TENANT RENT CONSULTATION

CO-CHOMHAIRLEMAIL 2027/2028

Every year we ask you for your views on the rent you will pay next year. We are still facing challenging times with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis still being widely felt. We recognise that any increase in rent affects household budgets and that many households continue to face financial pressures. At the same time, rent income provides the funding needed to maintain homes, deliver repairs, improve neighbourhoods, and invest in future housing improvements.

This consultation is your opportunity to tell us which option you think provides the best balance between affordability and maintaining high-quality housing services.

It is so important to give us your feedback. Even if you receive help with paying your rent through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, we want to hear your views. Completing the survey will help us understand this.

The rent consultation will run in Highland until **Friday 11th December.** The consultation will be available online, and there will be options to attend a local pop-up at various service points.

Tenants also have the option to text their response and there is a dedicated number to call if you want to discuss the proposals in more detail or would like help to complete the survey; 01463 702744

(Please note, this number is dedicated for the rent consultation. It will only be answered between 9am & 5pm Monday to Friday and will close after the consultation ends.)

If you have any questions, you can email us at tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk or call us on the number above.

What happens next?

We will use the feedback received from tenants to prepare a report for the Council's Housing and Property Committee to consider when Elected Members set the level of rent and service charges on 27th January for the year 2027/28.

We will write to you at least four weeks in advance to notify you of the new rent and service charges coming into effect for 2027/28.

Rent proposals for 2027/28

Moladhàrdachadhmàilairson 2027/28

Every tenant pays rent - even if you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to help you do so- and every tenant has a right to have a say about their rent.

Every pound collected in rent is reinvested in council housing and cannot be used to fund any other Council service.

What does your rent pay for?

- Essential housing services - day-to-day repairs, estate management, tenancy services,
- Funding major improvements – repayment of loans which pay for new heating systems, insulation and energy efficiency upgrades,
- Funding the building of new homes – a third of applicant's on the Highland Housing Register is a current tenant looking for a new property.

Cost of things are increasing

In 2026/27 the Annual Budget for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is **£82.02milion** and this is made up of tenant rent money and other rents, such as garages.

In the past year you will have seen the impact of increasing costs on your household budget and this is also true when it comes to delivering services.

Worldwide events over the last 9 months have meant a significant increase in inflation and associated costs of goods.

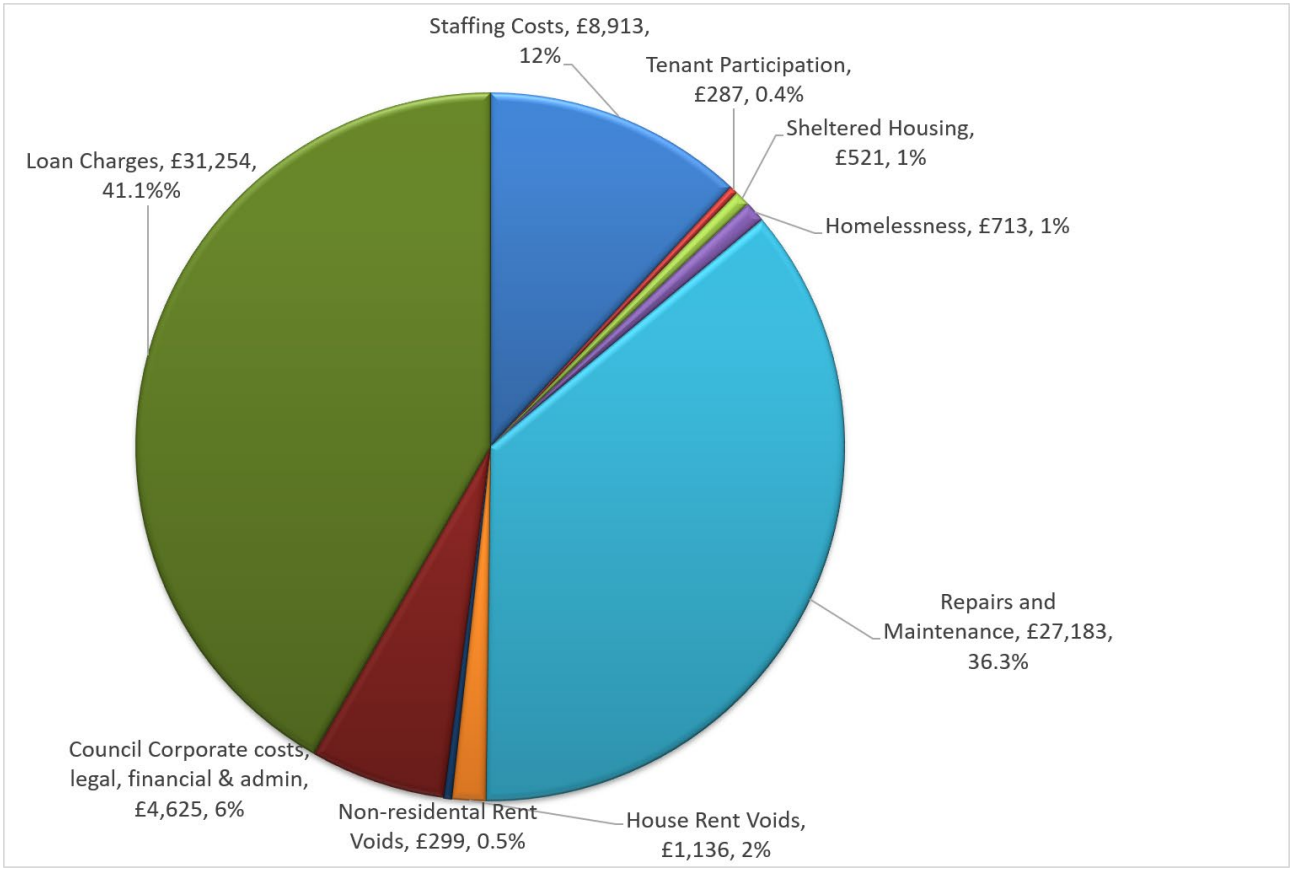
A considerable proportion of rent money is spent on repairs and maintenance of existing homes. The cost of delivering these services has significantly increased over the past 12 months.

