

**Highland Council: Questions: 26 March 2026**

**Member Questions**

**1. Mr A Christie**

**To the Leader of the Council**

Please could the Leader list, detail and give an explanation of all non family law legal cases the Council currently has ongoing and those concluded since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 together with the outcome as well as including complaints with the SPSO over the same period.”

**RESPONSE**

Information on non-family law legal cases and SPSO cases since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 are attached at **appendix one**.

**2. Mr A Christie**

**To the Leader of the Council**

Please could the Leader detail by school establishment all vacant teaching posts and in which schools these are and whether this is causing a significant curriculum delivery challenge?

**RESPONSE**

Information on vacant teaching posts detail by school establishment is attached as **appendix two**. In terms of pressure areas, these currently relate to STEM subjects, English and primary short and long-term cover, however it is expected that the primary situation will improve in the next term and after summer.

**3. Mr M Reiss**

**To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

What were the numbers of farmers and contractors used in January 2026 to combat the heavy snowfalls within the Council area, area by area if feasible and detailing costs incurred by Highland Council?

**RESPONSE**

Winter contractors 25/26 for period of heavy snow in January (costs identified in CiA as at 10th March 2026)

| Area       | £         | Number of contractors used | Notes  |
|------------|-----------|----------------------------|--|
| Caithness  | 18,022.50 | 3                          |  |
| Sutherland | 16,918.50 | 6                          | Includes estimate of £2,500 for invoice not received yet |

|                       |            |    |  |
|-----------------------|------------|----|--|
| Inverness             | 45,339.00  | 4  |  |
| Nairn                 | 5,469.00   | 1  |  |
| Badenoch & Strathspey | 17,547.00  | 1  |  |
| Lochaber              | 9,365.00   | 2  |  |
|                       |            |    | No breakdown of costs by date from Messrs Robertson, full amount of January invoice included |
| Ross & Cromarty       | 31,206.50  | 3  |  |
| Skye                  | 1,100.00   | 1  |  |
| Total                 | 144,967.50 | 21 |  |
|                       |            | -1 | Same Contractor used in both Caithness and Sutherland  |
|                       |            | 20 |  |

#### 4. Mrs I MacKenzie

##### To the Chair of Housing and Property

Given national research from Age Scotland and the University of Stirling showing that older people across Scotland face fragmented and difficult processes when trying to access essential home adaptations, including poor public information, inconsistent pathways and delays due to limited capacity, and recognising that Highland's ageing population is growing and dispersed across remote and rural communities, can the Chair outline how the Council intends to work with NHS Highland, the Integration Joint Board, and third sector partners, including local TSI organisations, to explore a more coordinated "Highland Model" for delivering timely home adaptations and to identify potential Scottish Government funding streams that could support such partnership work?

[Age Scotland | The Scottish Charity for Older People](#)

##### **RESPONSE**

The Council already works closely with colleagues in NHS Highland to deliver timely home adaptations. There are, naturally, different processes in place dependent upon the tenure of the property.

For Council houses, occupational therapy colleagues work with Council housing management, repairs and development teams in relation to assessing properties for adaptations but also in the design a delivery of new housing.

The Council commits £1m in HRA capital funds available annually for adaptations to Council properties. There is a clear referral process in place with NHS Highland, and we are required to report annually to the Housing Regulator on our performance to deliver timely repairs, once the referral has been received. Recent figures suggest that Highland Council is in the top quartile amongst social housing providers for delivery of adaptations to homes.

For private tenants and home owners, the Council works closely with NHS Highland, who are the first point of contact for anyone requiring adaptations to their home. If an Occupational Therapy assessment finds someone requires adaptations, they will be referred to care and repair services who can 1. Help someone find a contractor, 2. Oversee the work 3 provide support with funding applications for the costs of the work, depending upon financial circumstances.

The care and repair service has recently been reviewed, with revised processes and contracts in place to ensure timely delivery of home adaptations. The care and repair contracts also include telecare and handyperson services that delivered by the same providers and aimed at supporting people to stay in their homes for longer.

Highland Council continues to liaise with various residents, stakeholders and agencies as to how to further improve our approach to adaptations so it best meets the needs of our residents. This will include considering how to respond to the outcomes of the Scottish Government’s review of adaptations which is ongoing.

**5. Ms K Willis**

**To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

What is the annual cost to Highland Council of contracted bus services in Highland, broken down for each area?

**RESPONSE**

The following table sets out the Public Transport/Demand Response Transport/Dial a bus/School Transport costs broken down by area.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Caithness             | £2,847,263.03  |
| Sutherland            | £2,733,680.09  |
| Ross & Cromarty       | R&C (East) £2,627,094.79<br>R&C (West) £2,167,891.41<br>R&C £2,957,198.00<br>Total £7,752,184.20 |
| Skye                  | £4,197,404.96  |
| Inverness             | £6,262,708.80  |
| Nairn                 | £960,069.46  |
| Badenoch & Strathspey | £3,624,412.45  |
| Lochaber              | £3,048,703.97  |

**6. Mr J Edmondson**

**To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure**

The B9176 Road, known as “The Struie” linking the inner Dornoch Firth at Ardgay to the A9 south of Alness is defined as a Primary Route for winter maintenance as agreed by the Sutherland County Committee because it is a vital link to the North West Highlands.

