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Foreword

Facal-tòiseachaidh

“Future Highland” is this Council’s Programme which sets out our ambition and key strategic priorities for the next five years.

The development of our Programme is set against a backdrop of the greatest financial crisis in decades. While this limits our spending power, and our Programme has to be affordable, every crisis presents opportunities and we seek to be ambitious in establishing the foundations of a brighter and more sustainable future for our communities and particularly our younger generation.

We seek to be a listening council – and we have spent some time engaging with communities to ensure their hopes are reflected in our priorities. A particular joy has been seeing the posters coming in from schools across Highland, representing the hopes and dreams and ambitions of our young people in expressions and artwork. A few of these are included in this Programme and we will publish all the posters on our website.

The need for sustainable and resilient communities, businesses and council is a strongly emerging theme. Fairness, value for money, partnership and collaboration are values which underpin much of what we are hearing. People want affordable housing, clean environments, access to transport and work and a good quality of life.

Our ambition for a Highland which is a centre for global renewable energy, making the most of our natural resources, would help to achieve a better, brighter future for all, with the investment, jobs, infrastructure and prosperity which would stem from this.

The next few years will not be easy, but we are committed to working together with our partners, businesses and communities for the future Highland we all want to live in.



Photo by Peter Jolly

Raymond Bremner
Leader of the Highland Council

Our Highland Today

Ar Gàidhealtachd An-diugh

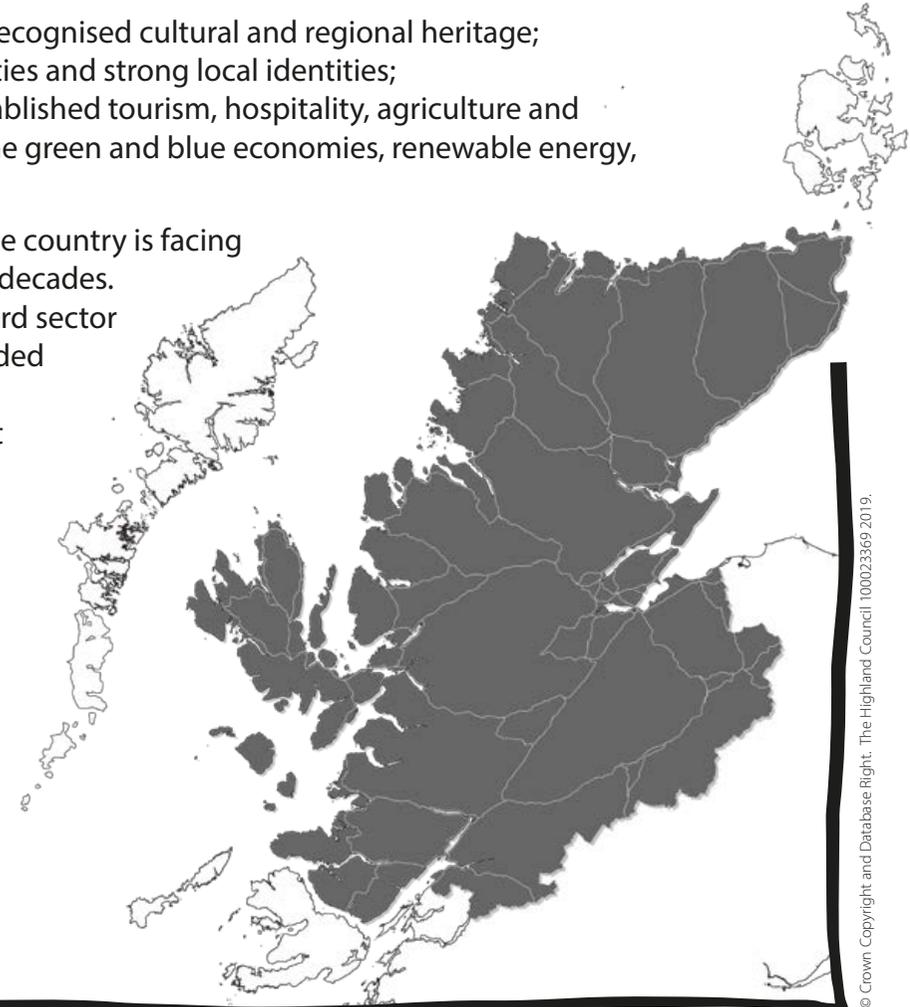
The Highland Council is the largest local authority in UK, with a landmass larger than Belgium. The area includes 6 inhabited islands, nearly 7000km of roads, 90 harbours and marine facilities, 199 schools and 14,500 council houses. The Council has a £900M, 15-year capital Programme and an annual net revenue budget of £640M to deliver services to 235,430 residents and thousands of annual visitors. (Nov 2022 figures)

Highland has many strengths and opportunities – internationally recognised cultural and regional heritage; an unparalleled natural environment; low crime; vibrant communities and strong local identities; positive public, community and voluntary sector partnerships; established tourism, hospitality, agriculture and aquaculture industries; and growth potential in newer sectors in the green and blue economies, renewable energy, land use and natural capital.

