The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**6**
Report No	**ECI/39/26**

Committee: **Economy and Infrastructure**

Date: **12 November 2026**

Report Title: **Designation of Inverness City and Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Areas**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 At its meeting on 28 September 2026, the Economy and Infrastructure Committee agreed to submit the proposed Inverness City and Highland Rural Short-Term Let Control Areas to Scottish Ministers for approval. Ministerial approval has now been given. Approval is now required to publish the statutory notice of designation and to confirm the date on which the Control Areas will come into effect.

1.2 Members are asked to agree to the publication of the statutory notice with a recommendation that the Control Areas be designated with effect from 1 April 2027. This date will allow time for officers to undertake the necessary implementation work, communicate the implications of designation to affected parties, consider planning policy requirements and prepare for the anticipated resulting increase in planning applications and related work.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

i. **Note** that Scottish Ministers have approved the designation of the Inverness City and Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Areas;
ii. **Approve** the publication of the statutory notice for the designation of the Inverness City and Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Area in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Short-Term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2021;
iii. **Agree** that the Inverness City and Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Areas shall come into effect on 1 **April** 2027; and
iv. **Agree** to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive – Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee to undertake all necessary actions associated with publication of the notice and implementation of the Control Areas.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - The work undertaken to progress the Inverness City and Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Areas has been extensive and has involved a significant number of officers across a variety of services prioritising this work. The decision to designate is expected to give rise to an increase in planning caseload. Ensuring that there is sufficient staffing resource is essential to ensure that demand, as a result of implementing the control areas, is managed effectively. Planning fee income will offset some costs over time, but any initial resource requirement would need to be front funded to ensure that this does not negatively impact performance and/or customer experience. This will form part of the budget setting process, although resources will need to be managed in advance of the control areas coming into effect and this may result in short term pressures within the planning service.

3.2 **Legal** - The Council has the power under Section 26B of the Town & Control Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, to designate a STL Control Area.

3.3 **Risk** - Members should be aware that, as with other decisions of Scottish Ministers, the approvals may be susceptible to legal challenge. Legal Services have been consulted and will continue to advise regarding any implications for the proposed implementation timetable.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no specific health and safety implications.

3.5 **Gaelic** - There are potentially disproportionate impacts on specific Gaelic-speaking communities stemming from a lack of housing availability and affordability in some areas of Highland. Any evidence of Short Term Lets and their impact on housing availability may have related impacts on specific Gaelic-speaking communities.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**

4.3.1 Integrated Impact Assessment screening was undertaken for both the Inverness City STLCA and the Highland Rural STLCA on 31 August 2026 and were presented to Members before the decision was taken to submit the proposals to Scottish Ministers. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval, although have not changed, and are provided again below.

4.3.2 The Screening process for the Inverness City STLCA has concluded that there are mixed impacts from the proposed Control Area if implemented. Overall, any impacts are likely to be indirect, limited and would depend on future planning decisions relating to individual short term let proposals. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3

Impact Assessment Area	**Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment**
Equality	Limited indirect positive impacts for elderly individuals by supporting social cohesion, neighbourhood familiarity/support networks. Limited indirect positive impacts for disabled individuals, should the Control Area support the retention of residential properties suitable for meeting the needs of disabled people. No impact on other characteristics.
Socio-economic	Positive and negative impact – both the direct and indirect benefits of retaining homes within the housing supply with the operator costs for preparing and submitting planning applications or certificates of lawfulness where required.
Human Rights	No impact - Considers Scottish Government's view in relation to ECHR Article 1 Protocol 1.
Children's Rights and Well-being	No impact
Island and Mainland Rural	No impact
Climate Change	No impact
Data Rights	No impact

4.3.4 The Screening process for the Highland Rural STLCA has concluded that there are mixed impacts from the proposed Control Area if be implemented. Overall, any impacts are likely to be indirect, limited and would depend on future planning decisions relating to individual short term let proposals. Members are asked to consider the summary within **Appendix 2** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.5

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
Equality	Limited indirect positive impacts for elderly individuals by supporting social cohesion, neighbourhood familiarity/support networks. Limited indirect positive impacts for disabled individuals, should the Control Area support the retention of residential properties suitable for meeting the needs of disabled people. No impact on other characteristics.
Socio-economic	Positive and negative impact – both the direct and indirect benefits of retaining homes within the housing supply with the operator costs for preparing and submitting planning applications or certificates of lawfulness where required.
Human Rights	No impact - Considers Scottish Government's view in relation to ECHR Article 1 Protocol 1 .
Children's Rights and Well-being	No impact
Island and Mainland Rural	Minor differences – Overall, the proposal is assessed as having a mixed but generally neutral to positive impact.
Climate Change	No impact
Data Rights	No impact

5 Background

5.1 At its meeting on 12 February 2026, the Economy and Infrastructure Committee agreed to commence the statutory consultation process on two proposed STLCAs: Inverness City and Highland Rural. Following consultation, the proposals were considered by the relevant Area Committees. These all supported the progression of the proposed Control Areas within their respective areas.

