

Notices of Motion: 17 September 2026

MOTION 1

Highland Council recognises the exceptional efforts of everyone involved on the ground during the recent Cairngorm wildfire and acknowledges the serious threat it posed to communities, property, the environment and potentially human life. Council notes the significant concerns raised regarding preparedness, escalation, command and control, communications, coordination, resource availability and welfare provision. It also recognises that a change in weather or wind direction could have had even more catastrophic consequences. Council affirms that Highland communities must have confidence that future major wildfires will be met with clear leadership, effective communication and appropriate resources.

This Council therefore calls on the Council Leader and Chief Executive to seek the agreement of, and funding from, the Scottish Government for a genuinely independent review of this incident and also to assess whether the existing command structure is appropriate for major landscape-scale wildfires.

The findings, together with a clear action plan identifying responsibilities and timescales should be reported to Highland Council no later than March 2027.

Signed: Mr R Jones

Mr B Lobban

MOTION 2

Support for a Minister for Older People

Council notes Age Scotland's call for the appointment of a dedicated Minister for Older People within the Scottish Government, recognising Scotland's ageing population and the importance of ensuring that the interests and needs of older people are represented across government policy.*

Council recognises the increasing pressures on health and social care, rising levels of pensioner poverty, digital exclusion, loneliness, mental health concerns, age discrimination, and the suitability of housing for older people. Council believes that improving access to timely, preventative and person-centred support is essential to enabling people to live well, independently and with dignity as they age.

Council affirms its commitment to supporting people throughout their life course and recognises the need to respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges associated with an ageing population.

Council further notes that the geographical scale of the Highlands, combined with one of the oldest and fastest-ageing populations in Scotland, means these challenges are particularly acute in rural and remote communities. Access to healthcare, social care, housing, transport, digital connectivity and community support are all key factors in maintaining quality of life for older residents.

Council therefore agrees to formally support Age Scotland's call for a dedicated Minister for Older People, recognising that such a role would provide greater strategic leadership and accountability across government in addressing the needs, aspirations and contributions of older people throughout Scotland, and to write to the First Minister, relevant Scottish Ministers and COSLA, highlighting Highland Council's support for this proposal and urging consideration of its implementation during the current parliamentary term.

[Calls for a Minister for Older People for Scotland | Age Scotland](#)

Signed: Mrs I MacKenzie

Mrs B Jarvie

Mr R Stewart

MOTION 3

Public Safety, Licensing Decision-Making and an Independent Review

Council notes:

1. The significant public interest generated by the Highland Licensing Committee's decision of 23 June 2026 in relation to the taxi operator licences held by David Brown and the subsequent referral of that decision for reconsideration.
 2. That discussion arising from the decision has extended beyond the circumstances of a single case and has prompted wider debate regarding public confidence in the Council's licensing processes, particularly in relation to public safety, safeguarding, transparency and the application of the statutory "fit and proper person" test.
 3. That licensing is fundamentally a public protection function and that public confidence is strengthened when licensing decisions are seen to place safety, safeguarding and the prevention of harm at their centre
 4. That a number of questions have been raised by elected members and members of the public regarding:
 - consistency of decision-making;
 - the weight attached to Police Scotland objections and public protection information;
 - the treatment of offences involving violence against women and girls;
 - the application of the fit and proper person test;
 - the balance between transparency and confidentiality in licensing proceedings;
 - the nature and extent of information available to members in cases involving ongoing criminal proceedings, including sub judice considerations; and
 - wider public confidence in licensing outcomes.
 5. That Highland Council has responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and has publicly committed itself to promoting equality, challenging discrimination and advancing the safety and wellbeing of all communities.
1. That understanding how different groups experience licensing services, including women and girls, can help inform effective policy and decision-making.

Council believes:

1. That public confidence is enhanced where licensing decisions are demonstrably fair, transparent, consistent and grounded in public protection.
2. That residents and visitors should be able to use licensed services and premises with confidence that safeguarding considerations are being given appropriate weight.
3. That where questions have arisen regarding decision-making processes, governance arrangements, organisational culture or the consideration of equality and safeguarding issues, it is beneficial for these matters to be examined independently and objectively.

4. That an independent review would provide an opportunity to identify lessons, share good practice, strengthen public confidence and support elected members in carrying out their licensing responsibilities.