Alongside these positive factors, it has to be acknowledged that the country is facing the most severe cost of living crisis that has been experienced in a decades. This is impacting on people, businesses, public services and the third sector across the Highlands. The effects of this crisis have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing health and wellbeing issues that this has caused. We are also seeing the impacts of Brexit through more regulation, less freedom of movement and uncertainty over replacement funding.

We are very conscious of the impact that these issues are having on both the Council and our communities. They have informed many of the short to medium term priorities of our programme as we seek to mitigate the impacts of this crisis where we can.

We will undertake reviews over the coming years to ensure our priorities remain relevant to the needs of the Council and our communities.



Trees for oxygen.

No more littering

nice beaches

clean and no litter.

Our Future Highland

Ar Gàidhealtachd Ri Teachd

While these are challenging times, our Future Highland is very much focused on being ambitious for the future, and maximising the opportunities and the resources we have to improve the quality of life for people in the Highlands. This includes supporting and empowering communities to identify local solutions and using available all resources by levering in funding and support.

- Our Future Highland is about bringing people together to promote wellbeing, to reduce inequalities and deliver improved outcomes, such as attainment, with a clear focus on literacy and numeracy.
- We want resilient and sustainable communities that make a positive difference in the lives of our citizens. We will take forward a place-based approach with a focus on quality neighbourhoods with local funding opportunities aimed toward local priorities.
- Without energy efficient, accessible and affordable homes, Highland communities will struggle to be sustainable. Our Future Highland commits to delivering and enabling a housing supply which supports our communities' needs and contributes to the economic growth of the area.
- We are ambitious for the future of our environment and recognise the importance of accelerating our response to the pressing climate and ecological emergency. Aligned to this, there is huge potential for renewable energy development in the Highlands. Working with our partners, communities and the private sector, we will ensure that Highland secures lasting benefits from our renewable resources for generations to come.
- The Council needs to become more resilient and sustainable as we serve our Highland communities. This will involve taking forward a flexible workforce planning approach, making better use of our assets, and working with partners to identify investment and funding opportunities, including implementing the tourism levy.

Less food waste

no drugs

Recycle

Help homelessness!

Make sure everyone has enough food.

Our Highland Priorities Ar Prìomhachasan Gàidhealach

Our Strategic Priority Outcomes are centred around:



A Fair and Caring Highland

Working together to improve quality of life and opportunities for Highland people.



Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Helping our communities to be prosperous, sustainable and resilient, making a positive difference to the lives of people.



Accessible and Sustainable Highland Homes

Build houses to support communities and economic growth.



A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy

Accelerate our response to the climate and ecological emergency. Make the most of the financial and environmental opportunities arising from the huge renewable energy potential in the Highlands.



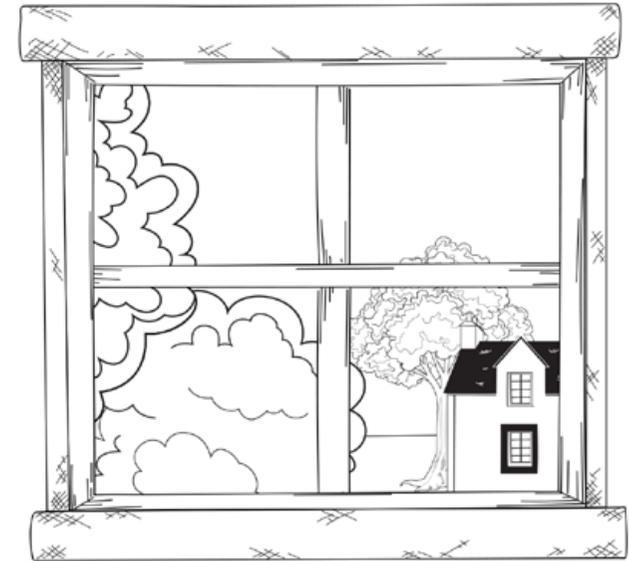
A Resilient and Sustainable Council

Work with partners to address service delivery challenges with a positive approach to change.

These Strategic Outcomes led to the following priorities being identified which have been grouped under three themes of **People**, **Place** and **Economy**.



A Fair and Caring Highland



**Gàidhealtachd
Chothromach is
Chùramach**

Working together to improve quality of life and opportunities for Highland people.