5.2 At its meeting on 28 September 2026, the Economy and Infrastructure Committee considered the outcomes of consultation and agreed to submit the proposals for designation of the Inverness City and Highland Rural STLCAs to Scottish Ministers for approval in accordance with Regulation 8 of The Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.

6 Ministerial Approval

6.1 Scottish Ministers provided their response to the request on 26 October 2026. The decision made by Ministers is to approve designation of the Inverness City and Highland Rural STLCAs. The decision of Ministers is set out within **Appendices 4 and 5** respectively.

7 Next Steps

7.1 In accordance with Regulation 9, the Council must publish notice of the designation before the Control Areas come into effect. Such notice must specify the date on which the designations will take effect, being a date not earlier than 28 days after the date of publication of the notice.

7.2 This statutory notice must confirm the date on which the Control Areas will come into effect. Consideration has been given to the timing of when the designation will come into effect. It is suggested, and for Members to agree, that the date that the Inverness City and Highland Rural STLCAs would come into effect would be 12 noon on 1 April 2027.

7.3 The reason for this lead-in time is three-fold: to ensure that appropriate notice to operators, communities and other stakeholders is provided; to allow sufficient time for officers to make the necessary arrangements that will ensure smooth implementation, including resourcing the anticipated caseload; and, to give time to review existing planning policy and progress additional planning policy to support implementation if required.

7.4 National Planning Policy 4 contains policy that relates to short-term lets and is already taken into account when considering planning applications for such use. The proposed Highland Local Development Plan will contain a specific, bespoke, Highland policy. As the Proposed Plan is not anticipated to be ready until mid-2027, setting the commencement of the STL Control Areas at 1 April 2027 would allow time to consider whether interim guidance might be required with an opportunity to achieve Member approval of such at the meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee planned for February 2027. Members will be invited to a workshop in due course to discuss relevant planning policy and how it is used in the planning application process.

7.5 As previously advised, the designation of the Control Areas is expected to result in an increase in planning applications, certificates of lawfulness and related enquiries. Significant demand is likely to be concentrated around the lead up to and introduction of the Control Areas and it is anticipated that this will require additional resource in order to manage this demand effectively. The proposed implementation date of 1 April 2027 would provide time for officers to put appropriate operational and resource arrangements in place ahead of commencement.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive - Place
Date:	28 October 2026
Author:	Meadhbh Maguire, Principal Planner David Mudie, Strategic Lead Planning and Building Standards and Chief Planning Officer
Background Papers:	Short Term Let Control Area Report to EIC 12 February 2026 Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update Report to WRSL 3 August 2026 Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update Report to Lochaber Area 10 August 2026 Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update Report to CIAC 17 August 2026 Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update Report to Skye and Raasay Area 17 August 2026 Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Update Report to Sutherland County 17 August 2026 Inverness City STLCA Statement of Reasons Highland Rural STLCA Statement of Reasons Short Term Let Control Area – Post Consultation Report to EIC 28 Sept 2026
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Inverness City STLCA Integrated Impact Assessment Appendix 2 – Highland Rural STLCA Integrated Impact Assessment Appendix 3 – Inverness City STLCA Ministers Approval Decision Appendix 4 – Highland Rural STLCA Ministers Approval Decision Appendix 5 – Inverness City and Highland Rural STLCA Assessment and Maps as Approved

Appendix 1

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

About proposal

What does this proposal relate to? Policy

Proposal name: Inverness City Short Term Let Control Area

High level summary of the proposal: To progress the proposed Inverness City Short Term Let Control Area, where any decision to submit a proposal for designation of the Short Term Let Control Area to Scottish Ministers for formal approval will be taken by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

Who may be affected by the proposal? Highland Council residents, Short Term Let Operators, and prospective Short Term Let operators seeking potential use of residential property for secondary letting.

Start date of proposal:

End date of proposal:

Does this proposal result in a change or impact to one or more Council service? Yes

Which Council services will be impacted by this proposal? Corporate**,** Place

Does this relate to an existing proposal? Yes

Provide details of the existing proposal: At the meeting of The Highland Council on 18 September 2025, Members agreed a new internal process to consider designation of further Short Term Let Control Areas (STLCA) beyond Ward 20: Badenoch and Strathspey.