Council therefore agrees:

1. To commission an independent external review of Highland Council licensing.
2. That the review should be led by a suitably qualified individual independent of Highland Council and that, where appropriate, the review will engage with individuals, organisations or professional bodies with relevant expertise in:
 - licensing law;
 - public protection and safeguarding;
 - violence against women and girls;
 - equality and human rights; and
 - governance and ethical decision-making.
3. That the review may wish to consider:
 - the operation of the Highland Licensing Committee;
 - arrangements relating to the appointment of the Chair of Licensing, recognising the Committee's quasi-judicial role;
 - the adequacy of governance, advice and support arrangements available to members in supporting lawful, consistent and evidence-based decision making;
 - consistency in the application of the fit and proper person test;
 - the treatment of Police Scotland objections and public protection evidence;
 - decision-making in cases involving violence, sexual offending, domestic abuse and safeguarding concerns;
 - the extent to which issues relating to women's safety and lived experience are reflected in licensing decision-making;
 - whether there are lessons to be learned regarding equality, unconscious bias, organisational culture or other factors that could potentially influence decision making;
 - the adequacy of member training and support;
 - decision-making culture, governance arrangements and accountability mechanisms; and
 - opportunities to strengthen public confidence, transparency and public understanding of licensing decisions.
4. That the review should, where appropriate, engage with elected members, Council officers, Police Scotland, licensing professionals, equality organisations, women's organisations and other relevant stakeholders.
5. That the Chief Executive is requested to bring forward to the next meeting of the Council detailed proposals for commissioning the review, including proposed governance arrangements, terms of reference, resource implications and estimated costs, for consideration and approval by Council.
6. That subject to approval as described at para 5 above, the Review Chair will be appointed and review initiated by the end of December 2026.
7. That an interim report will be presented to Highland Council by 31 March 2027, setting out progress to date, any emerging themes or findings, and the Review Chair's proposed timetable for completion of the review, including arrangements for the presentation of any final report and recommendations to Council.

8. That the review does not prevent the Council from instigating interim changes to the operation and membership of the Licencing Committee pending the final report and recommendations.
9. To reaffirm Highland Council's commitment to public safety, equality, transparency and continuous improvement in licensing decision-making.

Signed: Mrs J Hendry Mrs E Knox Ms L Johnston
 Mrs K MacLean Ms S Atkin Mrs M Reid
 Mrs K Willis

MOTION 4

Clear Labelling of Halal and Kosher Meat in Highland Schools

The Council notes that halal meat is currently being supplied and served in Highland schools without being clearly identified as such to pupils and parents.

The Council believes that children and parents should have a clear and informed choice about the food they eat, particularly where meat is sourced from animals slaughtered without stunning under a derogation from animal-welfare requirements.

The Council therefore agrees that all halal and kosher meat supplied or served by Highland council must be clearly labelled as such, and that suppliers must clearly declare this information at the point of procurement so the Council can make informed purchasing decisions and provide accurate information to consumers.

By way of context, it is my understanding that we currently serve turkey that HC know is halal but do not label it as such, however we do not know if or what else is halal but not sold to us as such.

Supplier SKU Code	Supplier Description
134717	Salimah Halal Turkey Rasher Topping 1Kg

Signed: Mr R Stewart Mrs I MacKenzie

Assessment of Notices of Motion: 17 September 2026**MOTION 1****Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:**

This motion is **not** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	No impact
Poverty	No impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	No impact
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:

A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The motion proposes the Council writes to the Scottish Government seeking an independent review of the Cairngorm wildfire. There is therefore no direct impact as a result of the motion.

MOTION 2

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is **not** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	No impact
Poverty	No impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	No impact
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:

A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The motion proposes to write to the Scottish Government calling for a Minister for Older People. There is therefore no direct impact as a result of the motion.

MOTION 3

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is **not** anticipated to have a direct financial implication to the Council. Any future financial implications arising from the commissioning of an external review would be reflected within the report to Council as set out in the motion wording, and need considered at that time.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	No impact
Poverty	No impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	No impact
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:

A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The motion proposes that the Council commissions an independent review into licensing. There is therefore no direct impact as a result of the motion. However, the motion proposes a range of areas the review should consider including women's safety and a range of equality issues and also proposes that equality organisations and women's groups are engaged as part of the review. The findings of the review therefore have the potential to have a positive impact on equalities, human and children's rights.

MOTION 4

Section 95 Officer assessment of financial implications:

This motion is **not** anticipated to have a financial implication to the Council, based on current contractual, supplier and service delivery arrangements.

This is predicated upon the context that the Council's catering service has one current core supplier of all meat products, with the only exception being a small supply of venison via local deer larders. The current core meat supplier does label Halal marketed products, and has advised that *"All our Halal meats have been pre-stunned and compliant in the UK & EU"*. The catering service has in place specific meal plans for particular diets and identify Halal marketed meat through those specific meal plans. The current meat supplier does not offer Kosher products.

Were contractual/supplier/supply arrangements to change in future, this might introduce additional implications for the service, which may be additional cost and/or additional staff time implications.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Area for Assessment	Assessment Summary
Equality	No impact <i>Summary</i> Duties under the equality act require the Council to support different diets for medical and religious grounds. Products are clearly labelled to support this.
Poverty	No impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights	No impact
Data Rights	No impact
Rural/Island	No impact
Climate Change	No impact

Summary of Assessment:

A summary of the integrated screening is outlined above. The motion proposes that all halal and kosher meat supplied or served is clearly labelled. The Council has a duty to ensure that different dietary requirements are supported.