People

Daoine

- Improve outcomes including attainment, achievement, positive destinations for all children and young people with a particular focus on literacy, numeracy, and our most vulnerable learners.
- Tackle child poverty and promote access to welfare support.
- Secure positive destinations including Modern Apprenticeships.
- Work with partners on suicide prevention.
- Encourage a diverse range of traditional and emerging sporting activities and active lifestyles.

Place

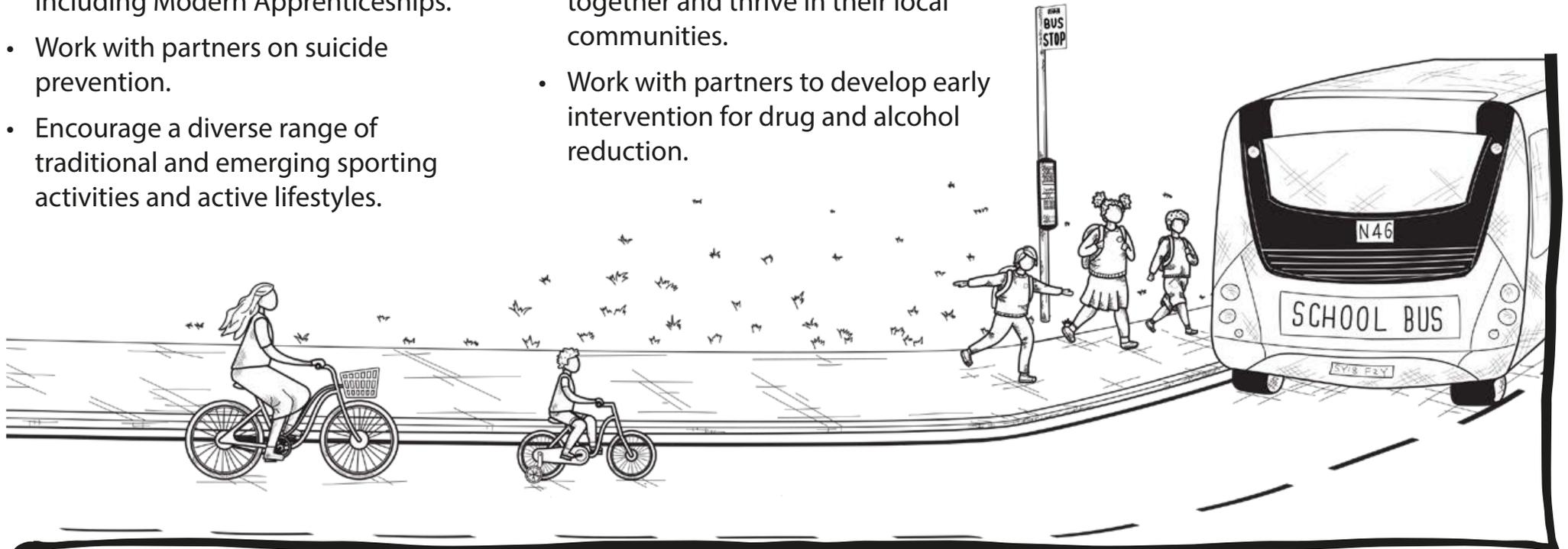
Àite

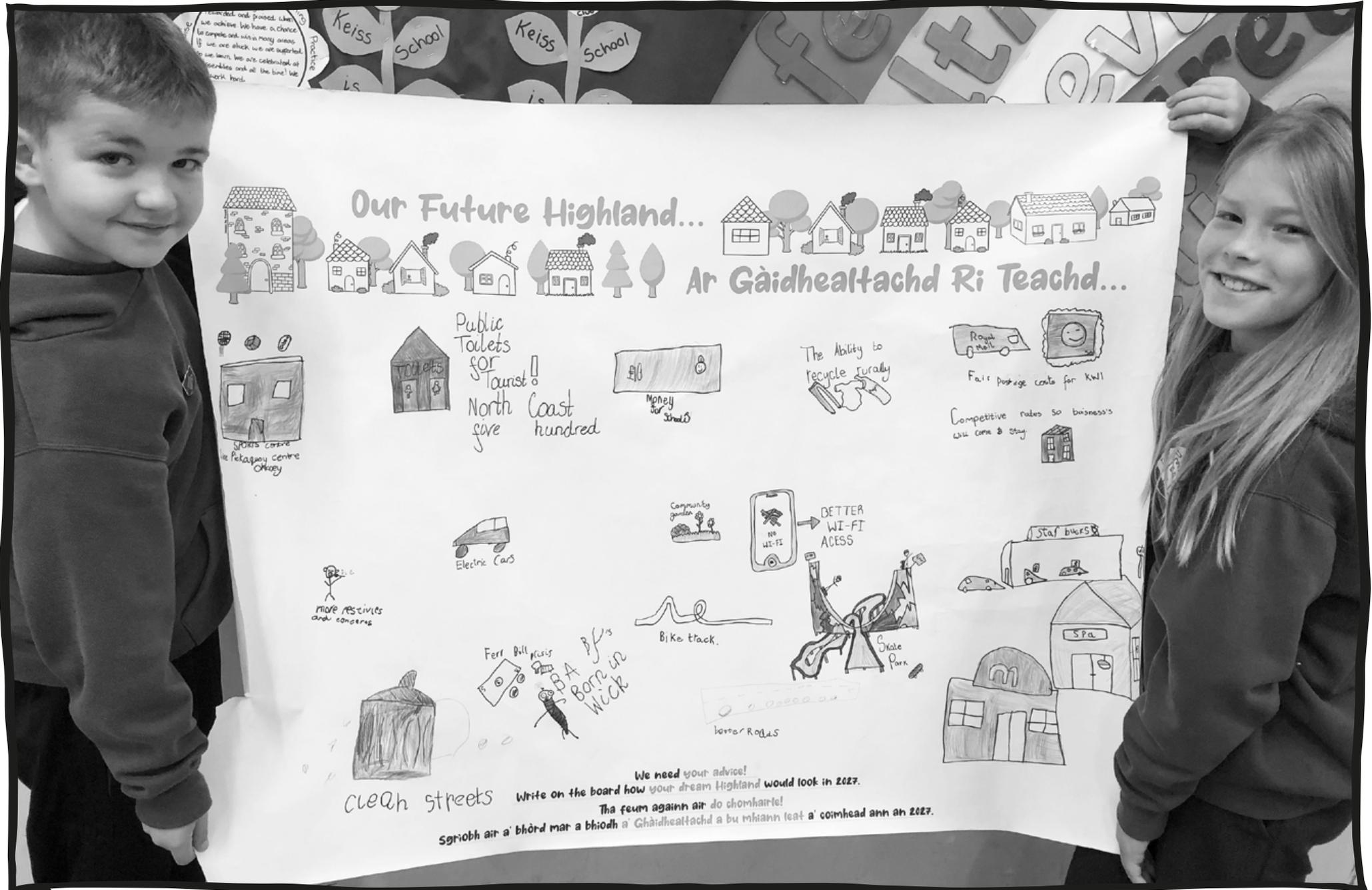
- Promote fair access through co-located services across the Highlands.
- Work with partners to improve the levels of mental health and wellbeing experienced by people in our communities.
- Develop a whole family support approach to ensure families stay together and thrive in their local communities.
- Work with partners to develop early intervention for drug and alcohol reduction.

Economy

Eaconamaidh

- Facilitate strategic sports and cultural planning across the Highlands.
- Continue to promote Gaelic language and cultural development.
- Promote and enhance the Highland's rich heritage and culture.





Keiss School Keiss School

Our Future Highland... Ar Gàidhealtachd Ri Teachd...