The impact of closing this road is felt by multiple communities and businesses, many of which serve our food industry. The route is also the most direct to Inverness for hospital admissions and visiting. There are four residential properties on the road at Aultnamain.

The principle alternative route is the A9, which if closed for any reason between Tain and the Dornoch Firth Bridge, cuts off access entirely to and from the north eastern Highlands including Caithness via an eastern route.

It is accepted and acknowledged by Policy that circumstances will arise when the Struie is impassable, but the experience of the January storms left the route closed for 10 days. It was the last Primary route to be opened in the Highlands during the recent January storm, it remained closed for days longer than any other Primary route in the Highlands.

Will the Council commit to treating The Struie, a Primary Route as set out in Winter Service Policy (2018) and as agreed by Area Committee, and work with Police Scotland where necessary to ensure that this regionally important road critical to the resilience of the road network in the Highlands is opened as a matter of priority and as quickly as possible after any storm has abated at times of unplanned closure in future?"

## **RESPONSE**

The Council will commit to treating the Struie as a Primary route as set out in the Winter Service Policy (2018) and as agreed by Area Committee. The Council will continue to work with Police Scotland where necessary to ensure that this regionally important road will be opened as a matter of priority, and as quickly as possible after any storm has abated.

## **7. Mr R MacKintosh**

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

A recent article in The Ferret reported that an Estate in Sutherland benefitted from 100% rates relief from Highland Council, saving the Estate £11,200 in 2023. What was the loss in tax revenue to Highland Council over the last five years due to Estates claiming rates relief through the Small Business Bonus Scheme?

## **RESPONSE**

Non-domestic rates (NDR) in Scotland are collected by local councils, pooled nationally by the Scottish Government, and thereafter redistributed to local authorities. The amount of Small Business Bonus Scheme relief granted in respect of Estates involving shootings and deer forests, for the five-year period commencing financial year 2021/22 was £544,615.

I would also highlight that as part of the Council's Revenue budget 2026/27, members agreed that a review will be undertaken of lands and heritages which are shootings and deer forests, and the Small Business Bonus Scheme (Corp/13 refers).

## 8. Mr S Coghill

### To the Leader of the Council

Where development proposals would result in the loss of natural greenspace within a town or village — particularly where provision is already limited — what specific policy tests, mitigation requirements or compensatory mechanisms are applied to ensure that replacement provision is made, is meaningful, publicly accessible and secured within the same community?

### **RESPONSE**

The latest national ([National Planning Framework 4](#)) and Highland ([Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2](#)) planning policy documents have similar policies that identify and protect greenspaces within defined settlements. A greenspace often offers several overlapping and occasionally conflicting public benefits. For example, a wooded burnside with an informal network of paths running through it can offer a wildlife movement corridor, an informal play area, a dog walking route (that can cause disturbance to wildlife), and indirect amenity to neighbouring houses.

The Highland Council's latest planning policy differentiates greenspaces by their function, range of benefits and likelihood of being lost to development. So, formal greenspaces such as play areas and public open spaces merit the highest degree of protection from alternative development. Alternatively, undevelopable, steep wooded burnsidess with no safe public access are identified as a green network and afforded a lower degree of protection.

If a formal public open space is lost to development, then full compensatory provision (of an equivalent quantity and quality in the same locality) would be sought in planning policy terms. Occasionally, the Highland Council has chosen to develop its own formal public open spaces for affordable housing development, and this highlights that there can be policy conflicts between two or more public benefits in some cases. Different policies apply in terms of tree and woodland protection but again similar principles of avoidance if possible or compensatory provision apply. Incursion into a Green Network is less likely to prompt compensatory provision unless that habitat has high biodiversity value and/or woodland of nature conservation value.

## 9. Mr R Cross

### To the Leader of the Council

The adopted Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 makes clear that further housing allocations linked to Green Freeport status should await clear evidence of employment-led housing demand; on what basis is the Council approving applications that rely on Freeport status as justification where such evidence has not been demonstrated, without undermining the integrity of the plan-led system?

## **RESPONSE**

Although the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (IMFLDP2) was adopted in June 2024 its content including the number and capacity of housing sites was decided by the Highland Council in early 2022. In 2022 the full scale and impact of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project was unknown. The project's scale and impact was also uncertain when the Scottish Government's Reporter issued the IMFLDP2 Report in January 2024. [The Reporter's Report](#) recognised this uncertainty and endorsed an early plan review when better information was available. [Further work has been undertaken on this issue](#) and continues to be done via a soon to be completed and published Housing Need and Demand Assessment. Applications are determined against the best evidence available at the point of decision. The forthcoming Highland Local Development Plan will provide a formal opportunity to review and test evidence on this topic but applications should still be determined in the interim.

### **10. Mr A Graham**

#### **To the Leader of the Council**

What percentage of Highlands premises have broadband with

- (a) superfast speeds (30+ Mbps) and
- (b) Gigabit-capable full fibre

## **RESPONSE**

The Council does not hold this information. Information on broadband coverage can be found at [Broadband Coverage and Speed Test Statistics for Highland](#)

### **11. Mr C Balance**

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

Given that Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils have just this year published their Regional Maritime Plan, is Highland Council preparing its own Regional Maritime Plan?

