

Integrated Impact Assessment

About proposal

What does this proposal relate to? Budget savings proposal

Proposal name: Council Tax 2nd Homes and Long Term Empty Properties

High level summary of the proposal: The Council propose to utilise flexibility introduced via legislation and increase premium charges on Second Homes and Long Term Empty properties.

Who may be affected by the proposal? Owners of Second Homes and Long Term Empty properties.

Start date of proposal: 01/04/2026

End date of proposal:

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

Which Council services are impacted by this proposal? Corporate, People, Place

Does this relate to an existing proposal? No

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Sign off date: 2026-02-23

Evidence and consultation

What sources have you used to gather information relating to this proposal? National or local data, Customer feedback, Budget Engagement

Are there any gaps or missing information in the available sources selected above? No

Have any stakeholders been involved in the development of the proposal? Yes

Which stakeholders have been involved and how you have engaged with them? Budget Engagement focussed on gathering views from communities, partners and stakeholders to inform priorities and spending decisions. The majority of respondents - 80% - indicated support for increasing Council Tax on 2nd Homes and Empty Properties.

In addition to involving stakeholders, have there been any other formal consultations? No

Will there need to be any further formal consultation undertaken prior to proposal implementation? No

Equalities, poverty and human rights

Protected characteristics

Bearing in mind the articles of the Human Rights Act, select what impact the proposal will have on the following protected characteristics:

Sex: No impact

Age: No impact

Disability: No impact

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: No impacts identified.

Vulnerable groups

Select what impact the proposal will have on the following vulnerable groups:

Unemployed: Positive, Negative

Lone parent families: Positive, Negative

Young children: Positive, Negative

Older people: Positive, Negative

Homeless: Positive

Looked after children: Positive

Low-income households (in-work poverty): Positive, Negative

Vulnerable groups impact details: The policy intent is to increase housing supply and sustain communities. The potential positive impact will be for families to be able to remain or be housed in rural locations. In areas with high second home ownership coastal towns, rural villages, more housing supply can reduce pressure on rents and to maintain cultural connections within the Highlands. Families waiting for social housing may move up the list faster and local people are less likely to be priced out by holiday home demand.

For some there may be negatively financially impacted, as some may have 2nd Homes to enable them to live in one location and work in other areas during the week. There may be a negative impact for people with complex living arrangements (e.g., caring responsibilities across two homes). Those within the vulnerable groups may have 2nd Homes or Long Term Empty properties that are subject to increased charges but cannot afford repairs, or probate costs. This may lead to escalating debt and recovery actions.

Raising taxes can have varying impacts across different groups, with some households experiencing increased financial pressure while others may be less affected. However, the additional revenue generated can deliver clear local benefits, as it enables more resources to be directly invested into housing supply. This helps support local services and strengthen community infrastructure.

Human rights

Select what impact the proposal will have on the below human rights:

Article 8: Respect for private and family life, home, and correspondence: No impact

Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion: No impact

Article 10: Freedom of expression: No impact

Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association: No impact

Article 12: Right to marry and start a family: No impact

Article 14: Protection from discrimination: Negative

Article 1, Protocol 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of property: Positive, Negative

Article 2, Protocol 1: Right to education: No impact

Article 3, Protocol 1: Right to participate in free elections: No impact

Human rights impact details: The policy intent is to increase housing supply and sustain local communities.

Article 1 rights may be negatively impacted, as higher charges on 2nd Homes and Long Term Empty properties could place financial pressure on owners and, in some cases, influence decisions to sell. While this may represent an interference with the peaceful enjoyment of possessions, the policy is lawful, proportionate and aimed at returning properties to use as principal homes. Increasing the supply of principal homes is a legitimate policy intent, and the measure seeks to strike a fair balance between individual impact and community benefit.

Article 14 rights may also be negatively impacted, as the proposed policy could disadvantage some groups with a protected characteristic, e.g. elderly or disabled people who rely on a 2nd Home for care or respite. However, the proposed policy is objective, reasonable, and therefore justified as it is based on property use rather than personal characteristics.

Children's rights and wellbeing

What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people? The policy intent is to increase the number of properties available as principal homes. In doing so this provides a stable environment from which individuals and families can access education, employment or training, and helps to sustain vulnerable areas and communities. Increased supply of housing should help to make housing more affordable.

Impact

Select whether the proposal will have positive or negative impact on the following children's rights articles:

Article 3 - best interests of the child: No impact

Article 12 - respect for the views of the child: Negative

Article 23 - children with a disability: Negative

Article 27 - adequate standard of living: No impact

Article 28 - right to education: No impact

Article 29 - goals of education: No impact

Article 31 - leisure, play and culture: Negative

Children's rights impact details: The policy intent is to increase housing supply and sustain local communities. Increasing the supply of principal homes is a legitimate policy intent, and the measure seeks to strike a fair balance between individual impact and community benefit.

Article 9 & 12 rights may be negatively impacted, as the proposed policy could disadvantage some children whose parent/parents/carers rely on a 2nd Home for family contact. However, the proposed policy is objective, reasonable, and therefore justified as it is based on property use rather than personal characteristics.

Article 23 rights may also be negatively impacted, as the proposed policy could disadvantage some children with disability whose parent/parents/carers rely on a 2nd Home for care or respite. However, the proposed policy is objective, reasonable, and therefore justified as it is based on property use rather than personal characteristics.

Article 31 rights may also be negatively impacted, as the proposed policy could disadvantage some children whose parent/parents/carers rely on a 2nd Home for maintaining cultural connections for their child. However, the proposed policy is objective, reasonable, and therefore justified as it is based on property use rather than personal characteristics.

Will the proposal impact any other UNCRC articles not listed above? No

Data protection

Lawfulness, fairness, and transparency

Why will you need to process personal data as part of this proposal?

Will the data subjects be aware that we are using their data for this purpose?

Purpose limitation

Will the data be used for purposes other than what is set out in the proposal?

Will data be shared with other services or organisations?

Data minimisation

Will you process personal data as part of this proposal?

Accuracy

How will you ensure data is kept up-to-date and accurate?

How will you monitor the quality of the data?

Storage limitation

How long will the personal data be kept for?

Is this included in the Council's retention schedule?

Does the IT system you use apply the retention appropriately?

Integrity and confidentiality

Will you utilise the Council's existing systems to process data?

Will data be held in the service provider's cloud?

Provide details of how you will control access to the data:

How will you ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities?

Accountability

Is there an up to date privacy notice available on the Highland Council website?

Do you have policies and procedures for staff to follow?

What information will you provide to data subjects about how their data will be used?

Risks

Have any risks been identified in relation to personal data?

Island and mainland rural communities

What are the impacts on island and mainland rural communities? The policy intent is to increase housing supply and sustain communities which will have a positive impact on Island and Mainland Rural Communities by potentially increasing supply of housing available for use as principal homes.

Will the delivery of the proposal vary between impacted communities?No

Climate change

The climate change full impact assessment does not currently sit within our digital tool. The climate change content is accessible either as an appendix to this document, or can be found on the [Impact Assessment Register](#).