

Highland Council: Questions: 31 October 2024

Public Questions

1. Mr W Morrison

To the Leader of the Council

As it has been decided by Council that the bollards on Academy St be removed together with the ones on Eastgate, I would be obliged to know the proposed timescale for same to be completed?

Response

As the busy Festive season will soon be upon us I feel that this should be carried out as a matter of urgency with no further delay.

A contractor has been booked to commence the works for burning off the existing road markings and reinstating the markings on November 4th.

The works should take 4 to 6 days to complete weather dependant. The Bollards will be removed immediately prior to these works commencing by our in-house team.

Member Questions

1. Mr A Christie

To the Leader of the Council

How many fines/penalty notices including total value and geographical location has the Highland Council issued on the following subject areas between April 2024 and September 2024?

Response

- Penalty Charge Notice car parking on restricted road markings or overstaying in car park.
- Penalty Charge Notice vehicles parking on a pavement?
- Fly tipping
- Dropping litter
- Dog fouling
- Smoking fines
- Environmental health

The information is provided in the accompanying spreadsheet (**Appendix 1**).

2. Mr A Christie

To the Leader of the Council

In the Budget passed on the 29th February 2024 a saving was included (CS:29) Redesign of Adult Social Care of £12,600,000 of which £7,000,000 was in 24/25. Please could the Leader list, as we are past the half way stage of the financial year, the potential areas identified for delivering this saving together with the value as well as including a copy of the detailed draft/final integrated impact assessment?

Response

The Council has adjusted the funding provided to NHH by the £7m saving target, and officers from both organisations are working jointly regarding change and transformation and saving measures in terms of both this target and the wider target which extends over 3 years. Members will also be aware that sitting alongside that savings target is the allocation of reserves of up to £20m over the next 3 years. It is intended that these monies contribute to changes in the care model in place consistent with the Partnership's Strategic Plan.

This investment, and the concomitant improvements it should help realise, will lead to reduced costs and take the pressure of the current bed-based care model.

That work is ongoing and will be reported upon to both the strategic committee and the Joint Monitoring Committee. In terms of the savings target and in terms of the Lead Agency arrangements, the responsibility for implementation of specific proposals and the impact assessment of these, rest with NHH and these are reported to the Joint Monitoring Committee as part of the regular budgetary reporting.

3. Mr A Graham

To the Leader of the Council

Charleston Academy has been included in the Highland Investment Plan as a "Phase One, Years 1-10 Project" with potential delivery within 3 to 5 years, subject to the availability and profiling of funding.

Can you advise of the main steps that require to be taken to progress from the project status at the date of this meeting to the award of contract to the successful bidder?

Response

Work is underway on the Stage 2 Concept Design for Charleston Academy, and this is due to be completed by February 2025.

Based on the recent programme for the Nairn Academy new build project, it would take up to 2 years to complete Design Stages 3 and 4 and progress the project to tender stage. This would comprise completing the detailed design, submitting a full planning application and obtaining permission, appointing a contractor, and completing all tendering and market testing exercises to arrive at the final tender amount.

An update on progress, timescales and the expected sequence of projects for all Phase 1 Highland Investment Plan priorities will be reported to the Council meeting in December.

4. Mrs H Crawford

To the Leader of the Council

At the continued Full Council of 30th September 2024, a majority of Highland Councillors approved Motion item 22 (3), entitled Major Electricity Development Applications and Community Engagement. Can you please confirm the anticipated timelines for implementation of the respective outstanding actions referred to in that Motion?

Response

This matter is covered by a separate report to this Council meeting.

5. Mr M Reiss

To the Chair of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee

Overnight Respite care is a vital service to some of our most needy families. This service has not been available in any practicable sense for several years in the Far North. SDS payments are not an effective alternative.

Can you provide a straightforward, cast-iron assurance to residents in Sutherland and Caithness that the Highland's Council's recent public commitment to reinstate Respite services at Thor House, Thurso or its replacement, will include overnight care?

Response

As part of its Family First Strategy, the service is committed to short break provision across Highland. A review of this is being undertaken in the areas of West (Skye/Lochaber), South (Inverness) and North (Caithness). This has involved engaging with local community networks and working across a large partnership of services e.g. Adults, Housing, Health, Education and 3rd Sector.

The aim is to improve access and strengthen the quality of short break provision across Highland. However, due to the differing and unique challenges that each area brings, the 3 areas are progressing local plans that align with their local need. With regard Caithness, community engagement and the options appraised, indicate that reinstatement of THOR House is the preferred option. Officers are working across the partnership to progress this option.

On conclusion of the review (as this takes in local need) we will then have an idea of what demand is and what the service requirements are. Staff need to be trained accordingly with final sign off for the service from the Care Inspectorate. All of this will inform the question about overnight provision.

6. Mr D Gregg

To the Leader of the Council

The Inverness and Ross and Cromarty access panels are listed as inactive on the council website.