## **RESPONSE**

While it has been discussed, since the adoption of the National Marine Plan 2015, no formal steps have been taken to begin the process of preparing a Regional Marine Plan for Highland.

The Scottish Government is currently developing the second National Marine Plan (NMP2). With that in mind, it is considered prudent to await its publication before progressing any work on a Regional Marine Plan. This will ensure that any potential future marine plan is aligned with the most up to date national marine policy and guidance. It will also allow officers time plan the resource requirements before finalising any commitment.

It should be noted that many marine matters and decisions fall outwith the Local Authority's planning powers. Marine matters that come within the Local Authority's jurisdiction are required to be assessed and determined in accordance with National Planning Framework 4 and the Local Development Plan alongside the National Marine Plan 2015. The preparation of the new Highland Local Development Plan provides an opportunity to review relevant planning policy if deemed necessary, in advance of publication of National Marine Plan 2.

## **12. Mr J Grafton**

### **To the Leader of the Council**

As Area Committees across Highland recently voted on :- “an increase of garage and garage site rentals” “[Lochaber - 8%] can you please confirm that the full value of the increase; or if greater, the percentage of the total garage rent that will be returned to the Area Committee's to fund repairs and maintenance of the garage stock and enable lessors to see some benefits for their increased payments?

### **RESPONSE**

Housing Revenue Account rent income is consolidated in local area rent accounts including council house rents, HRA shop rents and HRA garage rents. Area repairs expenditure from revenue budgets is according to need with preference being given to statutory repairs to council houses. In addition to revenue budgets, the Council borrows to fund capital expenditure to improve its assets again prioritised toward statutory improvements to council houses. A portion of this capital expenditure is set aside under Environmental Improvements usually covering council estate amenity improvements such as car parking, paths, and garages. There is no specific fund set aside for garage repairs or capital investment. Area repairs delivery teams action garage repairs and capital investment as needs arise and statutory priorities and budgets allow. Local teams continue to be committed to discussions with members as to options for garage sites on a site-by-site basis. Should the budget for garage rents be ringfenced for use on garage repairs only, this would have implications for the overall HRA budget.

## **13. Mr A Baxter**

### **To the Leader of the Council**

Will you set out the reasons as to why your administration was not prepared to support representations to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport requesting a cross-party, multi-agency roads summit for the Highlands to discuss future funding options to improve Highland roads?

### **RESPONSE**

Whilst I am not a member of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, I believe that your amendment was discussed by the members of the committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February and, following a vote, the amendment wasn't accepted.

## **14. Mr D Macpherson**

### **To the Leader of the Council**

What scope is there for the income generated from council tax on second homes and empty homes, contributing to and invested in the Highland 'housing challenge' ?

### **RESPONSE**

The 2026/27 Revenue budget agreed by the Council on 5 March 2026 includes increases in Council Tax on Second Homes and Long Term Empty properties, from which a £1 million recurring fund will be available to help meet the Highland Housing Challenge, bringing a new scheme comprising loans and grants into effect to enable the upgrade of long term empty properties for use as principal homes.

## **15. Mrs A MacLean**

### **To the Chair of Housing and Property**

Housing and Property Committee met on 5 Nov 2025 and agreed a new Domestic Abuse Housing Policy that clearly sets out its approach to assisting victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

The Policy strengthens the Council's role in preventing homelessness caused by domestic abuse, while ensuring a person-centred and safety focused response.

"At the core of our approach is the belief that victims should have the right to choose. Whether they decide to remain in their home or relocate, their wishes will guide our response. We are committed to making housing part of the solution, not a barrier for those seeking safety."

Last year over 2,700 incidents of domestic abuse were recorded by Police Scotland in Highland.

On average, 167 households present as homeless each year in Highland due to a violent or abusive relationship breakdown, this is 12% of all households who approach the Council as homeless as they have nowhere safe and secure to live (1 in 9 households).

Women are disproportionately affected, and many do not disclose abuse due to fear, stigma, or lack of housing options.

The new policy will:

- Improve housing outcomes for victims and their children.
- Provide a trauma-informed, person-centred service to victims of domestic abuse.

- Promote preventative and proactive approaches, including support to remain safely in the home where appropriate.
- Recognise domestic abuse as a breach of tenancy.
- Prepare for the implementation of new powers under the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021, which will allow landlords to remove perpetrators from their tenancy (enabling the victims to remain if they choose).

The policy has been shaped by the voices of those with lived experience, as well as input from Council staff, tenant volunteers and partner organisations. It builds on The Highland Council's existing work with its partners in the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership, and its pledge to the Chartered Institute of Housing's Make a Stand campaign.

An implementation plan is already underway and includes:

- Ensuring, through training, that housing staff, and anyone delivering services on its behalf, have the skills to recognise and respond to domestic abuse.
- Awareness raising to make sure that people know how to get the help they need to keep them and their families safe.
- Service improvements to embed the policy in practice.

The Highland Council is committed to ensuring that anyone experiencing domestic abuse is listened to, supported, and empowered to make informed choices about their housing and safety.

