

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board** held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 11.00am.

Present:

Representing the Highland Council:

Mr M Cameron (remote)
Ms T Collier (remote)
Mr L Fraser
Mrs M Paterson (remote)
Ms J McEwan (remote)
Mrs T Robertson (*substitute*)

Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:

Mr G Murray (remote)

In attendance:

Mr F Finlayson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Mr R Christie, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Ms J Johnston, Accountant, Treasurers Office (remote)
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Clerk's Office
Ms K Arnott, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr P Lipa, Lead Auditor, Audit Scotland (remote)
Ms E Scoburgh, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland (remote)

Mr L Fraser in the Chair

Business

**1. Apologies for Absence
Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Graham and Mr B Boyd.

Members were notified that Councillor James McGillivray, Highland Council had resigned from the Board. The appointment of a new Highland Council representative to the Board would take place in due course.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/ Aithris Fhollaiseachd**

There were no declarations of interest/transparency statements.

**3. Annual Audit Plan 2025/26
Plana Sgrùdaidh Bliadhna 2025/26**

There had been circulated Report No. VAL/01/26 by the External Auditor, Audit Scotland setting out the 2025/26 Annual Audit Plan for the Highland and Western Isles

Valuation Joint Board. The report set out the planned work to be carried out in connection with the 2025/26 audit.

Members were advised that Mr Prem Lipa would be replacing Mr David Fraser as Lead Auditor, Audit Scotland.

There was commentary on the report by the Lead Auditor and key areas were highlighted such as the scope of the audit; materiality levels determined for the audit of the Board; wider scope and best value audit; and audit timetable and audit fee.

The Board **NOTED** the contents of the report.

4. Minutes of Meeting Geàrr-chunntas Coinneimh

There had been circulated the Minute of Meeting of the Board held on 16 December 2025 the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes Gnothaichean Ag Èirigh on Gheàrr-chunntas

There were none.

6. Proposed Revenue Budget 2026 Buidseat Teachd-a-Steach 2026 ga Mholadh

There was circulated Report No. VAL/02/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer which set out for approval a proposed revenue budget for financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29.

The Assessor and ERO highlighted that the budget proposals included a focus on support for both management and teams. The Revaluation combined with work on the self catering audit had created significant additional work for the department over the last few years. Additional Barclay funding would help towards undertaking the self catering audit earlier in the year. Details of proposals for staffing were provided.

Further, the Assessor continued to monitor the progress of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport and wider Freeport area. The administration of the Freeport could be covered by the proposed valuation resource. However, there would be a cost from 2027/28, and it was likely that this will be in the form of specialist valuation and technical knowledge.

Budget savings of £18,262 had been identified, however there was some caution over the proposed saving in electricity given the war in Iran and the impact of this on energy prices.

In discussion, information was sought, and provided, on whether there was any capacity to take on a trainee valuer post in the Western Isles, similar to recruitment within Highland. It was clarified that staff in the Western Isles were currently at capacity however succession planning for next year was ongoing.

In terms of the audit of self-catering units, it was queried if there had been a difference in the number of these properties on the valuation roll since licensing of them had been introduced. It was advised that the numbers of self-catering units on the valuation roll were quite steady and were following the regulations. There was a 67% completion rate for information from self-catering operators on the current audit which was good compared to previous years.

Discussion took place regarding the canvassers for the upcoming elections using handheld devices and how these worked. It was explained this avoided unnecessary paperwork being carried around by the canvassers and information from the devices could be downloaded at the end of the working day.

Questions were asked regarding property tax in the Highlands. New council tax increases specifically targeting high-value properties were to be introduced by the Scottish Government and new council tax bands introduced for properties worth between £1m and £2m, and those worth over £2m. An explanation of the banding process of properties was provided and legislation on this new tax was awaited.

It was questioned whether there would be any costs or extra revenue arising from Highland Council's decision to increase premium charges on Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties. Any changes would be monitored.

The Board **APPROVED** the proposed budget.

7. Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement 2025/26 Aithris Sgrùdaidh Buidseit Teachd-a-Steach 2025/26

There had been circulated Report No VAL/03/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

It was noted that there were a number of vacancies within the team which accounted for the underspend in the revenue budget. It was queried if vacancies would cause any difficulties over the Scottish Parliament election period. It was advised that there should be no staff resource issues during the election period as assistance was being provided by canvassers during this busy period. Also, most of the vacancies were in the valuation side of the department.

