Agenda Item	**7**
Report No	**RES/47/26**

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Corporate Resources Committee**

Date: **19 November 2026**

Report Title: **Banking and Related Financial Transactions – Authorised Signatories List**

Report By: **Chief Officer – Corporate Finance**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 To update the approved list of officers appointed to authorise banking and related financial transactions on behalf of the Council and the Highland Council Pension Fund, to reflect current or planned changes in staffing arrangements within Corporate Finance.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

Approve the amendments to the Authorised Signatory List as set out in the report.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource – there are no direct resource implications arising. The recommendations are to ensure the Council has appropriate authorisation and delegation arrangements in place.

3.2 Legal – there are no legal implications.

3.3 Risk- Failure to have a sufficient number of staff able to support the Council's day-to-day banking activities may impact on the ability to effectively conduct business.

3.4 Health & Safety - (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process or people). There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.5 Gaelic - There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

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 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Background

5.1 The Council's banking arrangements are specified in the Council's Financial Regulations as follows:

Regulation 2.2.1 states: "These Financial Regulations detail the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer who is responsible for the proper financial administration of the Council's affairs, and acts as financial adviser to the Council, and to such other bodies, trusts and organisations, as the Council shall approve. This is a statutory role as set out in Section 95 Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The Chief Financial Officer also has statutory responsibility under Section 5 of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulation 2014 for the preparation of the annual accounts."

Regulation 2.2.2 states: "The role of the Chief Financial Officer complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government along with the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code). The Statement requires that the Chief Financial Officer:

- is a key member of the Leadership Team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the organisation's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest;
- must be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer-term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the organisation's financial strategy.
- must lead the promotion and delivery by the whole organisation of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively."

Regulation 2.2.3 states: "Any reference in these Regulations to the Chief Financial Officer includes those specifically authorised by them to undertake the various functions concerned."

Regulation 11.1 states: " All arrangements with the Council's bankers will be made by the Chief Financial Officer".

Regulation 11.6 states: "The Chief Financial Officer will make all necessary arrangements through the use of online banking, to enable appropriate transactions to be processed through the Bankers Automated Clearing System (BACS) and the Clearing House Automated Payments System (CHAPS). In order to operate online banking, the designated signatories and Officers of Principal Accountant grade and above as delegated by the Chief Financial Officer and approved by Resources Committee shall authorise all transactions and shall be responsible for approving the limits, permissions and levels of authority granted to other system users".

6. Formal Changes

6.1 The following staff should be removed from the authorised signatories list on the dates indicated below:

- Brian Porter, Chief Officer – Corporate Finance with effect from 18/12/2026.

6.2 The following staff should have their position amended on the authorised signatories list to reflect their change in role from Strategic Lead – Place to Acting Chief Officer - Corporate Finance and Section 95 Officer:

- Carolyn Pieraccini with effect from 18/12/2026

6.3 The following staff should be added to the authorised signatories list:

- Alistair Dempsey-Reid, Acting Strategic Lead – Place with effect from 20/11/2026
- Matt Simpkinson, Strategic Lead – Corporate with effect from 04/01/2027

6.4 The Council's and Highland Council Pension Fund's authorised signatories for banking and related financial transactions will be as follows as a result of these proposals:

- Carolyn Pieraccini, Acting Chief Officer – Corporate Finance and Section 95 Officer
- Matt Simpkinson, Strategic Lead - Corporate
- Jennifer McGonagle, Strategic Lead – People
- Alistair Dempsey-Reid, Acting Strategic Lead - Place
- Catriona Stachan, Pensions Manager
- Michael Fraser, Finance Manager

7. Online Banking Operational Changes

7.1 Under the current financial regulations, approval of online banking payments is carried out by two approvers from the Councils authorised list. This requires two officers from the list of authorised signatories to be available each morning to promptly approve the daily treasury transactions, and often there can be an additional call on their time for approvals of any urgent or emergency payments later in the day.

7.2 To provide cover for business continuity it is proposed to extend the number of approvers for online banking transactions by adding Matt Simpkinson Strategic Lead – Corporate with effect from 04/01/2027, Alistair Dempsey-Reid Acting Strategic Lead – Place with effect from 20/11/2026, and Brenda Dunthorne, Principal Accountant Corporate Finance, with effect from 20/11/2026. Brian Porter, Chief Officer Corporate Finance, will be removed as an online banking approver with effect from 18/12/2026.

7.3 The Council's authorised list for online banking approvals will be as follows as a result of these changes:

- Carolyn Pieraccini, Acting Chief Officer – Corporate Finance and Section 95 Officer
- Matt Simpkinson, Strategic Lead - Corporate

- Jennifer McGonagle, Strategic Lead – People
- Alistair Dempsey-Reid, Acting Strategic Lead - Place
- Catriona Stachan, Pensions Manager
- Michael Fraser, Finance Manager
- Rachel Macdonald, Principal Accountant
- Alison McDonald, Principal Accountant
- Lara Harrison, Principal Accountant
- Brenda Dunthorne, Principal Accountant

Designation: Chief Officer – Corporate Finance

Date: 28 October 2026

Author: Brian Porter, Chief Officer – Corporate Finance

Background Papers: none