

**A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 3pm.**

**This meeting is by remote online access only through the videoconferencing facilities which are available to participants and relevant officers. The joining details will be sent to participants and officers prior to the meeting.**

**In the event of connectivity issues, Members are asked to use the *join by phone* number in the Webex invitation and as noted above.**

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ANNE SINCLAIR  
Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**BUSINESS**

\*\* to follow

1. <b>Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	Page
2. <b>COVID-19 Update</b> ** Report by Interim Director Environment & Regeneration	P
3. <b>2021/22 Revenue Budget Update – Period 8</b> Report by Chief Executive, Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	P
4. <b>Policy &amp; Resources Capital Budget and 2021/24 Capital Programme</b> Report by Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance	P
5. <b>Finance Services - Update</b> Report by Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance	P
6. <b>Procurement Update</b> Report by Interim Director Environment & Regeneration	P
7. <b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update Report</b> Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	P
8. <b>2022/23 Budget Update</b> ** Report by Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance	P

9.	<b>Draft Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan</b> Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	<b>P</b>
10.	<b>Council Tax – Long Term Empty Levy Policy</b> Report by Report by Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance	<b>P</b>
11.	<b>Winter Support Fund 2021/22</b> Report by Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	<b>P</b>

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Enquiries to – **Diane Sweeney** – Tel 01475 712147

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Executive, Interim Director of Finance &amp; Corporate Governance, Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/06/22/AP/AE</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Angela Edmiston</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712143</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>2021/22 Revenue Budget Update – Period 8</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the 2021/22 projected outturn for the Policy & Resources Committee. The report also details the position of the General Fund Revenue Budget.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The total revised Committee budget for 2021/22 is £18,538,000. This excludes Earmarked Reserves of £2,006,000. The latest projection, excluding Earmarked Reserves, is an overspend of £54,000. The breakdown by Service and detailed material variances are detailed in Appendices 2 & 3. This projection excludes COVID-19 expenditure which is met from the COVID-19 Reserve Fund. The main variances making up this overspend are projected under-recoveries within Internal Resource Interest, Prior Years Council Tax and Statutory Additions income. Off-set against an underspend within the Non Pay Inflation Contingency.
- 2.2 There is a projected underspend in the year of £43,230 within the Common Good Fund resulting in a projected surplus fund balance of £144,410 at 31 March 2022 with a breakdown included within Appendix 4. This surplus is largely attributed to the cancellation of 2 events due to lockdown.
- 2.3 The Committee's own Earmarked Reserves for 2021/22 totals £2,006,000 of which £408,000 is projected to be spent in the current financial year. To date expenditure of £160,000 has been incurred which is £33,000 more than the phased budget. The Earmarked Reserves reported in Appendix 5 excludes Earmarked Reserves for Asset Plans and Strategic Funds.
- 2.4 It can be seen from Appendix 6 that as at 30 November 2021 the General Fund is projecting a £214,000 underspend (excluding Health & Social Care Directorate) which represents 0.10% of the net Revenue Budget. The position comprises, Education & Communities Committee currently projecting £341,000 underspend, Policy & Resources Committee £54,000 overspend and £73,000 overspend within the Environment & Regeneration Committee. Further details have been reported to the individual Committees. This position is after the 2021/22 pay inflation pressure being contained within the overall inflation allowance.
- 2.5 Appendix 7 shows the latest position in respect of overall Earmarked Reserves, excluding those relating to Asset Plans and Funding Models, it can be seen that as at 30 November 2021 expenditure totalled £1,867,000 which equates to 39.44% of the planned spend in 2021/22. It can also be seen from Appendix 7 that at 30 November 2021 actual expenditure is £377,000 more than phased budget.

2.6 Appendix 8 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 30 November 2021 is £9.154 million which is £5,154,000 more than the minimum recommended balance of £4 million. This includes approved write backs of £4.05 million approved at Full Council December 2021. Decisions on use of reserves will be considered as part of the annual Revenue Budget setting process.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the update in respect of the Policy & Resources Committee budget including the 2021/22 projected overspend of £54,000.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the projected 2021/22 surplus of £43,230 for the Common Good Budget.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Committee notes the overall underspend of £214,000 projected as at Period 8, 30 November for the General Fund, its overall Earmarked Reserves position and the position of the Free Reserves.

**Louise Long**  
Chief Executive

**Alan Puckrin**  
Interim Service Director of Finance &  
Corporate Governance

**Ruth Binks**  
Corporate Director,  
Education, Communities  
& Organisational Development

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council Budget was agreed in March 2021 and approved a budget of £18.902 million for the Policy & Resources Committee. This report provides an update on all matters relating to the Committee budget and the General Fund as at 30 November, 2021.

## 5.0 2021/22 COMMITTEE CURRENT POSITION

5.1 The current projection for 2021/22 is an overspend of £54,000. The material variances are identified in Appendix 3.

5.2 The following material variances relate to the Environment, Regeneration & Resources Directorate:

### **Finance - £177,000 overspend**

Material Variances are noted below;

Employee Costs: £29,000 projected underspend, mainly due to an over-recovery of turnover savings within Finance and Revenues partly off-setting unachieved turnover target to within ICT.

Supplies & Services: Projecting £34k overspend. This is primarily due to a £26k overspend in Computer Software Maintenance.

Administration Costs: Projecting £49,000 underspend. This underspend is mainly due to £22,000 underspend within Mobile Phone recharges and £35,000 underspend within Line Rental recharges which are off-set with an under-recovery within income.

Income: An under-recovery of £165,000 is being projected; £22,000 within Mobile Phone recharges, £35,000 under-recovery for Line Rental recharges as off-set within Administration Costs above. In addition there is a projected £60,000 under-recovery within Statutory Additions income in line with 2020/21, and also £80,000 projected under-recovery for Council Tax Prior Years Income.

### **Legal & Democratic - £28,000 overspend**

All budgets within Legal & Democratic are projected on target with the exception of income with a £33,000 projected under-recovery due to a decrease in license income.

5.3 The following material variances relate to the Education, Communities & Organisational Development Directorate:

### **Organisational Development, Policy & Communications - £15,000 overspend**

Employee Costs: £36,000 projected overspend, mainly due to unachieved turnover target to date.

5.4 The following material variances relate to the Miscellaneous budget.

### **Miscellaneous – £180,000 underspend**

All budgets within Miscellaneous are projected on target with the exception of Internal Resource Interest with a £170,000 projected under-recovery due to extremely low interest levels in 2021/22 and £350,000 projected underspend within Non Pay Inflation which is being reviewed as part of the current budget process.

5.5 The following position relates to the Chief Executive budget:

**Chief Executive – £14,000 overspend**

Projected variances are all below £20,000.

**6.0 VIREMENT**

6.1 No virement to be reported at P8.

**7.0 COMMON GOOD FUND**

7.1 The Common Good Fund is projecting a surplus fund balance of £43,230. Which results in projected surplus fund balance of £144,410 at 31 March 2022. There has been no change to the projected surplus fund balance since the last report.

**8.0 COMMITTEE EARMARKED RESERVES**

8.1 Appendix 5 gives a detailed breakdown of the current earmarked reserves position. Total funding is £2,006,000 of which £408,000 is projected to be spent in 2021/22 and the remaining balance of £1,598,000 to be carried forward to 2022/23 and beyond. It can be seen that expenditure of £160,000 has been achieved which is 33,000 more the phased budgeted spend to date and represents 39.2% of the annual projected spend.

**9.0 GENERAL REVENUE FUND POSITION**

9.1 It can be seen from Appendix 6 that as at 30 November 2021 the General Fund is projecting a £214,000 underspend (excluding Health & Social Care Directorate) which represents 0.10% of the net Revenue Budget.

9.2 The overspend consists of the Education & Communities Committee currently projecting an underspend with all other Committees projecting overspends:-

The main issues relating to the four Service Committees are:-

Policy & Resources Committee – Projected overspend of £54,000 (0.29%) which has decreased by £279,000 since last Committee mainly due to £350,000 underspend within the Non Pay inflation Contingency. Overspends are mainly due to under-recoveries within Statutory Additions, Prior Years Council Tax Income and £170,000 for internal resource interest.

Environment & Regeneration – Projected overspend of £73,000 (0.33%) decrease in overspend since P6 of 182,000. Overspend mainly due to an under-recovery for Cremations and Planning income lines and overspends within Residual and Green Waste mainly due to increased tonnage. These are off-set with additional turnover savings and one-off utility credits.

Education & Communities – Projected underspend of £341,000 (0.37%), underspend has increased by £80,000 since last Committee. Underspend mainly due to additional turnover savings achieved.

Health & Social Care – Projected overspend of £66,000 (0.12%), which is a decrease in costs of £456,000 since P6. Overspends within external residential placements within Children & Families and fostering, adoption and kinship. These are off-set by additional turnover savings. Any overspend will be met from the IJB Reserves at the year end.

9.3 Appendix 7 shows the latest position in respect of Earmarked Reserves, excluding those relating to Asset Plans and Funding Models, it can be seen that as at 30 November 2021 expenditure totalled £1,867,000 which equates to 39.44% of the planned spend in 2021/22. It can also be seen from Appendix 7 that at 30 November 2021 actual expenditure is £377,000 more than phased budget.

9.4 Appendix 8 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 30 November 2021 is £9.154 million which is £5.154, 000 more than the minimum recommended balance of £4 million. This includes approved write backs of £4.050 million approved at Full Council December 2021. Decisions on use of reserves will be considered as part of the annual Revenue Budget setting process.

**10.0 IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1 Finance**

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

**10.2 Legal**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

**10.3 Human Resources**

There are no specific human resources implications arising from this report.

**10.4 Equalities**

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES (see attached appendix)

NO -This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

**10.5 Repopulation**

There are no repopulation issues arising from this report.

**11.0 CONSULTATIONS**

11.1 The paper has been jointly prepared by the Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Governance and the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development.

**12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 There are no background papers for this report.



**Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2021/22****Period 8: 1st April - 30th November 2021**

Service	Approved Budget		Movements			Transferred to EMR £000	Revised Budget 2021/22 £000
	2021/22 £000	Inflation £000	Virement £000	Supplementary Budgets £000	2021/22 £000		
Finance	7,086	24	(59)			7,051	
Legal	1,846		31			1,877	
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,073	19	38			2,130	
Chief Exec	323					323	
Miscellaneous	7,574	(667)	250			7,157	
Totals	<u>18,902</u>	<u>(624)</u>	<u>260</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18,538</u>	

**Supplementary Budget Detail**

Inflation  
Finance/ICT - inflationary uplift 24  
OD, Policy & Communications - Brightwave System Upgrade 19  
Miscellaneous: (667)  
Non Pay Inflation Contingency (624)

Virements  
Legal - Service Restructure 31  
Finance - Service Restructure (69)  
Finance - Post transferred to CSC 10  
HSCP - Anti Poverty funding to Miscellaneous 250  
Education - Comm Safety Funding HR Posts 38  
260

**Total Inflation & Virements****(364)**

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORTCURRENT POSITIONPeriod 8: 1st April - 30th November 2021

2020/21 Actual £000	SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2021/22 £000	Revised Budget 2021/22 £000	Projected Out-turn 2021/22 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
9,235	Employee Costs	8,049	8,059	8,083	24	0.3%
514	Property Costs	552	552	552	0	0.0%
678	Supplies & Services	968	984	1,018	34	3.4%
2	Transport & Plant	4	4	4	0	-
1,112	Administration Costs	1,319	1,319	1,261	(58)	(4.4%)
30,517	Payments to Other Bodies	37,815	37,125	36,772	(353)	(1.0%)
(26,742)	Income	(29,805)	(29,505)	(29,098)	407	(1.4%)
<b>15,316</b>	<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>18,902</b>	<b>18,538</b>	<b>18,593</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
	Earmarked reserves				0	
<b>15,316</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>18,902</b>	<b>18,538</b>	<b>18,593</b>	<b>54</b>	

2020/21 Actual £000	OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2021/22 £000	Revised Budget 2021/22 £000	Projected Out-turn 2021/22 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
7,517	Finance	7,086	7,051	7,228	177	2.5%
1,883	Legal Services	1,846	1,877	1,905	28	1.5%
<b>9,400</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</b>	<b>8,932</b>	<b>8,928</b>	<b>9,133</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
2,093	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,073	2,130	2,145	15	0.7%
<b>2,093</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>2,073</b>	<b>2,130</b>	<b>2,145</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
327	Chief Executive	323	323	337	14	4.3%
2,760	Miscellaneous	7,574	7,157	6,977	(180)	(2.5%)
<b>14,580</b>	<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>18,902</b>	<b>18,538</b>	<b>18,593</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
	Earmarked reserves				0	
<b>14,580</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>18,902</b>	<b>18,538</b>	<b>18,593</b>	<b>54</b>	

	Approved Reserves £000	Revised Reserves £000	21/22 Budget £000	Projected Spend £000	Projected Carry Forward £000
Earmarked Reserves	2,472	2,474	870	408	1,602
<b>Policy &amp; Resources Overall Expenditure</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>2,474</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>1,602</b>

## REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

## MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)

Period 8: 1st April - 30th November 2021

Outturn 2020/21 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2021/22 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 30/11/21 £000	Projection 2021/22 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000
	<b><u>Finance/ICT</u></b>					
4,579	Employee Costs	3,982	2,444	2,074	3,953	(29)
308	Admin Costs - ICT Line Rental Recharges	333	222	217	298	(35)
55	Admin Costs - Mobile Phone Recharges	59	39	28	37	(22)
104	Supplies & Services - Finance Computer Software Maintenance	113	75	127	139	26
(215)	Income - Statutory Additions	(294)	(196)	(159)	(234)	60
(306)	Income - ICT Line Rental Recharges	(333)	(222)	(215)	(298)	35
(55)	Income - Mobile Phone Recharges	(59)	(39)	(28)	(37)	22
	Income - Council Tax Prior Years	(356)	0	0	(276)	80
	<b><u>Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</u></b>					
1,771	Employee Costs	1,806	1,108	1,028	1,842	36
	<b><u>Legal &amp; Property</u></b>					
(558)	Income	(598)	(367)	(268)	(565)	33
	<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>					
(39)	Internal Resource Interest	(200)	(133)	0	(30)	170
	Non Pay Inflation	1,750	1,280	1,280	1,400	(350)
<b>5,644</b>	<b>TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES</b>	<b>6,203</b>	<b>4,211</b>	<b>4,084</b>	<b>6,229</b>	<b>26</b>

**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22****Period 8: 1st April - 30th November 2021**

	Final Outturn 2020/21	Approved Budget 2021/22	Budget to Date 2021/22	Actual to Date 2021/22	Projected Outturn 2021/22
<b><u>PROPERTY COSTS</u></b>	<b>24,420</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>24,570</b>	<b>34,500</b>
Repairs & Maintenance	490	9,000	4,500	80	9,000
Rates	1	21,020	19,000	24,490	24,500
Property Insurance	2,910	1,000			1,000
<b><u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u></b>	<b>24,190</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>3,990</b>	<b>12,700</b>
Sundries	17,990	1,500	800	3,990	6,500
Commercial Rent Management Recharge	2,200	2,200			2,200
Recharge for Accountancy	4,000	4,000			4,000
<b><u>OTHER EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>61,400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>18,800</b>
Christmas Lights Switch On		10,500			10,500
Gourock Highland Games		29,600			0
Armistice Service	1,670	8,300		320	8,300
Comet Festival		13,000			0
Bad Debt Provision	(560)				
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b>(147,280)</b>	<b>(105,000)</b>	<b>(52,200)</b>	<b>(71,060)</b>	<b>(109,230)</b>
Property Rental	(167,850)	(158,050)	(79,000)	(102,870)	(158,050)
Void Rents	2	55,760	26,800	31,840	48,920
Internal Resources Interest	(90)	(500)		(30)	(100)
Disposal of Land	(35,100)				
<b><u>NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>(97,560)</b>	<b>(6,900)</b>	<b>(37,400)</b>	<b>(42,180)</b>	<b>(43,230)</b>
<b><u>EARMARKED FUNDS</u></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>(97,560)</b>	<b>(6,900)</b>	<b>(37,400)</b>	<b>(42,180)</b>	<b>(43,230)</b>

Fund Balance as at 31st March 2021 **101,180**

Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2022

**144,410****Notes:****1 Rates (Empty Properties)**

Rates are currently being paid on empty properties, projection reflects current Rates levels however all historic Rates costs are being examined to ensure all appropriate empty property relief has been obtained. Any subsequent credit will be included in future reports.

**2 Current Empty Properties are:**Vacant since:

12 Bay St  
6 John Wood Street  
10 John Wood Street  
15 John Wood Street  
16 John Wood Street  
17 John Wood Street

April 2015, currently being marketed  
January 2019  
August 2018  
June 2017, currently being marketed  
October 2019, currently being marketed  
March 2014, currently being marketed

**EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT**  
**COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Total Funding</u> 2021/22 £,000	<u>Phased Budget To Period 8</u> 2021/22 £,000	<u>Actual To Period 8</u> 2021/22 £,000	<u>Projected Spend</u> 2021/22 £,000	<u>Amount to be Earmarked for 2022/23 &amp; Beyond</u> £,000	<u>Lead Officer Update</u>
C	200	0	0	0	200	Balance for equal pay which is under review on an annual basis.
C	194	9	9	25	169	Project officer £88k over 2 years starting 01/10/21. £88k uncommitted.
C	216	50	44	77	139	Employee costs to 31.3.22. £60k unallocated balance.
C	43	0	0	30	13	DEC appeal for £20k approved. Write back £3k balance
C	996	0	45	80	916	Projecting £425k is needed to meet cost of Pupil Payments during 2022/23 with £381k remaining unallocated.
C	200	56	50	100	100	Kilblain Street Premises purchased for Tail O The Bank Credit Union. Use of balance to be confirmed.
C	7	0	0	0	7	£7k NDR relief Tail O The Bank.
C	10	0	0	0	10	On going need to be confirmed.
C	20	0	3	19	1	£4.4k committed to be spent by Education for training to take place Feb 2022, £2k for face fit testing training to be completed, either Dec or January, approx. £1,050 for some additional moving and handling training for Education. Approx. £1k for hand arm vibration meters, approx. £1.5k Training for Noise Assessor. Additional training is being confirmed around mediation which will be organised and spent prior to the year end
C	50	2	1	19	31	Information governance system contract awarded (2yr+1yr+1yr). Spend committed - £10k per year. Corporate training is being organised, £11k Workpro training December 2021. There is also committed spend for the information governance system for 2022 and 2023 as per the contract with the provider.
C	50	0	0	50	0	Additional marketing and support for events.
C	20	10	8	8	12	Recruitment costs to cover recruitment of new Chief Exec which has now taken place. Full costs of £8k. £12k to be written back 31/03/22.
<b>Total Category C to E</b>	<b>2,006</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>1,598</b>	

Policy & Resources CommitteeRevenue Budget Monitoring ReportPosition as at 30th November 2021

Committee	Approved Budget 2021/2022	Revised Budget 2021/2022	Projected Out-turn 2021/2022	Projected Over/(Under) Spend	Percentage Variance
	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	
Policy & Resources	18,902	18,530	18,584	54	0.29%
Environment & Regeneration	22,020	21,879	21,952	73	0.33%
Education & Communities ( <b>Note 1</b> )	95,925	92,688	92,347	(341)	(0.37%)
Health & Social Care	54,652	55,281	55,347	66	0.12%
<b>Committee Sub-Total</b>	<b>191,499</b>	<b>188,378</b>	<b>188,230</b>	<b>(148)</b>	<b>(0.08%)</b>
Loan Charges (Including SEMP)	11,586	16,174	16,174	0	0.00%
Identified Savings ( <b>Note 2</b> )	4	4	4	0	0.00%
Earmarked Reserves	0	645	645	0	0.00%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>203,089</b>	<b>205,201</b>	<b>205,053</b>	<b>(148)</b>	<b>(0.07%)</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates	(169,418)	(171,530)	(171,530)	0	0.00%
Contribution from General Reserves	(1,049)	(1,049)	(1,049)	0	100.00%
Council Tax	(32,622)	(32,622)	(32,622)	0	0.00%
Integration Joint Board - Contribution from IJB Reserves	0	0	(66)	(66)	100.00%
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(214)</b>	<b>(214)</b>	

**Note 1 - Reduction reflects loans charges and earmarked reserves.**

**Note 2 - Identified savings to be allocated**

Earmarked Reserves Position Statement

Appendix Z

Summary

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Total Funding 2021/22</u> <u>£,000</u>	<u>Phased Budget to</u> <u>£,000</u>	<u>Actual Spend To 30 Nov 2021</u> <u>£,000</u>	<u>Variance Actual to Phased Budget</u> <u>£,000</u>	<u>Projected Spend 2021/22</u> <u>£,000</u>	<u>Earmarked 2022/23 &amp; Beyond</u> <u>£,000</u>	<u>2021/22 %age Spend Against Protected</u>	<u>2021/22 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget</u>
Education & Communities	4,108	596	945	349	2,286	1,822	41.34%	58.56%
Health & Social Care	2,891	317	561	244	1,200	1,691	46.75%	76.97%
Regeneration & Environment	5,158	450	201	(249)	840	4,318	23.93%	(55.33%)
Policy & Resources	2,006	127	160	33	408	1,598	39.22%	25.98%
	14,163	1,490	1,867	377	4,734	9,429	39.44%	25.30%

**Actual Spend v Phased Budget Ahead Phasing = £377k 25.30%**

**Last Update (Period P6) Ahead of Phasing = £114k**

**Movement**

**£263k**

**Appendix 8**

**GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION**  
**Position as at 30/11/21**

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Balance 31/03/21 per 2020/21 Accounts		4890
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) 2021/22	<u>214</u>	214
<u>Proposed Write back of Earmarked Reserves:</u>		
Jobs Refresh (Full Council - December 2021)	1550	
Loans Charges (Full Council - December 2021)	1500	
Capital Fund (Full Council - December 2021)	<u>1000</u>	4050
Projected Unallocated Balance 31/03/22		<u><b>9154</b></u>
<b>Minimum Reserve required is £4 million</b>		



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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/02/22/AP/MT</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Matt Thomson</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712256</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Capital Budget and 2021/24 Capital Programme</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the 2021/24 Capital Programme.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 On March 18 2021 the Council approved the 2021/24 Capital Programme as part of the overall Budget approval.
- 2.2 The Capital Programme reflects the recently announced 2022/23 capital grant as well as an estimate of capital grant for 2023/24. While the Scottish Government are advising that national grant allocations are likely to remain at the same level until 2026/27, changes to allocation methods are likely to reduce the grant to Inverclyde Council and it is felt prudent at this stage to further reduce the 2023/24 estimated grant to £6.0m per year.
- 2.3 In order to address the reduction in resources the Council approved a number of measures including a reduction in the RAMP allowance to £2.4m from 2023/24 and the allocation of £1.7m from General Fund Reserves. The Council also requested officers to develop proposals to enhance the Capital Programme without adding further to the funding gap. Various decisions to free up reserves which could support the Capital Programme were agreed at the December 2021 Council.
- 2.4 An over provision of projects against estimated resources of up to 5% is considered acceptable to allow for increased resources and/or cost reductions. Currently the Capital Programme is reporting a deficit of £4.222m which represents 7.06% of the 2021/24 resources. This is in excess of the acceptable over commitment due to the inclusion of a further £1m for Clune Park, and the estimated reduction in the Capital Grant. The deficit will require to be addressed through the Budget process.
- 2.5 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £3.161m and the current projection is on budget. The budget for 2021/22 is £1.427m with slippage of £0.698m (49.91%) being reported at this stage. Spend to date is £0.266m which is 36.5% of projected spend however significant further spend is committed. Further detail on the Policy & Resources Capital Programme can be found in Appendix 1 and section 5 of the report.
- 2.6 As a result of material shortages and potential resultant project delays and price increases in the construction industry Policy & Resources Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> August approved the use of £100,000 Prudential Borrowing to borrow up to £1.6m to meet the potential increase in capital costs throughout 2021/22 and 2022/23. This £1.6m allowance is reflected in the Policy & Resources Capital Budget and will be allocated out to specific projects as the need is identified. All such allocations will be reported to this Committee.

