

## **Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Budget Proposals 2025/26: Public Feedback Summary**

136 members of the public submitted responses to the Comhairle's budget feedback form.

The feedback form was opened to members of the public on Thursday 13 February and promoted on the Comhairle's social media, website and the local press.

Members are thanked for their assistance in promoting the feedback form and encouraging public engagement.

Respondents to the form were asked to answer three questions giving their view on the Comhairle's budget proposals.

A summary of responses is detailed below.

### **Question: What Comhairle services are most important to you and should be protected from service reductions?**

In response to this question members of the public selected a variety of services. Health and Social Care scored highest with particular mentions for the importance of home care services.

Education was deemed to be the next most important service area followed by roads and library services.

Across several responses there was a feeling that the delivery of services within local areas was important and that centralisation to Stornoway should be avoided.

### **Comhairle Services (The number of responses mentioning each service area is detailed below.)**

Health and Social Care - 52  
Education - 44  
Roads - 37  
Libraries - 31  
Bus Services - 29  
Refuse Collections - 25  
Sport and Leisure Facilities - 25  
Social Work - 15  
Children's Services - 10  
ASN Provision - 7  
Winter Road Maintenance - 4  
Childcare - 4  
Transport - 4  
Tarbert Library - 3  
Arts - 4

Street Lighting - 4  
Public Toilets - 4  
Planning - 2  
Benefits - 1  
Apprenticeships and Training - 1  
Eriskay Services - 1  
Business - 1  
Environmental Health - 1

**Question: Do you have any additional feedback on the Comhairle's budget proposals?**

In response to this question members of the public provided a variety of feedback on the Comhairle's budget proposals.

Council Tax and the use of Crown Estate funds were two issues that featured in a significant number of responses with a variety of opinions shared.

32 members of the public felt that an 8% increase in Council Tax was too high. 7 respondents either agreed with the increase or suggested that the increase should be higher. A further 4 respondents called for a review of Council tax bands either based on updated property values or with consideration for the levels of Comhairle services delivered in geographical areas.

The rest of the responses suggested a variety of potential service reductions that are listed below.

**Comhairle Budget Proposal Feedback**

Reduce spending on 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – 35

Council tax increase is too high - 32

Council tax increase is appropriate - 7

Reduce Staff numbers/ salaries - 6

Reduce Member numbers/ salaries - 5

Use of crown estate funds is good - 5

Use of Crown Estate Funds is not appropriate and should go to communities - 5

Cut back on street lighting, particularly in rural areas - 5

Do not progress the Gaelic School project - 5

Carry out a re-assessment of Council Tax bands - 4

Open Sports Centres on Sundays - 4

Cutback on Gaelic Spending - 3

Introduce a Visitor Levy – 4

Do not progress Renewable Energy Projects - 4

Increase Slainte Mhath Rates - 3

Carry out focussed work on Social Care recruitment - 3

Push for Community Benefit from Windfarm Developments - 3

Recruit a Traffic Warden – 3

Close “non-viable” schools - 2

Reduce Bus Services - 2

Manage use of reserves - 3

Evening Bus Services Should not be Maintained through Crown Estate Funds.

Education IT should be prioritised.

Stop all spending on providing facilities for motorhomes.

Reduce Comhairle Office Space.

Close Shawbost Swimming Pool.

Protect Rural Swimming Pools.

Increase Council Tax on Second Homes.

### **What capital projects should Comhairle nan Eilean Siar look to progress as a priority?**

Respondents listed road resurfacing as the priority capital project. Responses on roads ranged from the general condition of roads to specific examples of geographic areas in need of attention.

The Comhairle’s priority capital project the Barra and Vatersay Community Campus (BVCC) came in next with particular mention for the replacement of Castlebay School. While not a matter for the Comhairle’s budget 9 respondents singled out the hospital aspect of the project as a priority. This is included below for information.

In addition to the mention of Castlebay School 7 respondents called for new school buildings in different areas.

## **Capital Projects Feedback**

Road resurfacing - 39

Castlebay School - 19

Housing - 12

BVCC (Hospital) - 9

Stornoway Town Centre Improvement - 9

Care Home Facilities - 7

New Schools - 7

- Lionacleit School – 1
- Stornoway Primary School - 3
- Tong Primary School – 1
- Uig Primary School – 1
- Gaelic School Project - 1

BVCC (Social Care) - 4

Spinal Route Improvements - 4

Tourism Infrastructure - 4

Fixed Links (causeways) - 2

Renewable Energy Projects - 2

Pavements

Baleshare Causeway

Maintain Education Facilities

Refurbishment of public toilets

Affordable homes

Expand Sir E Scott School

Harris Development Plan

Improve Flood Defences

Braighe Improvements

Covered area in Perceval square

Electric Vehicle Charging

