deliver preventative support, and hinder progress toward achieving HOIP strategic priorities.	People, Prosperity	4	5	20	Whole Family Wellbeing Programme in place, providing coordinated and preventative support to families experiencing financial pressures. Local coordination arrangements established, enabling partners to identify emerging needs and align responses at community level. Advocacy to Scottish and UK Governments on cost of living impacts, funding needs, and policy barriers affecting Highland communities. Signposting to support services, ensuring residents are aware of available financial, wellbeing, and crisis support.	Strengthen coordination of hardship and crisis support, ensuring streamlined access and reduced duplication across agencies. Deliver targeted locality based interventions in communities most affected by poverty and rising living costs. Develop and implement the Poverty Reduction Action Plan, setting out clear priorities, actions and indicators aligned with HOIP outcomes. Enhance signposting and communication, ensuring consistent messages reach those most in need.	Poverty Reduction Delivery Group	Quarterly
<b>Risk 06/26</b>	Community Engagement & Trust	There is a risk that ineffective engagement, limited participation, and insufficient opportunities for communities to influence decisions may reduce public confidence in partnership decision making. This could lead to lower levels of involvement in local initiatives, reduced support for service changes, and diminished impact of the HOIP strategic priorities. A lack of trust and meaningful engagement may also exacerbate inequalities and weaken the partnership's ability to deliver sustainable, community led outcomes.	People, Place, Prosperity	3	4	12	CPP Consultation Standards applied, promoting consistent, inclusive, and meaningful engagement across partners. Locality based engagement activity in place, ensuring communities have opportunities to influence local priorities and service design. Transparent reporting mechanisms established, enabling communities to see how decisions are made and how feedback is used.	Develop and strengthen lived experience forums, ensuring community voices directly shape policy, service delivery and locality planning. Publish regular 'You Said / We Did' updates, demonstrating how community feedback has informed decisions and actions. Produce and promote an accessible annual report, providing clear updates on progress, impacts, and next steps to maintain trust and accountability.	CPP Board	Quarterly
<b>Risk 07/26</b>	Implementation of New and Existing Scottish Government Policies	There is a risk that the CPP may not fully implement or align with new and existing Scottish Government policies and statutory duties (e.g., Net Zero, Public Health Framework, Fairer Scotland Duty, Child Poverty targets, and Housing standards). This may result from limited capacity, competing priorities, insufficient coordination, or unclear national guidance. Failure to meet these obligations could lead to non compliance, reputational harm, missed statutory or strategic commitments, and reduced ability to deliver the intended outcomes of the HOIP.	People, Place, Prosperity	4	4	16	Senior Officers monitor policy changes and statutory duties, ensuring awareness of emerging Scottish Government requirements and their implications for the CPP. Equality Impact Assessments and the Fairer Scotland Duty embedded within governance processes, supporting compliance and ensuring decisions reflect legal and national commitments. Existing partnership delivery plans aligned to relevant national frameworks, helping maintain consistency with Scottish Government priorities such as Net Zero, public health, equality and housing.	Develop and implement a CPP Policy Implementation Tracker, providing a central mechanism to monitor new policies, statutory duties, deadlines and compliance status. Assign clear leads for each major policy area (e.g., climate, health improvement, equality, housing, poverty) to ensure accountability and coordinated action across partners. Schedule annual compliance reviews, integrating findings into CPP Board reporting to provide assurance, identify gaps, and support timely corrective action. Embed forward planning for policy changes into strategic planning cycles, reducing risk of non compliance and supporting proactive alignment with national agendas.	CPP Senior Officers Group	Annual
<b>Risk 08/26</b>	Data Collection, Sharing & Analysis	There is a risk that the CPP may be unable to establish or maintain fit for purpose data sharing agreements and effective data collection processes. This may limit the partnership's ability to understand service demand and community need at local levels, target support appropriately, and populate data indicators required to evidence progress against HOIP outcomes. Insufficient data quality, inconsistent sharing practices, or gaps in analytical capacity could undermine planning, decision making, and the evaluation of partnership impact.	People, Place, Prosperity	3	4	12	Actions identified within the HOIP Delivery Plan, setting out initial steps to strengthen data collection, analysis, and reporting across the CPP. Individual organisations have established business intelligence and data analysis processes, providing a foundation for understanding service performance, though these require further alignment and enhancement for partnership level use.	Identify and develop fit for purpose data sharing agreements, ensuring partners can lawfully and consistently share the information required to understand local need, measure performance, and track progress against HOIP outcomes. Improve the consistency and quality of shared data, including work to align definitions, indicators, and reporting cycles across partners. Strengthen analytical capacity, including exploring shared analytical resources or joint dashboards to support better decision making. Implement the HOIP data indicator framework, ensuring outcome measures can be populated reliably and used for performance monitoring.	CPP Senior Officers Group	Quarterly
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## Strategic Risk Register March 2026 Risk Appetite Statements

These Risk Appetite Statements provide the CPP's agreed level of tolerance for risk. They support effective governance, guide decision-making and ensure clarity on when risks require escalation to the Board.

These appetite levels apply to the Strategic Risk Register (March 2026) and will be reviewed annually.