- 2.7 In terms of the overall Capital Programme it can be seen from Appendix 2 that as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 expenditure in 2021/22 was 46.8% of projected spend. Phasing and projected spend has been reviewed by the budget holders and the relevant Director. The position in respect of each individual Committee is reported in Appendix 2 and Section 6 of the report. Overall committees are projecting to outturn on budget.
- 2.8 In the current year net slippage of £2.690m, 12.88% is currently being reported, this is an increase of £2.552m, 12.22%, from the previous Committee. This is due to slippage within the Environment & Regeneration Committee (£1.733m), Policy & Resources Committee (£0.698m), Education & Communities Committee (£0.052m) and Health & Social Care (£0.207).
- 2.9 The Council's City Deal projects lie outwith the General Fund Capital Programme and are not included in this report. Progress on the 3 City Deal projects is reported to Environment & Regeneration Committee.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Committee note the current position of the 2021/24 Policy & Resources Capital Budget.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Committee note the current position of the 2021/24 Capital Programme and that the deficit in excess of the acceptable over commitment will require to be addressed through the 2022/23 Budget process.

**Alan Puckrin**  
**Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 On March 18 2021 the Council approved the 2021/24 Capital Programme as part of the overall Budget approval.
- 4.2 The Capital Programme reflects the confirmed 2021/22 capital grant and the recently announced 2022/23 capital grant as well as an estimate of capital grant for 2023/24. While the Scottish Government are advising that national grant allocations are likely to remain at the same level until 2026/27, changes to allocation methods are likely to reduce the grant to Inverclyde Council and it is felt prudent at this stage to further reduce the 2023/24 estimated grant to £6.0m per year.
- 4.3 In order to address the reduction in resources the Council approved a number of measures including a reduction in the RAMP allowance to £2.4m from 2023/24 and the allocation of £1.7m from General Fund Reserves. The Council also requested officers to develop proposals to enhance the Capital Programme without adding further to the funding gap. Various decisions to free up reserves which could support the Capital Programme were agreed at the December 2021 Council.
- 4.4 An over provision of projects against estimated resources of up to 5% is considered acceptable to allow for increased resources and/or cost reductions. Currently the Capital Programme is reporting a deficit of £4.222m which represents 7.06% of the 2021/24 resources. This is in excess of the acceptable over commitment due to the inclusion of a further £1m be allocated to Clune Park, and the estimated reduction in the Capital Grant. The deficit will require to be addressed through the Budget process.
- 4.5 The Policy & Resources Capital Programme contains the previously reported 2021/24 allocations as well as a £1.6m Cost Pressures allowance added to the Policy & Resources programme to address anticipated price increases in the construction industry as a result of cost increases and project delays arising from material shortages and supply chain issues. This allowance will be allocated out to specific projects as the need is identified. All such allocations will be reported to this Committee.

## **5.0 POLICY & RESOURCES CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE**

- 5.1 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £3.161m and the current projection is on budget. The budget for 2021/22 is £1.427m with slippage of £0.698m (49.91%) being reported at this stage. Spend to date is £0.266m which is 36.5% of projected spend however significant further spend is committed.
- 5.2 PC Refresh Programme – ICT has moved to a laptop refresh strategy to provide flexibility for home and hybrid working. It completed the next tranche of equipment to be replaced during the refresh programme in November 2021. ICT have identified and advanced an additional 240 devices to be refreshed by March 2022.
- 5.3 Server and Switch Replacement – A number of maintenance replacements are scheduled and are being scoped including the core VMWare Host Server Estate and School Estate Domain Controllers. Refresh of core Firewall and Anti-Virus appliances (£78k) completed and on-site awaiting deployment.
- 5.4 ICT & Digital Strategies - Business Cases for investment as part of the Council's Digital Strategy in Electronic Document Management to enable home and hybrid working have been developed and approved by the CMT.

## **6.0 2021/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

- 6.1 Appendix 2 shows that over the 2021/24 period the Capital Programme is reporting a £4.222m deficit. This is in excess of an acceptable level of up to 5% over provision and will be addressed through the 2022/23 Budget process.

6.2 The position in respect of individual Committees for 2021/22 is as follows:

Policy & Resources

Expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 is £0.136m against an approved budget of £1.427m. Slippage of £0.698m (48.91%) is being reported at this stage due to slippage within the Cost Pressure Contingency (£0.600m) and the annual allocation (£0.098m).

Environment & Regeneration

Expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 is £3.988m against an approved budget of £12.619m. Net slippage of £1.733m (13.73%) is being reported mainly due to advancement within the Cemetery Development (£0.125m), offset by slippage in the SPT projects (£0.214m), Spaces for People (£0.310m), Flooding Strategy (£0.226m), Cremator Development (£0.252m), Babylon Demolition (£0.180m), Ivy House Replacement (£0.254m), Waterfront Leisure Centre Lifecycle Works (£0.160m) and Boglestone Community Centre Roof (£0.100m).

Education & Communities

Expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 is £4.083m against an approved budget of £5.617m. Net slippage of £0.052m (0.93%) is being reported mainly due to advancement/cost increases in Gourrock Primary School Extension (£0.284m) and Lifecycle Fund (£0.263m) offset by slippage in Indoor Tennis Facility (£0.503m) and Waterfront Leisure Centre Moveable Pool Floor (£0.274m).

Health & Social Care

Net Slippage of £0.207m is being reported due to advancement within the Crosshill Children’s Home Replacement (£0.499m) offset by slippage in the new Learning Disability Facility (£0.206m) and SWIFT Upgrade (£0.500m), with spend of £0.183m for the year to date against an approved budget of £1.229m.

6.3 Overall in 2021/22 expenditure is 46.8% of projected spend for the year and projected net slippage of the programme is £2.690m (12.88%). Officers are examining ways to accelerate spend in order to reduce the level of slippage.

**7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 This report reflects the detail reported to Service Committees.

**8.0 IMPLICATIONS**

**Finance**

8.1 Financial Implications

All financial implications are shown in detail within the report and in Appendices 1 & 2

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

**Legal**

8.2 There are no legal implications.

**Human Resources**

8.3 There are no direct staffing implications in respect of this report and as such the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications has not been consulted.

**8.4 Equalities**

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

**Repopulation**

8.5 The Council's continuing significant capital investment levels will have a positive impact on regeneration, job creation and hence repopulation.

**9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None.

**COMMITTEE: POLICY & RESOURCES**

Project Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Est. Total Cost	Actual to 31/3/21	Approved Budget 2021/22	Revised Est 2021/22	Actual to 30/11/21	Est.2022/23	Est.2023/24	Future Years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</b>								
<b>ICT</b>								
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	25		25	25	6	0	0	0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	305		305	305	131	0	0	0
Whiteboard/Projector Refresh	30		90	30	0	0	0	0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	169		169	169	129	0	0	0
Annual Allocation	884		38	0	0	521	363	0
<b>ICT Total</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Finance</b>								
Modernisation Fund	123	112	0	0	0	11	0	0
Cost Pressure Contingency	1,600		800	200	0	1,400		
<b>Finance Total</b>	<b>1,723</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,411</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,136</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1,932</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>0</b>

**Appendix 2a**

Capital Programme - 2021/22 - 2023/24

	<u>Available Resources</u>					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Future		£000
	£000	£000	£000	£000		£000
Government Capital Support	6,405	6,353	6,000	-	-	18,758
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	835	275	296	-	-	1,406
Capital Grants (Note 2)	2,242	1,871	-	-	-	4,113
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	291	4,231	7,827	342	-	12,691
Balance B/F From 20/21	15,105	-	-	-	-	15,105
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	5,961	1,652	483	-	-	8,096
	<u>30,839</u>	<u>14,382</u>	<u>14,606</u>	<u>342</u>		<u>60,169</u>

Overall Position 2021/24

	£000
	59,827
	64,049
	<u>(4,222)</u>
	<u>(7.06)%</u>

Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-C)

Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-D)

(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources

(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %

**Notes to Appendix 2a**

**Note 1 (Capital Receipts)**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	525	275	296	-	1,096
Contributions/Recoveries	310	-	-	-	310
	835	275	296	-	1,406

**Note 2 (Capital Grants)**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Grant - Place Based Funding	675	-	-	-	675
Renewal of Play Parks	65	-	-	-	65
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	406	337	-	-	743
SPT	575	-	-	-	575
Spaces for People	168	-	-	-	168
Nature Restoration Fund	88	-	-	-	88
CO2 Monitors in Schools	95	-	-	-	95
HES - Watt Complex	26	-	-	-	26
Electric Vehicles	19	-	-	-	19
Sustrans	70	-	-	-	70
Watt Complex Creativity Space	55	-	-	-	55
RCGF - King George VI	-	1,534	-	-	1,534
	2,242	1,871	-	-	4,113

**Note 3 (Prudentially Funded Projects)**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Vehicle Replacement Programme	(375)	172	839	-	636
Asset Management Plan - Offices	-	84	-	-	84
Asset Management Plan - Depots	37	305	-	-	342
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	-	76	90	207	373
CCTV	15	-	-	-	15
Clune Park Regeneration	27	334	-	-	361
Neil Street Childrens Home Replacement - CoS	2	11	-	-	13
Crosshill Childrens Home Replacement	185	106	-	-	291
New Learning Disability Facility	200	1,500	5,498	135	7,333
SWIFT Upgrade	-	243	-	-	243
Additional Prudential Borrowing to Fund Capital Programme	200	1,400	1,400	-	1,400
Additional Prudential Borrowing to meet anticipated Cost Pressures	291	4,231	7,827	342	12,691



**Appendix 2b**

Capital Programme - 2021/22 - 2023/24

Agreed Projects Committee	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Prior Years £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Future £000	Total £000	Approved Budget £000	(Under)/ Over £000	2021/22 Spend To 30/11/2021 £000
Policy & Resources	112	729	1,957	363	-	3,161	3,161	-	266
Environment & Regeneration	6,110	10,886	17,605	7,152	364	42,117	42,117	-	3,988
School Estate	5,488	4,908	3,685	3,500	1,001	18,582	18,582	-	3,712
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	360	657	3,049	420	-	4,486	4,486	-	371
HSCP	1,556	1,022	2,618	5,498	135	10,829	10,829	-	183
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,626</b>	<b>18,202</b>	<b>28,914</b>	<b>16,933</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>79,175</b>	<b>79,175</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,520</b>

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/04/22/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712223</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Finance Services - Update</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Committee on various matters within the remit of Finance Services and to seek decisions as appropriate.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Over the Festive period and the first 2 weeks of January demand for Self-Isolation Support Grants increased exponentially compared to mid-December. Many applicants were unable to get through to the Discretionary Payments Team which resulted in understandable concern and complaints. The relaxation of self-isolation rules has to date has not relieved the pressure on the team due to the continued high level of transmission within Inverclyde plus the backlog of applicants who were unable to contact the Council in early January.
- 2.2 Extra resources were drafted in from other Council services and the extent of the backlog is being monitored daily. Even so it will be several more weeks before the team's workload position will return to the level before the Omicron variant. Priority continues to be given to processing Crisis Grants, the demand for which has also increased.
- 2.3 A £100 Winter Hardship Support Payment was agreed by the Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 as part of a suite of measures to support low income households. Most have received their payment directly into their bank account with the remainder due their payments due during January 2022.
- 2.4 Adjustments will be needed to the current DHP criteria to ensure 2022/23 expenditure is contained within the £160,000 expected budget. The DHP categories including the proposed changes to the policy to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.5 The latest published data shows that 7122 households and 9134 adults in Inverclyde are on Universal Credit. There has been limited impact of the withdrawal of the temporary £20 Covid uplift in the number of Crisis Grants paid to those on UC. The number of grants paid each month between April and September was on average 151 compared with 167 in October and 150 in November. The position will continue to be monitored and reported.
- 2.6 As part of the current Budget process a review of the future ICT Capital investment levels required to maintain the increased volume of laptops and ancillary kit rolled out due to Covid has been under taken. The matter was considered and supported by the MBWG and as such will be incorporated into the proposals to be considered by the Council later this month.
- 2.7 CMT have approved the renewal of Digital 360 EDRMS licences, the provision of support and maintenance services for a further 5 years and to upgrade the Digital Image Server. Included in the agreement is an Enterprise License that will allow the system to be deployed across all parts of the Council at no further expense for individual services apart from a one-off cost of £75,000.

2.8 Appendix 2 provides an updated action plans for both the ICT Strategy and Digital Strategy. It can be seen that good progress is being made with a number of actions now completed.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Committee note the significant work pressures within the Revenues & Benefits team in relation to Covid related grant payments which is in addition to the core workload.

3.2 It is recommended that Committee approve the revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy to be applied from 1.4.2022 attached at Appendix 1.

3.3 It is recommended that Committee notes the current position of various ICT projects and that a request for increased capital investment in ICT will be included in the 2022/25 Capital Programme for the Council to consider later this month.

Alan Puckrin  
Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Governance

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Revenues & Benefits team have had a key role in delivering new services arising from Covid since March 2020 with the payments of thousands of business grants, low income pandemic payments on behalf of the Scottish Government plus local schemes supporting CTR recipients and Self- Isolation Support Grants.
- 4.2 In a similar vein the ICT team have had unprecedented levels of work arising from the initial roll out of extra kit, setting up employees and Members for home working and supporting the on going delivery of remote/hybrid meetings plus remote/hybrid education delivery.

## **5.0 REVENUES & BENEFITS UPDATE**

### **5.1 Self-Isolation Support Grants**

The eligibility criteria for the £500 Self-Isolation Support Grant (SISG) delivered on behalf of the Scottish Government was expanded in December to align with the more rigorous self-isolation rules introduced to contain the spread of the Omicron variant. In the period over Christmas and the first 2 weeks of January demand for support increased exponentially compared to mid-December. Over and above this there were many applicants who could not register their application due to the level of demand. A Scotland wide survey indicated increases in demand of between 300%-1500% compared to the same time last year. The relaxation of self-isolation rules has had limited impact to date due to the backlog of applicants and levels of transmission within Inverclyde.

- 5.2 Extra resources were drafted in from other Council services but as the SISG process is not straight forward, a period of training and bedding in is required resulting in an increasing backlog. The extent of the backlog is being monitored daily and as at 18 January the backlog of applications was 179 with 47 potential applicants to be called back. An online initial application form is being developed and once implemented is likely to increase the backlog further. In light of this it can be seen that it will be several more weeks before the team's workload position will return to the level before the Omicron variant. The position reflects the impact of this and other Covid related increases in workload on day to day business. An update will be provided at the Committee.

### **5.3 Winter Hardship Support Payment**

A £100 Winter Hardship Support Payment was agreed by the Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 as part of a suite of measures to support low income households from Inverclyde's share of £25million in flexible funding. 700 low income households not supported by any other locally agreed scheme during 2021 received a letter in December 2021 advising payment arrangements. Most will receive their payment directly where bank account details are held, others have been asked to apply along with a copy of their bank statement. Payments are scheduled to be made during January 2022.

### **5.4 Discretionary Housing Payments**

The DHP allocation for purposes other than the mitigation of the Social Sector Size Criteria in 2021/22 is £229,000. This includes a one off Covid related grant of £69,000. DHP "other" expenditure based on applications received up to November 2021, expected to be paid until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 is £225,000. While the additional funding will meet the current DHP policy priority criteria, adjustments will be needed to ensure 2022/23 expenditure is contained within budget, expected to be £160,000.

- 5.5 Officers have reviewed expenditure against each priority category and recommend reducing the excess weekly income threshold from £50 to £20. An exception to the proposal is to maintain the current level of support for private rented sector applicants deemed to be in exceptional circumstances.

The DHP categories including the proposed changes to the policy to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 are attached at Appendix 1. A category met by additional funding during 2020/21 supporting private rented sector tenants directly affected by Covid-19, has been removed. Applicants who meet the financial assessment will however continue to be supported, although to a lesser degree, under a Financial Hardship category.

## **5.6 Scottish Welfare Fund**

The Scottish Welfare Fund helped 295 families move home in the 7 months to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, an increase of 195 during the same period in 2020/21. Grants averaging £950 for those who met the qualifying criteria paid for items including carpeting and white goods and accounted for £280,000 (56%) Community Care Grant (CCG) expenditure during that period; This compared with £100,000 spent on house moves during the same period during 2020/21.

5.7 Scottish Welfare Fund 2021/22 core funding of £756,000 was supplemented by £168,000 carried forward from a Covid-19 allocation received during 2020/21. The additional funding has helped meet the extra demand on the budget. It also permitted the application priority level to be extended to Medium priority applications until August 2021 when the priority level returned to High to contain expenditure within budget. An additional allocation of £110,000 Winter Hardship Support to the Community Care Grant budget was approved by the December Council and this will ensure there is sufficient budget to fund approved grants in the coming months.

5.8 The level of new build social rented properties planned to be released to new tenants will slow down during 2022/23 with 181 properties planned compared with 460 during 2021/22 meaning demand on Community Care Grant funding in these circumstances will reduce. Scottish Government funding for Scottish Welfare Fund is frozen for 2022/23 and expenditure will be kept under close review to ensure grants are awarded only in the circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the award will have an immediate and significant impact.

5.9 A Winter Hardship Support allocation of £40,000 to the Crisis Grant budget will ensure those in crisis over the winter period receive the level of grant needed to meet increased food and fuel costs. The new funding allows for an anticipated 20% increase in number of approved grant applications whilst each grant is increased by a further 20% above the current 20% increase on the standard grant level agreed in April 2020.

## **5.10 Other Matters**

The Covid-19 Tenant Grant Fund launched during November 2021 with communications sent directly to all registered Private Rented Sector landlords, engagement with RSLs, a social media campaign and a press release. Enquiries and applications are being assessed against the rigorous evidential requirements of the fund and officers are confident Inverclyde's £93,000 share of national funding will be allocated in full. A progress report was submitted to the Scottish Government in December and a further update will be provided in March.

5.11 The latest published data shows that 7122 households and 9134 adults in Inverclyde are on Universal Credit. There has been limited impact of the withdrawal of the temporary £20 Covid uplift in the number of Crisis Grants paid to those on UC. The number of grants paid each month between April and September was on average 151 compared with 167 in October and 150 in November. The position will continue to be monitored and reported.

## **6.0 ICT UPDATE**

6.1 As part of the current Budget process a review of the future investment levels required to maintain the increased volume of laptops and ancillary kit rolled out due to Covid has been undertaken. Between the increase of 700 laptops for officers and 1100 within the school estate then, even after taking into account the reduction in the level of desktops required, there is a need to increase the annual capital allocation by £230,000.

6.2 The matter was considered and supported by the MBWG and as such will be incorporated into the proposals to be considered by the Council later this month.

- 6.3 Civica Digital 360 is the corporate Electronic Document Management Solution (EDRMS). It was first implemented in 2013 and is extensively used in Revenues and Benefits and HSCP. It is planned to deploy further modules as part of the New Ways of Working programme as it was recognised as a key tool for the successful implementation of home and remote working.
- 6.4 CMT have approved the renewal of Digital 360 EDRMS licences, the provision of support and maintenance services for a further 5 years and to upgrade the Digital Image Server as part of the list of Contracts in the Negotiated Contracts policy agreed at CMT in November 2019. Included in the agreement is an Enterprise License that will allow the system to be deployed across all parts of the council at no further expense for individual services apart from a one-off cost of £75,000.
- 6.5 The costs will be contained in existing ICT budgets with the exception of the Enterprise Licence cost which will be met from the Cloud earmarked reserve.
- 6.6 A core requirement of the Council's ICT & Digital Strategies is the implementation of Cloud Based tools including migration to Microsoft 365. Procurement through the Scottish Government Framework Agreement has been completed. Initial "onboarding" to the Microsoft Cloud Platform has begun. A pilot programme is proceeding within ICT Services before being rolled out to the wider estate. A project timeline and roll-out programme has been developed and is in the process of agreement. A number of project sub-projects are being established to work with Services to communicate progress.
- 6.7 Appendix 2 provides an updated action plans for both the ICT Strategy and Digital Strategy. It can be seen that good progress is being made with a number of actions now completed.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Finance

There are no financial implications to be highlighted in this report over and above the considerable levels of funding being distributed to businesses and members of the public by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Government.

#### Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

##### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
ICT	Capital Refresh	2022/23	£230,000		Subject to approval as part of the 2022/25 Capital Programme

### 7.2 Legal

There are no legal implications to highlight in this report.

### 7.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications to highlight in this report.

## 7.4 Equalities

### Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

## 7.5 Repopulation

There are no repopulation issues arising from this report.

## 8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 No specific consultations were required when preparing this report.

## 9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

**DHP Policy – April 2022**

**Appendix 1**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Maximum Duration of Award/ Award to be reviewed</b>	<b>Amount of DHP</b> (up to the stated % of the shortfall between HB and the rent charge – or otherwise stated)	<b>Examples of Supporting Evidence</b>	<b>Changes from Previous Policy</b>
1	Claimants affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria (Working Age Housing Benefit claimants living in Housing Association tenancies)	For the full financial year	100% of the SSSC reduction	HB records	
2a.	Claimants supported by the Homelessness Service in the Private Rented Sector	12 months	100%	Homelessness records	
2b.	Claimants supported by the Homelessness Service or from Temporary Accommodation into Social Sector housing	One- off payment	Up to the equivalent of 1 week's rent charge for the new tenancy	Housing Association notification Lease agreement	Added those supported from temporary accommodation
2c.	Benefit Cap	Until end of financial year	75%	HB records	
3a.	Financial Hardship – Less than £20 income over expenditure each week	Until end of financial year	75%	Claimant statement/HB Assessment	Reduced from £50 to £20 per week
3b.	Financial Hardship – Less than £20 income over expenditure each week – aged less than 35years and housed private rented sector	Until end of financial year	100%	Claimant statement/HB Assessment	Reduced from £50 to £20 per week
3c	Financial Hardship – Less than £50 income over expenditure each week – housed in the private rented sector and in exceptional circumstances	Until end of financial year	100%	Claimant statement/HB Assessment	



**Notes**

DHP is awarded in order of priority with applications meeting the criteria for Category 1 being the first priority to Category 3 being the lowest priority

Category 1

- Applicants in category 1 are not subject to a financial assessment

Category 2

- Applicants in category 2 are subject to a financial assessment. Applicants are approved where income is less than £20 more than essential expenditure. Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Scottish Disability Payments are disregarded as income although all other income is taken into consideration.
- Awards for claimants supported by the Homelessness Service in the Private Rented Sector are limited to the equivalent of the difference between the HB award and one rate above the LHA rate for the household's requirements or the LHA 2 room rate, whichever is higher. Affordability of those supported by the Homelessness service or from temporary accommodation will be monitored closely subject to an upper annual budget of £10k.
- Those affected by the Benefit Cap renting in the social sector – DHP is awarded based on the difference between HB and the rent charge
- Those affected by the Benefit Cap renting in the private rented sector – DHP is awarded based on the difference between HB and the LHA rate applicable to the household's requirements, unless determined to be exceptional circumstances.

Category 3

- Applicants are approved where income is less than £20 more than essential expenditure. Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Scottish Disability Payments are disregarded as income although all other income is taken into consideration. This category will also be monitored closely and could be subject to review depending on the level of spend.
- In the private rented sector DHP is awarded based on the difference between HB or UC Housing costs and the LHA rate applicable to the household's requirements or the 1 room rate for those aged under 35 years
- In the social sector DHP is awarded based on the difference between HB entitlement or UC Housing costs and the rent charge
- Private rented sector claimants subject to Local Housing Allowance restrictions who are in "exceptional circumstances". Award DHP to meet the difference between HB or UC housing costs and one LHA rate above the rate applicable to the household's requirements with a limit of the 2 room rate for those aged less than 35 years. Exceptional circumstances being situations that are particularly challenging and for an identifiable and specific reason, normally beyond the applicant's control and more than the financial pressure experienced by most people who rely on welfare benefits. Exceptional circumstances may be when support is provided by Macmillan Cancer Support or similar organisation; those with terminal medical conditions; unexpected personal or family problems or illness.

Date: January 2022

ICT Strategy Action Plan 2021 – 2024

Action Area 1	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria	Update	Responsibility
Asset Management Programme & Cloud Migration Strategy	Hardware Refresh Programme reviewed to reflect new ways of working	Sufficient Funding in place March 2022  Staff have the appropriate equipment to work effectively and efficiently from the most appropriate location  From 2023	Sustainable refresh programme embedded  Staff satisfaction surveys reflect confidence in IT Services.  Line Managers are satisfied that staff have appropriate equipment	Members Budget Working group support need for increased investment.  Standard specification for equipment agreed by CMT. Hybrid working options being identified by Organisational Recovery Group	Chief Financial Officer/ICT Service Manager  ICT Service Manager
	Education Services – review services provided to schools to reflect new ways of teaching and delivery	Strategy approved and funding agreed March 2022  Students and Staff have the appropriate equipment to learn in a flexible and rewarding way.  From 2023	Sustainable funding model approved  Feedback from Education Services reflect satisfaction in service delivery	Extra funding proposed from 2022/25 Capital budget and Education Budget.  Digital strategy approved at Education & Communities Committee 02/11/21  <b>Complete</b>	ICT Service Manager
	Cloud Migration Strategy	Deliver Office 365 Licensing and implement initial Cloud Migration  From August 2021  Agree approach to deliver Telephony and other Communications Systems in the Cloud  March 2022	Cloud services including MS Teams deployed to staff  Contracts awarded for new Telephony approach	Contract Awarded August 2021.  Project timeline developed and agreed  Supplier engagement and Options appraisal continuing.	ICT Service Manager

Action Area 2	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria	Update	Responsibility
Service Provision	Maintain Service Levels across Support Services	Meet agreed Service Level Targets for Incident and Service Requests.	Customer satisfaction with service provided	SLA Statistics reported to P&R	ICT Service Manager
	Core Systems	Ongoing through life of Strategy Engage with services to ensure that existing systems are being used effectively. Focussing on collaboration and communication tools including the Cisco telephony systems, Customer Management and EDRIMS. March 2022	Services have access to the tools and functions required to provide effective efficient services to customers and staff.	<b>Complete</b> Report to CMT February 2022 on medium term plans for Core Systems	ICT Service Manager

Action Area 3	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria	Update	Responsibility
Information Security	Network and System Security	<p>Maintain a Secure Network Infrastructure</p> <p>Support the Information Governance group in dealing with the individual data management responsibilities of each member of staff.</p> <p>Ongoing through life of Strategy</p>	<p>Minimise Cyber Security Incidents,</p> <p>Corporate approach to data handling and electronic document management.</p>	<p>P&amp;R Report to be included as part of Security Accreditation Compliance programme.</p>	<p>ICT Service Manager</p>
	Security Accreditation Compliance	<p>Use of industry partners to provide Security Assurance through the Penetration Test &amp; IT Health check process.</p> <p>Ongoing through life of Strategy</p> <p>Maintain Cyber Essentials Plus and PSN Code of Connection compliance/accreditation</p> <p>Annual Compliance Process</p>	<p>Provision of report and implementation of recommendations</p> <p>PSN Compliance Certificate</p>	<p>PSN Accreditation in place for 2021/22</p> <p>Schedule to be developed for accreditation and penetration testing/Cyber Security Audit for 2022/23</p>	<p>ICT Service Manager</p>

Appendix 2 Page 4

Action Area 4	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria	Update	Responsibility
Procurement Strategy	Use of National Frameworks to deliver value for money services	National frameworks the default approach for available systems and services	Delivery of Value for Money Systems and Services	Two contracts awarded via Scottish Government Frameworks in August 2. Further contract placed via GCloud December 2021	ICT Service Manager
	Account Management	Meet with suppliers to review and ensure best value and most efficient levels of delivery and support of systems	Appropriate level of supplier support and best value delivery	<b>Fully Adopted</b> Supplier meetings ongoing	ICT Service Manager
	Project Management	Use temporary increase in Project Management resources to deliver support to services in planning and deploying projects and services	Business Cases are developed and projects are delivered on time and on budget	<b>Fully Adopted</b> Candidate appointed August 2021	ICT Service Manager
		2021/23		<b>Complete</b>	

Digital Strategy Action Plan 2021 – 2024 Update

Action Area 1	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria	Update	Responsibility
Provide Improved online Services	Work with suppliers to fully enable the ability of customers to book and pay for calendared and transactional services such as bulky uplifts.	Allow customers to book & pay for services online. Increase the range of services available via Web Self-Service October 2021	Delivery of extended range of services available.	First tranche of Online Forms are live. Integration with new payment engine pending. <b>COMPLETE</b>	ICT Service Manager with Heads of Service.
	Review and Develop additional services to be Digitized or enhance existing online services to provide additional functionality	Additional Services available online March 2022	Delivery of extended range of services available. Over Strategy Period	DMTs to be visited to discuss opportunities for migrating services online Ongoing	ICT Service Manager with Heads of Service

Action Area 2	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria/Target Date	Update	Responsibility
Channel Shift	Open new channels of communication including messaging and Social Media routes Increase convenience for customers.	The number of ways customers can interact with the council increases reflecting changes in demographics September 2022	Delivery of extended range of services available.	To be reviewed in 2022	ICT Service Manager with Corporate Communication Manager
	Identify channels which can be closed.	Review of Channels and identify if any can or should be closed April 2023	Provide only those channels needed by customers Over Strategy Period	To be reviewed in 2022 following return to more normal levels of service delivery	ICT Service Manager with Heads of Service

Action Area	Action	Milestones	Success Criteria	Update	Responsibility
Action Area 3	As part of Organisational Recovery following the COVID 19 Pandemic, all Services to review and if necessary develop systems to allow enhanced home and remote working	Opportunities identified as part of the Business Continuity short term Recovery Actions- September 2021 Projects developed to allow greater flexible working – December 2021 Funding agreed – March 2022	Efficiencies achieved and increases in productivity through roll out of mobile / agile working across council workforce	Business Cases developed Dec 2021	CMT and all Heads of Service
	As part of Organisational Recovery following the COVID 19 Pandemic, Office layouts to reflect greater flexible/remote working	Develop Proposals for CMT consideration – October 2021 Funding considered- March 2022 Project Delivery – From 2022	Better use of Council office estate	Funding approved 2022/23 Budget Adjustments delivered from 2022	Head of Property Services/ ICT Service Manager
	As part of Organisational Recovery, ensure the appropriate policies are in place to support new ways of working	Review Mobile Working and related HR Policies by September 2021	Staff can work safely and securely backed by appropriate policies and support	Hybrid and Home Working policies in draft for consultation. Pilot agreed.	Head of ODHR
Action Area 4	Education Services Digital Strategy	Coordinate with Education Services to ensure provision of Digital Services to schools meets the requirement of modern learning and teaching.	Delivery of extended range of services in schools	Digital Strategy agreed at Education and Communities Committee November 2021	ICT Service Manager with Education Services
	Health & Social Care Partnership Digital Strategy	Over Strategy Period Coordinate with HSCP to ensure provision and delivery of Digital Services to staff, patients and other service users that meet the needs of delivering digital Health and Social Care. Over Strategy Period	Delivery of extended range of services for staff and service users	<b>Complete</b> Draft policy prepared for consultation.	ICT Service Manager with HSCP
Other Digital Strategies					

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director Environment and Regeneration</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/01/22/EM/DA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Eddie Montgomery / David Aitken</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712472/2964</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Procurement Update</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on procurement related activity including the development of a Fair Work First Action Plan.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The procurement update report to the November 2021 Policy & Resources Committee included a summary of the revised policy and guidance around Fair Work First issued by the Scottish Government in September 2021. The report also noted that a Fair Work First Action Plan would be developed and reported to the February 2022 Committee which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 Scotland Excel have recently published sector and Council specific annual value reports which include a high-level update on financial indicators resulting from the use of Scotland Excel frameworks and services. Some of the key information in the report is included in section 6 whilst a link to the published reports is included in 6.2.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee:
- notes the Fair Work First Action Plan included as Appendix 1 and the current position including on-going actions to embed/apply the revised Fair Work First principles in line with the updated policy and guidance;
  - notes the Scotland Excel Annual Value Reports published in November 2021.

**Stuart Jamieson**  
**Interim Director**  
**Environment and Regeneration**



## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The procurement update report to the November 2021 Policy & Resources Committee included a summary of the current position including actions required to embed/apply the revised Fair Work First principles in line with updated policy and guidance. It also noted that a Fair Work First Action Plan would be developed and reported to the February 2022 Committee.
- 4.2 Since its launch in April 2008 Scotland Excel has continued to evolve its leading change services to help local authorities develop their procurement skills, tools and processes. As champions of procurement, Scotland Excel remains committed to increasing procurement and commercial capability within the Public sector to ensure that councils get the most from their local procurement activities. Scotland Excel issue sector and individual Council annual value reports providing a detailed view of the value derived from membership as outlined in 6.1 below.

## **5.0 FAIR WORK FIRST IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

- 5.1 Following the letter from Scottish Ministers to all Local Authority Leaders and COSLA Chief Executive in early September 2021 re-stating the Scottish Governments commitment to Fair Work, an updated procurement policy note was issued at the end of September 2021. Public bodies were advised to start an incremental approach to implementing the expanded Fair Work First criteria in new procurement processes from 31 October 2021, with a view to having fully developed internal procedures so that Fair Work First is incorporated in all relevant procurement processes in the financial year 2022/23.
- 5.2 The Action Plan included as Appendix 1 to this report provides a summary of the work completed to date and on-going activity across the three key areas of Employment Practices; Procurement; and Funding/Grants.

## **6.0 SCOTLAND EXCEL – ANNUAL VALUE REPORT**

- 6.1 The Council continues to participate in and utilise Scotland Excel's portfolio of collaborative framework agreements and contracts as these ensure best value is being achieved through combined spending power along with well-managed and effective supply chains that are regularly market tested.
- 6.2 Scotland Excel have recently published their annual value reports which provide detail on the value derived from membership of Scotland Excel. The reports include a high-level update on financial indicators resulting from the use of Scotland Excel frameworks and services, demonstrating the value Scotland Excel provides to each council. In addition to financial savings, the reports also include information on the social value aspects i.e. community benefits, local spend, living wage, and support for local economies. A high level summary of the key performance information contained within the report is provided below:

### **Inverclyde Council Overview, covering period of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

- £9.8m Spend;
- Participated in 93% of frameworks (not all frameworks will have spend within the last 12 months);
- 5 Local suppliers represented on frameworks;
- £137k spent locally in the Inverclyde area;
- 47hrs of community benefits have been delivered:
  - Staff members of Amey Construction who are a supplier on the engineering consultancy framework volunteered at Inverclyde foodbanks;
  - Kelvin Books, who are a supplier on the library books and textbooks framework, donated library books to Inverclyde schools.

Scotland Excel have been engaging with local authorities with a focus on increasing the number of local suppliers and SME's who are represented on their frameworks.

This has resulted in strategy changes in relation to how Scotland Excel go to the market with requirements and has resulted in new approaches such as the use of Dynamic purchasing systems and alternative lotting strategies with a view to increasing the number of suppliers who are able to secure a place on their frameworks.

It should be noted however, that the frameworks tend to be awarded for a four year period and as a result it will take time for the improvements and potential increases in local supplier representation to be realised.

### Savings & Rebates

- £161k Saving (through use of Scotland Excel frameworks);
- £15k Rebate across multiple frameworks.

The methodology Scotland Excel use to calculate savings involves a comparison of prices received within the tender evaluation and does not benchmark against what each council currently pays. The savings figure advised above represents a cost avoidance to the Council for using the framework agreements as opposed to cashable savings.

It should also be noted that the majority of the frameworks are in their third or fourth iterations and therefore pricing has become stable. Although this results in a market tested rate, the scope for achieving savings becomes more limited with each iteration of the framework agreement.

The key benefits now come from added value areas such as how they support sustainable procurement initiatives and increase social value across each authority area.

### Living Wage and Fair Work Practices

- As of December 2020, 899 (85.5%) of the 1051 suppliers appointed to Scotland Excel frameworks notified that they pay the Real Living Wage as of December 2020.

The sector and Inverclyde annual value reports can be viewed at the following link:  
<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/business-and-trade/procurement/annual-procurement-report>

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

### Finance

#### 7.1 Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

## Legal

7.2 There are no known Legal implications contained within this report.

## Human Resources

7.3 There are no known Human Resources implications contained within this report.

## Equalities

7.4 Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

## Repopulation

7.5 There are no repopulation implications contained within this report.

## 8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with the Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance; the Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services; the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, the Head of Culture Communities & Educational Resources, the Service Manager Community Learning and Development, Community Safety and Resilience, and the Regeneration Manager.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None.

Objective(s)	Milestones	Procurement Lead	Service Lead	Target Date	Progress / Comments	RAG Status
1. Fair Work First Inverclyde Employment Practices	Update the Councils Work Life Balance Policy to allow employees to make an application for flexible working from day one of employment.	David Aitken	Steven McNab	Jan 2022	Following agreement at November 21 P&R this was put in place. The policy and procedure was updated and communicated to employees.	Complete
2. Fair Work First Procurement	Develop and agree: (i). standard technical question(s) and proposed weightings in accordance with most recent SPPN detail; (ii). standard contract clause / specification wording for inclusion within tenders; (iii). new instructions to tenderers template for inclusion within all tenders.  Develop a communication in SPPN format to be communicated to Designated Procurement Officer (DPO) Group	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Denese O'Donnell	Dec 2021	Both a combined and individual question set have been drafted.  Special T&C's have been adopted and updated.	Complete
		David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	N/A	Jan 2022	Develop a suitable template for technical procurement. This will be uploaded to ICON and communicated to the wider DPO Group.	On track

Objective(s)	Milestones	Procurement Lead	Service Lead	Target Date	Progress / Comments	RAG Status
2. Fair Work First Procurement	Develop and agree mechanism to capture, monitor and report to ensure Fair Work First is contained and delivered on within all relevant tenders/contracts in line with policy and internal / external procurement guidance.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	All	Mar 2022	Can be achieved through contract strategy sign off process with reporting thereafter from PCS-T information.	On track
	Develop a tender completion report to support ongoing monitoring and reporting of Fair Work First.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	All	Mar 2022	Develop template by end Jan 22 and circulate to CPU in advance of communicating to wider DPO Group.	On track
	Review current internal thresholds for inclusion of Fair Work First in works contracts.	David Aitken	All	Mar 2022	Addressed as part of ongoing review of corporate governance documents including procurement manual and the current development of revised/updated Procurement Strategy planned for submission and approval by end of Mar 22.	On track

Objective(s)	Milestones	Procurement Lead	Service Lead	Target Date	Progress / Comments	RAG Status
3. Fair Work First Funding Applications	Convene short life working group of relevant service leads to discuss conditionality and scope of where Fair Work First could be implemented and embedded.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Jennifer Horn / Hugh Scott	Jan 2022	Working Group meeting arranged for early Jan 22.	On track
	Establish roles and responsibilities in relation to grant funding process.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Jennifer Horn & Hugh Scott	Feb 2022	Potentially for consideration within on-going Council governance document review.	On track
	Establish a pipeline that details the volume, value and frequency of grant funding.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Jennifer Horn / Hugh Scott	Feb 2022		On track
	Identify what conditionality requirements are applied with grants and what can be influenced and what cannot.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Jennifer Horn / Hugh Scott	Feb 2022	Aligned to action above.	On track
	Draft a proposal for minimum thresholds for funding applications in which Fair Work First could be included.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Jennifer Horn / Hugh Scott	Feb 2022		On track
	Develop and agree mechanism to capture, monitor and report to ensure Fair Work First is contained and delivered on within all relevant funding applications.	David Aitken / Andrew Duncan	Jennifer Horn / Hugh Scott	Mar 2022	Potential to consider use of PCS-T for grants, direct awards and tenders. Establish if selection criteria (SPD) templates would be required.	On track

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/02/22/AH</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Andrina Hunter, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712042</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update Report</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on a number of issues relating to corporate policy and performance.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on a number of performance and policy issues relating to:

- New Performance Management System
- Corporate Services CDIP Update
- Update on Process/Cycle of Self Evaluation
- Results from the Autumn 2021 Citizen's Panel
- Recruitment of Service Manager Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee note the key update areas in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities and Organisational Development**



## 4.0 NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- 4.1 Inverclyde Performs, the current performance management system utilised by the Council is no longer supported by its supplier therefore a new system is required. Procurement has been undertaken using the G-Cloud 12 Framework, and the Pentana Risk system, supplied by Ideagen, has been identified as meeting all the Council's key requirements.
- 4.2 Pentana is currently used by many local authorities and other public sector organisations to collate and oversee all strategic planning actions, risks and performance indicators. 80 licences have been procured for use across the council services and the HSCP, and an implementation plan for the new system is in place.

## 5.0 CORPORATE SERVICES CDIP PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 5.1 The first progress report on the delivery of the year 3 CDIP actions is included at Appendix 1 and provides the Committee with an update on the delivery of the CDIP improvement actions that are the responsibility of Finance & Corporate Governance and Organisational Development, Policy and Communications, as detailed in their respective CDIPs. The overall status at the beginning of January 2022 was:

Status	Blue (complete)	Green (on track)	Amber (slight slippage)	Red (significant slippage)
	4	9	1	-

Full detail of the progress that has been made is provided and the latest performance information for the CDIP key performance indicators (KPIs) is provided in in Appendix 1.