The costs have also increased when we are making improvements to houses such as installing new heating or improving insulation, Highland Council must continue borrowing to meet these costs. We recognise that tenant feedback has indicated that we need to continue upgrading existing houses with new windows, doors, and insulation.

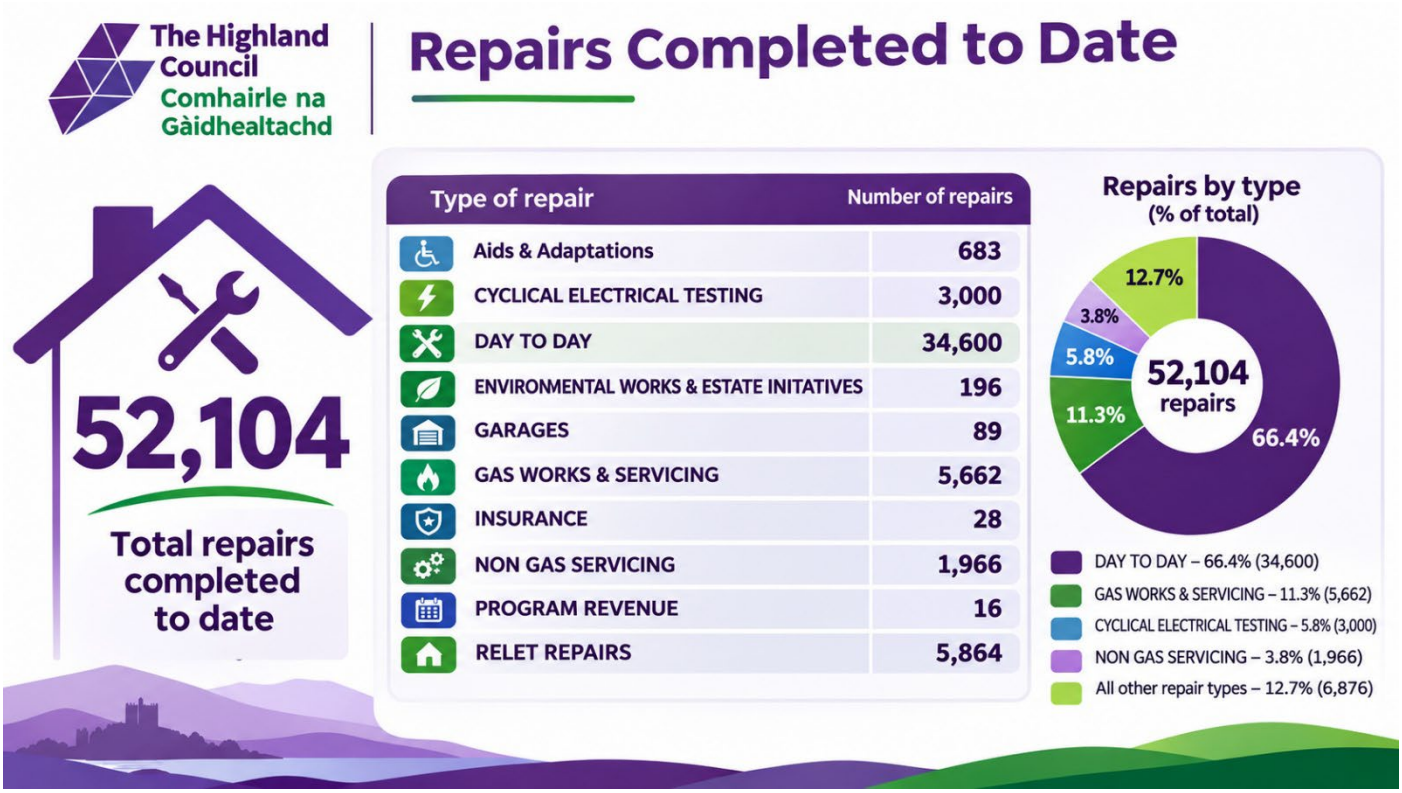
As a result of the worldwide financial uncertainty, there will be an increase of **£4m** in loan charges for next year to pay for carrying out the improvements needed to houses and repaying our existing borrowing. This has a direct impact on the HRA budget and what rent levels need to be in order to sustain services and continue to carry out improvements requested by tenants.