Author details

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Service: Place

Responsible officer details

Name: Tim Stott

Job title: Development Plans Manager

Email address: Tim.Stott@highland.gov.uk

Sign off date: 2026-08-31

Equalities, poverty, and human rights

Protected characteristics

Select what impact the proposal will have on the following protected characteristics:

Sex: No impact

Age: Positive

Disability: Positive

Religion or belief: No impact

Race: No impact

Sexual orientation: No impact

Gender reassignment: No impact

Pregnancy and maternity: No impact

Marriage and civil partnership: No impact

Protected characteristics impact details: Any Short Term Let Control Area would apply consistently across the designated area and would regulate the change of use of properties to short-term lets through the planning system, regardless of the personal characteristics of property owners, operators, residents or visitors. Instead, it introduces a planning framework through which applications for new short-term lets can be assessed on their individual merits. While individuals with protected characteristics may be represented among both residents and short-term let operators, any effects arising from the proposal would relate to a person's role as a resident, property owner or business operator rather than to a protected characteristic itself. As such, no disproportionate impact on any protected group has been identified.
By providing greater control over the conversion of dwellinghouses to secondary short-term lets, the Control Area may help retain housing for permanent occupation. This could support community cohesion and social networks, which can be particularly important for older residents who may rely on established local relationships, neighbourhood familiarity, and informal support networks. The measure may also help reduce the perception of increasing community transience associated with high concentrations of visitor accommodation in some areas. Any such impact would be indirect and limited, as outcomes will depend on the proposals brought forward and the decisions made on individual planning applications. The measure is therefore likely to have a modest and variable effect rather than a significant direct impact.
The proposed Short Term Let Control Area may have a positive impact on disabled people by enabling greater scrutiny of proposals involving the change of use of dwellinghouses to secondary short-term lets. In some cases, this may help support the retention of residential properties that are suitable for, or capable of adaptation to meet, the needs of disabled people. Where accessible housing forms part of the local housing stock, the requirement for planning permission provides an opportunity for the potential loss of such accommodation to be considered through the planning process, whereas changes of use that do not require planning permission would not be subject to the same level of scrutiny. Any benefit would be indirect and limited, as outcomes will depend on the nature of individual planning applications and subsequent decisions.

Poverty and socio-economic

What impact is the proposal likely to have on the following?

Prospects and opportunities: No impact

Places: Positive

Financial: No impact

Poverty and socio-economic impact details: The proposal does not restrict individuals' ability to access education, employment, training, childcare or support services, nor does it alter the provision of these services.
The Control Area would introduce a planning requirement for the future change of use of residential properties to short-term lets, but it would not prevent the operation of short-term lets where planning permission is granted. As such, the proposal is not expected to directly affect employment opportunities within the tourism sector or other industries.
The proposal is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on vulnerable areas or communities, including those identified through the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), fragile rural communities, or areas experiencing housing and transport challenges.
The purpose of the Short Term Let Control Area is to provide greater oversight of the conversion of residential properties to short-term let use through the planning system. It does not prevent short term lets from operating but allows the Council to assess proposals on a case-by-case basis, taking account of local circumstances and potential impacts on communities. Within Inverness, the Control Area may help to protect the availability of housing for permanent residents by providing a mechanism to manage the concentration and distribution of short-term lets in areas where demand for housing is high. By supporting the retention of residential accommodation for local households and workers, the proposal could contribute positively to sustaining mixed and balanced communities, maintaining access to housing, and supporting the long-term social and economic wellbeing of the city.
There may be some indirect positive impacts over the longer term if the proposal contributes to retaining housing stock for permanent residential use in Inverness City. Improved availability of housing could support recruitment and retention of workers in key sectors such as health, education, social care, hospitality and public services, thereby helping people access employment opportunities closer to where they live. Increased housing availability may also assist younger people, families and lower-income households to remain within their communities, supporting access to local schools, training opportunities and employment.
A potential economic impact relates to businesses by requiring planning permission or securing confirmation of lawful planning status with a Certificate of Lawfulness meaning additional costs. However this would bring Short-Term Letting into line with other accommodation businesses that already require planning permission for their siting or change of use. Overall, any impacts on prospects and opportunities are likely to be indirect, limited and would depend on future planning decisions relating to individual short-term let proposals.

Human rights

Which of the below human rights will be affected by this proposal?
Article 1 Protocol 1.