The Board **NOTED** the content of the report.

8. Departmental Report Aithisg Roinnei

There had been circulated Report No VAL/04/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

It was highlighted that the main work carried out since the last meeting of the Board in the valuation section was the self catering audit and finalising the 2026 Revaluation. The Election team were working on the delivery of the Scottish Parliament election on 7 May, 2026. Meetings were being held with the Royal Mail arising from concerns about poor mail deliveries in Highland. In terms of the hydroelectricity case that was heard before the Upper Tribunal for Scotland the outcome was expected to be known by the end of March 2026. Work with the aim of producing a formal Service Level

Agreement document with ICT in respect of the services they provide was continuing. ICT were also to produce documentation which will assist in creating an IT Disaster Recovery Plan for the department.

Further, a graduate valuer successfully sat their Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) in January and has now gained full professional status. There were a further three graduate valuers who are provisionally looking at sitting their APC in the spring of 2026. Three members of the electoral team had been successful in completing the Association of Electoral Administrators Certificate in Electoral Administration, adding more knowledge to the team. The Board asked that their congratulations be passed onto the members of staff for passing these exams.

Information was sought, and provided, on large housing developments and how the council tax banding was formulated.

It was requested that when the final number of appeals following the 2023 Revaluation were known, these be circulated to the Board members for information.

The Board **NOTED** the recent activities of the department as set out in the report

9. Special Leave Policy **Poileasaidh Fòrlaidh Shònraichte**

There had been circulated Report No VAL/05/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

Members welcomed this policy however requested an amendment to the policy:-

- amending Special Leave provision item H by deleting reference to Visiting Committee and replace with Independent Monitoring Committee;

Further, it would be checked if paragraph 3 of Special Leave provisions required to be amended to include a Justice of the Peace; a member of the Independent Monitoring Committee and Election duties to the following "Leave for duties for items (b) to (g) includes.....)

The Board **APPROVED** the updated Special Leave Policy, subject to an amendment to Special Leave provision item H by deleting reference to Visiting Committee and replace with Independent Monitoring Committee.

10. Carer Positive Policy **Poileasaidh Taiceil do Luchd-cùraim**

There had been circulated Report No VAL/06/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

The Board **APPROVED** the Carer Positive Policy.

11. Customer Relationship Policy **Poileasaidh Dàimh Luchd-ceannaich**

There had been circulated Report No VAL/07/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

The Board **APPROVED** the Customer Relationship Policy.

12. Exclusion of the Public
Às-dùnadh a' Phobail

The Board resolved that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

13. Staff Development – Career Grade Progression
Leasachadh Luchd-obrach – Adhartas Ìrean Dreuchd

There had been circulated to Members only Report No VAL/08/26 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer which set out new career grade progression schemes for the development of staff in all clerical, technical and valuation sections of the department.

Members welcomed the report, highlighting the importance of staff development and giving staff a career progression.

The Board **APPROVED** the new career grade progression schemes.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 am.



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board held remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

The Highland Council:

Councillor Graham MacKenzie, Chair of Communities and Place Committee
Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive – People (substitute)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Stuart Black, Chief Executive
Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland (also representing Community Partnerships)

NHS Highland:

Sarah Compton-Bishop, Chair, NHS Highland Board
Fiona Davies, Chief Executive
Jennifer Davies, Director of Public Health

Police Scotland:

Temporary Chief Superintendent Dave Ross (substitute)

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Lynne Gow, Area Commander and Local Senior Officer

The Scottish Government:

Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Place Director

Community Partnership representative:

Eann Sinclair, Chair of Caithness Community Partnership (also representing Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

High Life Highland:

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

Highland Third Sector Interface:

Kenny Steele, Chair of HTSI Board

NatureScot:

Graham Neville, Head of Operations - North

Skills Development Scotland:

Roddy Bailey, Area Manager

University of the Highlands and Islands:

Lorna Walker, Chief Operating Officer (substitute)

In attendance:

Fiona Duncan, Chief Officer - Health and Social Care, The Highland Council
Arlene Johnstone, Chief Officer – Highland Health and Social Care, NHS Highland
Ian Kyle, Chair, Community Learning, Development and Engagement Strategic Group
Judy Hill, Chair, Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group
Cathy Steer, Chair, Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group
Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group
James Maybee, Chair, Community Justice Partnership
Carron McDiarmid, Chair, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager
Melanie Murray, Principal Committee Officer, The Highland Council

Also in attendance:

Paul Reid, Chief Officer – Facilities and Fleet Management, The Highland Council
Karen Chisholm, Future Operating Model Programme Manager, The Highland Council
Gail Anderton, Community Benefits Manager, The Highland Council

Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop in the Chair**Business****1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Raymond Bremner, Derek Brown, Chief Superintendent Rob Shepherd, Ranald Robertson and Vicki Nairn.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of Meetings

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership Board – 5 December 2025;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership Strategic Group – 10 September 2025; and
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 18 November 2025.

4. Action Tracker

The Board was asked to review progress of its agreed actions as set out in the Action Tracker which had been circulated.

In relation to the Health Inequalities dashboard, the Partnership Development Manager confirmed that engagement activity was underway. The Head of Health Improvement, NHS Highland, had attended a recent meeting of the Partnership Coordinating Group, and the Director of Public Health was scheduled to present at the CPP Conference in May.

Due to technical issues, it was suggested that the Director of Public Health provide an update on the action relating to the Population Health Framework outwith the meeting so that the Action Tracker could be updated accordingly.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Action Tracker; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Director of Public Health provide an update to the Partnership Development Manager on the action relating to the Population Health Framework so that the Action Tracker could be updated accordingly.

5. Future Operating Model Programme Update

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/1/26 by the Future Operating Model Programme Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- it was reassuring that the Future Operating Model reflected feedback from communities regarding more effective and sensible use of resources in response to community needs;
- information was sought, and provided, on whether there were any areas of resistance or challenge, whether any specific risks to delivery had been identified, and whether partnership working and engagement were being maximised;
- questions were raised regarding what success would look like and how it would be evaluated, including in terms of return on investment. In response, the Programme Manager explained that the Future Operating Model would be measured against an assessment framework, which could be shared with partners. The Assistant Chief Executive – People added that the Future Operating Model was about decentralising services, engaging with and listening to communities and stakeholders, and developing the model accordingly, and success would be delivering what communities had said they wanted. It was also an opportunity to reduce duplication and free up resources by sharing services, as many partners were undertaking similar back-office functions. It was emphasised that there was no preconceived blueprint, and that there was still an opportunity for people to feed into the model;
- the importance of parity of voice, and of raising awareness of the Future Operating Model Programme throughout partners' extensive networks, was emphasised, and the Chair suggested that it would be helpful for the Programme Manager's contact details to be circulated so that partners could make contact on any relevant matters;
- the Chair suggested that a further progress report, including reflections on the points raised during discussion, be presented to a future meeting so that the Board could see how matters had developed; and
- the Council's Chief Officer – Facilities and Fleet Management expanded on the benefits of a shared services approach and provided examples of potential opportunities, including the sharing of logistics networks, stores networks and assets. Whilst discussions around sharing services had taken place for a number of years, these had not yet materialised. It was important to get an initiative over the line in order to change the dynamic and the culture, and a plea was made to partners to engage with the project. It was added that, once some initiatives had been implemented, it would be important to celebrate successes and communicate these to stakeholders.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the progress to date of the Future Operating Model Programme;
- ii. **NOTED** the next steps;

- iii. **AGREED** that the assessment framework in respect of the Future Operating Model, and the Programme Manager's contact details, be circulated to Community Planning Board Members and attendees; and
- iv. **AGREED** that a further progress report be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

6. **2024-2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Delivery Plan Progress Report – Community Wealth Building including Social Value Charter**

There had been circulated joint Report No CPPB/2/26 by the Community Benefits Manager and Service Lead Economy and Regeneration, Highland Council.