Source 7. HRA & Non HRA Budget

Where your rent money was spent 2025/26

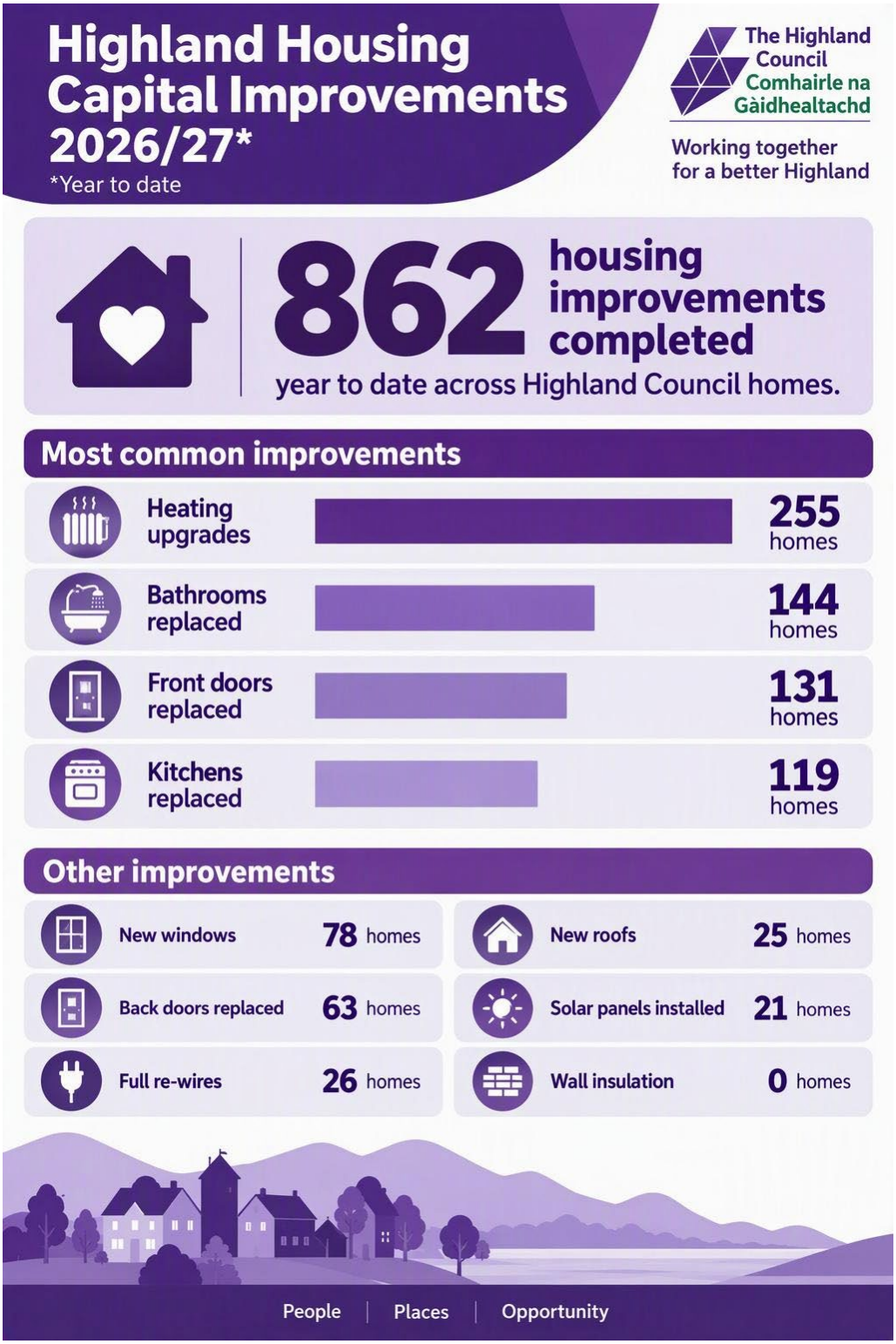


Repairs completed



Capital Programme 2026/27

The Council has a 5-year Housing Revenue Account Capital Plan that sets out our level of investment on improvements. The Capital Programme budget for 2026/27 is projected to spend £26.170 million against the budget set at £34.487 million*. With energy efficiency work accounting for 50% of the Capital Programme, the team is working to maximise external sources of funding. This year the Capital Programme has delivered the following improvements so far:

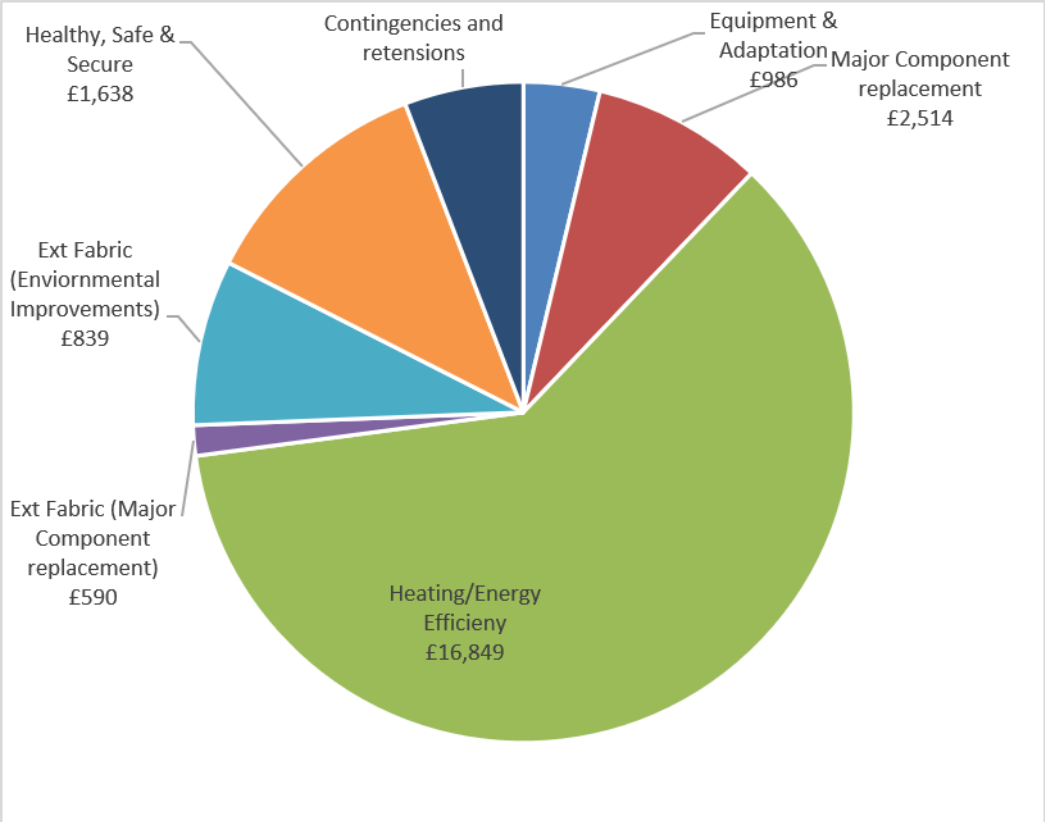


*Figures above only show completed projects and not those in progress.

Although the capital programme has a strong focus on energy efficiency measures which are designed to improve the efficiency and comfort of our homes and to mitigate the impact of increasing fuel costs, we are interested to know if there are other priorities which you think the Council should focus on when it comes to capital investment.

Source HRA Capital Monitoring

Capital Programme Budget 2026/27 (£34,486 Million)



Rent affordability

Comas pàigheadh màil

The table below highlights the average rent levels in Highland compared to other social landlords in Highland and Scottish Local Authorities.

