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 22 June 2026 at 9.00 a.m.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr D Fraser (substitute)
Mr R Gale (substitute)
Mr A Graham (substitute)
Mr D McDonald
Mr P Oldham (substitute)

<u>Officials in attendance</u>:-
Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate
Ms J Sikkema, Senior HR Business Partner, Corporate

Interim Chair

In the absence of the Chair of the Panel, the Panel **AGREED** to appoint Mr R Bremner as Interim Chair for these interviews.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie, Mr K Gowans, Mr J Finlayson, Mr B Lobban and Mrs T Robertson.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement

Item 4 – Mr D McDonald (Transparency Statement)

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 Business Solutions

Transparency Statement - Councillor D McDonald declared a transparency statement in relation to this item as he knew one of the referees named by one of the candidates. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

a) Shortlist note for Chief Officer Business Solutions post;
b) Interview times;
c) the Chief Officer Business Solutions job description and person specification;

d) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates;
e) candidate scoring sheet;
f) a scenario and interview questions.

The panel proceeded to interview the candidates.

Verbal feedback on the psychometric reports was provided after the interviews at the start of the deliberations.

Following consideration, the Panel **appointed: Mr Richard Whetton** to the post of Chief Officer Business Solutions.

The meeting ended at 1:15 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 Wednesday 2 September 2026 at 9.00 a.m.

Present:

Mr R Bremner
Mrs M Reid (substitute)
Mr K Gowans
Mr B Lobban
Mr D McDonald
Mrs T Robertson

Officials in attendance:-
Mr M MacLeod, Assistant Chief Executive, Place
Ms J Sikkema, HR Manager, Corporate

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie and Mr J Finlayson.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement

There were none.

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 Property & Assets

There had been circulated to Members only the undernoted documents.

a) Shortlist note for Chief Officer Property & Assets post;
b) Interview times;
c) Chief Officer Property & Assets job description and person specification;
d) Psychometric feedback report;
e) copies of the applications submitted by the candidates;
f) Briefing note - Protection of disability related information
g) Candidate scoring sheet;
h) a scenario and interview questions.

The panel proceeded to interview the candidates.

Following consideration, the Panel decided **not to appoint** to the post of Chief Officer Property & Assets. The post will go out for re-advertising in due course.

The meeting ended at:1.05 pm

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Governance Review Steering Group
Thursday 12 February 2026

Members Present: Mr B Lobban, Mr R Bremner, Ms M Hutchison, Ms L Johnston, Mrs M Paterson, Mr A Christie, Mr R Gale

Non-Members also present: Mr P Oldham, Mrs A MacLean, Mr J Edmundson, Mr D Millar, Mrs L Dundas, Mr J Finlayson, Ms J McEwan, Mr T MacLennan, Mrs M Reid, Mrs M Ross, Ms E Knox

Officer Support: Stewart Fraser (SF), Jane Maclennan (JM), Lorraine Dunn (LD), Arlene Gibbs (AG)

Admin Support: Kirsty Arnott (KA)

Purpose: To review the current arrangements for managing the business of the Council and to present options for improvement to the Council for approval.

Action Note

1.	**Apologies: Mr C Cross**	
2.	**Declarations of Interest: None noted.**	
3.	**Note of Previous Meeting: 4 March 2026 – NOTED**	
4.	**Standing Orders Annual Review**	
	Following a detailed discussion, the Steering Group:- i. **AGREED** the changes to Standing Orders as presented subject to the following: • 4.2: be clarified to explain that only members of the Review Body were entitled to speak at Planning Review Body meetings; • 11.8: wording be added to indicate that the Convener would rule on the appropriateness of the answers; • 12.10: to remain unchanged; • 12.13: the timescale be amended to enable the four day statutory deadline for publication of the agenda and accompanying reports to be met; • 17.1: the words “*by an officer*” be removed; and ii. **AGREED**, following a request from the Chief Executive, that the wording of SO 35 (renumbered 36) relating to Rescinding Resolutions or Decisions of the Council be revised for greater clarity.	**LD/AG/JMcL**