What impact do you consider this proposal to have on the human rights of people? No impact

Human rights impact details: The proposal has the potential to engage Protocol 1, Article 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of property because it introduces additional planning controls relating to the use of private property as a short-term let. Property owners may be required to obtain planning permission before changing the use of a dwellinghouse to a short-term let within the Control Area. The principle of requiring planning permission for changes of use to short-term lets has already been considered by the Scottish Government as part of the legislation introducing Short Term Let Control Areas. The Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 provide a lawful mechanism for local authorities to designate control areas where justified by local circumstances.
The Council has considered the view of the Scottish Government on this matter. Cabinet Secretary for Housing Màiri McAllan MSP accepted in February that the regulation of short-term lets via planning and licensing regimes represents a control of the use of a host's property for the purposes of Article 1 of the First Protocol to the ECHR. However, they were "satisfied that the creation of powers for a local authority to designate a short-term let control area is a proportionate measure to allow them to consider and manage the impacts of short-term lets on the availability of residential housing and on nearby amenity".
The proposal does not remove property rights or prevent ownership of property. Any interference with property rights would be lawful, proportionate and in pursuit of a legitimate public interest, namely the management of housing supply, community sustainability and the balanced development of the area through the planning system. As the Control Area operates within an established legal framework specifically created by the Scottish Parliament for this purpose, any interference with property rights is considered lawful, proportionate and in pursuit of legitimate public policy objectives. No significant adverse impacts on other Convention rights have been identified.

Equalities, poverty and human rights screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to equalities, poverty and human rights? Positive and negative impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Children's rights and wellbeing

What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people? The proposal does not introduce any direct impacts. While indirect positive impacts for children and young people could occur though supporting the availability of homes for permanent residents, contribute to sustaining local communities, supporting the retention of families within communities, and helping to maintain demand for local schools, childcare facilities and other community services, these impacts are limited, indirect and would depend on the planning decisions taken with respect to individual applications, rather than being achieved through the designation itself.

Which of the below children's rights will be affected by the proposal? No children's rights will be affected.

Explain how the children's rights selected above will be affected:

Children's rights and wellbeing screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to children's rights and wellbeing? No impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Data protection

Will your proposal involve processing personal data? No

Is any of this data already processed by the Highland Council? No

Data protection screening assessment

What change will there be to the way personal data is processed? No significant change to current processing.

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Island and mainland rural communities

Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities? No

Island and mainland rural communities screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to island and mainland rural communities? No difference

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Climate change

Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e)? No

Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity? No

Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing climate? No

Provide information regarding your selection above: No impact on climate change arising.

Climate change screening assessment

Have you identified potential impact for any of the areas above or marked any as not known? No

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

About proposal

What does this proposal relate to? Policy

Proposal name: Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Area

High level summary of the proposal: To progress the proposed Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Area, where any decision to submit a proposal for designation of the Short Term Let Control Area to Scottish Ministers for formal approval will be taken by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

Who may be affected by the proposal? Highland Council residents, Short Term Let Operators, and prospective Short Term Let operators seeking potential use of residential property for secondary letting.

Start date of proposal:

End date of proposal:

Does this proposal result in a change or impact to one or more Council service? Yes

Which Council services will be impacted by this proposal? Corporate**,** Place

Does this relate to an existing proposal? Yes

Provide details of the existing proposal: At the meeting of The Highland Council on 18 September 2025, Members agreed a new internal process to consider designation of further Short Term Let Control Areas (STLCA) beyond Ward 20: Badenoch and Strathspey.

Author details

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Service: Place

Responsible officer details

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Sign off date: 2026-08-31

Equalities, poverty, and human rights

Protected characteristics

Select what impact the proposal will have on the following protected characteristics:

Sex: No impact

Age: Positive

Disability: Positive

Religion or belief: No impact

Race: No impact

Sexual orientation: No impact

Gender reassignment: No impact

Pregnancy and maternity: No impact

Marriage and civil partnership: No impact

Protected characteristics impact details: Any Short Term Let Control Area would apply consistently across the designated area and would regulate the change of use of properties to short-term lets through the planning system, regardless of the personal characteristics of property owners, operators, residents or visitors. Instead, it introduces a planning framework through which applications for new short-term lets can be assessed on their individual merits. While individuals with protected characteristics may be represented among both residents and short-term let operators, any effects arising from the proposal would relate to a person's role as a resident, property owner or business operator rather than to a protected characteristic itself. As such, no disproportionate impact on any protected group has been identified.
By providing greater control over the conversion of dwellinghouses to secondary short-term lets, the Control Area may help retain housing for permanent occupation. This could support community cohesion and social networks, which can be particularly important for older residents who may rely on established local relationships, neighbourhood familiarity, and informal support networks. The measure may also help reduce the perception of increasing community transience associated with high concentrations of visitor accommodation in some areas. Any such impact would be indirect and limited, as outcomes will depend on the proposals brought forward and the decisions made on individual planning applications. The measure is therefore likely to have a modest and variable effect rather than a significant direct impact.
The proposed Short Term Let Control Area may have a positive impact on disabled people by enabling greater scrutiny of proposals involving the change of use of dwellinghouses to secondary short-term lets. In some cases, this may help support the retention of residential properties that are suitable for, or capable of adaptation to meet, the needs of disabled people. Where accessible housing forms part of the local housing stock, the requirement for planning permission provides an opportunity for the potential loss of such accommodation to be considered through the planning process, whereas changes of use that do not require planning permission would not be subject to the same level of scrutiny. Any benefit would be indirect and limited, as outcomes will depend on the nature of individual planning applications and subsequent decisions.

