



# COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

## COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Chamber,  
Council Offices, Stornoway on Tuesday 25  
February 2025 at 3.00pm

### PRESENT

Mr Kenneth Macleod (Convener)	
Mr Paul Steele (Leader)	
Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE (Depute Leader)	Mr John M Macleod
Mr Kenneth John Maclean	Mr Donald Macsween
Mr Iain A MacNeil	Mr John A Maciver
Mr Iain M Macleod	Mr Calum Maclean
Ms Susan Thomson	Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr Mustapha Hocine	Mr Malcolm K Macdonald
Mr Uisdean Robertson	Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Paul Finnegan	Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Kenneth M Macleod	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Robert Mackenzie	Dr Frances Murray
Mr Angus Morrison	Mr George Murray
Mr Ranaid Fraser	Mr Norrie Macdonald
Mr Norman Macdonald	Mr Finlay M Stewart

### APOLOGIES

Mr Donald F Crichton

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Mr Tim Langley
Mr Norman MacDonald	Mr Derek Mackay
Mr Donald A Macleod	Mr Donald E Macleod
Mrs Emma MacSween	Mrs Anne Macdonald
Mrs Anne M Murray	Mr Calum Smith
Mr Calum Mackenzie	Mr James Mackinnon
Mr Jack Libby	Mrs Marina Macaulay
Mr Colm Fraser	

### Prayer

The meeting was preceded in prayer, led by Mr Angus Morrison.

Declaration of Interest      of      1

There were no declarations of interest.

### REPORT OF MEETING

The Convener ruled items 2 and 3 as urgent in order to allow the Comhairle to set a balanced budget for 2025/26.

Committee Decision Report: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – 25 February 2025 at 12.20pm      2

The Committee Decision Report of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of 25 February 2025 at 12.20pm was **approved**.

Report of Meeting 3  
of the Policy and  
Resources  
Committee of 25  
February 2025 at  
3.00pm

Mr Paul Steele, seconded by Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE, presented the Report of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 25 February 2025 at 3.00pm and proposed that the Comhairle:

- (a) agree to accept the 2025/26 Settlement from the Scottish Government as set out in the Finance Circular in Appendix A to the Report;
- (b) agree the Budget Strategy for 2025/26 as set out in Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Report;
- (c) approve the draft Budgets for 2025/26 at Budget Item B of the Agenda;
- (d) agree the delegated Budget for Cùram is Slàinte nan Eilean Siar as detailed in Section 11 of the Report;
- (e) agree to a Council Tax increase of 8% (£1,394.01 for Band D properties);
- (f) note the capital allocation for 2025/26 and that progress with the Capital Programme will continue to be monitored quarterly through the Policy and Resources Committee;
- (g) note the financial risks in Appendix C to the Report and agree to maintain the level of uncommitted reserves at £3.5m;
- (h) agree that the Budget Board monitor progress with the implementation of Savings Plans;
- (i) note the preparation of a medium-term financial plan is currently being finalised;
- (j) agree that a Budget Strategy update be provided to the June 2025 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee;
- (k) agree to a flat rate increase of 5.5% across all sections of the Harbours Rates and Dues;
- (l) agree to a 6.5% increase to harbour dues levied on CalMac Ferries Ltd; and
- (m) agree to the Municipal Services Fees and Charges as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Mr Angus McCormack, seconded by Mr Malcolm Macdonald, moved the following amendment:

That the Comhairle agree to reinstate the 11.00pm switch off time for rural streetlights to be funded through the Roads Maintenance Budget, at a cost of £22,000.

Mr Paul Steele and Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE, indicated that they were willing to accept the amendment proposed by Mr Angus McCormack, seconded by Mr Malcolm Macdonald.

Dr Frances Murray, seconded by Mr Kenneth Macleod, moved the following amendment:

That the Comhairle agree to increase Council Tax by 7.5% to be funded from the additional General Revenue Grant announced by Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, to assist Councils in meeting the extra costs associated with the rise in Employers' National Insurance Contributions brought in by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr Paul Steele and Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE, indicated that they were willing to accept the amendment proposed by Dr Frances Murray, seconded by Mr Kenneth Macleod.

Mr Gordon Murray, seconded by Mr Rae Mackenzie, moved the following amendment:

The Comhairle, recognising the real hardship being faced by many members of our communities who work hard to strive for their families to have a warm home and decent wholesome food on the table, wishes to support them and for that reason will limit the increase in the council tax for 2025/26 to 3% to be funded from uncommitted reserves and that the Comhairle further welcomes the significant increased financial support to Scottish local authorities by the Scottish Government for the forthcoming financial year.

The Comhairle proceeded to debate the motion against the amendment.

The Comhairle then proceeded to vote on the matter.

The vote was taken by roll call, as follows:

**MOTION**

Mr Kenneth Macleod  
Mr Paul Steele  
Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE  
Mr Kenneth John Maclean  
Mr Iain A MacNeil  
Mr Iain M Macleod  
Ms Susan Thomson  
Mr Mustapha Hocine  
Mr Uisdean Robertson  
Mr Paul Finnegan  
Mr Kenneth M Macleod  
Mr Robert Mackenzie  
Mr Angus Morrison  
Mr Ranaid Fraser  
Mr Norman Macdonald  
Mr John N Macleod  
Mr Donald Macsween  
Mr John A Maciver  
Mr Calum Maclean  
Mr Iain M Macaulay  
Mr Malcolm K Macdonald  
Mr Angus McCormack  
Dr Frances Murray  
Mr George Murray  
Mr Norrie Macdonald  
Mr Finlay M Stewart

**AMENDMENT**

Mr Gordon Murray  
Mr Rae Mackenzie

**The Motion, as detailed below, having received the majority of the votes cast, became the finding of the meeting.**

- (a) agree to accept the 2025/26 Settlement from the Scottish Government as set out in the Finance Circular in Appendix A to the Report;
- (b) agree the Budget Strategy for 2025/26 as set out in Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Report;
- (c) approve the draft Budgets for 2025/26 at Budget Item B of the Agenda;

- (d) agree the delegated Budget for Cùram is Slàinte nan Eilean Siar as detailed in Section 11 of the Report;**
- (e) agree to a Council Tax increase of 7.5%;**
- (f) note the capital allocation for 2025/26 and that progress with the Capital Programme will continue to be monitored quarterly through the Policy and Resources Committee;**
- (g) note the financial risks in Appendix C to the Report and agree to maintain the level of uncommitted reserves at £3.5m;**
- (h) agree that the Budget Board monitor progress with the implementation of Savings Plans;**
- (i) note the preparation of a medium-term financial plan is currently being finalised;**
- (j) agree that a Budget Strategy update be provided to the June 2025 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee;**
- (k) agree to a flat rate increase of 5.5% across all sections of the Harbours Rates and Dues;**
- (l) agree to a 6.5% increase to harbour dues levied on CalMac Ferries Ltd; and**
- (m) agree to the Municipal Services Fees and Charges as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.**

The Convener paid tribute to the work of the Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team, Chief Financial Officer and the Accountancy Team in preparing the budget papers.