- 5.2 At its meeting on 14 September, the Policy and Resources approved the extension of the CDIP and Corporate Plan planning term to April 2023 to allow time for appropriate consultation to take place with all stakeholders on what the priorities for the area are.

## 6.0 UPDATE ON PROCESS/CYCLE OF SELF EVALUATION

- 6.1 The Council's rolling programme of self-evaluation continued throughout 2021 with Property and Legal Services both carrying out assessments in the latter half of the year, whilst a self-evaluation by the Regeneration Service will be complete by the end of January 2022. Due to Covid-19, the assessment process has moved from a facilitated workshop to an online survey which is completed by a team from across each area of the service. The purpose of the assessment is for the team to identify both service strengths and areas for improvement. Assessments will be carried out by Roads and Environmental Shared Services and Public Protection and Recovery in spring 2022, which will conclude the current 3 year cycle of self-evaluation.

## 7.0 AUTUMN 2021 CITIZENS PANEL

- 7.1 The Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey focussed on two topics: historic links to slavery in Inverclyde; and Inverclyde's libraries. The response rate to the Survey was approximately 59%.

A number of significant points emerged from the Autumn 2021 Survey, including:

- just over half (51%) of Panel members thought artistic interpretation (film, media, plays, poetry etc) was the best way to tell the history of the Inverclyde area and its relationship to the transatlantic slave trade;
- the library visited most often by respondents was Greenock Central (28%); and
- the most popular reasons for visiting Inverclyde libraries were to borrow books (60%), browse for books (38%) and collect books (27%).

Given that the topics covered in the Autumn 2021 Survey fall under the remit of the Culture, Communities and Educational Resources Service, the results from the questionnaire will be

reported in full to the meeting of the Education and Communities Committee on 25 January 2022, with the papers for the meeting available to view on the Council's website from 14 January 2022: [Education and Communities Committee](#).

## 8.0 RECRUITMENT OF SERVICE MANAGER CORPORATE POLICY PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

8.1 The Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships service within the Council is managed on an interim basis by an experienced service manager from Inverclyde HSCP working 80:20 split basis with this arrangement currently in place until April 2022. The Service Manager has intimated that they will revert to their substantive post within HSCP and this has been agreed to take effect from Monday 2 May 2022. The purpose and role of the team has been refreshed and members are asked to note that the permanent full time Service Manager position will be advertised with immediate effect.

## 9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial Implications

Cost Centre	Budget heading	Budget year	Proposed spend this report	Virement from	Other comments
	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/(Savings)

Cost centre	Budget heading	With effect from	Annual net impact	Virement from (if applicable)	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

9.2 Human Resources: There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

9.3 Legal: There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

X

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO

**10.0 CONSULTATION**

10.1 None.

**11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None.

### Corporate Improvement Actions 2021/22

These improvement actions have implications for the whole Council or more than one Directorate

Corporate Improvement Actions 2020/21					
	Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority
1.	<p><u>Budget 2022/23</u></p> <p>Council to approve a balanced 2022/23 Revenue Budget and a 2022/25 Capital Programme which is within funding parameters.</p>	<p>Revenue Budget developed by March 2022.</p> <p>Calculate funding gap by December 2021.</p> <p>Identify sustainable funding for the 2022/25 Capital Programme</p> <p>Regular meetings of the MBWG and Joint Budget Group</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Green - On Track</p>	<p>Savings issued to members for consideration.</p> <p>Over £5million of Reserves freed up to assist Revenue and Capital Budgets.</p> <p>MBWG meeting weekly in January/February.</p>	OP9
2.	<p><u>Information governance</u></p> <p>The Council's Freedom of Information Policy and associated guidance to officers is updated.</p>	<p>Freedom of Information Policy and procedures are updated to reflect current practice.</p> <p>Information Management System to manage FOI requests is implemented.</p> <p>A corporate training programme is established.</p> <p>December 2021</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Blue – complete</p>	<p>The actions within this workstream are now complete</p>	OP9

Corporate Improvement Actions 2020/21					
	Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority
3.	<p><u>Channel Shift</u></p> <p>Move customers away from traditional channels of communication to digital channels such as self-serve and online services.</p>	<p>Improve range of services and systems available online by increasing the number of channels and transactions dealt with via digital routes. Projects to be identified by services as part of the 22/23 budget.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Green - On Track</p>	<p>A continued increase in the number of contacts and payments being completed by eform is noted.</p> <p>The use of the online service for the majority of Garden Waste Permit payments indicates the ability of the majority of those customers for that service to use that system where there is limited alternatives. Customer Services will move back under the remit of Finance Services from April 2022 reporting to ICT Service Manager to enhance and develop digital and other channels of customer interaction.</p>	OP9
4.	<p><u>Measuring outcomes</u></p> <p>Inverclyde Alliance and Inverclyde Council are better able to demonstrate impact on outcomes, at various levels across services and programmes.</p> <p>Performance reporting is linked to measuring impact on outcomes at all levels.</p>	<p>Continue to work with experts and other performance management specialists, to identify processes to better measure impact on outcomes and learn from good practice elsewhere.</p> <p>Build on the existing performance reporting arrangements. Identify desired</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Green - On Track</p>	<p>This work continues to be ongoing. A new performance management system is being procured and will be used to strengthen the council performance management and reporting which in turn will provide quantitative data linked to measuring outcomes.</p> <p>A review of the LOIPs in other CPPs is underway.</p>	OP1-8

Corporate Improvement Actions 2020/21					
Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority	
<p>Enhanced performance management across the Council linked to the delivery of outcomes.</p> <p>The Council's SPPMF is streamlined and simplified and more outcome focused.</p>	<p>outcomes with key milestones / timescales for all strategic plans. Review concluded March 2022. Proposals agreed August 2022</p>				
<p>5. <u>Workforce Planning</u></p> <p>Continue to ensure workforce planning and development is integrated into CDIPs, risk registers and associated plans to address the key workforce challenges arising from Covid-19 recovery and into the longer term.</p> <p>Continue to ensure Service Workforce Plans are actioned and reviewed.</p> <p>Progress the implementation of the Workforce Refresh Scheme.</p>	<p>Analysis of workforce data and learning needs with a coordinated approach to WP and L&amp;D solutions.</p> <p>Assess future workforce requirements via service workforce plans. Progress will be monitored by the Workforce Planning &amp; Development Group.</p> <p>New job opportunities created for the local community.</p>	<p>Green - On Track</p> <p>●</p>	<p>Service Workforce plans continue to be monitored and reviewed via the Corporate Workforce Planning and Development Group. An update will be provided to the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2022 as part of the People and OD Strategy report.</p> <p>All releases under the Workforce Refresh Scheme have now been agreed and there will be no further trawls. Recruitment to vacancies will continue until March 2023 and an initial evaluation of scheme is scheduled for March 2022.</p>	<p>OP1 OP3 OP9 OP10</p>	
<p>6. <u>People and OD Strategy</u></p> <p>The People &amp; OD Strategy Action Plan should meet workforce needs in light of the Covid--19 pandemic and associated recovery plans with a focus on supporting employee mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>OD Team to review Action Plan and link with OD, Policy &amp; Communications representatives on Recovery Groups and with Workforce Development Group to determine any new or</p>	<p>Blue – complete</p> <p>●</p>	<p>An Employee Wellbeing Strategy and action plan was agreed as part of the Councils People and OD Strategy. Given the ongoing effects of the pandemic additional funding for occupational provision was also</p>	<p>OP9 OP10</p>	

Corporate Improvement Actions 2020/21					
Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority	
	amended key priorities in terms of the strategy and employee wellbeing. Dec 2021		secured at the Policy & Resources Committee in November 2021.		
7. <u>Fairer Scotland Duty</u> Ensure we are compliant with the Duty, by actively considering how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. Implementation of new guidance.	Utilise the support available from the Improvement Service to develop and share best practice to ensure that services are full able to embrace the Fairer Scotland Duty requirements  New guidance is expected September 2021. Training and awareness raising for EM and appropriate officers.	● Blue-complete	Equality Impact Assessments have been prepared for the savings proposals being considered as part of the budget setting process 2022. The documents include a section on the Fairer Scotland Duty which provides information on how the budget saving proposals would impact on reducing inequalities of outcome. The final Guidance on the Duty was published by the Scottish Government on 4 October 2021. There are no material differences between the interim and final versions of the Guidance. Arrangements will be made regarding awareness-raising sessions on the finalised Guidance, facilitated by the Improvement Service.	OP2 OP4 OP9	
8. <u>Corporate Equality Outcomes</u> Progress is made with the delivery of the Corporate Equality Outcomes Improvement Plan 2021/25	Devising of an Improvement Plan 2021/25 for submission to the Policy and Resources Committee on 16 November 2021	● Green - On Track	The Corporate Equality Outcomes Improvement Plan 2021/25 has been devised, together with an Equality Impact Assessment. The Plan 2021/25 includes details of improvement actions which will support delivery of the five Corporate Equality Outcomes during the four year period 2021/25.	OP2 OP5 OP9	

**Cross-Directorate Improvement Actions 2021/22**

These improvement actions are implemented by more than one Council Service

Cross-Directorate Improvement Actions 2021/22					
	Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority
1.	<p><u>Review of Long Term Empty Homes Levy</u></p> <p>A sustainable LTE Policy supported by Members and the public</p>	<p>Consultation –summer 2022, Review by Members September 22. Amended policy approved as part of the 2022/23 Budget</p>	<p>● On Track</p>	<p>The revised Policy will be considered by the P&amp;R Committee in February, 2022</p>	<p>OP7 OP9</p>



### Service Improvement Actions 2021/22

These improvement actions are implemented by individual Council Services

Corporate Services and Organisational Recovery					
	Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority
1.	<p><u>Non-domestic rates Policy- Unoccupied Premises</u></p> <p>Policy set by the Council and communicated to Rate Payers</p>	<p>Policy Approved by March, 2022</p> <p>Letters issued April, 2022</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Amber - Slippage</p>	<p>The Scottish Government guidance has been delayed due to Covid-19. Policy will be delayed until officers have time to analyse this once received.</p>	<p>OP9</p> <p>OP10</p>
2.	<p><u>Cloud Migration Strategy</u></p> <p>Office 365 implemented including roll out of MS Teams and implementation of new telephony approach.</p>	<p>Procure Office365 licences and roll out throughout 2021 &amp; 2022.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Green – on track</p>	<p>Procurement through the Scottish Government Framework Agreement has been completed. Initial “onboarding” to the Microsoft Cloud Platform has begun. A pilot programme is proceeding within ICT Services before being rolled out to the wider estate. A project timeline and roll-out programme has been developed and is in the process of agreement. A number of project sub-groups are being established to work with Services to communicate progress.</p>	<p>OP9</p>
3.	<p><u>Elections</u></p> <p>An Election Team is identified with responsibility for planning / arrangements to deliver the local government election in 2022.</p>	<p>Develop succession planning to ensure that an Election Team is in place to deliver the required actions and to support the new Returning Officer</p>	<p>●</p> <p>Green – on track</p>	<p>Identification of Election Team completed.</p> <p>The development of succession planning is ongoing. Completion by 31 January 2022 at the latest.</p>	<p>OP10</p>

Organisational Development, Policy and Communications					
	Where do we want to be?	How will we get there?	Status January 2022	Commentary January 2022	Corporate Plan priority
1.	<p><u>Health and Safety Monitoring System</u></p> <p>To record and monitor key action points and control measures which require to be implemented at Service level and that implementation has taken place.</p>	<p>Develop and test the relevant modules in the Figtree system.</p> <p>Bring online the audit and assessment modules and pilot them in selected areas (Fire Risk Assessment, Education and Environmental and Commercial Services.</p> <p>Develop the reporting function to bring additional statistical information to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee as required.</p> <p>March 2022</p>	<p>Blue-complete</p> <p>●</p>	<p>All modules have been tested.</p> <p>Initial work on piloting the modules for recording SFR audit reports was carried out. The system can be utilised for monitoring high priority actions, however it is less suitable for low priority items.</p> <p>Statistical data can be drawn for all main areas and further reporting can be developed as required.</p>	<p>OP9 OP10</p>
2.	<p><u>Population and tourism 'place' marketing</u></p> <p>There is a coordinated place marketing campaign, involving a range of partners, linked to the work of Tourism Inverclyde and the 'discover Inverclyde' brand to promote Inverclyde as a place to encourage more visitors, more businesses and more new residents</p>	<p>Launch of the new web resource 'discover Inverclyde' website, supported by a place marketing campaign throughout 2021/22 focused on promoting Inverclyde as a place to visit, live and work.</p>	<p>Green – on track</p> <p>●</p>	<p>Recruitment to new temporary two year tourism post is complete (November 2021) and recovery funding will spent in the next two financial years to support place marketing and further development of the 'discover Inverclyde' call to action and branding against tourism Inverclyde priorities (food and drink; film and TV; outdoor activities and sports cruise ships; heritage and walking).</p>	<p>OP1 OP10</p>

## Corporate Services Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators help demonstrate performance against strategic objectives. Full year performance figures for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 are shown below, along with the most recent data.

Key Performance Indicators						
Key performance measure	Performance 2018/19	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21	2021/22 FQ1	2021/22 FQ2	Target 2021/22
Council tax in year collection levels	95.7%	95.4%	94.4%	28.3%	54.8%	90.5%
Speed of processing changes in circumstances to Housing Benefit	4 days	2.55 days	1.95 days	2.27 days	2.79 days	4 days
Speed of Processing new claims for Council Tax Reduction (From November 2016)	33 days	31 days	20 days	18.9 days	22.7 days	34 days
Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	95.86%	96.2%	96.84%	95.7%	94.65%	95%

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resource Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/03/22/AH</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Andrina Hunter Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>2042/ 2146</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Draft Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This purpose of this report is to present Policy and Resources Committee with the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 and to seek approval to submit to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for its approval.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan 2017/22 is approaching the end of its term and in accordance with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 a new Plan for the period 2022/27 must be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig by 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 for its approval.

2.2 A Gaelic Language Plan Development Group has led the production of the new plan. The group comprises of representatives from across a number of Council services, with some parent and community involvement.

2.3 The 2022-27 Plan incorporates a number of High Level and Corporate Services Aims as set by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to meet the three strategic aims of: Increasing the use of Gaelic; Increasing the learning of Gaelic; and Promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

2.4 An internal capacity audit of Inverclyde Council's employees has been undertaken as part of the development of the plan, and in addition, a wider public consultation on the draft plan took place over the period 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Many of the responses received from the public consultation were focussed around the area of secondary education provision.

2.5 Inverclyde Council cannot implement the plan until it has been assessed and approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Once approved, it will become final and will be translated into Gaelic and redesigned in the Council's corporate style. Both Gaelic and English versions will be published on the Council's website.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- Note the proposed actions and timescales within the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 relating to the delivery of the High Level and Corporate Services Aims
- Approve the draft Plan and agree submission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for its approval
- Agree the annual Gaelic Language Plan monitoring report is submitted to Committee

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 seeks to secure the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to the English language.
- 4.2 The Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig as an executive non-departmental public body with responsibility for promoting Gaelic development and providing advice to the Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues. The Act also requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a National Gaelic Language Plan and gives it the power to request that public authorities, including local authorities, prepare and publish their own Gaelic Language Plan. This was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising its status and profile and creating practical opportunities for its use.

## 5.0 INVERCLYDE COUNCIL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

- 5.1 The [Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan 2017/22](#) ends in March 2022 and Bòrd na Gàidhlig have been in dialogue with the Council regarding preparations for the next edition. As part of this process, the Bòrd works with Councils to co-produce a small number of high level, strategic aims for inclusion in the Gaelic Language Plan. In addition the Bòrd na Gàidhlig sets out the template for the plan and also a number of Corporate Aims to be included.
- 5.2 To help develop the new five year plan (2022-27), a cross-Council Gaelic Language Plan Development Group was established. The group comprises of representatives from OD, Policy and Communications, Education Services (including Whinhill Primary School), Community Learning and Development, Customer Services and Registration, Libraries, Educational Development and the Arts and Transportation and Roads. In addition, a small number of parents whose children receive Gaelic Medium Education in Inverclyde and representatives from Gaelic Community Groups also attended an early meeting of the group.
- 5.3 Bòrd na Gàidhlig has set out High Level Aims for Inverclyde Council, which closely link to the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23. As such, they are framed around the three National Gaelic Language Plan headings of Increasing the use of Gaelic; Increasing the learning of Gaelic; and Promoting a positive image of Gaelic. The High Level Aims are:
- Support existing and new Gaelic language and culture groups in the Inverclyde area to help grow the use of Gaelic in the community.
  - Establish Gaelic learning and usage opportunities for Council staff, utilising existing staff skills and resources, with the aim of increasing the use of Gaelic internally
  - Increase the numbers of children entering Gaelic Medium Education at primary 1 level by at least 15% each year.
  - Explore opportunities, in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and with neighbouring authorities, within the first 18 months of the plan and make appropriate recommendations and if necessary take applicable steps to develop Gaelic Medium Education provision at secondary level within the Inverclyde Council area.
  - Increase the provision of Gaelic Learners Education (GLE) at primary and secondary level.
  - Increase the number of adults learning Gaelic in Inverclyde
  - Establish the Gaelic language plan implementation as a function of the Corporate Equalities Group.
- 5.4 In addition to actions to support these high level aims, the Bòrd na Gàidhlig has set a number of standardised Corporate Aims that all local authorities must include in their Gaelic Language Plan.
- 5.5 Also as part of the plan's development, an Internal Capacity Audit in the form of an employee survey has been carried out to help establish the current levels of Gaelic skills across the organisation. In total, 120 responses were received and a summary of the results is provided below:

- Almost 17% of respondents have some or limited ability of the Gaelic Language;
- More than three quarters of respondents reported that they have no ability at all in relation to the Gaelic language;
- Just over 3% of respondents are undertaking Gaelic language training. All those undertaking this training arranged it themselves.
- Of those respondents not presently undertaking Gaelic language training, 37% are interested in doing so.

5.6 Inverclyde Council's draft plan was subject to a 6 week public consultation period which ran from the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 using Smart Survey. It was promoted through social media including Inverclyde Council's Facebook and Twitter pages and also through the consultation webpage.

A number of comments were received and these can be viewed within the consultation report section of the plan (Appendix 2). Of note is the number of responses specifically relating to secondary education provision rather than on the whole plan.

The key findings include:

- 33 people responded to the survey
- 58% strongly agreed or agreed that the draft Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 will help to support and improve Gaelic language provision locally
- 68% found the plan to be clear in setting out its actions
- 58% agreed that the actions and timescales proposed to deliver the High Level Aims were relevant and appropriate
- 56% agree that the actions and timescales proposed to deliver the Corporate Services Aims were relevant and appropriate
- Almost a third of respondents noted that they know a few words of Gaelic
- 25% respondents reported that they have no ability at all in relation to the Gaelic language
- Nine respondents said they would be interested in finding out more about Gaelic

A number of additional comments were received however have not been included in the plan as the analysis of the feedback received has been carried out in accordance with the guidance provided by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This guidance is that the public consultation report should only focus on comments received in relation to the draft Plan and not include wider comments in relation to Gaelic itself.

5.7 Inverclyde Council cannot implement the plan until it has been assessed and approved by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Once approved, it will become final and will be translated into Gaelic and redesigned in the Council's corporate style. Both Gaelic and English versions will be published on the Council's website.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Financial Implications - One off Costs

There is no additional financial contribution to deliver this plan and all actions require to be contained within service budgets.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a					

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

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if applicable)	Other Comments
n/a					

6.2 Human Resources: none at present

6.3 Legal: Inverclyde Council has a statutory responsibility to submit its Gaelic Language Plan to Bòrd na Gàidhlig by 8 March 2022. The draft Plan must also be subject to a minimum 6 week public consultation period.

#### 6.4 Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

The Equalities Impact Assessment will be finalised following the public consultation

X	YES
---	-----

	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required
--	--

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

x	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed. Included with the EIA
---	--

	NO
--	----

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. As part of the consultation.
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x	NO
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#### 6.5 Repopulation

None at present.

### 7.0 **CONSULTATION**

7.1 None

### 8.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments>



## Comhairle Inbhir Chluaidh

Plana na Gàidhlig

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

**2022-2027**

This plan has been prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on [approval date]

The Bòrd na Gàidhlig logo should be added to the front cover of the approved plan only and not to any drafts.



## Foreword

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Inverclyde Council recognises the importance of Gaelic to our national culture and heritage and as such, is delighted to present our second Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27. As a Council, we are committed to supporting Gaelic and will seek to further and promote its development within Inverclyde over the life of this plan.

This Plan builds on our first Gaelic Language Plan 2017/22, detailing the additional actions the Council will take to promote and support the acquisition and usage of the Gaelic language, as well as developing the status of the language, recognising it as an official language of Scotland, according it the same respect as English.

Through the implementation of this Plan, we aim to support the delivery of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 and meet our responsibilities under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

During the lifetime of this Plan we will continue to build our 'active offer' in a proportionate way through the provision of Gaelic medium education, identifying a range of opportunities for our communities and workforce, working with Gaelic community organisations locally and learning from good practice elsewhere.

Our long term vision is to nurture Gaelic within Inverclyde to ensure a supportive environment, recognising the importance and value of the language. Governance of the Plan will therefore be provided by the Corporate Equalities Group which will help to ensure that this work is mainstreamed within all services and promote Council- wide ownership of its delivery.

**Louise Long**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Inverclyde Council**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Description of Inverclyde Council

Inverclyde is located in West Central Scotland with an estimated population of 77,060 people, covering an area of 61 square miles stretching along the south bank of the River Clyde. The main towns of Greenock, Port Glasgow and Gourock sit on the Firth of the Clyde alongside the coastal settlements of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay which lie to the South West of the area and the villages of Kilmacolm and Quarriers Village which are located further inland, and offer a further dimension to the area's diversity, particularly in social, economic and physical terms.