Poverty and socio-economic

What impact is the proposal likely to have on the following?

Prospects and opportunities: No impact

Places: Positive

Financial: No impact

Poverty and socio-economic impact details: The proposal does not restrict individuals' ability to access education, employment, training, childcare or support services, nor does it alter the provision of these services.
The Control Area would introduce a planning requirement for the future change of use of residential properties to short-term lets, but it would not prevent the operation of short-term lets where planning permission is granted. As such, the proposal is not expected to directly affect employment opportunities within the tourism sector or other industries.
The proposal is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on vulnerable areas or communities, including those identified through the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), fragile rural communities, or areas experiencing housing and transport challenges.
The purpose of the Short Term Let Control Area is to provide greater oversight of the conversion of residential properties to short-term let use through the planning system. It does not prevent short term lets from operating but allows the Council to assess proposals on a case-by-case basis, taking account of local circumstances and potential impacts on communities. In rural and fragile communities, the proposal may help to support the sustainability of settlements by providing a mechanism to manage the loss of residential housing stock where concentrations of short-term lets could affect the availability of homes for local residents and workers. This could have positive implications for maintaining population levels, supporting local services and sustaining community cohesion.
There may be some indirect positive impacts over the longer term if the proposal contributes to retaining housing stock for permanent residential use in rural communities. Improved availability of housing could support recruitment and retention of workers in key sectors such as health, education, social care, hospitality and public services, thereby helping people access employment opportunities closer to where they live. Increased housing availability may also assist younger people, families and lower-income households to remain within their communities, supporting access to local schools, training opportunities and employment.
A potential economic impact relates to businesses by requiring planning permission or securing confirmation of lawful planning status with a Certificate of Lawfulness meaning additional costs. However this would bring Short-Term Letting into line with other accommodation businesses that already require planning permission for their siting or change of use. Overall, any impacts on prospects and opportunities are likely to be indirect, limited and would depend on future planning decisions relating to individual short-term let proposals.

Human rights

Which of the below human rights will be affected by this proposal?
Article 1 Protocol 1.

What impact do you consider this proposal to have on the human rights of people? No impact

Human rights impact details: The proposal has the potential to engage Protocol 1, Article 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of property because it introduces additional planning controls relating to the use of private property as a short-term let. Property owners may be required to obtain planning permission before changing the use of a dwellinghouse to a short-term let within the Control Area. The principle of requiring planning permission for changes of use to short-term lets has already been considered by the Scottish Government as part of the legislation introducing Short Term Let Control Areas. The Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 provide a lawful mechanism for local authorities to designate control areas where justified by local circumstances.
The Council has considered the view of the Scottish Government on this matter. Cabinet Secretary for Housing Màiri McAllan MSP accepted in February that the regulation of short-term lets via planning and licensing regimes represents a control of the use of a host's property for the purposes of Article 1 of the First Protocol to the ECHR. However, they were "satisfied that the creation of powers for a local authority to designate a short-term let control area is a proportionate measure to allow them to consider and manage the impacts of short-term lets on the availability of residential housing and on nearby amenity".
The proposal does not remove property rights or prevent ownership of property. Any interference with property rights would be lawful, proportionate and in pursuit of a legitimate public interest, namely the management of housing supply, community sustainability and the balanced development of the area through the planning system. As the Control Area operates within an established legal framework specifically created by the Scottish Parliament for this purpose, any interference with property rights is considered lawful, proportionate and in pursuit of legitimate public policy objectives. No significant adverse impacts on other Convention rights have been identified.

Equalities, poverty and human rights screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to equalities, poverty and human rights? Positive and negative impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Children's rights and wellbeing

What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people? The proposal does not introduce any direct impacts. While indirect positive impacts for children and young people could occur though supporting the availability of homes for permanent residents, contribute to sustaining local communities, supporting the retention of families within communities, and helping to maintain demand for local schools, childcare facilities and other community services, these impacts are limited, indirect and would depend on the planning decisions taken with respect to individual applications, rather than being achieved through the designation itself.

Which of the below children's rights will be affected by the proposal? No children's rights will be affected.

Explain how the children's rights selected above will be affected:

Children's rights and wellbeing screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to children's rights and wellbeing? No impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Data protection

Will your proposal involve processing personal data? No

Is any of this data already processed by the Highland Council? No

Data protection screening assessment

What change will there be to the way personal data is processed? No significant change to current processing.