How will this be implemented?

## **RESPONSE**

As outlined in the question, the implementation plan for the Domestic Abuse Housing policy is already in place and progress being made against it. The Housing Service has extensive experience supporting people affected by domestic abuse, ensuring they receive appropriate housing options advice and are signposted or referred to relevant support agencies. Emergency accommodation is provided when needed, and this service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for anyone requiring a safe place urgently for them and their children. Our aim is to prevent homelessness, however when this is not possible, we rehouse affected families as quickly as we can. This commitment is demonstrated by the decline in the number of children in temporary accommodation across Highland.

A long-established process is in place for managing 'Safe at Home' referrals, through which we carry out safety measures for victims living in any type of housing tenure. This can include installing additional window and replacement/additional door locks and improving external lighting.

Partnership working is central to the Housing Service's response to domestic abuse. We work closely with partners in terms of the provision of all domestic abuse services, and across the Highland area, Housing staff participate in Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, which focus on sharing information and coordinating actions to reduce risks for victims.

In November 2025, all housing management staff—including officers and assistants—completed Domestic Abuse training delivered by SafeLives. We are also considering the implications of forthcoming legislative changes and exploring how the Housing Service can continue to engage with all stakeholders and maintain strong working relationships.

Highland is awaiting the final guidance from the Scottish Government around the new powers under the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 (which will allow landlords to remove perpetrators from their tenancy (enabling the victims to remain if they choose)).

## **Appendix 1 – Answer 1**

### **Litigation and Advice cases since 1 April 2023**

#### Simple Procedure

AH v THC (Simple Procedure, damage via fallen tree, concluded)  
AB v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA damage, concluded)  
AB v THC (Simple Procedure, vehicle damage, pothole, concluded)  
BD v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
CE v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
DF v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
IM v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
JB v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
Enterprise Mobility v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
KS v THC (Simple Procedure, road defect, vehicle damage, concluded)  
LR v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
MN v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
NS v THC (Simple Procedure, vehicle damage, pothole, concluded)  
RW v THC (Simple Procedure, damp in tenancy, property damage, concluded)  
Visitor Centres Ltd v THC (Simple Procedure, RTA, vehicle damage, concluded)  
SW and RW v The Highland Council (Simple Procedure, data protection case, concluded)  
SW and RW v Assessor of HWIVJB and The Highland Council (Simple Procedure, data protection case, ongoing)

#### Non-Domestic Rates

Simply Inverness v The Highland Council – (non-domestic rates, 1<sup>st</sup> instance concluded)  
Simply Inverness v The Highland Council – (non-domestic rates, Sh Appeal Crt, concluded)  
Simply Inverness v The Highland Council – (non-domestic rates, Court of Session concluded)

#### Personal Injury

AI v THC (writ, PI, concluded)  
CS (writ, injury, slip and trip, concluded)  
DM v THC (writ, PI, slip and trip, concluded)  
JH v THC (PI, employee injured, concluded)  
JCr v THC (RTA, injury, concluded)  
P G v THC (Personal Injury, eye injury, ongoing)

### Adult Support and Protection Banning Order

THC v CM – (Banning Order via ASP, concluded)

### Housing

P v THC – (discrimination, housing, ongoing)

TD v THC (housing, injury and repairs, concluded)

EM v The Highland Council – discrimination claim – concluded

### Land/Contractual Dispute

Caol Sewage Treatment Works v THC (land dispute, contract, ongoing)

The Partnership of I & G Macdonald v THC (alleged contractual breach re land, concluded)

Unauthorised encampments x 1 (Dores Road, concluded)

### Property Damage

AM v THC (writ, property damage, vicarious liability, concluded)

Gleaner Oils Ltd v THC (RTA, property damage, concluded)

KB v THC (writ, RTA, vehicle damage, ongoing)

### Planning

Highland Council -v- AR & Boardbeach Ltd. Interdict sought at Inverness Sheriff Court. Instructed by Planning Department.  
Ongoing.

### Environmental Health

BSW Timber Limited -v- Highland Council. Appeal of Abatement Notice issued by Highland Council at Fort William Sheriff Court.  
Instructed by Environmental Health Department. Ongoing (sisted).

### Judicial Reviews

Petition by AO for Judicial Review of an intentionally homeless decision by The Highland Council. Concluded

Petition by SM for Judicial review of an intentionally homeless decision by The Highland Council. Concluded

Petition by CM for Judicial Review of a decision by Highland Council not to accept transfer of throughcare responsibility for him.  
(Ongoing)

Petition by Cains Trustees (Jersey) Limited and Cains Fiduciaries (Jersey) Limited as Trustees for the Eastgate Unit Trust for  
judicial review of decisions of the Highland Council taken on 28 August and 14 September 2023. (Concluded)

### Court of Session

Alasdair John McNab v The Highland Council & Others. Roads. Concluded.

### Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited (HOIL cases)

Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited v RA. Recovery of sums due. Concluded. Decree with expenses in favour of Pursuer.

Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited v External Reality Limited. Recovery of sums due. Concluded. Decree with expenses in favour of Pursuer.

Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited v KA. Petition for Sequestration. Concluded. Sequestration awarded.

Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited v Wyvis Cosmetic Dental Laboratory Limited, JM and JM. Recovery of sums due. Concluded. Decree and expenses granted in favour of Pursuer.

### **Trading Standards**

| <b>Type of Case</b>                            | <b>Defender/Accused</b>                   | <b>Issues</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Prosecution                                    | Adnan Abbas t/a Wow Mobile, Inverness     | Illegal vape sales  | Guilty, £900 fine.  |
| Prosecution                                    | Daniel Kay, Inverness                     | Rogue builder offences, targeting vulnerable householders.    | Guilty, sentencing pending.   |
| Civil Enforcement Order                        | Mohammad Shuaab t/a JM Patterson, Alness  | Sale of vapes to children and various other related breaches. | Order granted.  |
| Vapes Banning Order                            | Adnan Abbas t/a Wow Mobile, Inverness     | Repeated sales of vapes to children.                          | Banning Order granted.  |
| HMRC tax sanctions for sale of illicit tobacco | Five shops in the Inner Moray Firth area. | Sale of counterfeit and non-duty paid tobacco products.       | Sanctions imposed, one penalty confirmed at £5000, others amount pending. |
| Formal Undertaking                             | Locally based online seller.              | Sale of counterfeit clothing and other fashion products.      | Undertaking signed, being monitored.                                      |
| Formal Undertaking                             | Locally based online seller.              | Sale of counterfeit sports clothing.                          | Undertaking signed, being monitored.                                      |

Fixed Penalty  
Fines

Various local shops.

Sale of vapes or cigarettes to  
underage buyers.

51 fixed penalties issued,  
ranging from £200 to £600,  
all but one paid.

## Employment Tribunals

| Service   | Post          | Date ET Lodged | Reason for ET Claim  | Concluded     |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|--|---------------|
| People    | Employee      | 13/03/2023     | Disability Discrimination  | Yes - Settled |
| Corporate | Employee      | 23/02/2023     | Disability Discrimination  | Yes - settled |
| People    | Employee      | 06/01/2023     | Disability Discrimination  | Yes - settled |
| Place     | Employee      | 22/09/2023     | Unfair dismissal   | Yes - settled |
| People    | Non-employee  | 07/07/2025     | Unfair dismissal   | Yes           |
| People    | Employee      | 19/05/2025     | Unfair dismissal   | Yes - settled |
| Place     | Employee      | 17/07/2025     | Unfair dismissal   | Ongoing       |
| People    | Employee      | 24/09/2025     | Whistleblowing/industrial injury/protected disclosure                                  | Ongoing       |
| People    | Employee      | 28/11/2024     | Disability   | Ongoing       |
| Corporate | Employee      | 18/03/2025     | Disability, Victimisation, Maternity   | Ongoing       |
| Place     | Employee      | 28/05/2025     | Unfair dismissal   | Ongoing       |
| People    | Non-employees | 05/11/2025     | Unfair dismissal/Holiday Pay   | Ongoing       |
| Place     | Employee      | 28/11/2025     | Disability & Wrongful dismissal  | Ongoing       |
| People    | Employee      | 23/12/2025     | Unfair dismissal, sex discrimination, pregnancy<br>discrimination & breach of contract | Ongoing       |

## Legal

| <b>Case</b>  | <b>Type of Action</b> | <b>THC Involvement</b> | <b>Outcome</b>        |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Brian Maclsaac v The Highland Council  | Judicial Review       | Respondent             | Petition dismissed    |
| Catherine Hannaford v The Highland Council   | Judicial Review       | Respondent             | Conceded              |
| Ross MacGregor v The Scottish Ministers (and The Highland Council)                                   | Statutory Appeal      | Interested Party       | Ongoing               |
| Ben Nevis Landing Ltd v The Scottish Ministers (and The Highland Council)                            | Statutory Appeal      | Interested Party       | Ongoing               |
| The Highland Council v Scottish Ministers (and Ecocel)   | Statutory Appeal      | Appellant              | Ongoing               |
| Richard Cross v The Highland Council   | Judicial Review       | Respondent             | Petition dismissed    |
| The Highland Council v The Scottish Ministers (and Energiekontor and Energyfarm UK Strath Oykel Ltd) | Judicial Review       | Petitioner             | Unopposed, with costs |
| Brian Maclsaac v The Highland Council  | Judicial Review       | Respondent             | Conceded, no costs    |
| The Lawson Family Partnership V The Highland Council (and EE Limited)                                | Judicial Review       | Respondent             | Conceded, no costs    |

## Insurance

| <b>Claim type</b>    | <b>Total no. of claims</b> | <b>No. Outstanding</b> | <b>No. Concluded</b> | <b>Outcome of concluded cases</b>           |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Employer's liability | 16                         | 10                     | 6                    | All cases resulted in financial settlement. |
| Public liability     | 32                         | 13                     | 19                   | All cases resulted in financial settlement. |
| Motor                | 10                         | 5                      | 5                    | All cases resulted in financial settlement. |
| <b>Totals</b>        | <b>58</b>                  | <b>28</b>              | <b>30</b>            |   |

Details of individual claims cannot be provided in order to ensure confidentiality. However, the following explanations for the claim types are provided:

Employer's liability –claims by Council employees for accidents/ incidents in the workplace.