Inverclyde Council is the local unitary authority which is responsible for a range of functions, including education, cultural services, community learning and development, regeneration, environmental health, a range of social work services, strategic housing, planning and building control, waste management, maintenance of public roads (excluding trunk roads), economic development and a range of corporate support services.

The Council's [Corporate Plan 2018/22](#) sets out the Council's organisational priorities that reflect the key issues to emerge from a socio-economic profile of the area and those issues identified by our communities as a priority. The organisational priorities also support the delivery of the Community Planning Partnership, the Inverclyde Alliance's strategic priorities for the area.

In 2021/22 the Council had an overall budget of £203 million, this includes a new £4m Covid-19 recovery fund to support the community and services recover from the effects of the pandemic.

As at the end of July 2021, the Council had approximately 4,380 employees, with service delivery structured under three Directorates: Education, Communities and Organisational Development; Environment, Regeneration and Resources and the Health and Social Care Partnership. A re-structure of the Environment, Regeneration and Resources Directorate was carried out in April 2021 to ensure that, as the Covid-19 pandemic moved towards the recovery phase, the Council was targeting its resources in the most efficient and effective way possible to support organisational, environmental and economic recovery.

The Council has rationalised its property portfolio in recent years but retains in excess of 100 operational buildings across the authority, including office accommodation, libraries, community halls and centres and the renowned Watt Institution. Inverclyde Council headquarters is located in the Municipal Buildings, Greenock.

Inverclyde comprises of 7 multi member wards with 22 councillors, the political composition of the Council is Scottish Labour Party (8), Scottish National Party (5), Independent (4), Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2), Alba Party (2) and Scottish Liberal Democrats (1).

## Gaelic within Inverclyde

The Census 2011 remains the most comprehensive source of data on the numbers of people in Inverclyde that can understand, speak, read and write Gaelic. As at the time of the 2011 Census, 667 people in Inverclyde were identified as having some knowledge of Gaelic. This is broken down for the population aged three and over, as follows:

- 174 people understand but do not speak, read or write Gaelic (0.2% of the population)
- 212 people speak, read and write Gaelic (0.3% of the population)
- 176 people speak but do not read or write Gaelic (0.2% of the population)
- 36 people speak and read but do not write Gaelic (0.04% of the population)
- 49 people read but do not speak or write Gaelic (0.06% of the population)
- 20 people have other combinations of skills in Gaelic (0.02% of the population)

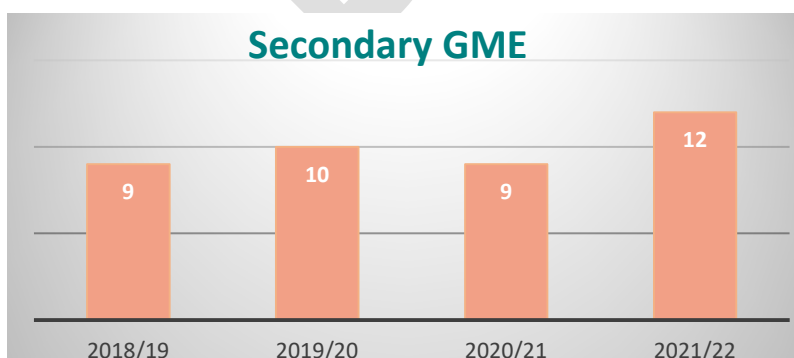
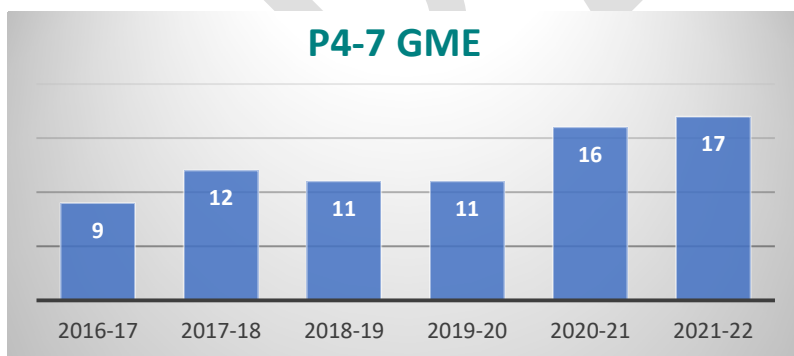
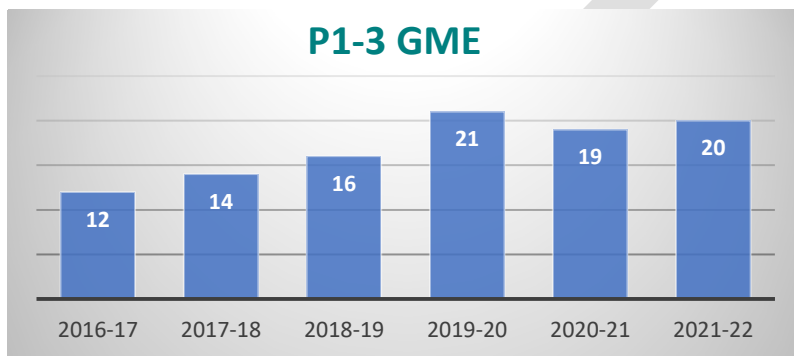
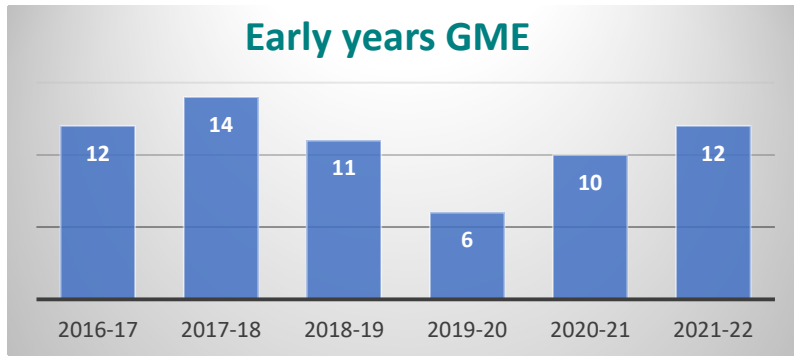
New data will be available following the next Scotland's Census which will take place on 20 March 2022.

As an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life, Inverclyde Council seeks to nurture, promote and raise the awareness and status of the Gaelic language and culture across Inverclyde. Some examples of this include:

- As part of the Council's participatory budgeting, £25,000 was awarded to Inverclyde Gaelic Learners Group to allow the group to research the history of Gaels who came to Greenock or who had emigrated, with interest in the impact this had on the area and how the Gaelic community survived and integrated.
- An Inverclyde Gaelic Group has been established which aims to improve communication and sharing of information across all groups involved in Gaelic. The group is supported by the CLD service and includes membership from CLD, Whinhill Primary School, Education Services, Inverclyde Gaelic Learners Group and many others.
- The Council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) Service widely promotes classes on Gaelic and Scottish History and the sharing of good news stories from the local Gaelic community.
- Gaelic taster sessions have been carried out at regular Bookbug sessions and teachers at Whinhill have been trained to use Gaelic Bookbug, which they use to facilitate nursery transitions.
- During 2019-20, CLD held three public events in a local Arts Centre with guest speakers on a range of topics from 'The Highland Clearances' to 'Gaelic Place Names'. 54 people attended these events.

## Gaelic Medium Education in Inverclyde

Inverclyde introduced Gaelic Medium Education in 1999. Whilst the Council does not provide Gaelic Medium secondary education, it does provide transport for the pupils to travel from the Inverclyde area to the Gaelic Secondary School in Glasgow. The graphs below show the number of children attending in recent years.



Gaelic is considered to be the founding language of Scotland and is thought to have its origins in Ireland. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the language was heavily suppressed during the Highland Clearances and although speakers of the language were persecuted over centuries, Gaelic is still spoken today by around 60,000 Scots, however there are concerns over the fragility of the language.

At a national level, the 2011 Census showed that the decline in the number of Gaelic speakers since 2001 had slowed. The total number of people recorded as being able to speak and/or read and/or understand Gaelic was 87,056.

- Of these 87,000 people (1.1% of the population) aged three and over in Scotland were able to speak Gaelic.
- In 2011, the proportion of the population aged three and over in Scotland who could speak, read, write or understand Gaelic was 1.7% (87,056), compared with 1.9% (92,000) in 2001.
- Within this group, the number of people who could speak, read, understand and write Gaelic in 2011 was 32,000, 0.6% of the population aged three and over; this was the same proportion as in 2001.

Gaelic speakers are spread throughout Scotland. Of those who identified themselves as Gaelic speakers in the 2011 Census the Council areas with the highest proportions able to speak Gaelic were found to be in Na h-Eileanan Siar (52%), Highland (5%) and Argyll & Bute (4%). There is also a high degree of urbanisation within the Gaelic speaking community with large numbers of Gaelic speakers living in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Greater Glasgow and Inverness.

The map on the following page shows the influence of the Gaelic language on place names in Scotland.

# Alba

Taghadh de dh'ainmean-àite bhon Ghàidhlig

Airson tuilleadh air na h-ainmean seo, feuch an stòr-dàta air [www.ainmean-aite.scot](http://www.ainmean-aite.scot).

# Scotland

A selection of Gaelic-derived place-names

For more on these names, consult the database on [www.ainmean-aite.scot](http://www.ainmean-aite.scot).



Le dàta bho NRS © Còir copaidh is stòr-dàta a' Chrùin 2020.  
Le dàta bhon t-Suirbhidh Òrdnais © Còir copaidh is stòr-dàta a' Chrùin 2020.  
Contains NRS data © Crown copyright and database right 2020.  
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020.

Rannsachadh le Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba & Bòrd na Gàidhlig.  
Mapa le Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2020 a' cleachdadh QGIS 3.  
Research by Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba & Bòrd na Gàidhlig.  
Map by Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2020 using QGIS 3.

## The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

One of the key features of the 2005 Act is the provision enabling Bòrd na Gàidhlig to require a public authority to prepare a Gaelic language plan. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising the status and profile of the language and creating practical opportunities for its use.

This document is Inverclyde Council's Gaelic Language Plan prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic.

Inverclyde Council's Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act and having regard to the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans.

## The National Gaelic Language Plan

Inverclyde Council supports the aim of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 that "Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations".

We are committed to the achieving this aim by focussing our work, on these three headings:-

- Increasing the use of Gaelic within our organisation and encouraging more people to use Gaelic, more often when they interact with us
- Increasing the opportunity for people to learn Gaelic as part of our day-to-day operations
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic whenever we can as part of our day-to-day operations as an organisation

## Internal Gaelic Capacity Audit

In order to obtain a better understanding of the Gaelic skills that exist within the Council, Inverclyde Council conducted an internal Gaelic capacity audit of its employees. The audit was conducted via an online survey with a hard copy of the survey also made available to employees without access to a PC.

In total, 120 responses were received and a summary of the results is provided below:



- Almost 17% (20) of respondents have some or limited ability of the Gaelic Language
- More than three quarters (93) of respondents reported that they have no ability at all in relation to the Gaelic language
- Just over 3% (4) of respondents are undertaking Gaelic language training. All respondents undertaking this training arranged it themselves.
- Of those respondents not undertaking Gaelic language training at present, 37% (43) are interested in doing so.
- Currently, Inverclyde Council has 4 posts within Gaelic Medium Education and 2 early years' posts where Gaelic is designated as an essential / desirable job skill.
- Gaelic Medium Education is the only service provided by the Council delivered entirely via the medium of Gaelic.

Full details of the audit are provided in Appendix 1. To ensure that the Council continues to hold viable data on Gaelic in the workforce, the survey will be carried out every three years.

### Consultation on the draft Gaelic Language Plan

The 2005 Act requires that public authorities consult on their draft Gaelic language plan before submitting it to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Inverclyde Council consulted on the draft Plan for a period of 6 weeks from 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 using Smart Survey. It was promoted through social media including Inverclyde Council Facebook and Twitter pages and also through the council's consultation webpage. Full details of the consultation and results can be found in Appendix 2.

The key findings:

- 33 people responded to the survey
- 58% strongly agreed or agreed that the draft Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 will help to support and improve Gaelic language provision locally
- 68% found the plan to be clear in setting out its actions
- 58% agreed that the actions and timescales proposed to deliver the High Level Aims were relevant and appropriate
- 56% agree that the actions and timescales proposed to deliver the Corporate Services Aims were relevant and appropriate
- Almost a third of respondents noted that they know a few words of Gaelic
- 25% respondents reported that they have no ability at all in relation to the Gaelic language
- Nine respondents said they would be interested in finding out more about Gaelic

## 2. KEY PRINCIPLES

### Equal Respect

Under the terms of the 2005 Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig works with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language and the Bòrd in turn expects that public authorities will demonstrate in their plans how the principle will be achieved and maintained in practice.

Inverclyde Council will ensure that where Gaelic is included as part of our operations and services, we will ensure they are of an equal standard and quality as those that we provide in English.

### Active Offer

Inverclyde Council will make an active offer of our Gaelic services to our employees and the public. This will ensure that where Gaelic services are made available by us, Gaelic users are made aware of their existence, and are actively encouraged to use them.

This will take the responsibility away from the individual to ask for the service and will give Gaelic users the confidence to know that their needs will be met if that is their choice.

We will ensure that our Gaelic language services are as accessible as our English language services.

### Third Parties

Inverclyde Council will ensure that where appropriate, Arm's Length Executive Organisations and other contractors help with the delivery of the public authority Gaelic language plan.

### Mainstreaming

Inverclyde Council will ensure that opportunities for the public and our staff to use Gaelic are normalised, in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 aim that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations.

### Corporate Parenting

Inverclyde Council is aware of the duties of a Corporate Parent and will work together to ensure that looked after children and young people and care leavers with Gaelic receive the same opportunities as those with other languages.

### 3. PLAN COMMITMENTS

#### High Level Aims

To assist public authorities with the development of their Gaelic language plan, the Bòrd has worked with Inverclyde Council to co-produce a set of High-Level Aims.

The High-Level aims are a small number of strategic level actions, closely linked to the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23. As such, they will be framed around the three National Gaelic Language Plan headings of:-

- Increasing the use of Gaelic
- Increasing the learning of Gaelic
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic

#### INCREASING THE USE OF GAELIC

High-level Aim	Support existing and new Gaelic language and culture groups in the Inverclyde area to help grow the use of Gaelic in the community.
Desired Outcome	Increased knowledge, skills and confidence in the use of Gaelic across Inverclyde's communities.
Current Practice	The Community Learning and Development Service provides support to a small number of Gaelic Groups in Inverclyde
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer free online space, training and support for local Gaelic groups to use the CLD Inverclyde learning platform (Moodle)</li> <li>• Hold 2 cultural celebration evenings per year</li> <li>• Hold 2 Inverclyde Gaelic meetings per year to make links across Gaelic language, culture and social activities</li> </ul>
Target Date	Ongoing yearly activity over the lifetime of the plan
Responsibility	Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources

High-level Aim	Establish Gaelic learning and usage opportunities for Council staff, utilising existing staff skills and resources, with the aim of increasing the use of Gaelic internally.
Desired Outcome	Increased knowledge, skills and confidence in the use of Gaelic across Inverclyde Council's workforce.
Current Practice	The availability of national Gaelic training courses is advertised via the Council's intranet

Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the availability of national Gaelic courses to all employees and encourage uptake</li> <li>• Development of a Gaelic awareness resource for front line employees</li> <li>• Conduct an internal audit capacity at least once during the lifetime of the plan to establish the level of skills that exist across the authority</li> <li>• Develop the Council's intranet page promoting Gaelic</li> </ul>
Target Date	Ongoing over the lifetime of the Plan
Responsibility	Head of OD&HR, Policy and Communications

### INCREASING THE LEARNING OF GAELIC

High-level Aim	Increase the numbers of children entering Gaelic Medium Education at primary 1 level by at least 15% each year.
Proposed Outcome	Increased numbers of children accessing Gaelic Medium Early Years Education and P1 Education
Current Practice	21/22- 12 children in Early Years Education 21/22- 6 children in P1
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish catchment area for GME provision</li> <li>• Update information on Council website.</li> <li>• Promote offer at enrolment- seek to review communication strategy around admissions with regards GME</li> </ul>
Target Date	June 2022 then annually
Responsibility	Head of Education Services

High-level Aim	Explore opportunities, in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and with neighbouring authorities, within the first 18 months of the plan and make appropriate recommendations and if necessary take applicable steps to develop Gaelic Medium Education provision at secondary level within the Inverclyde Council area.
Proposed Outcome	Appropriate provision for secondary school pupils
Current Practice	Pupils put forward a placing request to attend Glasgow Gaelic School. There is no provision presently in Inverclyde for Secondary GME

Actions Required	Parent Consultation Discussions with Education Scotland and Bòrd Discussions with neighbouring authorities Implementation of agreed actions
Target Date	June 2022
Responsibility	Head of Education

High-level Aim	Increase the provision of Gaelic Learners Education (GLE) at primary and secondary level.
Proposed Outcome	Increased numbers of children at both primary and secondary level
Current Practice	GLE in P4-P7 Whinhill Primary as part of 1+2 (2). GLPS training offered across the authority annually.
Actions Required	Continue to promote to all schools and offer training when available, supported by new 1+2 development officer
Target Date	June 2025
Responsibility	Head of Education

High-level Aim	Increase the number of adults learning Gaelic in Inverclyde
Proposed Outcome	Using the new Speak Gaelic language framework we will deliver A1 and A2 learning provision to 30 learners per year
Current Practice	Delivery of beginners Gaelic provision and Intermediate Provision – limited service due to Covid-19 restrictions, classes operating online which has affected attendance of current learners.
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train staff in Speak Gaelic language framework</li> <li>• Deliver 1 x A1 Speak Gaelic course per year</li> <li>• Deliver 1 x A2 Speak Gaelic course per year</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate provision</li> <li>• Support progression to B1 level for learners achieving level A2</li> </ul>
Target Date	Ongoing yearly activity over the lifetime of the plan
Responsibility	Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources

## PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF GAELIC

High-level Aim	Establish the Gaelic language plan implementation as a function of the Corporate Equalities Group.
Proposed Outcome	Gaelic becomes embedded into the corporate business of the council
Current Practice	The Gaelic Language Plan discussed as a standing agenda item at each Corporate Equalities meeting.
Actions Required	Continue to ensure the GLP is a standing agenda item Convene the Gaelic Language Plan sub group to oversee development of the plan and relevant monitoring.
Target Date	Ongoing through the life of the plan
Responsibility	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development

### Corporate Services Aims

As well as the High-level Aims, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has developed a set of standardised Corporate Service Aims. The Corporate Service Aims are based on Bòrd na Gàidhlig experience of approved Gaelic language plans to date, with the aim of standardising key Gaelic services over time across the public sector. All public authorities will be expected to address all of these Corporate Service Aims in their plan, describing current practice, actions needed to achieve the aim, timescales and which team will have responsibility for progressing the actions

### STATUS

Desired Outcome	<b>Logo and brand</b> Render the corporate logo and branding in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity and as part of any renewal process. The logo should demonstrate equal prominence for both languages.
Current Practice	Currently, the Inverclyde Council logo is not published in Gaelic
Actions Required	Design the Inverclyde Council logo in Gaelic and incorporate within all corporate documentation, published documents and the Council website
Target Date	April 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Signage</b> Prominent signage will include Gaelic and English as part of any renewal process.
Current Practice	The signage to Inverclyde's largest towns is bilingual, however very little bilingual signage exists elsewhere across Inverclyde
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an audit of existing signage</li> <li>• Any new/existing road signs to be reviewed and will be considered for bilingual signage</li> <li>• Other appropriate corporate signage will be considered for bilingual signage when due for refresh</li> <li>• The new Inverclyde Cruise Centre will have signage in Gaelic</li> </ul>
Target Date	By 2025
Responsibility	Head of Roads Head of Property Services

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

Desired Outcome	<b>Promotion</b> Positive message that communication from the public in Gaelic is always welcome.
Current Practice	No consistent approach to promotion of Gaelic across the council is currently in place Further development is required to ensure a corporate, co-ordinated approach to the promotion of Gaelic
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate text to be added to Council's promotional / information literature and leaflets.</li> <li>• Develop the Council's website pages in relation to Gaelic to indicate that communication from the public in Gaelic is welcome.</li> <li>• Further develop a page on the Council's intranet with the aim of promoting Gaelic to employees</li> </ul>
Target Date	March 2023
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Written Communication</b> Written communication in Gaelic is always accepted (post, email and social media) and replies will be provided in Gaelic in accordance with the general policy.
Current Practice	The Council endeavours to meet all requests for replies in a language other than English, however there is no

	formal policy in place regarding the publication of printed material in Gaelic
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council will procure access to a Gaelic translation service and identify relevant written document which should be produced in Gaelic</li> <li>• Encourage staff to use a bilingual email signature</li> </ul>
Target Date	April 2023
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Reception and phone</b> Where Gaelic speaking staff can provide this service, they are supported to do so, and the service is promoted to the public.
Current Practice	No current Gaelic provision at IC main reception or within the Customer Service Centre Currently, the Council does not have a policy on the use of Gaelic in the main reception areas
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a review of the Council's Translation Services</li> <li>• Carry out a review of the Council's Interpretation Services</li> <li>• Development of a Gaelic awareness resource for front line employees</li> <li>• Customers who speak Gaelic will be able to request translation in the language</li> </ul>
Target Date	December 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Public meetings</b> Opportunities to hold public meetings bilingually or in Gaelic are regularly explored and promoted.
Current Practice	Due to no demand being made for this service to date, no public meetings have taken place in Gaelic or held bilingually.
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where requested and relevant the Council will ensure that all public meetings are offered in a range of languages, and with 3 weeks' notice source access to an interpreter(s) to support this.</li> <li>• Where meetings are on Gaelic issues they will be promoted bilingually</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaelic events will be notified to Gaelic community groups</li> </ul>
Target Date	April 2023
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources

## INFORMATION

Desired Outcome	<b>News releases</b> High profile news releases and all news releases related to Gaelic are circulated in both Gaelic and English.
Current Practice	The vast majority of information published in Gaelic is related to Gaelic medium education. Inverclyde Council does not have written guidance on the use of Gaelic in press releases.
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Communications will engage with Gaelic medium publications / BBC Alba to view preferred receipt of press releases</li> <li>• Increase joint working across Council services to promote news releases related to Gaelic, helping to ensure a wider reach</li> <li>• Where a media release is required for a Gaelic event, this will be provided in both languages, subject to a translation service being available within the required timescale</li> </ul>
Target Date	December 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Social Media</b> Gaelic content distributed regularly through social media, guided by the level of actual and potential users
Current Practice	Usage of social media to distribute Gaelic content primarily relates to Gaelic Medium Education and is distributed by the Whinhill PS. Inverclyde Council does not have written guidance on the use of Gaelic in social media.
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the use of languages other than English issued by the Council on social media</li> <li>• Increase joint working across Council services to promote Gaelic content via social media, helping to ensure a wider reach</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events in Gaelic will be shared on social media in both languages, subject to a translation service being available in the required timescale</li> </ul>
Target Date	December 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Website</b> Gaelic content should be available on the public authority's website, with emphasis given to the pages with the highest potential reach.
Current Practice	<u>Gaelic Medium Education webpage</u> Features of GME outlined and link to placing request form The Council has a dedicated Gaelic webpage with links to other Gaelic resources <u>Inverclyde's Gaelic Language Plan - Inverclyde Council</u>
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update GME webpage to ensure that information on Gaelic education is easily accessible and up to date.</li> </ul>
Target Date	June 2022
Responsibility	Head of Education

Desired Outcome	<b>Website</b> Gaelic content should be available on the public authority's website, with emphasis given to the pages with the highest potential reach.
Current Practice	The Council's website has a dedicated page for the Gaelic Language Plan. The web page includes a range of web links related to Gaelic organisations and further information on Gaelic.
Actions Required	Review the Gaelic web page to identify how it could be developed to encompass a wider range of information, with a view to providing a higher profile of Gaelic in Inverclyde
Target Date	June 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Corporate Publications</b> Produced in Gaelic and English, with priority given to those with the highest potential reach.
Current Practice	Council publications are produced in English and are available in other languages on request
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a review of the Council's Translation Service</li> <li>• Carry out a review of the Council's Interpretation Service</li> <li>• Ensure that all Corporate publications offer a translation service to the public, including the option of Gaelic</li> <li>• Develop guidelines for staff regarding the availability of translation services</li> <li>• Information regarding Gaelic Education and Gaelic school activities will be promoted bilingually</li> </ul>
Target Date	December 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Language utility</b> A process is in place to ensure that the quality and accessibility of Gaelic language in all corporate information is high.
Current Practice	Inverclyde Council currently using translation services for any publications required in Gaelic
Actions Required	High level of translation services requires to be continued
Target Date	Throughout the life of the plan
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Exhibitions</b> Opportunities to deliver public exhibitions bilingually or in Gaelic should be explored on a regular basis, with priority given to those with the highest potential impact.
Current Practice	There are no Gaelic labels, signs, panels or exhibitions in the Watt Institution.
Actions Required	The service will include bilingual text for labels and signs as they are replaced and will incorporate bilingual text into panels and exhibitions planned for 2022 onwards.
Target Date	December 2023

Responsibility	Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources
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## STAFF

Desired Outcome	<b>Internal audit</b> Conduct an internal audit of Gaelic skills and training needs through the life of each plan.
Current Practice	An internal capacity audit of employees was carried out in August 2021. This helped to establish a baseline of the Gaelic skills across the authority.
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a survey of employees to ascertain the number of employees that have knowledge and understanding of Gaelic language every 3 years.</li> <li>• Review results and identification of potential areas for development</li> </ul>
Target Date	Next audit due August 2024
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Induction</b> Knowledge of the public authority's Gaelic language plan included in new staff inductions
Current Practice	Inverclyde Council's employee induction does not include the Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan.
Actions Required	The Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan to be included within the Council's induction process.
Target Date	March 2022
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Language training</b> Gaelic language skills training and development offered to staff, particularly in relation to implementing the public authority's Gaelic language plan.
Current Practice	<p>The Gaelic courses for local authorities, delivered by the University of Aberdeen are promoted to all employees.</p> <p>EO attends GLAN and GLPS network. Training offered to support GME and GLE.</p>

Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with partners and other authorities to continue to offer training to GME Early Years and Primary Staff and offer GLE support to all Primary staff.</li> <li>• Look to extend GLE offer of training to Secondary modern languages practitioners.</li> <li>• Continue to promote the availability of national courses and encourage employee uptake</li> </ul>
Target Date	June 2025
Responsibility	Head of Education

Desired Outcome	<b>Awareness training</b> Gaelic awareness training offered to staff, with priority given to directors, board members, councillors and staff dealing directly with the public.
Current Practice	Inverclyde Council does not have access to a dedicated local resource or trainer that could be utilised to offer Gaelic awareness training
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the feedback from the Internal Capacity Audit to inform appropriate actions to develop in this area.</li> <li>• Investigate whether an appropriate national resource is available (subject to cost)</li> <li>• Review whether Elected Members' personal development training programme could incorporate Gaelic awareness training</li> <li>• Further development of Gaelic information on the Council's intranet and or internet to assist in raising awareness of Gaelic to employees</li> <li>• Promotion of national Gaelic events to employees</li> </ul>
Target Date	July 2022
Responsibility	Cross-Directorate

Desired Outcome	<b>Recruitment</b> Recognising and respecting Gaelic skills within the recruitment process throughout the public authority
Current Practice	All available posts are advertised via myjobsscotland
Actions Required	Post adverts that include Gaelic as a requirement will be advertised in both Gaelic and English
Target Date	Lifetime of the Plan

Responsibility	Head OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Recruitment</b> Gaelic named as an essential and / or desirable skill in job descriptions in order to deliver the Gaelic language plan and in accordance with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig recruitment advice.
Current Practice	Only posts directly associated with the delivery of Gaelic include reference to Gaelic as an essential or desirable skill within the job description.
Actions Required	Review job profiles to ascertain any other roles within the council that would benefit from inclusion of Gaelic within essential or desirable criteria.
Target Date	Lifetime of the Plan
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

Desired Outcome	<b>Recruitment</b> Bilingual or Gaelic only job adverts for all posts where Gaelic is an essential skill.
Current Practice	All available posts are advertised via myjobsscotland
Actions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All advertisements for Gaelic specific roles will include reference to it being desirable for knowledge and fluency of the language</li> <li>• Post adverts that include Gaelic as a requirement will be advertised in both Gaelic and English</li> </ul>
Target Date	Lifetime of the Plan
Responsibility	Head of OD, Policy and Communications

## GAELIC LANGUAGE CORPUS

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Desired Outcome	<b>Gaelic Orthographic Conventions</b> The most recent Gaelic Orthographic Conventions will be followed in relation to all written materials produced by the public authority.
Current Practice	Inverclyde Council adhere to the current Gaelic Orthographic Conventions through utilising national translation services
Actions Required	High level of translation services requires to be continued
Target Date	Ongoing through the plan
Responsibility	All services

Desired Outcome	<b>Place-names</b> Gaelic place name advice from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba is sought and used.
Current Practice	There is limited usage of bilingual place names across Inverclyde
Actions Required	Any new place names will be introduced with advice from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba
Target Date	Ongoing through life of the plan
Responsibility	Head of Roads / Head of Property Services Head of OD, Policy and Communications

## 4. LINKS TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Inverclyde Council's Gaelic Language Plan is seen as contributing towards the following outcomes of the National Performance Framework and in particular:

- people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential
- people live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely

## 5. LINKS TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Inverclyde's Strategic Planning and Performance Management Framework sets out a number of high level priorities through the Inverclyde Community Planning Partnership's (Inverclyde Alliance) Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and also within the Council's Corporate Plan. The link to each of these Plans is provided below:

[Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan - Inverclyde Council](#)  
[Corporate Plan 2018/22 - Inverclyde Council](#)

This Plan aims to promote the Gaelic medium and afford it equal respect. For Gaelic speakers this translates to respect for their culture, heritage and community. The following partnership and Council priorities seek to support the delivery of this plan.

### Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan Priority:

#### Environment, Culture and Heritage

Inverclyde's environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

### Inverclyde Council's Corporate Plan organisational priorities:

To preserve, nurture and promote Inverclyde's unique heritage

To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources

To develop motivated, trained and qualified employees that deliver quality services that meet current and anticipated service needs



## 6. PUBLICATION

### Publishing and Publicising the Plan

#### INTERNAL

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Inverclyde Council's Gaelic Language Plan will be published in Gaelic and in English and be available to all our staff via ICON, the Council's intranet.

#### EXTERNAL

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Inverclyde Council's Gaelic Language Plan will be published in Gaelic and in English on our website. In addition, we will:-

- issue a bilingual press release announcing the plan
- publicise the plan through a variety of social media platforms
- distribute copies to arms-length organisations and other third-party organisations, explaining their role in the delivery of the plan
- distribute copies of the plan to key stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors
- distribute copies of the plan to relevant Gaelic organisations and other interested bodies
- make hard copies available on request

## 7. RESOURCING THE PLAN

All activities in this plan will be resourced through existing budgets relevant to the responsible service. Additional funding for specific projects will be accessed through external funding bodies as appropriate.

It is anticipated that there may be additional funding required for transcribing all relevant documents and information.

## 8. MONITORING THE PLAN

Inverclyde Council will monitor the implementation of this plan by reporting the Bòrd na Gàidhlig Annual Monitoring Template annually to the Policy and Resources Committee. The annual progress reports will then be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig who will assess our progress.

Monitoring of progress will be supported by the Council's electronic performance management system, Inverclyde Performs, and updated on an annual basis. The performance management system will encourage progress updates to be submitted on a timely basis and also provide an overview of performance at a glance, enabling areas of slippage to be quickly addressed.

The plan will be publicised on the Council's website and intranet so that employees can be made aware of the Council's duties under the The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and what actions the Council intends to take.

## 9. THE GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IN INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

### Overall Responsibility for the Plan

The Corporate Director, Education, Communities & Organisational Development has overall responsibility for preparation, delivery and monitoring of Inverclyde Council's Gaelic Language Plan. The contact details are provided below: -

Ruth Binks  
Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development  
Inverclyde Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Clyde Square  
Greenock  
PA15 1LX

Tel: 01475) 717171

Email: [corporate.policy@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.policy@inverclyde.gov.uk)

### Day-to-Day Responsibility for the Plan

The Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager has day-to-day responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of Inverclyde's Gaelic Language Plan. Queries regarding the day-to-day operation of the plan should be addressed to:

Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager  
Inverclyde Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Clyde Square  
Greenock  
PA15 1LX

Tel: (01475) 717171

Email: [corporate.policy@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.policy@inverclyde.gov.uk)

## Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Group

Inverclyde Council has established a Gaelic Language Plan Development Group, with the primary responsibility of developing the commitments within this plan. Overall governance at a strategic level is provided by Inverclyde Council's Corporate Equalities group. This group includes representation from across all council services and will carry out a quarterly review of the implementation and monitoring of different aspects of the plan and facilitate communications with all staff members with regard to their ongoing duties.

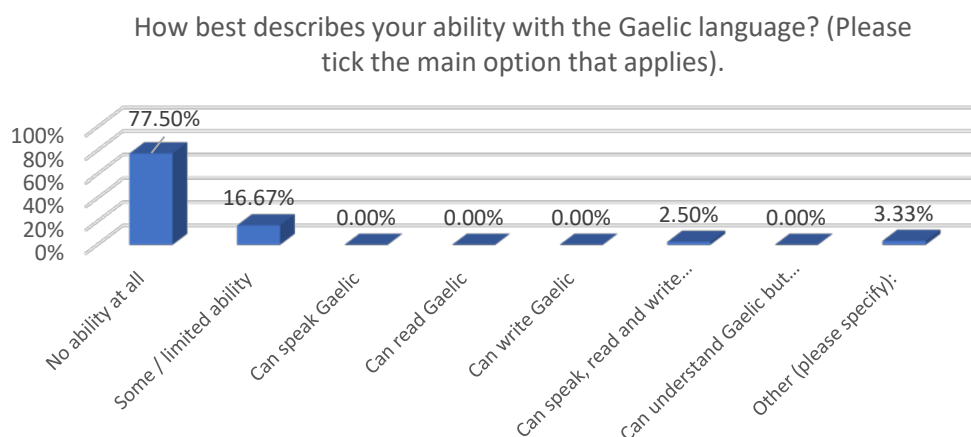
## Arm's Length Organisations and Third Parties

All third party organisations which deliver services on behalf of Inverclyde Council will be advised of the commitments within this Gaelic Language Plan. Information on the content of this plan will be provided to all Community Planning Partners across Inverclyde Council. It will also be made available to all Community Councils, equality groups, and other organisations as appropriate.

## APPENDIX 1 – INTERNAL CAPACITY AUDIT

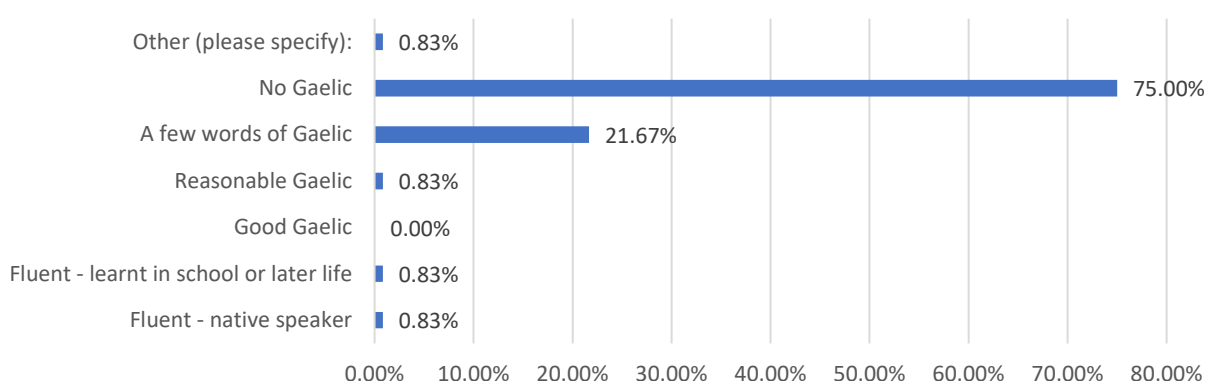
As part of the preparations for the development of this Plan, Inverclyde Council carried out an audit of existing internal Gaelic capacity via an online survey which was promoted to all employees. The survey had 120 responses and a summary of the responses is provided below:

Employees were asked about their ability and level of Gaelic language skills:



2.5% (3) of employee respondents said that they can speak, read and write Gaelic, almost 17% (20) of respondents have some or limited ability of the language and 77.5% (93) of respondents described themselves as having no ability at all. 3.3% (4) of respondents placed themselves in the 'other' category

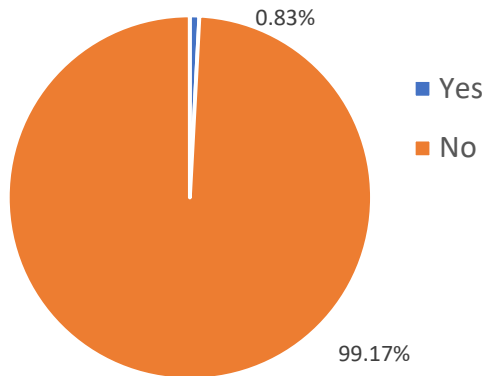
How would you describe the level of your Gaelic language skills? (Please tick the main option that applies)



Almost 22% (26) of respondents said that they know a few words of Gaelic whilst less than 1% (1) are fluent and a similar percentage replied that they have reasonable Gaelic skills. Three quarters of respondents (90) said that they have no Gaelic language skills.

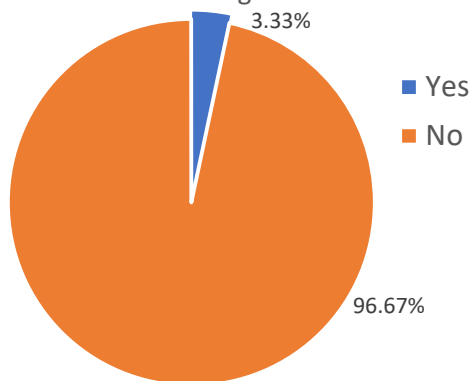
Employees were then asked whether they conduct their work through the medium of Gaelic and the vast majority of respondents, 99%, answered no. Gaelic Medium Education is the only service provided by the Council delivered entirely via the medium of Gaelic. Currently, Inverclyde Council has 4 posts within Gaelic Medium Education and 2 early years' posts where Gaelic is designated as an essential / desirable job skill.

4. Do you conduct your work with the Council through the medium of Gaelic?

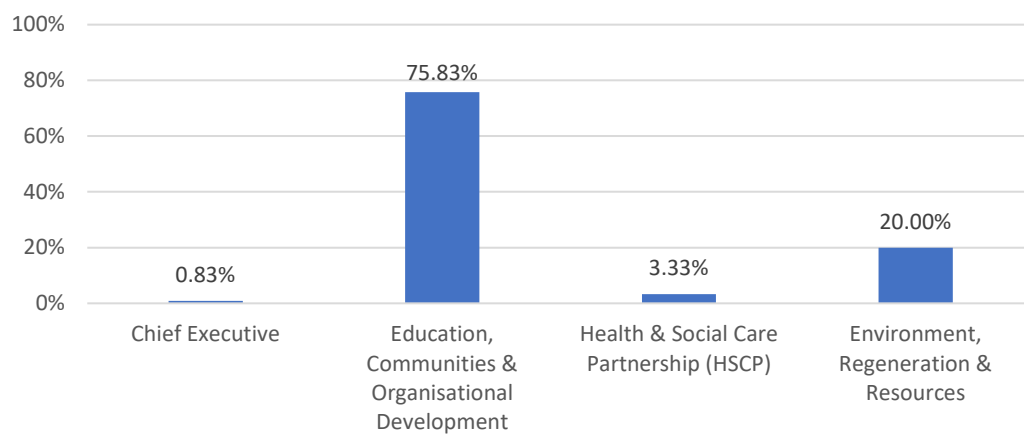


3% (4) of respondents are undertaking Gaelic language training and all respondents arranged this personally. Of those that are currently not undertaking Gaelic language training, 37% (43) expressed an interest in doing so.

5. Are you undertaking Gaelic language training?



The vast majority of survey responses, 76% (91), were received from the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Directorate.



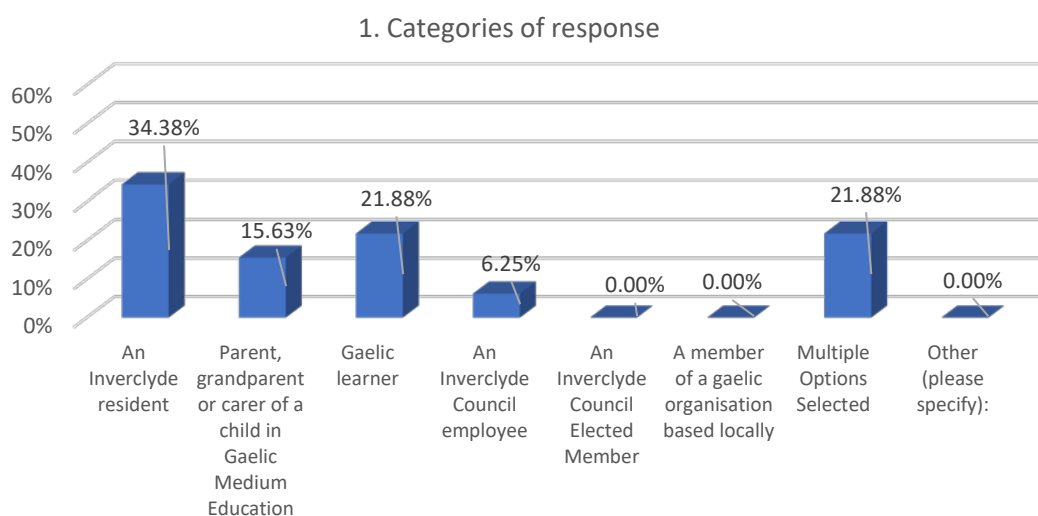
## APPENDIX 2 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The public consultation on the draft Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 was carried out between Friday 29 October 2021 and Friday 10 December 2021. In total, 33 completed responses were received. The analysis of the feedback received has been carried out in accordance with the guidance provided by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which is that the public consultation report should only focus on comments received in relation to the draft Plan and not include wider comments in relation to Gaelic itself.

### Summary of public consultation feedback

Respondents were first asked to note in what capacity they were responding to the survey. 32 out of 33 respondents answered this question.

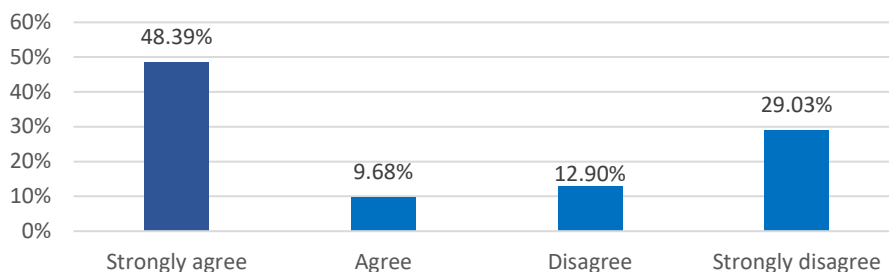
- 11 people said that they were responding as an Inverclyde resident,
- 7 people were completing the survey as a Gaelic learner,
- 7 people were responding in several capacities (e.g. Inverclyde resident and Gaelic learner and / or parent carer of a child in GME).
- 5 people were responding as a parent, grandparent or carer of a children in GME
- 2 people said that they were responding in their capacity as an Inverclyde Council employee





Question 2 asked respondents whether they agreed that the Plan will help to support and improve Gaelic language provision locally. 31 responses were received.

2. The draft Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan will help to support and improve Gaelic language provision locally

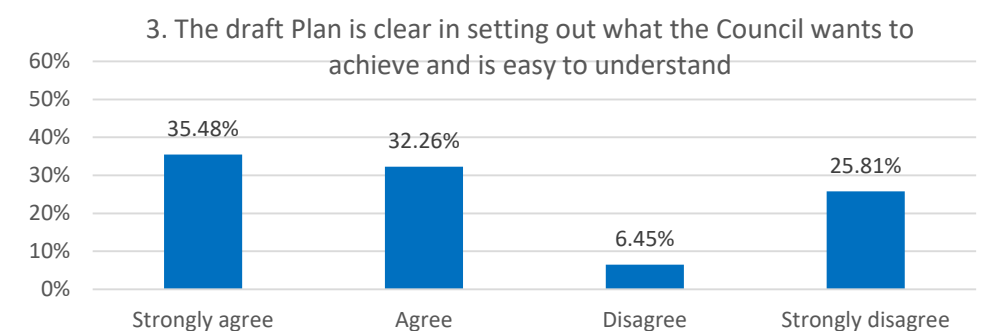


58% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the plan will help to support and improve Gaelic language provision in Inverclyde, whilst just under 42% disagreed. This question included a text box for respondents to note their comments. The provision of Gaelic medium education was a feature of many responses:

Q2. RESPONSES		
Gaelic is only spoken and understood by less than 3% of the Scottish population and its use is declining due to people moving away from the Western Isles to find work. I don't see any point in supporting use of a language that hardly any Scots speak in 2021	As a Gaelic learner, having more signage about Inverclyde helps and reinforces the learning	I cannot imagine there is a real need for Gaelic provision in Inverclyde. There are so few who need to speak Gaelic.
It's important to promote the use of our languages	Inverclyde has always had strong associations with Gaelic as apparent in the number of local place-names of Gaelic origin, a connection which, even when it was no longer the business language of the community, remained the first tongue of many inhabitants. Knowledge of the language in a cultural element of Scotland is an important aspect for the local council to promote as it has been entrusted to do in the National Act.	There has been very poor communication regarding this
Making Gaelic available to all children in Scotland should become absolutely normal	Gaelic has been a subject taught in Greenock for generations and should be continued as part of our culture	It is important that it is available locally and keep Gaelic relevant and part of education curriculum
Gaelic is our language. Scotland will be united only after we have our own tongue.  "A country without its own language is a country without a soul".	The vast majority looks like box ticking exercises where the council is doing the absolute minimum to promote Gàidhlig	It's part of the Scottish identity and needs recognition
I agree in the sense that it LOOKS like the plan will help to support and improve Gaelic language provision locally, but the reality is that it's very unlikely to do so due to the fact that for the majority of Inverclyde residents, Gaelic is a waste of money and the attitude is generally negative. However, with my daughter in GME - when people are told this they're pleasantly surprised, many didn't know it was an option and parents of young children have asked me further about it as they're interested for their own children.	Tha deagh ghealltanasan anns a' phlana seo a bhios a' fàs na Gàidhlig san sgìre. Ach, tha mi den bheachd gum faodadh Comhairle Inbhir Chluaidh a bhith a' gabhail chothroman a bharrachd, gu sònraichte ann am foghlam.  "There are great promises for growth in Gaelic in area, but I think the council should take more opportunities particularly in education."	It's important to protect languages and the heritage and knowledge that they contain. Linguistic diversity is essential for looking at the world in more than one way.
As there is now an increased demand for early years which leads to increased numbers in P1. You would expect a level of commitment to the continuing of secondary education for these Children. The corporate priorities state you wish to preserve and	I do agree and welcome some parts of the plan. However, there is no clear plan for secondary as children will no longer be accepted to Glasgow Gaelic school.	

<p>nurture Inverclyde's heritage, yet you deem it acceptable to offer a few hours of Gaelic language per week in an English secondary suitable? Our children and ourselves as parents are committing NINE years of our lives to fully immersive Gaelic. To then be told because Glasgow's capacity has reached its limits the "best" Inverclyde Council can do is provide these committed, fluent children to 2 hours per week language only in a local secondary that has space. This is unacceptable and utterly disappointing to parents of these children and to the local community. The offer you proposed is that Gaelic as a provision in Inverclyde would be treated similar to that of European languages such as French or Spanish. Not at all as EQUAL respect to the English language.</p>		
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Question 3 asked respondents whether they agree that the Plan is easy to understand and is clear in setting out what the Council wants to achieve. 31 responses were received.

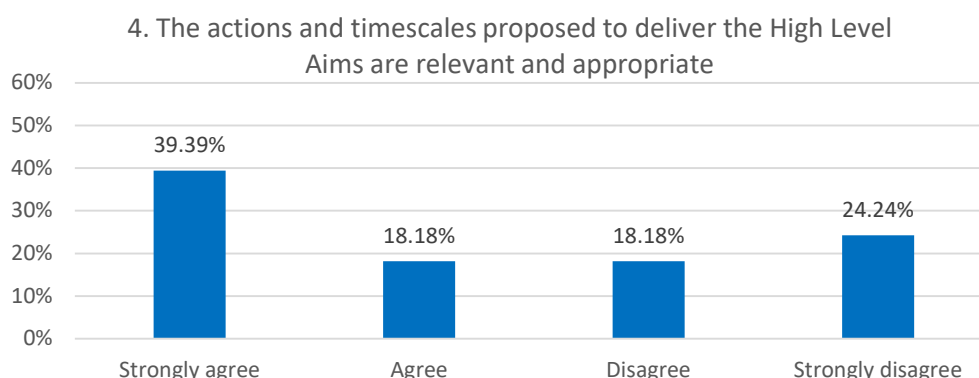


Just over two thirds, 68% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the plan is easy to understand and clear, whilst almost one third disagreed. This question also included a text box for respondents to provide further information if they wished and a small number of relevant comments were received.

Q3. RESPONSES		
This is a well presented, if unnecessary, plan.	It seems competent and hopefully will be pursued actively with provision of the necessary resources towards fulfilment	It is clear and easy to understand thanks to the layout.
This is important so that everyone can be aware of what is in place	The information is clear and as above agree with some but no clear plan for secondary which is worrying as a parent of 2 children in GME.	Tha e soilleir It is clear
<p>Tha structar a' phlana a' coimhead soilleir agus tha fiosrachadh gu leòr ann. Ach, tha feadhainn de na gealltanasan nach eil cho soilleir. Mar eisimpleir, thathar ag ràdh rudan mar 'consider', 'review' agus 'look to extend' seach gnìomhan soilleir gun jargon corporra.</p> <p>"The structure of the plan is clear and contains plenty of information. But, some of the commitments/ promises aren't so clear. For example it says things such as</p>	It is clear the council is looking to achieve a box ticking exercise	This seems clear

"consider", "review", and "look to extend", which are just corporate jargon."		
The plan is a bit long winded. For example I don't need to know how Inverclyde council are made up. Facts and figures from other areas not really needed. Information on Gaelic education in Greenock is important.		

The draft Plan contains a number of High Level Aims which are concerned with increasing the use and learning of Gaelic as well as promoting a positive image of Gaelic. In question 4, Inverclyde Council asked for residents' views on whether the actions and timescales developed to deliver the High Level Aims within the Plan were relevant and appropriate. 33 responses were received.



Almost 58% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the actions and timescales to deliver the High Level Aims were relevant and appropriate whilst 42% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Respondents were asked to provide a reason for their answer and a small number of comments were received. A common theme relating to the High Level Aims is the provision of Gaelic medium education in Inverclyde.

Q4. RESPONSES		
Bu chòir gum bi a' Chomhairle cinnteach gu bheil na gnìomhan freagarrach airson na h-amasan a chur an gnìomh.  "The council need to be sure that their actions are going to be effective in having the goals put into action"	I might disagree with the original premise but the plan is relevant to the stated aims.	The sooner the better
I still have no idea what my children's future education will entail.	Think high-level aim to increase the provision of Gaelic Learns Education at primary and secondary level should be expanded upon, as there is currently no secondary GME education in Inverclyde but the proposed outcome is increase numbers of children at both primary	Bòrd na Gàidhlig's aims are great but have to be pan-national and inclusive. Using their framework as a basis for any local council is grand but their framework includes keeping Gàidhlig alive as a working and living language

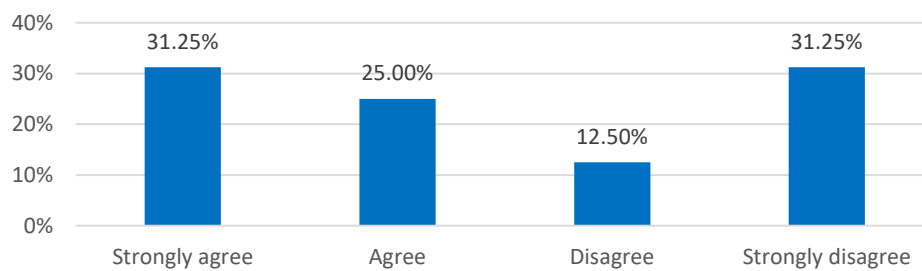
	and secondary level. It would be useful to know how the council wants to achieve this - will there be a secondary Gaelic school set up locally?	in Benbecula as well as coaxing folk from Duns into learning it. Their aims are too generic for Inverclyde Council to copy/paste.
It is important our communities know this is available so that it can be accessed by anyone who is interested to learn Gaelic	It is important that everyone in our community is aware that Gaelic is being taught in school and classes are available for adults wishing to learn	Relevant and appropriate but could be expanded.
It's great to have these aims but I feel that the actions and timescales particularly relating to secondary education are unreasonable. Those with children in GME are very aware that it's becoming increasingly unlikely that the children from Whinhill will be accepted to the Glasgow Gaelic School as the years go on and demand increases. We feel that it's extremely important to have a stand-alone Gaelic school in Inverclyde for those from Inverclyde and surrounding areas who want to attend. The education has to be full time in Gaelic as they're used to, not just a few hours in a unit in a school where they are a minority and potentially susceptible to bullying, etc.		

Respondents were invited to make any further comments or suggestions in relation to the High Level Aims and again, comments largely focused on the provision of Gaelic medium education.

<b>Q5. RESPONSES</b>		
Bu choir dhuinn uile Gaidhlig a chlachadh "We should all be using Gaelic"	"Increase the numbers of children entering Gaelic Medium Education at primary 1 level by at least 15% each year."  The council's plan doesn't intend to do this at all. There needs to be more GME places and in other schools in Inverclyde.  " Increase the number of adults learning Gaelic in Inverclyde"  A handful of A1/2 level learning courses (which seem to be just follow BBC Alba's 'Speak Gaelic' programme) isn't an active form of increasing Gaidhlig speakers. Language nests, speaking groups and promotion of discounted further education for the jump from beginner to fluency are required.	I think that in order to increase numbers at primary GME level, there has to be a clear path for families/pupils to progress to secondary GME level. Either formal arrangements need to be put in place with other local authorities who can offer a continuation into secondary GME, or Inverclyde must seriously consider an equal offering of secondary GME as is offered to pupils in English mainstream education.
As a parent of a pupil who attends Whinhill Gaelic unit I have been made aware that there is no provision for our children to go on to higher Gaelic education at the present time therefore we hope this situation can be rectified by having a Gaelic provision in inverclyde	The plans for adults I welcome, however the plan for secondary is not clear and feel the children are being let down with this.	All parents in the Gaelic medium need to know what there children's future looks like. It is unacceptable that plans are not in place.

Inverclyde Council also sought views on the Corporate Services Aims within the draft Plan. These Aims relate to Gaelic provision in our community, education, workplace and the provision of Gaelic services. In question 6, respondents were asked to rate whether they agree that the proposed actions and timescales set for the Corporate Aims are relevant and appropriate. 32 replies were received to this question.

6. The actions and timescales to deliver the Corporate Services Aims are relevant and appropriate



Just over 56% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the actions and timescales to deliver the Corporate Services Aims are relevant and appropriate, whilst the remained disagreed / strongly disagreed.

Respondents were asked to provide a reason for their answer and a small number of relevant comments were received:

Q6. RESPONSES		
Just nonsense like "Bilingual signs will be considered". Are signs paid for by the letter? There is no reason that all signs shouldn't be bilingual.	It seems to me that all this will provide is a when of signs, notices and documentation expensively being translated into Gaelic.	Unless the language is used in everyday life to give it relevance, it will wither.
Bu chòir gum bi na gealltanasan ceangailte ri Amasan Corporra nas treasa. Tha cothrom aig a' Chomhairle an seo a bhith a' cur air dòigh deagh chleachdadh, no best practice, agus seasamh làidir a ghabhail airson na Gàidhlig. Bhiodh seo a' toirt barrachd misneachd do luchd-labhairt is luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig san sgìre agus barrachd tuigse don fheadhainn a tha na h-aghaidh.  "The commitments should be connected to stronger corporate goals. There is an opportunity for this council to put in place a good practice, and take a strong position on Gaelic."	Again there are poor gaelic provisions for high school.	Gaelic is not widely seen in Inverclyde other than in education through the Gaelic medium school. I would like to see other schools adopt lessons in Gaelic just like they do French or Spanish. If Gaelic had been taught as a language when I was at school I would have chosen it in my 3rd year of high school

Also in relation to the Corporate Services Aims, respondents were invited to make any further comments or suggestions:

Q7. RESPONSES	
Almost all of those aims could be met, and probably surpassed, by hiring a single, fluent Gàidhlig speaker whose sole remit is to ensure all of those corporate services are met and they would still have time to visit schools/local groups to promote and teach about Gàidhlig as well	I just want to know my child can access Gaelic education in high school. When they started there Gaelic journey we were told they would go to Glasgow Gaelic school.

The final two questions in the survey were open ended and invited views on:

**Q8:** Do you have anything further to suggest regarding our draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 and its effectiveness in fulfilling the objectives of the National Gaelic Language Plan?

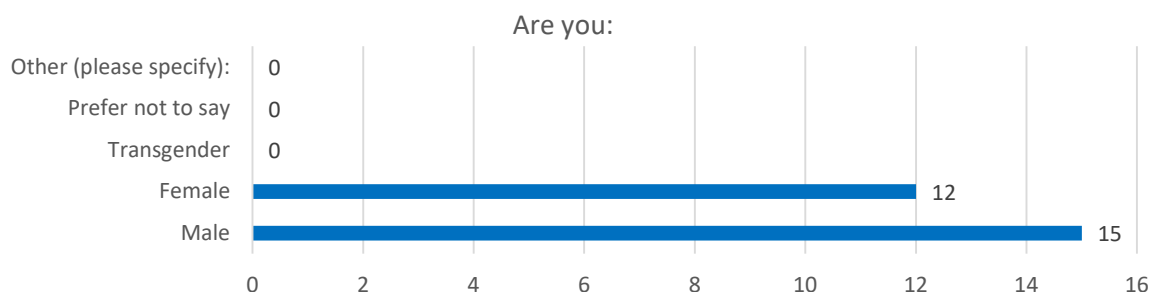
**Q9:** Do you have any other comments regarding our draft Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 as a whole?

Due to the small number of relevant comments received, these have been combined below.

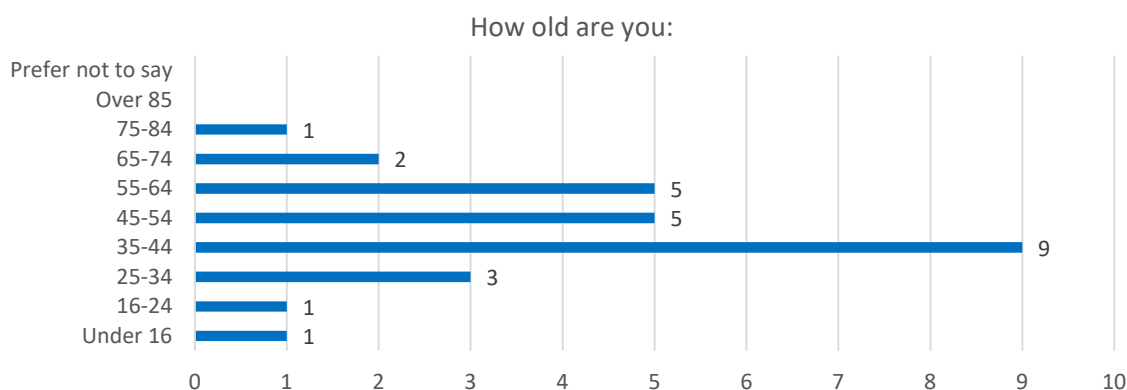
<b>Q8: RESPONSES</b>		
I don't see the point of such a plan. Gaelic is not in daily use for business, education or news media anywhere in Scotland apart from the Western Isles and its use there is declining. it would be far better to support Scots language which is actually spoken in the south of Scotland daily by many people. Yet Scots is often derided as 'slang' and is not considered to be a 'proper' language by many Scots, unfortunately.	Rather than a National Gaelic language plan, a local Gaelic language plan would be more understandable.	Provide higher Gaelic education. People need to start thinking about the future how will we get Gaelic teachers in the future if our children are not educated in this.
The Plan should have been more visible and accessible.		
<b>Q9. RESPONSES</b>		
It is good to see Inverclyde Council taking such a positive stance in this important matter.	I would hope for a plan to be in place soon.	It is unnecessary. Uptake of provision in Whinhill Primary is influenced by the smaller pupil/teacher ratio as it always was historically.
To encourage uptake of GME in primary then Inverclyde Council could tap into the fund that is available for Gaelic children in Inverclyde who are outside the catchment area of Whinhill primary for transport to and from school. All other areas utilise the fund. We both work and since there is no GME in our catchment area we have to make our own way to school despite being more than 2 miles from the school, we have to pay out of our own pocket for travel expenses and time away from work, it seems unfair when there is a fund there that can be accessed for this purpose. It has a negative impact on children and parents, the out of pocket expense and time will put parents off sending their children to GME rather than supporting and encouraging the development of the language.	Am the grandparent of a child who is at present in Gaelic unit at Whinhill Primary and have been made aware that there may be no provision for them moving on to secondary Gaelic education therefore I hope steps are taken to ensure this is not the case	Was a bit generic and wishy washy. But I appreciate you're at least trying to give the impression you're trying. When this Covid stuff has finished get some Māori speaker up from Ngāti Ranana in London to explain the importance of indigenous language promotion and the benefits of it and they can be a great example of how to make this a cross cultural unifier.
I feel that the ideas are great but I'm really not convinced that it'll go ahead at the level stated in the plan. It feels like a bit of a box-ticking exercise - I really hope I'm wrong for the sake of my children as I see it as a huge positive to learn the language and be part of a close-knit community.	Tha e air a chur ri chèile ann an deagh chruth agus tha pìosan làidir ann.  "It is put together in good shape and had some strong points."	I would like to see visually and quite quickly beginning in 2022. The Gaelic plan begin and not some year's later

## Section 2: About You

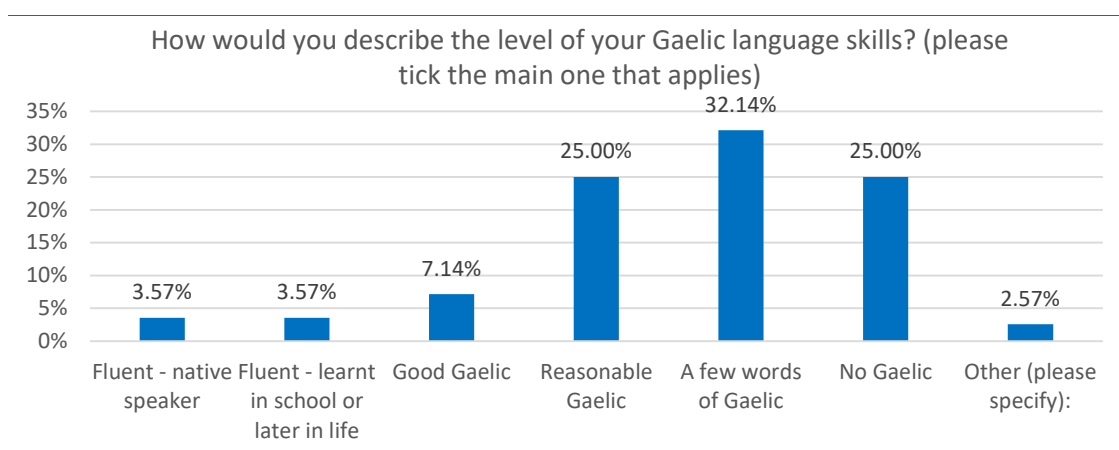
Respondents were asked for information about themselves to help the Council improve its services in relation to Gaelic, however there was no obligation to complete this part of the survey. Almost 84% of respondents were happy for Inverclyde Council to publish information about themselves whilst 16% noted that they were not. Accordingly, their information has been excluded from the data analysis provided below.



55% of respondents who were willing to share their information were male and 45% female.



The highest number of responses received were from the 35-44 year old age group.



Almost a third of respondents said that they know a few words of Gaelic and a quarter said that they have reasonable Gaelic language skills. Another quarter said that they have no Gaelic language skills at all. A small number of respondents, 7%, reported that they are fluent in Gaelic.