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Island and mainland rural communities

Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities? Yes

Could people in island and mainland rural communities be affected differently? Yes

Have any negative impacts been identified? No

Island and mainland rural communities screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to island and mainland rural communities? Minor Differences

How could the impact differ? The Highland Rural Short Term Let Control Area is, by its design and nature, intended to apply to rural areas across Highland, including both island and mainland rural communities. The proposal could affect island and mainland rural communities in different ways, reflecting their differing housing markets, population characteristics and levels of reliance on tourism. However, the purpose of the Short Term Let Control Area is to provide a consistent planning mechanism that allows local circumstances to be taken into account when considering individual proposals.

In some island and rural communities, short-term lets can form an important part of the local economy, supporting tourism-related employment and income for self-employed individuals, seasonal workers and small businesses. The introduction of a Control Area may therefore be perceived as having a greater impact in locations where the visitor economy is particularly significant.
Conversely, many island and rural communities experience acute housing pressures, including limited housing supply, higher construction costs, outward migration of young people, difficulties attracting workers and challenges sustaining local services. In these areas, the Control Area may have positive impacts by helping to manage the loss of residential properties to short-term let use and supporting the availability of housing for permanent residents and local workers.
As the Control Area does not prohibit short-term lets but instead requires planning permission for changes of use, it provides a mechanism through which the specific circumstances of individual island and mainland rural communities can be considered as part of the planning process.
Overall, the proposal is assessed as having a mixed but generally neutral to positive impact, recognising that effects may vary between communities depending on the balance between housing pressures and the economic benefits associated with short-term letting. No disproportionate adverse impacts on island communities compared with mainland rural communities have been identified.

Scottish Government in the Consultation report on proposals for a licensing scheme and planning control areas for short-term lets in Scotland page 84 stated :

We believe that our licensing scheme and powers to introduce control areas provide the right combination of national consistency and local flexibility that will allow local authorities to strike the right balance between tourism and economic benefits and community needs and concerns in their areas. Some local authorities may want to designate control areas in all or part of their area and might consider that some islands would benefit from such designation. Similar considerations apply in other urban and rural areas on the mainland.

and page 85:
We consider that the legislation is appropriate for the whole of Scotland, including island communities, and offers considerable flexibility to local authorities on how it is implemented. We intend to work with local authorities, not least in the preparation of guidance, as they work towards implementation so that we can facilitate the sharing of ideas and best practice. We hope this will be of particular value to island local authorities and local authorities with island communities.

By introducing planning control for future changes if use it is accepted that this introduces costs applying for planning permission or Certificates of Lawfulness where relevant, that do not apply at present, within rural and island areas that fall within this proposal.

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Climate change

Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e)? No

Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity? No

Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing climate? No

Provide information regarding your selection above: No impact on climate change arising.

Climate change screening assessment

Have you identified potential impact for any of the areas above or marked any as not known? No

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Directorate for Planning
Planning Policy and Practice

E: Planning.Decisions@gov.scot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Meadhbh Maguire
The Highland Council
meadhbh.maguire1@highland.gov.uk

Our ref: STL-270-002

26 October 2026

Dear Meadhbh Maguire,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SHORT-TERM LET CONTROL AREAS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2021: REGULATIONS 3 AND 8
PROPOSED INVERNESS CITY SHORT-TERM LET CONTROL AREA

I refer to your email of 28 September 2026 seeking the approval of Scottish Ministers to designate Inverness City as a Short-term Let Control Area under the terms of the above Regulations.

Scottish Ministers' Decision

Scottish Ministers have carefully considered all the evidence presented to them including the Council's Statement of Reasons for the designation and the relevant committee and council meeting reports and minutes.

Circular 1/2023: Short-term Lets and Planning states that in considering a proposal for a control area, Ministers will seek assurance that the planning authority has:

a) taken reasonable steps to raise awareness in the proposed control area(s) and consulted appropriately;
b) taken account of the views expressed in consultation and considered this with any other relevant evidence; and
c) come to a reasoned decision as set out in the accompanying statement.

Ministers consider that these points have all been satisfied by the planning authority. The planning authority proposes to designate the control area due to a lack of affordable housing for local residents in the area and the detrimental impact of short term lets on local amenity. Ministers consider that these are valid reasons to propose the designation, and conclude that the proposed designation would be justified and reasonable.

The Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2021[i], read with section 26B(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 ("the Act") set out when a short term let is provided.

A change of use of a dwellinghouse to a short-term let after the designation of the control area will be deemed to be a material change of use by virtue of section 26B of the Act.

Where the change of a dwellinghouse to a short-term let took place before the designation of the control area the existing rules will apply. These require planning permission for a change of use of property where that change is a material change in the use of the property.

Accordingly and on the above basis, Scottish Ministers hereby approve the proposed designation of Inverness City Short-Term Let Control Area.