In introducing the report, the Community Benefits Manager emphasised that the Social Value Charter was not solely a Council initiative and asked that any partners actively engaging with developers bear the Charter in mind and promote engagement with the Community Wealth Building team with a view to developers entering into partnership agreements and setting out a clear commitment as to what they could contribute to Highland.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that the re-established Community Wealth Building Partnership Group would establish a baseline, and that potential metrics to measure the impact of the collective effort could be brought to the Board for discussion at a later date;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding how the statutory Community Wealth Building Plan would be taken forward, and the associated timescale; and the staffing resource within the Council to support communities around community benefit, and whether it was considered to be sufficient given the amount of renewable energy development taking place;
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that the proposed increase in community benefit value from £5,000 to £6,000 per megawatt per year was significantly lower than expected, and this would be reflected in the CPP response to the Scottish Government's request for feedback on the Good Practice Principles. In relation to whether there would be any community benefit arising from the significant amount of investment in pump storage hydropower, mainly in the Great Glen, it was explained that Pump Storage Hydropower had not been specified within the proposals, and this had been identified as a risk as it created ambiguity;
- the Scottish Government's refreshed guidance did not go far enough for communities and did not align with the principles set out in the Social Value Charter. Community benefit should not be voluntary and legislative change was required, and it was important that this was reflected robustly in the CPP's response to the Scottish Government;
- as work progressed, it would be necessary to consider the links between community wealth building and what the CPP wanted to achieve in terms of addressing inequality;
- with reference to previous contributions regarding the need for equity, it was highlighted that the purpose of the Social Value Charter was to achieve equity of investment and legacy across Highland;
- in relation to the Employer Charter, the focus on Fair Work was welcomed and was expected to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing, including health inequalities. On the point being raised, the Assistant Chief Executive – People undertook to explore whether there was scope for more general workplace health initiatives in and around the Employer Charter. The Head of Health Improvement

offered support in that regard, highlighting that the Health Improvement team had considerable experience of workplace health initiatives;

- in response to a question, it was confirmed that the £62m of funding committed by SSEN Transmission, to be distributed through a Regional Fund and Local Funds, was expected to be delivered between now and 2030. Further detail on the anticipated timescales could be circulated to partners. The position beyond 2030 was not yet known, although it was hoped that the funds would continue to grow as other developers came online;
- in relation to the proposed development of over 500 permanent homes, it was explained that all housing development would be subject to the usual planning process and matters such as impacts on services and infrastructure would be considered as part of that process;
- with regard to the proposed collective CPP response to the Scottish Government's request for feedback on the Good Practice Principles, the timescale for submission was very tight. It was explained that the intention was to respond on the same basis as in the previous year, emphasising the key points, particularly the lack of alignment with the Social Value Charter, and incorporating any additional points raised during discussion. The draft response would be circulated to Board Members for comment prior to submission; and
- in response to a question regarding the commissioning of external legal support to develop and appraise governance models in respect of the Strategic Investment Fund, it was explained that initial legal advice had been received and would be discussed with partners over the coming months. The intention was that formal proposals would be brought to the June Board for consideration and agreement. The approach outlined was welcomed.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the update relating to the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026, and requirements of the Community Wealth Building Partnership Group to progress the duties within the act;
- ii. **NOTED** progress with Social Value Charter activity;
- iii. **NOTED** the update on the Scottish Government's Guidance refresh in relation to the Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy;
- iv. **AGREED** that a collective CPP response be submitted in response to the Scottish Government's request for feedback on the Good Practice Principles; and
- v. **AGREED** that information be circulated to partners on the anticipated timescales in respect of the £62m of funding committed by SSEN Transmission to be distributed through a Regional Fund and Local Funds.

7. Highland Children and Young People's Needs Assessment 2026

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/3/26 by the Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board. The appendices to the report had been circulated separately as Booklet A.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- information was sought, and provided, regarding how the Children and Young People's Needs Assessment (CYPNA) and the Integrated Children's Services Board Voice Report would be communicated to ensure that partners and stakeholders could make full use of the rich data contained within them; and on the governance route for approval of the Integrated Children's Services Plan;