Public liability – claims by members of the public where they consider that the Council has failed in its duty of care and is liable for the "harm" that occurred. Examples include damage to private vehicles caused by potholes, slips and trips on roads/ pavements and damage to personal property caused by Council employees.

Motor – accidents caused to vehicles by Council drivers.

## SPSO

### Complaints Received by SPSO by function

|  | 2026/25*        | 2024/25         | 2023/24         |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Subject Group</b>                   | Number received | Number received | Number received |
| Housing                                | 16              | 23              | 14              |
| Education                              | 13              | 16              | 13              |
| Planning                               | 2               | 13              | 13              |
| Legal and Admin                        | 6               | 8               | 7               |
| Finance                                | 5               | 7               | 6               |
| Social Work                            | 4               | 7               | 8               |
| Roads and Transport                    | 5               | 5               | 10              |
| Environmental Health and Cleansing     | 0               | 4               | 6               |
| Recreation and Leisure                 | 0               | 2               | 2               |
| Economic Development                   | 1               | 1               | 0               |
| Land and Property                      | 1               | 1               | 0               |
| Other                                  | 1               | 1               | 1               |
| Building Control                       | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Consumer Protection                    | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Fire & Police Boards                   | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| National Park Authorities              | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Personnel                              | 0               | 0               | 1               |
| Valuation Joint Boards                 | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Welfare Fund - Community Care Grants   | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Welfare Fund - Crisis Grants           | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Subject unknown or Out of Jurisdiction | 0               | 5               | 2               |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>54</b>       | <b>93</b>       | <b>83</b>       |

### Complaints Received by SPSO by outcome

| Stage                   | Outcome Group  | 2024/25   | 2023/24   |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| Early Resolution        | Cause and impact test not met (s 5 (3))                              | 3         | 1         |
|                         | Discretion – Alternative action proposed                             | 2         | 1         |
|                         | Discretion – Alternative route used or available                     | 0         | 1         |
|                         | Discretion - Good complaint handling                                 | 36        | 26        |
|                         | Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation | 11        | 13        |
|                         | Discretion – referred back   | 3         | 3         |
|                         | Discretion - Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome | 1         | 0         |
|                         | Member of the public test not met (s 5 (6))                          | 0         | 0         |
|                         | Premature  | 1         | 1         |
|                         | Right of appeal to court/tribunal/Scottish ministers (s 7 (8))       | 1         | 0         |
|                         | Subject matter not in jurisdiction                                   | 5         | 2         |
|                         | Time limit (s 10)  | 3         | 1         |
|                         | Unable to proceed  | 0         | 1         |
|                         | <b>Total</b>   | <b>66</b> | <b>50</b> |
| Investigation           | Fully upheld   | 0         | 0         |
|                         | Not duly made or withdrawn   | 0         | 0         |
|                         | Not upheld   | 0         | 0         |
|                         | Resolved   | 0         | 0         |
|                         | Some upheld  | 0         | 2         |
|                         | <b>Total</b>   | <b>0</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Total Complaints</b> |  | <b>66</b> | <b>52</b> |

| <b>Outcome</b>                                     | <b>2025/26*</b> |
|--|-----------------|
| Awaiting outcome                                   | 3               |
| Customer to provide further information to Council | 1               |
| Further response required                          | 5               |
| No Further Action                                  | 45              |
|  | 54              |

\*The Council is not informed of all complaints received by the SPSO. Numbers will be confirmed in SPSO annual report and reported to Audit Committee

## Appendix 2 – Answer to Question 2

### TOTAL VACANCIES CLOSED – 09/03/26 = 31

| Status | Job Number | Int/Ext  | Re-Ad | Job Title   | Contract Type | Position Type | Job Closing Date | Primary or Secondary or Special School | Promoted Post |
|--------|------------|----------|-------|---|---------------|---------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| Open   | HGH19512   | External | Yes   | Head Teacher (Primary), Inverloch Primary School, HGH19512  | Permanent     | Full Time     | 09/03/2026       | P                                      | HT            |
| Open   | HGH20212   | External | Yes   | Head Teacher (Special), Drummond School, HGH20212   | Permanent     | Full Time     | 09/03/2026       | P                                      | HT            |
| Open   | HGH20263   | External | Yes   | Principal Teacher (Primary), Maternity Cover from 23/03/2026 until March 2027, Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar, HGH20263                        | Fixed Term    | Full Time     | 09/03/2026       | P                                      | PT            |
| Open   | HGH20485   | External | No    | Head Teacher (Primary) Milton of Leys Primary School, HGH20485  | Permanent     | Full Time     | 09/03/2026       | P                                      | HT            |
| Open   | HGH20486   | External | No    | Teacher (ASN), Drummond School, HGH20486  | Permanent     | Full Time     | 09/03/2026       | P                                      |               |
| Open   | HGH20490   | Internal | No    | Teacher (Primary), 21 hours per week, Maternity Cover from 20/04/2026 until 02/07/2026, Millbank Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20490 | Fixed Term    | Part Time     | 09/03/2026       | P                                      |               |