Subsequent Procedures

Before designating the Short-Term Let Control Area, the planning authority must publish notice of the designation in accordance with Regulation 9 of the above Regulations.

Yours sincerely

PLANNING DIRECTORATE

[i] SSI 2021/154, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2022 (SSI 2022/33).

Directorate for Planning
Planning Policy and Practice

E: Planning.Decisions@gov.scot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Meadhbh Maguire
The Highland Council
meadhbh.maguire1@highland.gov.uk

Our ref: STL-270-003

26 October 2026

Dear Meadhbh Maguire,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SHORT-TERM LET CONTROL AREAS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2021: REGULATIONS 3 AND 8
PROPOSED HIGHLAND RURAL SHORT-TERM LET CONTROL AREA

I refer to your email of 28 September 2026 seeking the approval of Scottish Ministers to designate Highland Rural as a Short-term Let Control Area under the terms of the above Regulations.

Scottish Ministers' Decision

Scottish Ministers have carefully considered all the evidence presented to them including the Council's Statement of Reasons for the designation and the relevant committee and council meeting reports and minutes.

Circular 1/2023: Short-term Lets and Planning states that in considering a proposal for a control area, Ministers will seek assurance that the planning authority has:

a) taken reasonable steps to raise awareness in the proposed control area(s) and consulted appropriately;
b) taken account of the views expressed in consultation and considered this with any other relevant evidence; and
c) come to a reasoned decision as set out in the accompanying statement.

Ministers consider that these points have all been satisfied by the planning authority. The planning authority proposes to designate the control area due to a lack of affordable housing for local residents in the area and the detrimental impact of short term lets on local amenity. Ministers consider that these are valid reasons to propose the designation, and conclude that the proposed designation would be justified and reasonable.

The Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2021[i], read with section 26B(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 ("the Act") set out when a short term let is provided.

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Where the change of a dwellinghouse to a short-term let took place before the designation of the control area the existing rules will apply. These require planning permission for a change of use of property where that change is a material change in the use of the property.

Accordingly and on the above basis, Scottish Ministers hereby approve the proposed designation of Highland Area Short-Term Let Control Area.

Subsequent Procedures

Before designating the Short-Term Let Control Area, the planning authority must publish notice of the designation in accordance with Regulation 9 of the above Regulations.

Yours sincerely

PLANNING DIRECTORATE

[i] SSI 2021/154, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Short-term Let Control Areas) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2022 (SSI 2022/33).

Assessment Report: **STL-270-002 & STL-270-003**

Proposed Short-Term Let Control Areas, the Highland Council.

Establishing a control area

1. Section 26B of the Planning Act allows a planning authority to designate all or part of its area as a control area. Before doing so it must consult on the proposal and obtain approval from Scottish Ministers. If approved, the authority can designate the area following public notice.

2. *Circular 1/2023 Short-term Lets and Planning* confirms processes for the establishment of short-term let control areas. In approving any Short-Term Let Control Area, Ministers must ensure certain procedures have been followed by the planning authority.

3. The Highland Council has submitted a request to Scottish Ministers for approval to designate two Short Term Let Control Areas:
   - Highland Rural Short-Term Let Control Area (ref STL-270-003)
   - Inverness City Short-Term Let Control Area (ref STL-270-002)

Assessment

Procedures	Evidence submitted
Map provided of affected control area	Maps of both consent areas have been submitted and are set out below.
Statement of the planning authority's reasoning	*Rural Highland Area* - The Council consider the control area is justified due to the lack of affordable housing for local residents in the area and the detrimental impact of short-term lets on local amenity (including impact on schools through declining pupil numbers and changes in community function and character). *Inverness City Area* - The Council consider the control area is justified due to the lack of affordable housing for local residents in the area and the detrimental impact of short-term lets on local amenity (including changes in community function and character, recurring noise impacts and recurring waste management issues). The Council consider that each control area will allow local communities the opportunity to make representations through the planning process. Extensive further details and supporting data and evidence have been set out for both consent areas in their Statements of Reason.
Steps to raise awareness in	The Council took multiple steps to raise awareness and engage with stakeholders including:

the proposed areas and consultation	- 6 week formal public consultation period. - Advertisement of the Highland Rural Area in the Press and Journal and the Inverness City Area in the Inverness Courier. - Notices were published on the Council website. - Information was made available at Council Service Points. - Webinars were provided for Community Councils and outputs circulated to all community councils. - Social Media campaign was launched. - Webinar for the tourism industry. - A Short Term Let Enquiry Form launched.
Taken account of views expressed in consultation	The Highland Council have provided evidence that they have taken account of the consultation views in local Area Committee Reports and minutes as well as the information provided to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.
Reasoned decision	The Highland Council has reached a reasoned decision taking account of the consultation responses. Committees in Wester Ross Strathpeffer and Lochalsh; Lochaber; Skye and Raasay; Sutherland and City of Inverness agreed to recommend to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee that the Highland Area Control Area should be progressed. The City of Inverness Local Committee recommended that the Inverness City Control Area should be progressed. The Economy and Infrastructure Committee considered both cases on 28 September.