- the data within the CYPNA and Voice Report could be used in a number of ways, including to inform the development of the new HOIP and the work of the Poverty Commission, and it would be important to continue to refer back to it;
- as indicated in the report, rural deprivation was less visible in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, and it was queried whether any work was underway in terms of how to articulate rural deprivation and rural challenges in a way that was easily understood. Detailed discussion ensued, during which reference was made to discussions at the recent CPP Development Day regarding the importance of viewing priorities through different lenses. It was suggested that “rural” was one such lens, and that different approaches might be required in a rural context. It was further commented that, even where there were established measures, issues such as homelessness could be hidden in rural communities. Highland was unique in the UK in terms of its level of remoteness and rurality, and it was suggested that it could lead the way in developing complementary approaches to statistical methods to better articulate issues of space and place, and that support could potentially be drawn from a national agency such as Public Health Scotland; and
- with reference to the charts on page 13 of the CYPNA, concern was expressed regarding the projected continuing decline in the number of children and young people in Highland, which was a significant challenge and raised a range of issues in relation to the future labour force and economy. It was queried how this compared to other parts of Scotland and what actions could be taken to help reverse the trend. Detailed discussion ensued on declining birth rates and depopulation, during which it was recognised that some aspects were beyond the remit of the CPP, and a broader conversation was needed. Reference was made to the Scottish Government’s action plan to address depopulation, which some partners had been closely involved in, and the work being undertaken by a range of partners to try to encourage people to see Highland as a place to settle and bring up a family. It was suggested that there might be merit in considering what partners were doing individually in order to build a clearer picture of the collective activity that made a difference. The Chair concurred and suggested that the matter be discussed at a future development session, and that the new HOIP presented an opportunity to articulate the issue from a Highland perspective, which could then inform future lobbying activity.

The Board:

- NOTED** the findings of the draft Highland Children and Young People’s Needs Assessment 2026 and the evidence and themes from the draft Integrated Children’s Services Board Voice Report;
- AGREED** to endorse the Children and Young People’s Needs Assessment and the themes from the Integrated Children’s Services Board Voice Report as the evidence base for the Integrated Children’s Services Plan 2026–2029; and
- AGREED** to support the next steps including data-improvement work and publication of a summary version.

8. Place Based Framework Annual Report

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/4/26 by the Chief Officer- Housing and Communities, Highland Council.

During discussion, information was sought, and provided, on the extent to which individual partner organisations were engaging with or utilising the Place Based Framework in terms of their own work; and the connectivity between Area Place Plans and the overall HOIP. In relation to the latter, it was explained that alignment between the work taking place at a strategic level and what was happening at community level had been a challenge since the

inception of the HOIP and, whilst improvements had been made, it was necessary to consider, as the new HOIP was developed, how to further strengthen that alignment.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the progress made across all 11 Area Place Plans as partnership-led frameworks guiding local priorities and investment.

9. CONTEST Board Annual Report

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/5/26 by Superintendent Judy Hill, Police Scotland.

During discussion, an update was sought, and provided, regarding the protest activity associated with the potential use of Cameron Barracks in Inverness to house asylum seekers. On the point being raised, it was explained that there were established processes in place around supporting Elected Members and Members of Parliament in the event of any security or safety concerns.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the contents of the report and Highland activity in relation to CONTEST.

10. Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) self-assessment process, results and next steps

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/6/26 by the Independent Chair of the HADP.

In introducing the report, the Chair of the HADP highlighted that the new Partnership Delivery Framework for Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships referred to in section 4.3 of the report had been published earlier that day. The HADP would review the framework and report back to the Board should any new actions be required.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that no actions to improve alignment between the HADP and the CPP Board had emerged from the survey other than those outlined in section 3.2 of the report. A number of CPP Board Members and attendees participated in the HADP Strategy Group, and continued engagement would help strengthen the connections between the two structures. The Chair of the CPP Board indicated her willingness to discuss any further opportunities to reinforce alignment outwith the meeting.

The Board **NOTED**, for assurance:

- i. the results of the recent HADP self-assessment process; and
- ii. the actions agreed to support improvement.

11. Scottish Government Update

The Scottish Government Place Director provided a verbal update, explaining that the Scottish Government had adopted a more deliberative and positive approach to Place Director roles and that, while the role remained voluntary, it was now better resourced. She reported that she had recently attended a session relating to the National Islands Plan, which had covered forthcoming work on data, evidence and funding. The Islands Team was led by Erica Clarkson, with Megan McWilliams acting as the link for Highland. She had also attended a session on data needs of Place Directors, and advised that she would discuss with the Partnership Development Manager what comparative place-based data would be most useful.