Public Toilets for Tourist! North side Coast hundred

SPORTS centre like Pekingay centre Okoy

Money for Street

The Ability to Recycle rurally

Fair postage costs for KWI

Competitive rates so business's will come to stay

Electric Cars

more activities and concerns

Ferr Bill prices

SPA Barn in Wick

Bike track

BETTER WI-FI ACCESS

State Park

Star buses

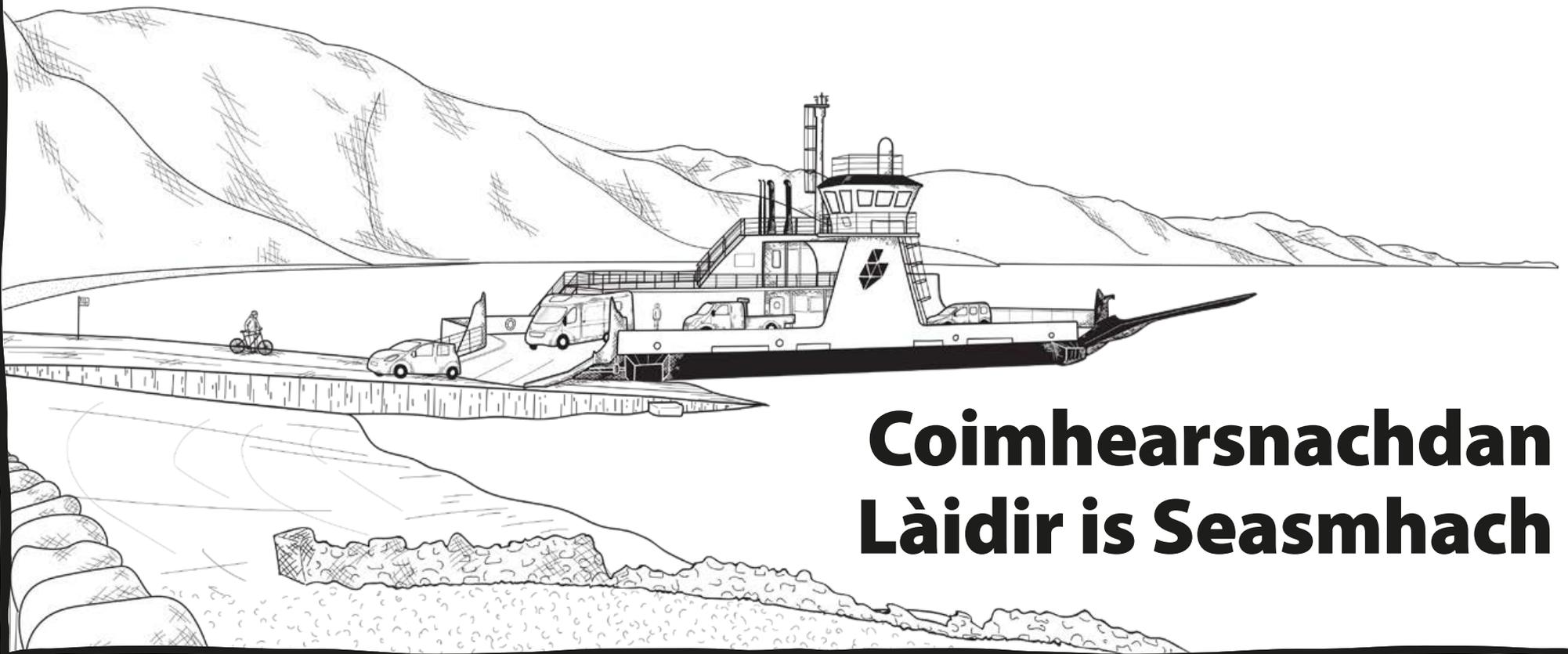
SPA

better Roads

clean streets

We need your advice!
Write on the board how your dream Highland would look in 2027.
Tha feum againn air do chomhairle!
Sgrìobh air a' bhòrd mar a bhiodh a' Ghàidhealtachd a bu mhiann leat a' coimhead ann an 2027.

Resilient and Sustainable Communities



**Coimhearsnachdan
Làidir is Seasmhach**

Helping our communities to be prosperous, sustainable and resilient - making a positive difference to the lives of people.

People

Daoine

- Develop affordable and reliable public transport.
- Continue to work with partners to develop and promote Road and Water Safety.

Place

Àite

- Continue our expanded programme for improving road condition and maintenance.
- Develop place-based plans that focus on quality neighbourhoods and direct local funding opportunities towards local priorities.
- Support communities to help each other live well and independently.
- Work with partners to promote visitor management.
- Work with communities and partners to keep public spaces clean and safe.

Economy

Eaconamaidh

- Support Scottish and UK Government initiatives to ensure maximum digital connectivity across the area.
- Work with the Scottish Government on the delivery of improved transport infrastructure throughout the Highlands.
- Encourage private and public sector economic development partners to ensure that Highland remains a top destination for inward investment.
- Work with partners to develop a community wealth building strategy.



Our Future Highland... Ar Gàidhealtachd Ri Teachd...

COMMUNITY GARDENS

A nice place for any age to come and sit down and relax and look at wild life.

COMMUNITY VEGETABLE GROWING

Community Vegetable Growing!
Collection of School food waste! UR & ENT

CYCLE PATHS

safer cycle paths + reduce traffic + stop air pollution keeping beaches clean.

SAFE ROADS

Paths and roads laid out and access for disabled and older people.

ACCESS FOR ALL AGES

LIBRARIES

LIBRARY VAN AND LIBRARIES OPEN!

RECYCLING

recycling where does it go?
Where does it go?
More recycling
Save our seas
If we don't recycle there is no future
Save our future there is still time to change everything

RANGERS LINKED TO SCHOOLS GREEN SPACES

We need your advice!
Write on the board how your dream Highland would look in 2027.
Tha feum againn air do chomhairle!
Sgrìobh air a' bhòrd mar a bhiodh a' Ghàidhealtachd a bu mhiann leat a' coimhead ann an 2027.

We need more bees to help save the highlands.

Accessible and Sustainable Highland Homes



**Dachaighean Gàidhealach
So-ruigsinn is Seasmhach**

Build houses to support communities and economic growth.

People

Daoine

- Build quality, affordable, accessible homes.
- Provide warm and energy efficient homes.
- Support the development of quality affordable housing in response to need.
- Support the needs of veterans through the Armed Forces Covenant.