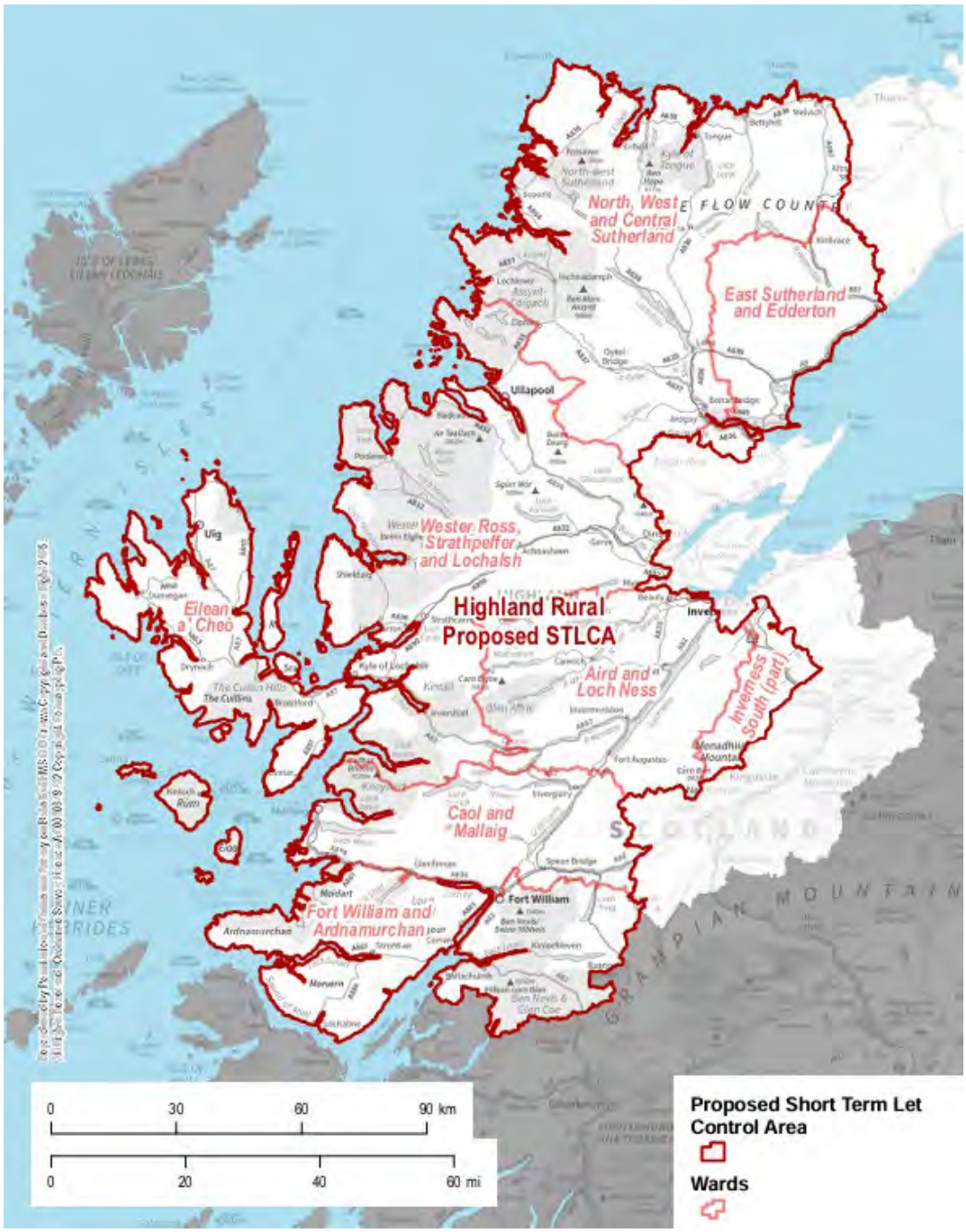
<u>Recommendation</u>

4. We are satisfied that the Council has complied with the requirements of Circular 1/2023 (Short Term Lets and Planning) by adequately taking account of the views expressed through consultation and come to a reasoned decision. This is demonstrated through various submitted Committee reports, relevant Committee minutes and the submitted Statement of Reasons. We conclude that the proposed designation would be reasonable.

Planning Directorate
10 October 2026

Proposed Control Area Boundaries

Highland Rural Control Area



Inverness City Control Area