The Place Director went on to outline the arrangements for the forthcoming Scottish Parliament Election. It was explained that the pre-election period would begin in late March 2026, with the dissolution of Parliament scheduled for 9 April 2026 and polling day on 7 May 2026. Government business would move to an essential-only footing during this period and there would be a reduced visible ministerial presence. It was highlighted that the national count would take place on 8 May 2026 rather than overnight. Information was also provided on the processes followed by the Civil Service in advance of an election, including access for opposition parties to officials, the preparation of guidance, manifesto analysis, scenario planning for government formation and readiness to brief incoming ministers. The statutory timescales for the appointment of a First Minister and formation of a government were outlined, together with the likely timing of Cabinet appointments and the later establishment of parliamentary committees. It was emphasised that civil servants operated under strict propriety rules, including the need to maintain political impartiality, postpone decisions that could bind a future administration and ensure that public resources were not used for party-political purposes.

The Chair welcomed the update and expressed her appreciation of the positive developments in relation to the Place Director role, including the Place Director and CPP Charter. The engagement that had taken place with the Islands Team was also welcomed, and it was indicated that further discussion on the type of information that would best support engagement and strengthen links could take place later in the year, once the post-election period had concluded and portfolio responsibilities were clearer. The value of continued regular dialogue between the Place Director and the Partnership Development Manager, to ensure the CPP remained informed of national developments, was recognised.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the update.

12. Partnership Development Team Quarterly Report: December 2025 - February 2026

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/7/26 by the Partnership Development Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the Chair acknowledged and commended the substantial volume of work undertaken by the Partnership Development Team and encouraged partners to ensure that key dates, including the CPP Conference on 15 May 2026 and the next Board meeting on 12 June 2026, were included in diaries. It was also intended to hold a development session on the morning of 12 June 2026, details of which would be provided in due course;
- the draft Engagement Route Map for the 2027-2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) was welcomed as it clearly set out the timescales that would have to be adhered to deliver the new HOIP, which would require a significant amount of work by partners over the coming year; and
- concern was raised regarding declining attendance at Community Partnerships. Board Members were asked to emphasise, within their organisations, the importance of consistent attendance at Community Partnerships and other partnership groups to support effective community planning.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Partnership Development Team's quarterly progress for December 2025 to February 2026;

- ii. **AGREED** the approach outlined for the development of the 2027-2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan;
- iii. **AGREED** the Place Director Charter available at Appendix 4 of the report;
- iv. **AGREED** the collation of a Highland CPP response to the National Performance Framework request; and
- v. **AGREED** that Board Members disseminate, throughout their organisations, the importance of partner attendance and engagement at Community Partnerships and other partnership groups.

13. Strategic Risk Register

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/8/26 by the Partnership Development Manager.

The Chair thanked the Risk Register Sub-Group for the substantial amount of work that had been undertaken, highlighting that the Risk Register would continue to evolve through regular review, and that there were further discussions to be had in relation to risk appetite and how it should be used by the partnership going forward.

The Board:

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

14. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday 12 June 2026 at 1.30 pm.

At this point, a query was raised, on behalf of the Chair of the Council's Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, regarding the ownership of the Population Health Framework and whether this should sit with the CPP Board to ensure coordination of activity. In response, it was explained that, whilst the Framework was relevant to the CPP and the Board was sighted on it, ownership rested with individual partner organisations. It was suggested that this approach might need to be articulated more clearly, and it was confirmed that this would be taken on board.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm.

**The Highland Council
Chief Officer Recruitment Panel**

Minutes of Meeting of the Chief Officer Recruitment Panel held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 8 June 2026 at 1.30p.m.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr A Christie
Mr K Gowans
Mr J Finlayson

Mr B Lobban
Mr D McDonald
Mrs T Robertson

Officials in attendance:-

Mrs K Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive, People
Ms J Sikkema, Senior HR Business Partner, Corporate

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement

There were no Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements.

3. Exclusion of the Public

The Panel **Resolved** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. Appointment of Chief Officer Education Secondary

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

- a) Shortlist note for Chief Officer Education Secondary post;
- b) Interview times;
- c) the Chief Officer Education Secondary job description and person specification;
- d) Psychometric feedback report;
- e) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates;
- f) Candidate scoring sheet; and
- g) a scenario and interview questions.

The panel proceeded to interview the candidates.

Following consideration, the Panel **appointed:**

Kirsty MacPherson to the post of Chief Officer Education Secondary.

The meeting ended at 4:15 pm.

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Redesign Board of the Highland Council** held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on 4 June 2026 at 2pm.

Members present:

Mr R Bremner	Ms B Jarvie
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr B Lobban
Mr A Christie	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr J Edmondson	Mr D Macpherson
Mr J Finlayson	Mrs M Reid
Mr D Fraser	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs J Hendry	Ms L Saggars
	Mrs C A Stewart, GMB

Non-Members present:

Mr M Baird	Mr K Gowans
Dr C Birt	Ms M Hutchison
Mr R Gale	Mrs A MacLean
Ms C Gillies	Mrs M Ross

Participating Officials:

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate
Mrs S Armstrong, Chief Officer - Revenues and Commercialisation
Mr M Bailey, Strategic Lead - Commercialisation
Ms L Lallah, Business Management Analyst
Mr S Bone, Business Development Lead
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mr S Cameron, Mr M Green, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr B Boyd, Mr D Macpherson, and Mr J Gibson (UNISON).

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were none.

3. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Board **NOTED** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2025, which had been approved by the Council on 26 March 2026.

4. Redesign Board Forward Plan Plana Air Adhart a' Bhùird Ath-dhealbhadh

There was circulated Report No RDB/05/26 by the Chief Officer, Revenues & Commercialisation.

During discussion, the importance of follow-up on prior Redesign Board projects to allow post-project discussion was emphasised, including recalling operational projects to the Redesign Board to sense check and scrutinise progress. Clarity was sought and provided on the standard process for projects to be considered and recommended by the Board, presented to the Council for approval, then implemented and/or monitored via the relevant Strategic Committee, as appropriate.

The Board **NOTED** the report and the Redesign Board work programme.

5. Food in Schools Project Pròiseact Biadh ann an Sgoiltean

There was circulated Report No RDB/06/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

A presentation was provided on a recent focus group that had been held at Inverness High School with teaching and non-teaching staff, and a workshop with pupils. Issues covered had included preferences, nutrition, menu choices and next steps.

Members thanked the school staff and pupils for their participation and welcomed the frontline feedback, especially from the school pupils themselves. Issues raised during discussion included the pupils' thoughts on the availability of seating for consuming their lunch, which it was acknowledged was very dependent on the individual school and the ages of the pupils.

In response to a request for a second Member for the sub-group, Mrs M Reid was proposed.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the progress to date; and
- ii. **AGREED** to appoint Mrs M Reid to the Food in Schools Working Group.

6. Good Food Nation Plan Plana airson Dùthaich a Tha Math a Thaobh Biadh

There was circulated Report No RDB/07/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- assurance was provided that food suppliers and grow-your-own initiatives would be included in the project, that religious food considerations would be taken into consideration, and that information from the Association of Service Solutions in Scotland (ASSIST FM) would be taken into account;
- it was thought that current demand for allotments exceeded availability;
- assurance was sought and provided that appropriate child health and nutritional/dietetic representation was to be involved, and attention was drawn to there being emerging issues which might not be included in government guidance. In this regard, specific reference was made to emerging reports about

the potential longer-term health impacts of the consumption of red meat. It was confirmed that while discussions on this were taking place at national level, the Working Group would follow Scottish Government national policy and guidance in the development of the Good Food Nation Plan (GFNP);

- clarification was sought and provided that the Food in Schools project would form part of the GFNP;
- concern was expressed at the potential duplication of effort and outcome anomalies as a result of the Council and NHS Highland having to produce separate plans, and it was suggested that a joint Plan, produced in collaboration with the Community Planning Partnership, would be preferable. In response, attention was drawn to the intention to hold 6-weekly joint meetings between the Council and NHS Highland to ensure their Plans were aligned, and to a consultation that had been held at the early stages of the initiative which had resulted in the Scottish Government requiring separate plans for Local Authorities and Health Boards;
- it was queried whether perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) were being taken into consideration and this would be looked into outwith the meeting;
- information was sought and provided on consultation plans for the GFNP; and
- it was queried how private facilities such as private care homes, schools and healthcare facilities would be impacted by the GFNP initiative.

The Board **NOTED** the progress to date.

The meeting ended at 2.50pm.