Place

Àite

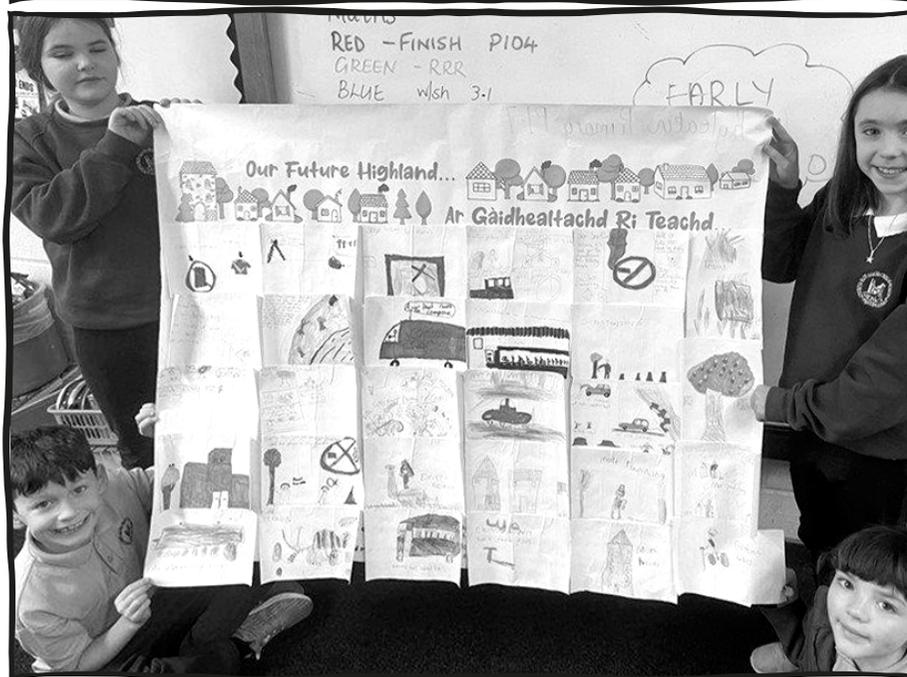
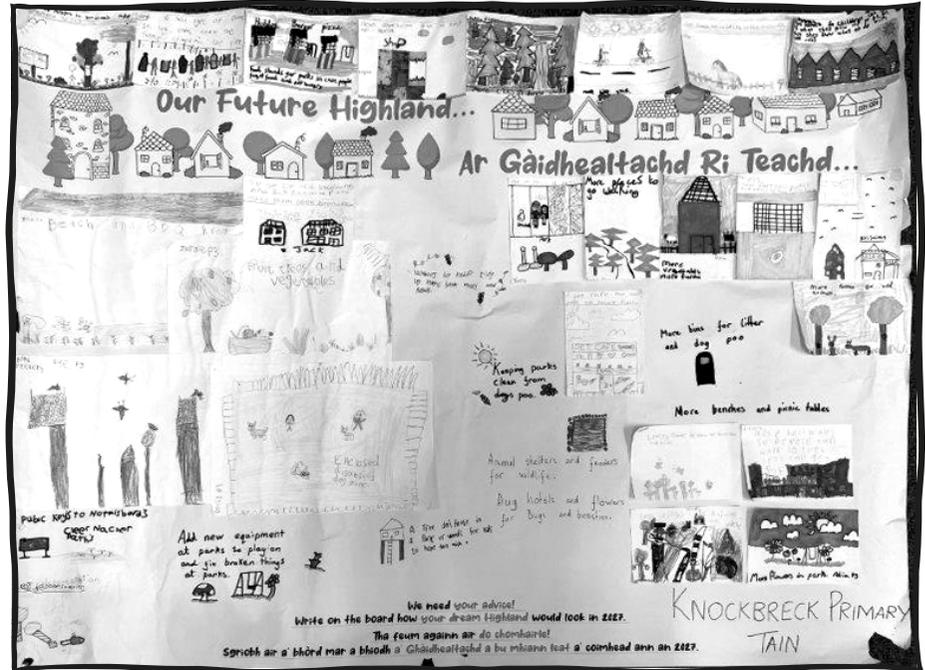
- Develop housing options that help vulnerable and elderly adults to be cared for close to home and community.
- Convert Council assets for housing use.
- Work to ensure a fair balance of residential, recreational and commercial use of properties to sustain vibrant local communities.

Economy

Eaconamaidh

- Work with partners to develop key worker housing opportunities so that sustainable public services and economic growth are not constrained by a lack of housing.
- Work to ensure accessible transport networks are integrated into future housing developments for access to work and services.





