

Item 10 - Question Time

Response to Mrs M Davidson

I attach a list of the Council's campaigning issues taken from the Council's Programme. I am happy to provide Members with updates on progress as and when appropriate.

The Highland Council - Lobbying Commitments	
Commitment Number	Commitment
Economy	
1.22	Europe - The Council will work with the Highlands and Islands European Partnership and the Scottish and UK Governments to secure maximum benefit for the Highlands from the EU funding programmes for 2014-20, including further transitional funding, and participate actively in key European organisations.
1.23	Connectivity - The Council will work with the UK and Scottish Governments, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and telecommunications companies to seek to provide Highland homes and businesses with broadband, 3G, 4G and mobile telephony services fit for the 21st century. We will continue to support innovative and community-based schemes to drive delivery.
1.2	Crown Estate - The Council wishes to see Crown Estate revenues directed to local coastal communities and management of the estate transferred from Crown Estate Commissioners to the Scottish Parliament and local communities, as appropriate. The Council will continue to make a case for the review of the management and income derived from the Crown Estate
1.27	Land Reform - The Council will maintain its commitment to land reform. (Aim is an increase in community land ownership).
1.29	Fuel Prices - The Council will work with partners to campaign for fair fuel prices across the Highlands.
1.30	Local Taxation - The Council wishes to see a fairer system of local taxation than the current Council Tax and will work with both Scottish and UK Governments to achieve this.
Children and Young People	
2.26	Gaelic Medium Teachers - The Council will work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Higher Education institutions to address the issues of supply of Gaelic medium teachers.
2.26	Gaelic medium Primary Schools - We will continue to seek funding for two

	new Gaelic Medium Primary Schools
2.29	UHI - The Council will support the UHI as it continues to develop relationships with secondary schools, and as we seek to retain skills in the Highlands. We will maximise the opportunities offered by the new UHI Inverness campus and other UHI colleges across the Highlands, and continue to work with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig to further develop its community partnership projects.
Caring Communities	
3.14	Welfare Reform - Seek exemptions and mitigation measures in relation to the Bedroom Tax & the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme
Better Infrastructure	
4.1	Road Transport - Working with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and partners, the Council will strongly support the upgrade of Berriedale Braes, the whole length of the A9 north of Perth, the whole length of the A82 and the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen
4.5	Stromeferry - Pursue options for securing external funding (to deliver a long term solution which provides a secure and effective transport link between Lochcarron and the Lochalsh area.
4.2	Rail Improvements - The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and Network Rail to secure improvements, reduced journey times and fairer pricing on the Highland rail network, to protect and modernise the sleeper service and to develop new commuter rail opportunities around our urban centres
4.7	Inverness Airport Rail Link - Working with partners, the Council will support the delivery of the Inverness Airport Rail Link.
4.14	Air Links - The Council will work with Highlands & Islands Airports, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and partners to attract new and enhanced air services. We will support the development of Wick and Skye airports, and campaign to protect the Inverness to Gatwick link and reinstate the Inverness to Heathrow link. We will also encourage the development of new international air-links.
4.20	ETVs - The Council will work with the Scottish Government to press the UK Government for the same level of protection as previously provided by two emergency towing vehicles covering the Minch and Northern Isles.
Better Housing	
5.9	Housing Debt - The Council will continue to press for the UK Government to write-off the council's housing debt and seek to work with the Scottish Government and support its efforts to make the case for a debt write-off.

Strong and Safe Communities

7.1	Police Numbers - Working with the Scottish Government, the Council will support the maintenance of police numbers in the Highlands.
7.2	Engagement with Police & Fire - The Council will ensure that elected members will play a full part in agreeing the priorities and local plans for police and fire and rescue services in the Highlands. Elected members will also monitor performance against these plans.
7.6	Ambulance Service - The Council will work with the Scottish Ambulance Service, the NHS and the Scottish Government, to achieve better coverage across the Highlands. We will investigate sustainable solutions to improve patient transport in rural and urban areas.