

HIGHLAND AND WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

17 March 2026

Agenda Item	7
Report No	VAL/03/26

Revenue Monitoring Report Period to 31 January 2026

Report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Summary

This report sets out the revenue monitoring position of the Board for the period to 31 January 2026 and the projected year end position.

CURRENT POSITION

The attached monitoring statement shows the position for the period to 31 January 2026. Net expenditure to date is £2.954m and represents 73% of the annual budget of £4.048m.

YEAR-END PROJECTION

At this point in the year, the overall outturn is expected to be an underspend of £0.038m however, as in previous years, this projection is sensitive to the eventual outturn of the annual electoral canvass.

Staff costs

Salaries including NI, superannuation and overtime

Vacancies account for the estimated underspend. Some electoral canvassing staff have been appointed and will start doorstep canvassing. Canvassers will assist with delivery of the Scottish Parliamentary election scheduled to take place on Thursday 7 May 2026. Some limited overtime will be worked by staff to reach key deadlines for the election such as poll card extracts etc. which are done outwith office hours. The total underspend may reduce in the coming weeks as the volume of work created by the election is currently unknown.

Digitisation salaries incl. NI, superann, OT

Whilst this budget head shows an overspend in the actuals to date, some staff costs have been incorrectly coded, and a journal will be done to resolve this issue. Digitisation staffing costs are expected to be within budget.

Travel and subsistence

The actuals to date show an underspend however, the annual canvass door knock visits have commenced, and it is estimated that this budget head will be very slightly overspent.

Property costs

Heating, lighting and cleaning

The actuals to date show an underspend at this point in the financial year. Billing from Highland Council has still to be progressed. It is anticipated that heating, lighting and cleaning will be within budget.

Other property costs

There is a reduction in rent for Moray House in this financial year as part of a new lease agreement. The reduction in rent will be used to carry out a refurbishment of the office accommodation. Some minor works have commenced. This budget head is expected to have a slight overspend to accommodate office works as part of lease agreements. Any reduction in rent that has not been used for refurbishment works may be carried forward into the 2026/27 budget.

Administrative Costs

Printing, stationery and photocopying

The actuals to date show a slight overspend at this point in the financial year. This is due to printing costs associated with the UK Parliamentary election postal voter reapplication process and valuation mailings, which are further explained under the postage heading below. It is anticipated that printing, stationery and photocopying costs will be overspent by the end of the financial year.

Postages

Expenditure on postages for the period to date shows an overspend. This is due to the annual canvass taking place in the first half of the financial year. The UK absent vote reapplication process has incurred additional costs due to paper forms being issued with reminder letters along with business reply envelopes. Cancellation notices were issued in February 2026. There may be an increase in postages due to the Scottish Parliamentary election scheduled for May 2026. Some costs have been incorrectly coded and will need to be journalled before the end of the financial year.

Self-catering audit mailings for the year 2024/25 have been issued, and the final 2026 Revaluation notices will be issued on 31 March 2026.

It is estimated that postages will be overspent by the end of the financial year.

Telephone and fax costs

The actuals to date show that there has been no spend against this nominal code. Highland Council billing for the year has still to be carried out.

Legal Expenses

Legal expenses are expected to be overspent. This is primarily due to the hydroelectricity case which was heard before the Upper Tribunal for Scotland from 10 November to 13 November. As this is a new Tribunal to replace the Lands Tribunal for Scotland, and this was the first rating case to go before the Tribunal costs have been more difficult to predict. A decision is expected imminently with the potential at that stage for there to be further legal expenses. Further legal expenses are being incurred in connection with a challenge to data processing with a hearing in Inverness Sheriff Court scheduled.

Other administration costs

Other administration costs show an overspend to date. This is due to printing of annual canvass communications which happens in the first half of the financial year. An invoice for computer charges has been incorrectly coded and will be journalled accordingly.

The estimated outturn shows an overspend. This is due to refurbishment of Moray House as part of the office lease agreement and additional costs will cover the purchase of new furniture to allow more office-based working for staff.

Apportioned Costs

The Central Support Charges from Highland Council will be billed in month twelve and are estimated to be in the region of £0.060m.

Supplies and Services

Computer charges

This budget head is expected to be on budget. Additional tablets for electoral canvassers will be reviewed in the summer of 2026. Annual ICT billing has still to be carried out.

Income

There is carried forward income from 2024/25 of £0.066m which relates to Elections Act funding. This funding will be used to offset some of the costs associated with the UK Parliamentary election postal voter reapplication process. There has also been a transfer from reserves of £0.047m. Additional funding for Elections Act is expected at the end of March 2026. This is in the region of £0.023m.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to comment and otherwise note the content of this report.

Date: 23 February 2026

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HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26

MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 JANUARY 2026

Heading	Period to date		Annual		Year End
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Estimated	Estimated
	£000	£000	£000	outturn	variance
			£000	£000	£000
Staff costs					
Salaries including NI, superann	2,522	2,162	3,028	2,752	(276)
Digitisation salaries incl. NI, superann, OT	33	52	40	37	(3)
Overtime	9	64	11	80	69
Salaries including NI, superann and overtime	2,564	2,278	3,079	2,869	(210)
Travel and subsistence	38	31	45	46	1
Other staff costs	36	31	43	43	-
	2,638	2,340	3,167	2,958	(209)
Property costs					
Heating, lighting and cleaning	31	11	38	38	-
Rent, rates and water	118	118	142	142	-
Other property costs	28	12	33	37	4
	177	141	213	217	4
Administrative costs					
Printing, stationery and photocopying	9	18	11	33	22
Postages	129	210	155	225	70
Telephone and fax costs	8	-	9	9	-
Advertising	2	-	2	2	-
Legal expenses	17	65	20	100	80
Digitisation costs	8	1	10	5	(5)
Other administration costs	52	73	62	82	20
	225	367	269	456	187
Apportioned Costs					
Central service support	50	-	60	60	-
Total Administrative costs	275	367	329	516	187
Transport costs	2	1	2	3	1
Supplies and services					
Computer charges	317	173	380	380	-
Valuation Appeal Committee expenses	-	-	-	-	-
	317	173	380	380	-
Members' Expenses					
Board expenses	6	-	8	8	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,415	3,022	4,099	4,082	(17)
Income					
Service Income	(3)	(68)	(4)	(25)	(21)
Interest Income	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserves	(39)	-	(47)	(47)	-
	(42)	(68)	(51)	(72)	(21)
NET EXPENDITURE	3,373	2,954	4,048	4,010	(38)