

Our Future Highland Ar Gàidhealtachd Ri Teachd



Highland Council Budget Challenge Dùbhlán Buidseit Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd

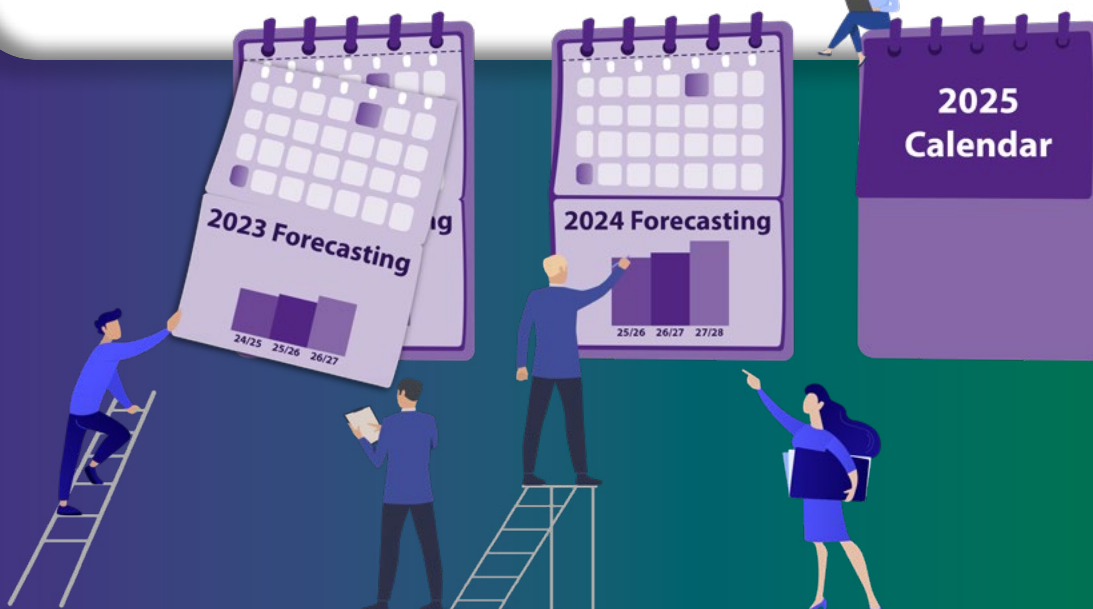
2025/26

Between November 2023 and February 2024, the Council undertook a widespread engagement exercise to help inform its budget for the next three years.

Over 3,500 separate responses were received from the public over this period which helped shape the budget savings and income generation ideas that the Council then agreed to.

At its meeting in February 2024, the Council agreed a £54.6m package of savings over 3 years. This included a range of savings that focused on redesigning services, changing how we use and manage our properties, delivering efficiencies and on generating income.

As a result of increasing costs and inflation, we expect our budget to continue to decrease further therefore it is important that we continue to plan over the next three years.



Whilst we need to do things differently and find different ways to generate income, the Council continues to provide a wide range of services to communities across the Highlands.

How do we spend our budget?

£712 million delivering services to the Highlands

We sustain:



We deliver:



We provide:



We know we will have less money in the future and we want to focus our resources on key priorities. Hearing from our communities last year helped us to do this.

You told us we should:

- **Redesign our Services** – including reducing management, joining up teams to reduce duplication, better use of existing staff rather than outsourcing
- **Change how we manage our buildings** – including that we should operate fewer vehicles, better use school space/halls/libraries to deliver services, close schools with low numbers
- **Generate more income** – including increasing income generated from tourists, energy production and that we should increase council tax and fees
- **Be more efficient in how we do things** – including that we should enable people to do more online and use technology to provide services.



Over the course of the last year we have worked hard to deliver on these commitments which will help transform how we deliver our services. Find out more through our information videos:

Income Generation: www.bit.ly/thc-income-generation

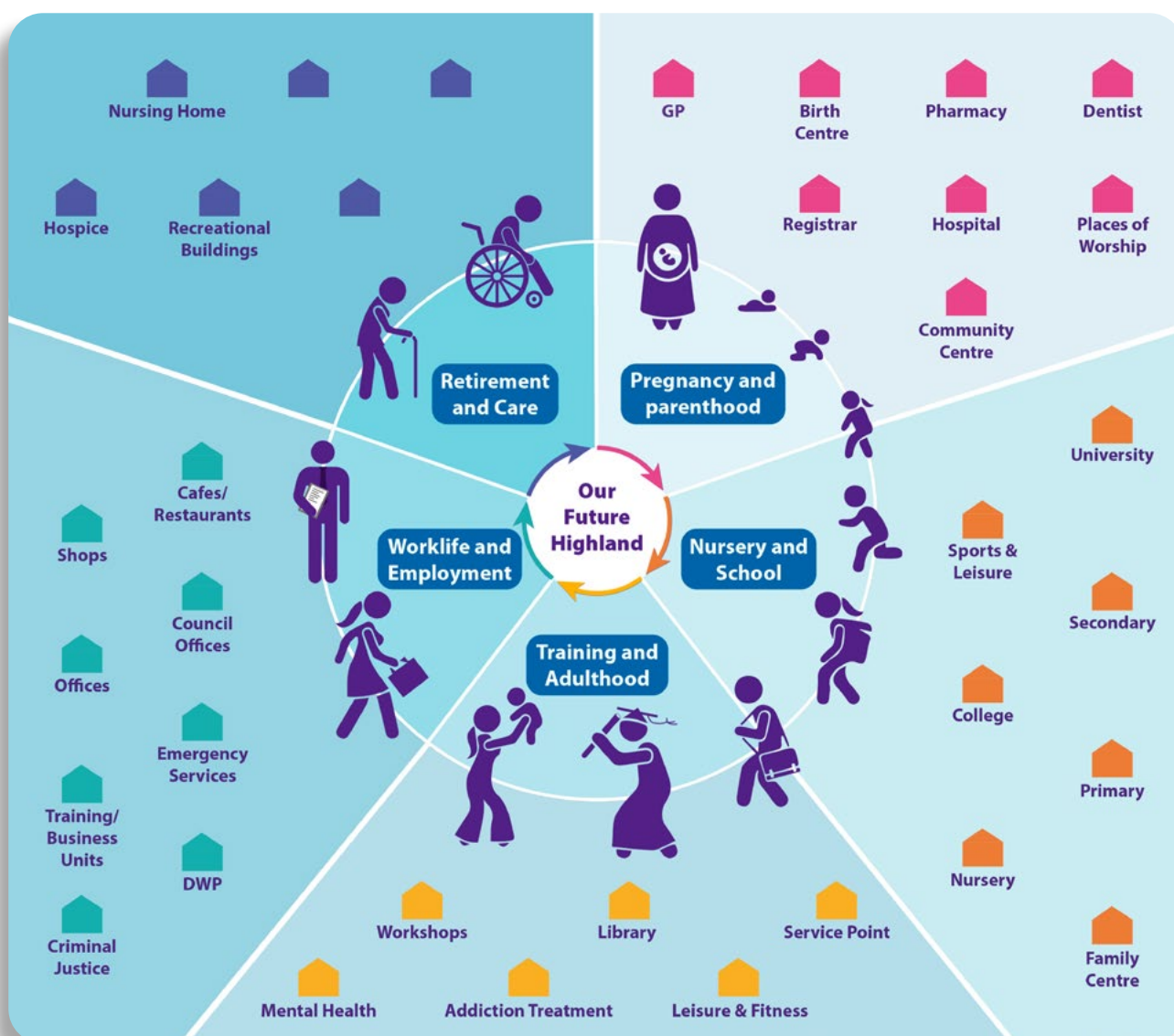
Redesigning our Assets: www.bit.ly/thc-redesigning-assets

Corporate Solutions: www.bit.ly/thc-corporate-solutions

Investment

Although our budget is reducing, we recognise that it is important to invest – in our communities and facilities. In May 2024, Highland Council agreed a new approach to develop sustainable local services and communities for the future. The Highland Investment Plan sets out a plan for development of communities across Highland, with over £1bn of capital investment in local service provision, including schools and roads, over the first 10 years.

The approach to be taken is to consider what the opportunities are within a local area – a master-planning approach. A new generation of community facilities are proposed – Points of Delivery or PODs – which would be a way of delivering a range of public services that better fit the needs of communities.



Nationally, the financial picture for the public sector remains challenging. Inflation and interest rates are higher than we would like, and other pressures mean that we must continue to review our budget planning and seek to save money by changing how we do things and increase the income that we generate.

It is important that our budget continues to be informed by the ideas and suggestions from our communities and our staff. The ideas we received last year have been put into action but we know that there continue to be other areas for improvement and how we could generate income.



Highland Council Budget 2025/26 Tell us more

We want to hear what further ideas you have.

Please help us by:

- **Completing our Budget Survey** – the survey asks for your thoughts on priorities, how you think the Council could generate new income and how it could change what it does.

The survey can be accessed online or is available in paper form in libraries and service points.

www.bit.ly/budget-survey2025-26

- **Placing ideas on our Ideas Board** – this gives people the opportunity to put ideas for making savings, doing things differently or generating income on our ideas board.

www.bit.ly/budget-ideas-board2025-26