A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy



**Àrainneachd
Ghàidhealach
Sheasmhach agus Àite
Cruinneil airson Lùth Ath-nuadhachail**

Accelerate our response to the climate and ecological emergency.
Make the most of the financial and environmental opportunities arising from the huge renewable energy potential in the Highlands.

People

Daoine

- Promote active travel infrastructure across Highland.
- Promote green transport including low carbon public transport and the development of hydrogen hubs throughout the area.

Place

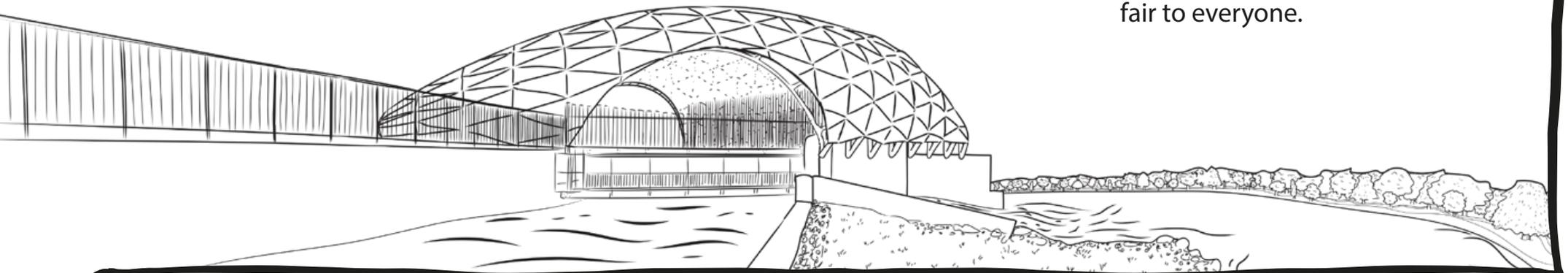
Àite

- Work with communities to find local solutions and lever in funding.
- Value and protect Highland's natural environment.
- Encourage greater use of land and seas being well managed for nature and Adaptation including blue economy, carbon sequestration, and peatland restoration.
- Reduce residual waste and increase re-use, repair, recycling and upcycling.
- Achieve our Net Zero targets.

Economy

Eaconamaidh

- Invest in commercial renewable energy opportunities to generate new income streams for the Council.
- Identify and commit to renewable energy investments to reduce the overall energy costs for the Council.
- Capitalise on our areas of immense natural capital to deliver alternative energy solutions including development of solar, hydrogen, Hydro, and wind solutions.
- Promote a "Just Transition" by moving to a more environmentally sustainable economy in a way that's fair to everyone.





Our Future Highland...

Ar Gàidhealtachd Ri Teachd...

More Eco-friendly,
Lots more plants and trees. Plants in roundabouts and anywhere else that they can grow.

Better public transport-buses and trains, so that people use it more instead of using their cars. More access to public transport in rural areas.

Everyone is kind to animals.
More vets to care for injured animals, but not too big so as not to take up too much of the animal's land.
- more space for animals.
- more freedom for animals

Better upkeep & maintenance on local swingparks

Community gardens-free fruit and veg. Eco-friendly, healthy and helps with cost of living crisis. Growing things locally so they don't need to be flown from other countries or transported.

Electric cars to be more affordable and the charge to last longer.

Cheaper solar panels so that more people can afford them.

Everyone is eco-conscious and people don't waste electricity.

Ban coal fires →
Replace with wood burners

More emergency services.

Less use of fuels that create smoke. Less greenhouse gases.

Less accidents on the road.

More support so that no-one is homeless.

More housing.

Looking at ways to prevent animal extinction

More activities to do. Including rollercoasters and swingparks

Litter-free

Less traffic and traffic-jams.

Things are cheaper to buy so everyone can afford what they need.

No-one is poor.

Bigger schools with more games and more resources.

No smoking.

Save the bees - more wildflower meadows

A Resilient and Sustainable Council



Comhairle Làidir is Sheasmhach

Working with partners to address service delivery challenges with a positive approach to change.

People

Daoine

- Grow and retain our own talent within the Council.
- Work with public and private sector partners to coordinate employment opportunities.
- Improve our response times in replying to enquiries and service requests from the public.
- Actively redesign service delivery in response to constrained budgets to ensure the sustainability of the Council.

Place

Àite

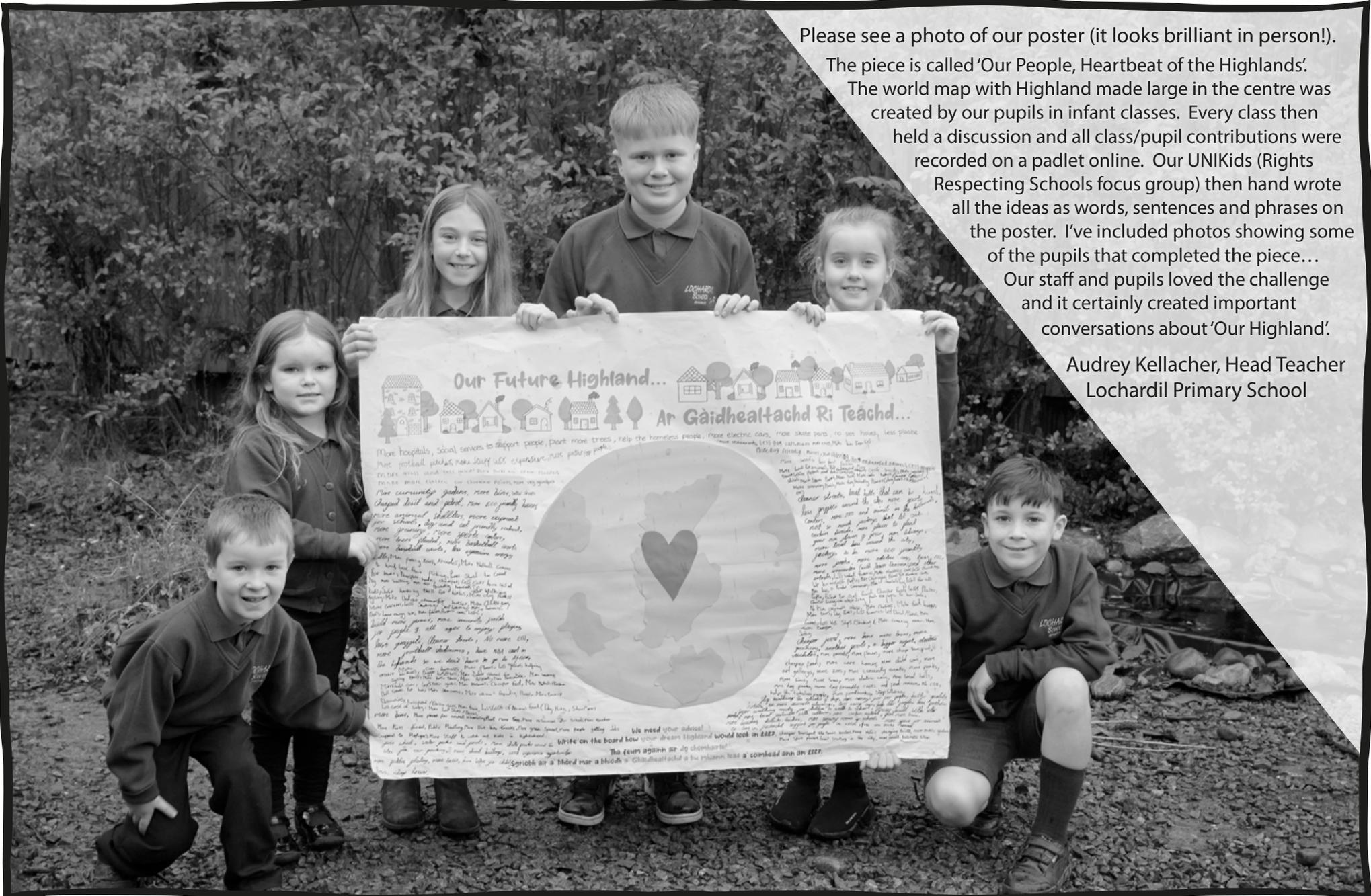
- Work together with communities and partners to produce local place plans which meet communities' needs.
- Develop place-based partnership strategies to coordinate investment and rural repopulation.
- Continue the Council's success in attracting rural tourism infrastructure funding to provide improvements to local infrastructure.
- Accelerate the delivery of our Asset Management approach to increase efficiency and reduce overheads and carbon impact.

Economy

Eaconamaidh

- Promote and support business development opportunities through Business Gateway and Highland Opportunity Investment Limited.
- Broaden the Council's income base through taxation and delivering more commercial Value for Money services.
- Implement the tourism levy as an enabler to a vibrant attractive visitor experience.





Please see a photo of our poster (it looks brilliant in person!).

The piece is called 'Our People, Heartbeat of the Highlands'.

The world map with Highland made large in the centre was created by our pupils in infant classes. Every class then held a discussion and all class/pupil contributions were recorded on a padlet online. Our UNIKids (Rights Respecting Schools focus group) then hand wrote all the ideas as words, sentences and phrases on the poster. I've included photos showing some of the pupils that completed the piece...

Our staff and pupils loved the challenge and it certainly created important conversations about 'Our Highland'.

Audrey Kellacher, Head Teacher
Lochardil Primary School