Access panels provide a key way for people with disabilities to engage with changes to their streets and towns.

Please can the council detail any actions it has taken to help reactivate either of these panels within the last 6 months?

Response

Access Panels make an important and valuable contribution to our communities. There are a number of active Access Panels in operation across the majority of Highland Council areas. The Council supports the Access Panels with an annual grant towards their running costs. Although we have not been able to progress this in the last 6 months, we have recently appointed an Equality and Inequalities Officer who will seek to make contact with relevant stakeholders to help re-establish these groups.

7. Ms K Willis

To the Chair of Economy and Infrastructure

The Council is responsible for coordinating Bikeability training in Highland. Please can the Chair provide a breakdown of the number of schools and children participating in Bikeability training for each area in Highland last year, including the number of children who achieved Level 1, 2 and 3 awards.

Response

In the 2023-24 academic year, 43 schools undertook the Bikeability Scotland Level 1, with 984 completing this programme. In the same period, 40 schools undertook Level 2, with 849 pupils completing this. There was 1 school and a total of 8 pupils that undertook Level 3.

8. Mr R Mackintosh

To the Leader of the Council

Highland Council's Net Zero Strategy was launched in October last year. The Net Zero Strategy replaces the 2014 Carbon CLEVER programme and Action Plan, so when does Council plan to replace the implications section heading 'Climate Change / Carbon Clever' with 'Climate Change / Net Zero' in all Council reports?

Response

The Highland Council approved the use of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) in March 2024, and from August 2024, all reports were updated to include "impacts". This new approach removed the "Climate Change / Carbon Clever" section, replacing it with the new impact section covering all impacts considered within the completion of an IIA – Any Climate impacts identified will be reported under this section of committee reports.

Appendix to Answer 1

Environmental Health Team notices served April 2024 and September 2024

Total Notices served: 38

Area

Notice Type	Ca	Su	RC	Sk	Lo	Iv	Na	BS	Total Issued	Received
Fly-tipping fixed penalty notice	1								1	£500
Litter fixed penalty notice									0	
Dog fouling fixed penalty notice									0	
Smoking ban fixed penalty notice									0	

Other Environmental health:

Notice Type	Ca	Su	RC	Sk	Lo	Iv	Na	BS	Total Issued	Received
Dog Control Notices			3		8	3			14	na
Food Safety - hygiene improvement notice		3		1					4	na
Food Safety - remedial action notice						3			3	na
Food Safety - Shellfish Area Closure notice		3	2	1	5				11	na
Health & Safety prohibition notice	1					1			2	na
Health & Safety improvement notice		1						2	3	na

Traffic Penalty Charge Notices between April 2024 and September 2024

Number of PCNs issued by The Highland Council - WAITING & LOADING

	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Total 2024	
Inverness	649	830	880	718	574	653	558	616	655	6133	
Lochaber	78	175	91	202	234	265	261	180	135	1621	
Skye	62	159	524	620	1111	744	1252	1107	621	6200	
Wick	3	13	8	5	5	23	18	24	31	130	
Thurso	2	33	35	21	31	58	62	44	73	359	
Dingwall	1	19	22	35	44	12	10	39	26	208	
Nairn	13	37	25	40	18	9	11	16	10	179	
Other	7	103	132	189	186	122	314	130	138	1321	
TOTAL Issued	815	1369	1717	1830	2203	1886	2486	2156	1689	16151	
Issued Value	£58,800	£95,750	£114,200	£123,300	£140,500	£122,200	£153,850	£130,250	£91,850	£1,030,700	
Cancelled or Written Off Value	£6,750	£9,850	£14,200	£19,152	£24,050	£22,800	£30,850	£23,750	£6,850	£158,252	15%
Net Received to date	£37,076	£64,289	£72,937	£76,538	£96,950	£78,950	£101,850	£81,450	£52,900	£662,940	64%

Number of TSA 2019 PCNs issued by The Highland Council 2024 - Pavement/Double Parked/Dropped Kerb

	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Total 2024	
Inverness	0	78	78	35	20	27	21	15	19	293	
Lochaber	0	5	2	3	2	5	3	1	2	23	
Skye	0	1	14	15	23	8	12	12	2	87	
Wick	0	2	2	2	1	9	9	4	8	37	
Thurso	0	2	8	3	1	2	6	3	6	31	
Dingwall	0	2	2	15	4	2	0	7	3	35	
Nairn	0	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	9	
Other	0	23	30	24	25	15	36	13	16	182	
TOTAL Issued	0	117	137	99	77	68	87	55	57	697	
Issued Value	£0	£7,400	£9,850	£6,850	£5,600	£4,300	£5,900	£3,300	£3,250	£46,450	
Cancelled or Written Off Value	£0	£800	£800	£800	£1,000	£800	£700	£400	£50	£5,350	12%
Net Received to date	£0	£5,450	£6,050	£4,100	£3,100	£2,600	£4,000	£2,400	£1,900	£29,600	64%