Bedrooms	HC Average weekly rent	Highland RSL Landlord Weekly Average	Scottish Local Authority Weekly Average
Bedsit	£85.35	£77.23	£80.70
1 bed	£89.12	£102.93	£93.69
2 bed	£99.39	£117.63	£100.22
3 bed	£110.45	£129.77	£108.77
4+ bed	£123.59	£141.05	£117.91

Your rent options for 2027/28

Question 1 Your Priorities.

Having considered all the services and home improvements your rent money contributes towards we would like to know what are the most important to you. Choose your top 3:

a) Keeping rents affordable
b) Providing a reliable repairs service
c) Improving the energy efficiency, heating upgrades & insulation, and new windows
d) Replacing and upgrading Kitchens & bathrooms
e) Maintaining estates and communal areas
f) Building new homes to meet continued demand
g) Aids & Adaptations to enable tenants to stay in their homes
h) Cyclical maintenance, such as statutory servicing, external painting & gutter clearing
i) Other (please specify)

Question 2 – Which of the following rent options do you prefer?

We are listening to your feedback and are working hard to balance the cost pressures facing the Housing Revenue Account with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on you as tenants. The proposed increases seek to balance these priorities while helping to maintain the long-term sustainability of housing service.

To find out your views we are consulting on 3 options, summarised below:

** Increases based on average weekly rate in 2026/27*

Option 1: 8% increase Average increase of £8.14 in rent per week depending on property size.

The housing budget would increase by £7.405 million over the next year, this includes

- Additional £1.9 million in the 2027/28 repairs budget to reflect the increasing costs of delivering day-to-day repairs and statutory servicing requirements.
- Supporting the 2027-2032 capital programme with an additional £28 million over the course of the programme to continue to tackle fuel poverty and invest in your homes.

This would be the absolute minimum amount required to ensure we can meet the needs of our tenants, deliver our statutory obligations and ensure that our loan repayments are financially sustainable.

Option 2: 9% increase Average increase of £9.14 in rent per week depending on property size

The housing budget would increase by £8.217 million over the next year.

- Additional £1.9 million in the 2027/28 repairs budget to reflect the increasing costs of delivering day-to-day repairs and statutory servicing requirements.
- Supporting the 2027-2032 capital programme with an additional £28 million over the course of the programme, to tackle fuel poverty and invest in your homes.

This would help to reduce the loan charges needed to continue with our energy efficiency programme for existing tenants. In the longer term this means more available budget to spend on tenant priorities.

Option 3: 10% increase Average increase of £10.15 in rent per week depending on property size

The housing budget would increase by £9.029 million over the next year.

- Additional £1.9 million in the 2027/28 repairs budget to reflect the increasing costs of delivering repairs and statutory servicing requirements.
- Supporting the 2027-2032 capital programme with an additional £28 million over the course of the programme, to tackle fuel poverty and invest in your homes

This would help to further reduce the loan charges needed to continue with our energy efficiency programme for existing tenants. In the longer term this means more available budget to spend on tenant priorities.

Question 3 – Overall, do you feel that your rent is good value for money?

2026/27 * Based on rent payments only

Size of Property	Bedsit	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed
HC Current average weekly rent	£85.35	£89.12	£99.39	£110.45	£123.59
Overall Scottish National average	£91.63	£98.61	£101.42	£110.33	£121.71

Rents for Highland Council homes remain lower or in line with the national average. Do you think that the rent you pay represents good 'value for money'?

a. Very good

b. Quite good

c. Neither good nor poor

d. Quite poor

e. Very poor

You can visit the Scottish Housing Regulators website to compare rents with other social landlords across Scotland. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/comparison-tool/?landlord=3145

Advice and assistance to help with your rent?

If you are having difficulties paying your rent, we can help you. In the first instance please contact your housing officer. The Welfare Support Team can advise you on your current circumstances and help you to maximise your income contact **Telephone:** 0800 090 1004 **Email:** welfare.support@highland.gov.uk

Have Your Say

We want to hear what you think.

You can tell us using one of the methods below

- **Online:** by following the Link below or use the QR code

- **By email: tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk**

Please send us your response by **Friday 11th December**

If you are unable to respond using any of these options, please call 01463 702744 to speak to someone about the Rent Consultation. (This number will be open for the duration of the consultation and will only be answered between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday. If the line is busy, please leave your details and we will get back to you.)

As a thank you for participating in this consultation you will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher!