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| <b>Report To:</b>       | <b>Inverclyde Council</b>  | <b>Date:</b> 28 September 2017 |
| <b>Report By:</b>       | <b>Head of Organisational<br/>Development, HR &amp;<br/>Communications</b> | <b>Report No:</b> HR/30/17/GB  |
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**Subject: Budget Consultation – Communications and Engagement**

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to confirm to the Council, proposals regarding communications and engagement on the Council's 2018/20 budget.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

2.1 The Council Budget Consultation and Communications Plan sets out proposals to consult with residents, community organisations and a range of other stakeholders to inform the budget process.

2.2 The Communications and Engagement plan will aim to deliver a consistent approach to branding and messaging, and combine a range of mechanisms, both print and online, to encourage residents and groups to take part in the budget consultation.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- Notes the consultation communications and engagement objectives, audiences, key mechanisms outlined in this report and the timetable for consultation and the potential release of employees outlined in Appendix 1.

**Steven McNab**  
**Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources and  
Communications**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Council carried out budget consultation for the first time in Autumn 2012 to inform the 2013/16 budget with limited feedback. An enhanced method of budget consultation was carried out in 2014 and again in 2015 with a more comprehensive approach to budget consultation. In 2016 a high level budget consultation took place with the principal mechanism used being an online survey setting out broad views on the Council budget.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

5.1 This paper sets out a communications and engagement programme for budget consultation which is based on the comprehensive and successful budget consultation carried out in 2014 and 2015 which focused on specific savings proposals. Below are the overall objectives of the consultation campaign, the key audiences targeted and the key mechanisms used.

5.2 The overall objectives of the consultation and communications plan are:

- To ensure a high level of engagement across all audiences in setting the Council's budget.
- To demonstrate clearly to the local community that Inverclyde Council and its elected members welcome and are actively listening to the views of its key audiences.
- To give all audiences and communities the opportunity to be involved, influence and to have a say in determining the Council's budget.
- To seek feedback on the services Inverclyde Council needs to protect or reduce and views on specific budget savings proposals.

5.3 The key audiences for the Council's budget consultation and communications plan are:

- Community
- Council staff and trade unions
- Politicians (internal and external)
- Public sector partners, voluntary sector and community organisations
- Business sector/Industry stakeholders

5.4 The key mechanisms include consistent branding of all consultation and communications activity using the message: Inverclyde: your council, your say; community 'drop in' events; a morning event with representatives of the business community; presentation to Inverclyde Alliance Board and supporting material supplied to partner organisations to encourage staff and customers to engage with the budget process; staff cascade and briefings through heads of service/managers for those staff potentially affected by savings proposals and social media engagement using the hashtag #InverclydeYourSay to encourage residents to get involved in the consultation to promote organic engagement;

5.5 To target key groups affected by any proposed savings and to identify and engage with 'hard to reach' groups, engagement will take place through a range of Council services already engaging with groups such as young people and older people. Information will also be supplied to community partners who are actively engaging with local groups across Inverclyde to encourage further engagement.

5.6 For example, Your Voice and registered social landlords will be encouraged to engage in the consultation themselves and to actively encourage their clients and customers in the community to engage.

5.7 In addition, it is proposed that for each agreed budget saving, the Council or the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) service responsible should lead on communicating with organisations and clients potentially affected by the saving proposal to encourage individuals and groups to engage in the consultation.

5.8 There is an expectation that the Council would engage in community consultation events

to allow residents and interested parties the opportunity to engage directly and find out more. To that end it is proposed that a series of community events take place during the consultation period using a 'drop-in' format to allow opportunities for more residents to find out more about the options proposed.

- 5.9 The key budget consultation timescales have a number of dependences including the the review of savings proposals by the Members' Budget Working Group and the Scottish Government settlement announcement which is expected in mid-December 2017. The Council's budget consultation is expected to take place in January 2018 in advance of the Council budget meeting held in February or March.
- 5.10 A timetable has been developed for consultation and potential release of employees in areas where the Members' Budget Working Group propose should form part of the public consultation or a report is to be submitted to the relevant service committee. This has been agreed with the Joint Budget Group and is attached as Appendix 1.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Financial Implications - One off Costs

Costs associated with this include advertising (both print and online including social media); production of display, posters, publications and event handout material; room hire for community drop in events and business consultation event; licence and development work associated with the creation of the budget simulator, and research and analytical support.

| Cost Centre        | Budget Heading     | Budget Year | Proposed Spend this Report<br>£000 | Virement From | Other Comments |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Earmarked Reserves | Budget Development | 2017/18     | 20                                 |               |                |

### Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From (if applicable) | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
|             |                |                  |                   |                               |                |

### 6.2 Human Resources

N/A

### 6.3 Legal

N/A

### 6.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES (see attached appendix)

NO -

### 6.5 Repopulation

N/A

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 N/A

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A

## Appendix 1: Proposed timeline for potential release of employees

| <b>DATE</b>       | <b>ACTION</b>   |
|-------------------|---|
| w/c 2 October     | <p><b>Commencement of a formal trawl</b></p> <p>It is proposed that a targeted formal trawl commence in areas where the Council has decided to move forward for public consultation or a report is to be submitted to the relevant service committee. Where there are not enough vacancies or temps in permanent posts that can be released, permanent employees would be formally written to in order to commence a formal trawl exercise.</p> |
| w/c 16 October    | <p><b>Responses received from formal trawl</b></p> <p>Analysis of responses received, available vacancies and temps in permanent posts, to assess progression towards savings targets.</p>  |
| From 23 October   | <p><b>Formal trawl</b></p> <p>Provisional figures requested from Strathclyde Pension Fund office.</p>   |
| w/c 4 December    | <p><b>Formal trawl</b></p> <p>Value for money assessments.<br/>Provisional figures issued to employees and asking if they wish to proceed (subject to final budget decisions).<br/>Analysis of value for money assessments, available vacancies and temps in permanent posts, to assess progression towards savings targets.</p>  |
| w/c 8 January     | <p><b>Formal trawl</b></p> <p>Responses from those staff confirming they wish to be released.<br/>Analysis of responses received, available vacancies and temps in permanent posts, to assess progression towards savings targets.<br/>Depending on progression towards savings target, may consider a wider targeted formal trawl to increase redeployment opportunities.</p>  |
| w/c 15 January    | <p><b>Formal trawl</b></p> <p>Formal notice issued to employees (provisional) stating release at 31 March 2018 is conditional based on decisions made at Council budget meeting.</p>  |
| February/March    | <p><b>Full council</b></p> <p>Agree budget saving proposals to be implemented.</p> <p><b>Redeployment</b></p> <p>Analysis of impact on remaining permanent employees affected by budget saving decisions. Firm up 'affected employee grouping' before commencing initial redeployment meetings.</p>   |
| From 1 April 2018 | <p><b>Removal of posts</b></p> <p>Removal of posts (and any related vacancies) affected by budget savings.</p>  |