5.	**Confidential Reports**	
	Extensive discussion took place within the group regarding the protection of confidential reports following which it was **AGREED** that:- i. all confidential reports be watermarked and to explore the feasibility of a pop-up notice being provided indicating that this information could not be shared when entering the restricted SharePoint site; ii. if reports contained distressing content, Members be provided with advance notice prior to reading; and iii. confidential Licensing Committee reports, be removed from the restricted SharePoint site following the meeting.	-
6.	**Members Training Programme**	
	NOTED that training had been provided for Members for the Licensing Committee.	**-**
7.	**Members Induction Programme 2027**	
	An update was provided about an initial meeting that officers had had in preparedness for the upcoming election in 2027 and in which preparation for the induction of new Members was discussed. It was **NOTED** that it would be helpful if newly recruited Members were made aware in advance of the:- i. requirement for Members to undertake a PVG disclosure check; and ii. work and commitment expectation, particularly during the first 3-6 months following election which involved a significant volume of training.	**-**
8.	**Next meeting date – TBC**	**KA**

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 27 August 2026 at 2pm.

Members present:

Mr R Bremner
Mr S Cameron (remote)
Mr A Christie
Mr J Edmondson
Mr J Finlayson (remote)
Mr D Fraser
Mr K Gowans
Mr M Green
Mrs J Hendry (remote)
Mrs B Jarvie (remote)
Mr G MacKenzie
Mr A MacKintosh
Mr D Macpherson
Mr J Murray (sub for Mr Lobban)
Mrs M Reid
Mrs T Robertson
Ms L Saggers
Mr J Gibson, UNISON
Mrs C A Stewart, GMB

Non-Members present:

Mr M Baird
Dr C Birt
Ms M Cockburn (remote)
Ms L Dundas
Mr L Fraser
Mr R Gale
Ms C Gillies
Mr A Graham
Ms M Hutchison (remote)
Mr H Morrison
Mr P Oldham
Ms C Ramsay (remote)

Participating Officials:

Mr A Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate
Mr D Scott, Chief Officer, Business Solutions
Mr M Bailey, Strategic Lead - Commercialisation
Mrs L Lallah, Business Development Lead
Mr S Bone, Business Development Lead
Mr A Yates, Strategic Lead, Environmental Health & Bereavement Services
Ms Percy-Bell, Principal Waste Management Officer
Mr B Gray, Strategic Lead, CCFM
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

Mr R Bremner in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mr B Lobban and Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

There were none.

3. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas

The Board **NOTED** the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2025, which had been approved by the Council on 25 June 2026.

4. **Exclusion of the Public**
   Às-dùnadh a' Phobaill

   The Committee RESOLVED that, under Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for Item 5 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 9 and 9 Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

5. **Unique Visitor Experiences**
   Eòlasan Sònraichte do Luchd-tadhail

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

   Following discussion, the Board:

   i. **APPROVED** the Full Business Case for the UVE at Smoo Cave; and
   ii. **NOTED** the position on the work to identify additional UVEs across Highland.

6. **Redesign Board Forward Plan**
   Plana Air Adhart a' Bhùird Ath-dhealbhachaidh

   There was circulated Report No RDB/08/26 by the Chief Officer, Revenues & Commercialisation.

   During discussion, it was asked that activity that resulted from the Roads and Amenities Workshop, and future Workshops, be scoped out and detailed in a programme of events to ensure Members were kept informed of actions. Similarly, assurance was sought and provided that after a Redesign Workshop, a report with recommendations would be brought to the Board for formal consideration. The impact Public Sector Reform might have on the Roads and Amenities review was queried.

   The Board:

   i. **NOTED** the work being delivered across the current Redesign Board programme; and
   ii. **AGREED** to support the continued development of the future Redesign Board work programme.

7. **Food in Schools Project**
   Pròiseact Biadh ann an Sgoiltean

   There was circulated Report No RDB/09/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

   The Principal Waste Management Officer gave a presentation covering waste audits, reasons for food waste in schools, leftover lunch audits, expansion of food waste collections. and next steps.

   During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was suggested that in relation to establishing the causes of food waste, it would be useful to analyse the food waste at schools with a higher percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals against a school with a lower percentage. It was suggested the Working Group could investigate this, and various primary schools were suggested for comparison;
- clarification was provided that ‘avoidable food’ was food that could have been consumed;
- it was suggested that the provision of traditional crockery rather than plastic trays might encourage children to waste less food, and some of the challenges around this were summarised, such as the additional storage space required, and lack of seating in many secondary schools, meaning pupils were provided with disposable containers due to challenges around the provision of take-away food on crockery that required to be returned. It was suggested that when this type of challenge came to light, it should be reported to the Board. The importance of providing adequate seating for catering in secondary schools should be taken into consideration when new schools were designed. Staggered lunchbreaks were suggested as a possible solution;
- food monitors in school, similar to prefects, might be useful to encourage recycling;
- it was considered unfair that the Catering Service was bearing the financial burden of this food waste in schools, noting the impact on food in schools on education, something that might of value for future investigation. In this regard, the cost to Catering Services of educational food waste was queried and a rough estimate was provided of the equivalent business waste cost but, acknowledging that the costs had not been recently reviewed, this would be checked and provided to Mr Gibson outwith the meeting; and
- the challenges around providing unused food for community use were highlighted

The Board **NOTED**:

i. the progress to date; and
ii. the detailed Food in Schools Action Plan at Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

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

There was circulated Report No RDB/10/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

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

9. Abandoned & Nuisance Vehicles
Carbadan a Tha Trèigte is nan Trioblaid

There was circulated Report No RDB/11/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- a more detailed timeline to demonstrate what could be expected and when was requested;
- information was sought and provided on progress with contractors for the vehicle storage compound, with a contract being drafted and engagement with procurement planned for September, two site being considered;

- appropriate communication with Members and the public was urged;
- it was suggested that vehicles suspected of being abandoned should have a notice put on them to indicate they were under investigation, and it was confirmed stickers were applied but were often removed;
- some Members felt the alignment of approach and communication between officers and Members could be improved, while others considered it was already in place. Reference was made to it being a live topic in a Cosla community wellbeing group;
- it was noted that a significant percentage of vehicles were wrongly suspected of being abandoned;
- it was felt the legislation was not sufficiently clear, and the matter had been raised at relevant Scottish Government forums. The Council Leader offered to raise the matter with the Scottish Government;
- consideration was given to the differences in approach if vehicles were abandoned on public versus private land, or in urban versus rural areas; and
- further suggestions included holding an amnesty and providing a car crushing service for a period of time, and the Council seeking more powers to issue fines, with the income ring-fenced to a particular cause, such as pothole repair. Attention was drawn to plans to run a social media awareness campaign, to reference the Council's need for full cost recovery as a deterrent, and to partnership working with the DVLA.

The Board:

i. **NOTED** the update from environmental health on abandoned vehicles including the data from 2025/26;
ii. **NOTED** the proposed improvements being considered to address abandoned vehicles by Environmental Health; and
iii. **NOTED** the role of the Council and wider partners in addressing nuisance vehicles and proposed improvements; and
iv. **AGREED** a detailed timeline be provided to the Board.

10. My Council
A' Chomhairle Agam

There was circulated Report No RDB/12/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate.

The Board **NOTED**:

i. the updates against the My Council programme and future governance for the remaining project;
ii. the closure of the Web Project in line with agreed plan and timeline; and
iii. that updates on the work of the remaining project, MyHighland, along with updates on the continued work to improve customer experience and contact with the Council, will continue to be provided to the Redesign Board.

The meeting ended at 3.25pm