The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that may compromise its ability to deliver the agreed Highland Outcome Improvement Plan strategic priorities, undermine shared outcomes, or lead to failure of cross-partner commitments.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for well-managed innovation that improves strategic delivery, strengthens collaboration, or accelerates progress where benefits to communities are clear and achievable.
The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that may impair partnership financial stewardship, create instability, or weaken the capacity to maintain core coordination and delivery functions.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for risks associated with re-aligning or pooling funding streams, provided such risks are mitigated and demonstrate clear added value.
The CPP has a <b>moderate</b> appetite for innovative or multi-agency investment approaches that offer longer-term benefits, provided financial exposure is controlled and supports HOIP priorities.
The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that lead to insufficient staffing, critical skills shortages, or unsafe levels of resilience within essential partnership activities.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for workforce change where it supports improved coordination, shared delivery, or resource optimisation.
The CPP has a <b>moderate</b> appetite for innovation in workforce models including shared roles, training collaborations, and flexible deployment if these approaches strengthen capacity and support long-term sustainability.
The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that may widen inequalities or reduce access to essential services, particularly in remote and rural communities or among vulnerable groups.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for new ways of delivering services where digital, community-based or hybrid approaches can improve accessibility without creating exclusion.
The CPP has an <b>open</b> appetite for well-managed innovation aimed at closing the digital divide, enhancing community outreach, or improving the reach of partnership communications.



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The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that may worsen poverty, increase financial hardship, or reduce the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals, families, or communities.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for preventative investment and for piloting new partnership approaches where evidence indicates potential to reduce demand, improve outcomes, and address inequalities.
The CPP is <b>open</b> to collaborative models and targeted locality action where the risks are well-managed and likely to deliver longer-term improvements.
The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that may damage public trust, reduce transparency, or weaken community confidence in decision-making.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for reputational risk where decisions are evidence-based, clearly communicated, and taken in the long-term interest of communities.
The CPP has an <b>open</b> appetite for participatory approaches, lived-experience forums, and co-design methods where innovation can strengthen relationships and improve outcomes.
The CPP is <b>averse</b> to any risks that may result in non-compliance with statutory duties, national policy requirements, regulatory expectations, or legal obligations.
The CPP is <b>cautious</b> when interpreting new national policy, ensuring adequate capacity, coordination, and governance arrangements to maintain compliance.
The CPP has a <b>moderate</b> appetite for adaptive approaches in applying national policy where this enables improved outcomes, provided legal and regulatory requirements are fully met.
The CPP is <b>averse</b> to risks that may compromise data protection, confidentiality, or public trust in how information is handled.
The CPP has a <b>cautious</b> appetite for developing new data-sharing arrangements and for greater alignment of partner data systems when these are compliant and properly governed.
The CPP has a <b>moderate</b> appetite for innovation in analytics, intelligence sharing, and digital tools that strengthen evidence-based decision-making and improve understanding of community need.

### Definitions

The level of risk the CPP is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives.

**Averse** – Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is a key objective.

**Cautious** – Preference for safe options with low inherent risk.

**Moderate** – Willing to accept some risk to achieve objectives.

**Open** – Willing to take on significant risk for potential reward.



**Strategic Risk Register Summary  
March 2026**

To sit alongside the Highland CPP Strategic Risk Register this summary provides the Board with an overview of the movement of risk scores over time for consideration. This summary will be published for each Board meeting, as an alternative to circulating the full Strategic Risk Register.

**Review of risks, lessons learned and points for discussion:**

- 

**Notable movements in risk scores:**

- 

**Risks added or removed from the Strategic Risk Register:**

- 

**Current areas of key risk:**

The current areas of key risk categorised into themes:

- 
-

Movement of risk scores over time

Risk ID	Risk name	Themes	Risk score			Risk Movement	Comments
			Original	Previous	Current		
01/26	<b>Failure to Deliver Against Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Strategic Priorities</b>	People, Place, Prosperity			12		
02/26	<b>Financial Sustainability &amp; Funding Alignment</b>	People, Place, Prosperity			20		
03/26	<b>Partnership Capacity &amp; Skills</b>	People, Place, Prosperity			6		
04/26	<b>Access to and Awareness of Services</b>	People; Place			9		
05/26	<b>Cost of Living &amp; Poverty</b>	People; Prosperity			20		
06/26	<b>Community Engagement &amp; Trust</b>	People, Place, Prosperity			12		
07/26	<b>Implementation of New and Existing Scottish Government Policies</b>	People, Place, Prosperity			16		
08/26	<b>Data Collection, Sharing &amp; Analysis</b>	People, Place, Prosperity			12		



Risk ID	Risk name / owner	Risk description	Current risk score	Controls in place	Actions planned
RISKS					
	xx	There is a risk that ....	25		

## Key risks as identified on business unit registers at October 2025

Risk ID	Risk name	Risk owner	Risk description	Current Risk Score	Risk Movement
<b>RISKS</b>					
<b>Risks scored 25</b>					
		xx		25	
<b>Risks scored 20</b>					
		xx		20	
<b>Risks scored 16</b>					
		xx		16	
<b>Risks scored 15</b>					
		xx		15	