|      |          |          |    |   |            |           |            |   |    |
|------|----------|----------|----|---|------------|-----------|------------|---|----|
| Open | HGH20492 | Internal | No | Teacher (ASN), Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, The Glade, Enhanced Nurture Provision based at Central Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20492 | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20494 | Internal | No | Teacher (Primary), 14 hours per week, Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, Millbank Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20494                        | Fixed Term | Part Time | 09/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20496 | External | No | Teacher (ASN), Maternity cover from 20/04/2026 until 25/03/2027, Drummond School, HGH20496  | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20498 | Internal | No | Teacher (ASN), Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, Merkinch Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20498   | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20503 | Internal | No | Teacher (Primary), 17.5 hours per week, Fixed Term from 09/03/2026 until 02/07/2026, Hilton Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20503        | Fixed Term | Part Time | 09/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20558 | External | No | Head Teacher (Primary), Cannich Bridge Primary School, HGH20558   | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | P | HT |
| Open | HGH20564 | External | No | Head Teacher (Primary), Tomnacross and Teanassie Primary Schools, HGH20564  | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | P | HT |

|      |          |          |     |  |            |           |            |   |  |
|------|----------|----------|-----|--|------------|-----------|------------|---|--|
| Open | HGH20569 | Internal | No  | Teacher (Primary), Maternity Cover from 20/04/2026 until 02/07/2026, Abernethy Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20569              | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | P |  |
| Open | HGH20571 | Internal | No  | Teacher (Primary), 21 hours per week, Maternity cover from 11/03/2026 until 02/07/2026, (INTERNAL VACANCY), Inverlochy Primary, HGH20571 | Fixed Term | Part Time | 09/03/2026 | P |  |
| Open | HGH19892 | External | Yes | Teacher (Secondary), Music, Plockton High School, HGH19892   | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20061 | External | Yes | Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics, Fixed Term until July 2027, Portree High School, HGH20061  | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20255 | External | Yes | Teacher (Secondary), Business Studies, Maternity Cover until 27/01/2027, Inverness royal Academy, HGH20255                               | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20479 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary), Physical Education, 14 hours per week, Dingwall Academy, HGH20479   | Permanent  | Part Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20488 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary), Art & Design, 21 hours per week, Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, Millburn Academy, HGH20488                            | Fixed Term | Part Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |

|      |          |          |    |   |            |           |            |   |    |
|------|----------|----------|----|---|------------|-----------|------------|---|----|
| Open | HGH20489 | External | No | Principal Teacher (Secondary), Pastoral Support, Lochaber High School, HGH20489                               | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S | PT |
| Open | HGH20499 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Physics and Science, Start date 17/08/2026, Culloden Academy, HGH20499                   | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20500 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Art & Design, 28 hours per week, Start date 17/08/2026, Culloden Academy, HGH20500       | Permanent  | Part Time | 09/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20501 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics, Start date 17/08/2026, Culloden Academy, HGH20501                           | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20511 | External | No | Principal Teacher (Secondary), ASN - Enhanced Provision, Millburn Academy, HGH20511                           | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S | PT |
| Open | HGH20519 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics, Millburn Academy, HGH20519  | Permanent  | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20521 | External | No | Teacher (ASN), Additional Support for Learning, Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, Lochaber High School, HGH20521   | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20567 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Art & Design, Fixed Term from 17/08/2026 until 01/07/2027, Mallaig High School. HGH20567 | Fixed Term | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |    |

|      |          |          |    |   |           |           |            |   |  |
|------|----------|----------|----|---|-----------|-----------|------------|---|--|
| Open | HGH20570 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Physics & Science, Start date 20/04/2026, Tain Royal Academy, HGH20570 | Permanent | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20573 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), English, Mallaig High School, Lochaber, HGH20573                       | Permanent | Full Time | 09/03/2026 | S |  |

**TOTAL VACANCIES OUT – CLOSING 23/03/26 = 27**

| Status | Job Number | Int/Ext  | Re-Ad | Job Title  | Contract Type | Position Type | Job Closing Date | Primary or Secondary or Special School | Promoted Post |
|--------|------------|----------|-------|--|---------------|---------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| Open   | HGH18090   | External | Yes   | Teacher (Primary) GAELIC MEDIUM, Lochaline Primary School, HGH18090  | Permanent     | Full Time     | 23/03/2026       | P                                      |               |
| Open   | HGH19313   | External | Yes   | Teacher (Primary), Gaelic Medium, Newtonmore Primary School, HGH19313  | Permanent     | Full Time     | 23/03/2026       | P                                      |               |
| Open   | HGH20256   | Internal | Yes   | Teacher (ASN), 21 hours per week, Maternity cover until 02/07/2026, Lundavra Primary, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20256               | Fixed Term    | Part Time     | 23/03/2026       | P                                      |               |
| Open   | HGH20301   | Internal | Yes   | Teacher (Primary), 10.5 hours per week, Maternity Cover until 02/07/2026, Lochaline Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20301 | Fixed Term    | Part Time     | 23/03/2026       | P                                      |               |

|      |          |          |     |   |            |           |            |   |    |
|------|----------|----------|-----|---|------------|-----------|------------|---|----|
| Open | HGH20374 | Internal | Yes | Teacher (Primary), Fixed Term from 18/02/2026 until 02/07/2026, Kinlochleven Campus, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20374           | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20621 | Internal | No  | Teacher (Primary), 17.5 hours per week, Fixed Term until 02 July 2026, Obsdale Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20621 | Fixed Term | Part Time | 23/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20622 | External | No  | Teacher (Primary), 21 hours per week, Fixed Term from 09/03/2026 until 02/07/2026, Dingwall Primary School, HGH20622        | Fixed Term | Part Time | 23/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20637 | Internal | No  | Principal Teacher (Primary), Start date 17/08/2026, Croy Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20637                       | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | P | PT |
| Open | HGH20640 | Internal | No  | Teacher (Primary), Fixed Term until 03/07/2026, Dingwall Primary School, (INTERNAL VACANCY), HGH20640                       | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20642 | Internal | No  | Teacher (Primary), Fixed Term until 02/07/2026, (INTERNAL VACANCY), Dingwall Primary, HGH20642                              | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | P |    |
| Open | HGH20644 | External | No  | Principal Teacher (Primary), Start date 17/08/2026, Muck Primary School, HGH20644   | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | P | PT |

|      |          |          |     |  |            |           |            |   |    |
|------|----------|----------|-----|--|------------|-----------|------------|---|----|
| Open | HGH19852 | External | Yes | Teacher (Secondary), Physics, 28 hours per week, Maternity Cover until 07/01/2027, Nairn Academy, HGH19852         | Fixed Term | Part Time | 23/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20262 | External | Yes | Principal Teacher (Secondary), Enhanced Provision, Start Date 01/03/2026, Wick Joint Campus, HGH20262              | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S | PT |
| Open | HGH20623 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary), Physics, Start date 01/06/2026, Inverness Royal Academy, HGH20623                             | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20631 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary), Chemistry, 7 hours per week, Start date 17/08/2026, Inverness Royal Academy, HGH20631         | Permanent  | Part Time | 23/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20632 | External | No  | Principal Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics & Business, Tain Royal Academy, HGH20632                                | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S | PT |
| Open | HGH20634 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary), Gaelic Medium, Fixed Term from 17/08/2026 until 01/07/2027, Inverness Royal Academy, HGH20634 | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20635 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary) Mathematics, Thurso High School, HGH20635  | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |    |
| Open | HGH20636 | External | No  | Teacher (Secondary), Business Studies, Fixed Term from 17/08/2026  | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |    |

|      |          |          |    |   |            |           |            |   |  |
|------|----------|----------|----|---|------------|-----------|------------|---|--|
|      |          |          |    | until 01/07/2027, Inverness Royal Academy, HGH20636   |            |           |            |   |  |
| Open | HGH20639 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Physical Education, Fixed Term from 17/08/2026 to 01/07/2027, Millburn Academy, HGH20639     | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20641 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Physical Education, Start date 17/08/2026, Millburn Academy, HGH20641                        | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20643 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Technical Education, Commencing 17/08/2026, Millburn Academy, HGH20643                       | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20646 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Home Economics, Maternity Cover until June 2027, Thurso High School, HGH20646                | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20654 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Biology, Maternity Cover from 17/08/2026 until 01/07/2027, Inverness Royal Academy, HGH20654 | Fixed Term | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20657 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Craft Design and Technology, Start date 17/08/26, Inverness Royal Academy, HGH20657          | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
| Open | HGH20658 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Biology, Dingwall Academy, HGH20658  | Permanent  | Full Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |

|      |          |          |    |  |           |              |            |   |  |
|------|----------|----------|----|--|-----------|--------------|------------|---|--|
| Open | HGH20661 | External | No | Teacher (Secondary), Mathematics,<br>Start date 17/08/26, Inverness Royal<br>Academy, HGH20661 | Permanent | Full<br>Time | 23/03/2026 | S |  |
|------|----------|----------|----|--|-----------|--------------|------------|---|--|

#### INTERNAL POSTER ADVERTS – CLOSED THIS WEEK = 4

| AREA  | LOCATION                  | VACANCY                                | FTE | SALARY                       | DURATION                                | DATE CIRCULATED | CLOSING DATE | ADVERT CIRCULATION |
|-------|---------------------------|--|-----|------------------------------|---|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| NORTH | Ferintosh/Mulbuie Cluster | Head Teacher (Primary)                 | 1   | £69,270                      | Until return of Substantive post holder | 03/03/2026      | 09/03/2026   | INTERNAL TO HC     |
| NORTH | Coulhill Primary          | Teacher (Primary)                      | 1   | Teacher Maingrade (SP 1 - 5) | Until return of Substantive post holder | 04/03/2026      | 10/03/2026   | INTERNAL TO HC     |
| NORTH | Coulhill Primary          | Depute Head Teacher (Primary) - Acting | 0.4 | DHT SP3 £69,270              | Until return of Substantive post holder | 03/03/2026      | 09/03/2026   | INTERNAL TO SCHOOL |
| SOUTH | Drummond School           | Depute Head Teacher (Special) - Acting | 1   | DHT SP8 £80,451              | From 20/04/2026 until August 2027       | 03/03/2026      | 09/03/2026   | INTERNAL TO SCHOOL |