The survey concluded by offering people the chance to leave their contact details if they were interested in finding out more about Gaelic language and cultural activities provided by the Council and 9 requests for information were received.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director of Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/01/22/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712223</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Council Tax - Long Term Empty Levy Policy</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the updated Long Term Empty Council Tax Levy Policy and to ask Committee to consider approving funding for an Empty Homes Officer post to support owners/Landlords with bringing long term empty properties back into productive use.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council introduced a Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy in September 2015. The levy was applied at 30% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016; increasing to 50% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 100% since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. All but one Council applies a Council Tax Long Term Empty Property (LTE) levy; 30 apply the levy at 100% and another applies it at 90%.
- 2.2 The proposed Policy has been updated to reflect to matters highlighted in section 5 of this report and Appendix 1 is the amended and updated Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy for consideration by Committee.
- 2.3 The Council does not currently have an Empty Homes Officer (EHO) post following the termination of external funding. There was a clear view from the Member Workshop that an EHO post would provide much needed support and advice.
- 2.4 The LTE Policy including Empty Homes support has and will continue to produce a decrease in numbers of empty properties through a multi-strand approach of providing information and advice, offering targeted support to owners of LTE properties and undertaking direct contact across all tenures.
- 2.5 There is no recurring budget to meet the cost of the EHO post and if Committee agree to establish the post it is proposed to fund from the LTE levy budget from 2022/23.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the updated Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee approve the funding of an Empty Homes Officer from the LTE levy budget with effect from 2022/23.



## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 At its meeting of 23 February 2021 the Committee tasked officers to review the effectiveness of the Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy, the review to incorporate public consultation.
- 4.2 The review and consultation indicated that whilst the Policy has been effective in reducing the number of Long Term Empty (LTE) properties in Inverclyde in the non-RSL sector further changes may yield further reductions.
- 4.3 It was agreed by Committee to hold an all member workshop to further consider this matter and this took place on the 15 December 2021. The report reflects officer's interpretation of the outcome of that workshop.

## **5.0 LONG TERM EMPTY POLICY & COLLECTION PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

- 5.1 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 provides local authorities with a discretionary power to remove the empty property discount or set a council tax increase, or levy of up to 100% on certain properties which have been empty for 1 year or more
- 5.2 Inverclyde Council introduced a Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy in September 2015. The levy was applied at 30% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016; increasing to 50% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 100% since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. All but one Council applies a Council Tax Long Term Empty Property (LTE) levy; 30 apply the levy at 100% and another applies it at 90%.
- 5.3 At its meeting of 24 June 2021 the Policy and Resources Committee decided to remove the Long Term Empty Property Council Tax levy from the accounts of property not owned by Inverclyde Council located in the Clune Park Estate. The Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy has been updated at point (7.3) to reflect this decision.
- 5.4 The additional Council Tax billed as a result of the levy which now excludes the Clune Park estate amounts to £340k in 2020/21 and £345k in 2019/20. Collection performance during 2020/21 and 2019/20 at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 is 84.45% and 89.60% respectively.
- 5.5 The revised Policy also includes a point of clarification regarding exemption from Council Tax and the LTE levy applied to property awaiting demolition is added at (7.12). Exemption on this basis will terminate for every dwelling within a block if one or more dwellings within the same block are let to tenants for occupation subsequent to exemptions being granted whilst the preceding exemption period will also be reviewed.
- 5.6 Appendix 1 is the amended and updated Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Council Tax Policy for consideration by the Committee.

## **6.0 LINKS TO LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY**

- 6.1 As outlined in the recent Housing update brought to the Environment and Regeneration Committee the Council is required, according to statute, to produce a new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for 2023-2028.
- 6.2 Work is underway on the preparation of the new LHS. The relevant statutory guidance on how the LHS must be undertaken places quite some emphasis on the requirement for Local Authorities to consider how best to tackle empty homes. The review of the Long Term Empty policy therefore, fortunately, comes at a time when the future of our housing, across tenure, in Inverclyde will be closely reviewed and examined with our partners and plans agreed for what we need it to look like in future; this will include how to deal with empty homes.

- 6.3 The LHS Development Group including Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) has been established, Terms of Reference have been agreed, and discussions have begun on how this group we will operate over the coming months.
- 6.4 Key to an LHS, the outcomes of which reflect the needs and aspirations of the people of Inverclyde, is close joint working with our RSL and other housing partners this in conjunction with information provided within the Housing Needs and Demands Assessment (HNDA) due within the coming weeks and produced with the Glasgow Clyde Valley Housing Market Partnership of which Inverclyde is part.
- 6.5 The LHS Development Group will allow the Housing Strategy Team and RSL's to begin to review the current LHS outcomes and to look to what changes might need to be made in light of current circumstances. Given the declining and aging population profile in Inverclyde consideration will need to be given to a review of current stock including re-provisioning, a reshape of stock and, in some cases, resizing stock by reducing numbers of empty homes in some areas. The Outcomes of the new LHS will reflect this work and provide a cohesive plan for the future of Housing in Inverclyde.

## **7.0 SUPPORTING PROPERTY OWNERS/LANDLORDS**

- 7.1 The Council does not currently have an Empty Homes Officer (EHO) post following the termination of external funding. There was a clear view from the Member Workshop that an EHO post would provide much needed support and advice.
- 7.2 The re-establishment of the Empty Homes Officer post within the Housing Strategy Team will mean that not only will Social landlords be supported in dealing with empty stock but so too will those who own private property which is empty. The LTE Policy including Empty Homes support has and will continue to produce a decrease in numbers of empty properties through a multi-strand approach of providing information and advice, offering targeted support to owners of LTE properties and undertaking direct contact across all tenures. In addition to large-scale, organisational engagement, the Empty Homes Officer will engage with individual owners.
- 7.3 The officer, working collaboratively with Council Tax colleagues will contact those in the private sector who are in receipt of the Council Tax levy to provide a one to one support service to provide information, support, guidance and even access to trade discounts for work required to help make empty properties more attractive to buyers with a view to achieving the aim of the re-occupation of empty homes by selling them or having them occupied via the private rented sector.
- 7.4 There is also evidenced need for direct engagement with RSLs on the issue of their Empty Homes but this is in the context of wider area regeneration alongside their housing investment and asset management plans. As part of this the RSL will be expected to evidence that they have financially viable and deliverable investment plans which seek to address the issue of empty homes and which meet the relevant standards for LTE exemption. There may be opportunity, in addition, to consider the funding of the acquisition of empty properties via the SHIP programme where the acquisition would assist the RSL in carrying out common improvement works in a property where they have been unable to achieve this due to reluctance or lack of availability of funds on the part of a private owner.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 Finance**

There is no recurring budget to meet the cost of the EHO post and if Committee agree to establish the post it is proposed to fund from the LTE levy budget from 2022/23.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Housing Strategy	Employee Costs	2022/23	£42,000		Funded via a reduction in the LTE levy Budget.

**8.2 Legal**

The Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services has been consulted in the development of this report.

**8.3 Human Resources**

There are no HR implications outwith those directly identified in the report.

**8.4 Equalities**

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES (see attached appendix)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
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X	NO
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## 8.5 Repopulation

Reducing the number of long term empty properties within Inverclyde will make the area more attractive to existing and potential residents.

## 9.0 CONSULTATIONS

9.1 A community consultation plus direct consultation with RSLs took place in the summer of 2021 prior to the September Committee report, an all member briefing took place on 15 December regarding the proposals in this report and the CMT are supportive of the proposals in this report.

## 10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the LTE Homes Council Tax Policy- September 2021 Policy & Resources Committee

# **Council Tax**

## **Long Term Empty Property & Second Homes Policy**

# Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

## Document Control

Prepared by:  
Approved by:

Liz Brown  
Policy & Resources Committee

August 2015  
September 2015

## Change Control Table

Version	Version Date	Revised By	Reason for Change
2.0	March 2018	L Brown	Levy increased to 50% from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018
3.0	December 2018	L Brown	Levy increased to 100% from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019
			Additional discretionary exemption categories introduced
			Second Homes Policy added to document
4.0	February 2019	L Brown	Policy updated to include exemption agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
5.0	February 2022	T Bunton	(7.3) Removal of the Levy from property located in the Clune Park Estate not owned by the Council.
			(7.12) Property awaiting demolition – clarification

# **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

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# Inverclyde Council - Finance

## Revenues and Benefits

### 1.0 Introduction

This document details Inverclyde Council's Policy on a Council Tax Increase (Levy) on Long Term Empty (LTE) properties.

### 2.0 Background

2.1 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 provides local authorities with a discretionary power to remove the empty property discount or set a council tax increase of up to 100% on certain properties which have been empty for 1 year or more. Previously, local authorities were only able to vary the level of discounts, with a minimum discount of 10% for empty and second homes.

2.2 The provision only applies to long-term unoccupied properties, not second homes.

2.3 This greater flexibility is intended as an additional tool to help local authorities encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use, both to increase the supply of housing for those who need homes and to reduce the blight on communities caused by houses being left empty and allowed to fall into disrepair. The council tax increase could be used as part of a wider approach to tackle long-term empty homes including support and guidance to owners and provision of loans or grants if available.

2.4 For eligible unoccupied properties, local authorities can set a discount of between 0% and 50% or an increase of up to 100%. The provision also gives local authorities discretion to vary the council tax charged for different circumstances, and to apply discounts or increases in all or part of their areas. This can be done by using postcode boundaries, council wards or data zones. This could include charging different rates for a variety of different reasons as a local authority considers appropriate, and is intended to recognise that different pressures and factors will affect different areas.

2.5 Guidance has been issued by the Scottish Government in relation to the allowable flexibility available to ensure that authorities do not unfairly penalise owners who are justified in leaving their dwelling unoccupied or where there are reasons why the dwelling could not be lived in, sold or let.



## **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

### **3.0 Unoccupied Dwellings**

3.1 The council tax increase can be applied to homes which have been unoccupied for 1 year or more. An unoccupied dwelling is any dwelling which is not someone's sole or main residence, but does not fall within the definition of a second home. An unoccupied dwelling may be either furnished or unfurnished but is either not lived in at all or is lived in for less than 25 days in any twelve month period.

3.2 The council tax increase does not apply to water and sewerage charges.

### **4.0 Second Homes**

4.1 The council tax increase will not apply to second-homes. In general, second-homes are maintained well and are occupied for periods of the year when their owners contribute to the local economy.

4.2 Under the new legislation, a second home is defined as being furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in any twelve month period, but not as someone's sole or main residence. This aims to ensure that only homes which are likely to be reasonably well maintained and which the owner is likely to visit regularly (and therefore make some contribution to the local economy) can qualify as a second home.

4.3 The Council will not be able to charge a council tax increase for second homes but will, as was previously the case, have flexibility to set a discount level of between 0% and 50%. The second home discount level set by Inverclyde Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 is 0%, prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the level was set at 10%.

4.4 It will be for owners to prove that their property is a genuine second home and need to provide evidence to substantiate their claim. Evidence provided may be in the form of utility bills, TV license and anything else deemed appropriate. Visiting officers may be utilised to follow up on individual properties.

# Inverclyde Council - Finance

## Revenues and Benefits

### 5.0 Exclusions from the Increase

#### 5.1 Existing Mandatory Discounts and Exemptions

The new flexibility will not affect an owner's eligibility to claim council tax exemptions under the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (Scotland) Order 1997.

As long as an owner is eligible for an exemption, they would not be charged any council tax, regardless of how long the dwelling has been unoccupied. However, where a dwelling becomes no longer eligible for the exemption, but remains unoccupied, it will become eligible for the council tax increase after the property has been empty for 1 year.

Properties classed as purpose built holiday homes or occupied as job related dwellings will continue to receive 50% discount.

The legislation defines a purpose built holiday home as a dwelling which is used for holiday purposes and is either, in accordance with any license or planning permission regulating the use of the site, or for any other reason, not allowed to be used for human habitation throughout the whole year or, by reason of its construction or facilities which it does, or does not, provide, is unfit so to be used.

#### 5.2 Homes actively being marketed for sale or let

Homes being marketed for sale or let will be exempt from the council tax increase until they have been unoccupied for 2 years, these homes will continue to attract a discount of 10%. New build properties can also qualify for this exemption from the increase. This exemption is conditional on the home being genuinely marketed for sale or let at a realistic market price. In considering whether a home is genuinely being marketed for sale or let, the council can have regard to any unduly restrictive conditions being attached to the sale or let as well as the sales price/ rent level. In coming to their decision on whether or not the property is being genuinely marketed for sale or let, the council can request and take into account evidence including:

- Home Report - If the property is being marketed for sale, does it have a valid home report? Most houses for sale in Scotland require a home report which also includes a valuation of the property. If the home report valuation is significantly below the advertised price, it may be that the owner is not making a genuine attempt to sell their property.
- Marketing - Is the owner's marketing efforts providing adequate exposure to the market? Is the property being actively marketed by an agent and/or property sale/letting website?

## **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

### 5.3. Additional flexibility to vary discount/increase

Regulation 4 of the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 includes provision for local authorities to apply additional exemption from the increase, or to charge a reduced level of increase. This could include charging different rates according to, for example, the area the dwelling is in; the length of time that the dwelling has been unoccupied and other circumstances as a local authority considers appropriate.

This additional flexibility is included so that local authorities can modify provision by

- not charging a council tax increase,
- charging a reduced level of increase,
- offering a higher level of discount.

The legislation provides adequate flexibility to ensure that individual owners are not unfairly penalised. The circumstances of individual owners should be taken into account when applying the increase. This allows a local authority to avoid charging a council tax increase, or to charge a lower level of council tax than for other unoccupied dwellings, where it considers there are reasons why the owner is justified in leaving the dwelling unoccupied and/or reasons why the dwelling could not be lived in, sold or let.

Scottish Government guidance states that the following circumstances would merit flexibility in terms of not charging the council tax increase where the property has been empty for over a year and:

- The owner is finishing renovations prior to moving in/selling/letting and can demonstrate that these works are progressing.
- A long-term second home where the owner was unable to meet the 25 day occupancy criteria in the previous 12 months due to personal circumstances but where a history of 25 day occupancy can be shown in previous years.
- A property that is taking a long time to sell/let in a stagnant market despite being priced appropriately.
- Any other circumstances where the owner has agreed with an Empty Homes Officer to take positive steps to re-occupy their property and it is in the view of the Empty Homes Officer that a time-limited council tax increase “holiday” would encourage the property to be brought back into use sooner.

For all cases, the maximum discount of 50% and a maximum increase of 100% as set in the legislation must not be exceeded. Under the legislation, local authorities are prevented from using their discretion to vary council tax charges in a way that gives more favourable treatment to unoccupied social rented dwellings just because they are owned by a social landlord.

## **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

It is important that all owners take steps to bring unoccupied homes back into use as soon as possible, rather than leaving them empty.

### **6.0 Information Requests**

6.1 The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2012 require the council to take reasonable steps to ascertain whether a taxpayer is entitled to a discount or liable to an increased amount before calculating the council tax liability, with the default position being that there is no variation unless a reason for variation is identified. The council is also required to ensure that the taxpayer is notified of assumptions made and of their responsibilities to advise of changes in their circumstances or of an erroneous assumption.

6.2 The regulations also place an obligation on specific persons to provide information which is sought by the council for the purposes of ascertaining whether a discount or increase in council tax liability applies as a result of non-occupation of the dwelling.

### **7.0 Council Tax Levy Policy**

7.1 Under this policy the council tax increase to be applied by Inverclyde Council is:

- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 the increase is set at 30% of the annual council tax charge for the property.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 the increase is set at 50% of the annual council tax charge for the property.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the increase is set at 100% of the annual council tax charge for the property.

7.2 There is no council tax increase on the water and sewerage charge.

7.3 The Council Tax levy does not apply to property located in the Clune Park Estate that is not owned by Inverclyde Council. The increase applies to all other parts of the Council area.

7.4 In order to ascertain whether a vacant property is eligible for the council tax increase, a review form will be issued once a property has been unoccupied for 12 months.

7.5 Once the review form is returned a decision will be made on whether the property is entitled to a discount or should be subject to an increased amount.

7.6 Any additional information or evidence required will be requested from the owner.

## **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

7.7 Visiting officers may also be utilised to follow up on individual properties.

7.8 Officers will carry out checks to verify claims and any decision made is final subject to appeal.

7.9 Once the review form has been processed the owner will be notified in writing of the decision.

7.10 Owners will be advised of the mandatory and discretionary exemptions that can be applied for, their right to appeal any decision and also of their responsibility to advise of any change in circumstances or of any erroneous assumptions by the council.

7.11 An application for a mandatory or discretionary exemption from the council tax increase must be made in writing by completion of an application form.

7.12 Exemption from the full implementation of LTE Council Tax levy would be considered for a defined housing area provided an intervention plan led by an RSL has been agreed with the Council. The Plan's delivery must be resourced and be time limited to a reasonable period which reflects the level of intervention required. The exemption will be for 12 months initially. Intervention plans lasting longer than 12 months will require further application(s) for additional exemption. These further applications will be considered favourably if the interventions are making adequate progress against the agreed plan. Other owners within the defined area will also be eligible for exemption subject to an agreed intervention plan. For clarification, dwellings owned by the Council or an RSL and kept unoccupied following a formal documented decision by the Council or RSL to demolish the property are likely to qualify for exemption. Exemption from Council Tax and the LTE Council Tax levy on this basis will be terminated for every dwelling within a block if one or more dwellings subject to the exemption within the same block are let to tenants for occupation subsequent to the exemptions being granted and the preceding exemption period will also be reviewed.

7.13 The following discretionary exemptions that can be applied for under this policy are introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. These are in addition to the existing discretionary exemption category noted below which will continue under this policy.

### **Additional Discretionary Exemptions from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019**

Discretionary Category	Purpose	Maximum Exemption Period
New Owner or Tenant	The new owner or tenant of a long term empty property requires a short period of time to make the	3 Months

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

	property fit for occupation or to move in.	
Owner is working with Empty Homes Officer	Owner has agreed with the Empty Homes Officer to take positive steps to re-occupy their property and it is the view of the Empty Homes Officer that a time-limited council tax increase “holiday” would encourage the property to be brought back into use sooner.	6 Months
Property undergoing repair/renovation	Property is undergoing major repair to make it habitable, the liable person can demonstrate work is progressing	12 Months

### Existing Discretionary Exemption

Exceptional Circumstances	The owner considers that their property is empty due to exceptional circumstances not covered by the discretionary exemption categories	6 Months
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### 8.0 Second Homes Policy

8.1 Under this policy the council tax discount on second homes to be applied by Inverclyde Council is:

- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the discount is set at 0% of the annual council tax charge for the property.
- Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the discount was set at 10% of the annual council tax charge for the property.

## **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

8.2 Although the discount on second homes is set at 0% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, it is in the interest of owners of second homes to apply to the council for their property to be classed as a second home in order to avoid the council tax increase on unoccupied properties.

8.3 A second home is defined as being furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in any twelve month period, but not as someone's sole or main residence. This aims to ensure that only homes which are likely to be reasonably well maintained and which the owner is likely to visit regularly (and therefore make some contribution to the local economy) can qualify as a second home.

8.4 Under this policy properties that are undergoing renovation or repair will not be considered as second homes.

8.5 It will be for owners to prove that their property is a genuine second home and they need to provide evidence to substantiate their claim. Evidence provided may be in the form of photographs of the interior of the property, utility bills, TV license, second home insurance schedule and anything else deemed appropriate. In addition proof of travel to the property such as train or airline tickets may be requested.

8.6 Visiting officers may be utilised to follow up on individual properties.

8.7 Officers will carry out checks to verify claims and any decision made is final subject to appeal.

8.8 If the owner of a long-term second home was unable to meet the 25 day occupancy criteria in the previous 12 months due to personal circumstances but a history of 25 day occupancy can be shown in previous years, the property can continue to be classed as a second home for a further 12 months.

8.9 A newly purchased property that is intended to be occupied as a second home will not be classed as a second home until it has been occupied for 25 days in a rolling 12 month period.

8.10 Second Homes will be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to meet the 25 days occupancy per rolling 12 month period.

### **9.0 Appeals**

9.1 Appeals can be made in writing to the Revenues and Benefits Manager; the appellant will be notified of the outcome of their appeal within 2 months.

## **Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits**

9.2 If, following the appeal to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, the customer remains dissatisfied with the decision they have a further right of appeal to the Valuation Appeal Committee. Any appeals to the Valuation Appeal Committee must be within four months of the date of their original appeal.



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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 February, 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/04/22/TMcE</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tony McEwan, Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>712761</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Winter Support Fund 2021/22</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee regarding the £400,000 projects approved by the Council in December funded by the Winter Support Fund grant from Scottish Government and to seek approval for the allocation of the additional £112,000 balance.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced a £41m Winter Support Fund to support low income households. Included in this was £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government Winter Support Fund allocation to Inverclyde Council was £512k which was more than the initially estimated £400k. Proposals for the original £400k were approved by Inverclyde Council on 2 December 2021 as detailed in the body of the report.
- 2.3 The Officers Anti-Poverty Group have now considered the best use of the additional £112k to support households on low income and recommend that:
- further support is provided to families on low incomes who are entitled to the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment, by increasing this payment by £30 to £50 per eligible child, with the payment being made in February 2022; and
  - support to Inverclyde foodbanks so they can support the most marginalised households with both food and fuel vouchers when necessary. (£28,000)

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- a) notes the content of this report and the initiatives previously approved by Inverclyde Council;
  - b) agrees the proposals set out at 2.3 above to support Inverclyde residents in the winter months; and
  - c) notes that a fuller update on progress in delivery of the previously approved initiatives funded by the Anti Poverty monies will be presented to the March meeting of the Committee.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced a £41m Winter Support Fund to support low income households. Included in this was £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities. The allocation to Inverclyde was £512k which was more than the initially estimated £400k. Proposals for the £400k spend were approved by Inverclyde Council on 2 December 2021.
- 4.2 Local authorities were given the flexibility to adapt interventions to meet emerging needs including supplementing local budgets for the Scottish Welfare Fund to meet demand, boosting local funding for Discretionary Housing Payments and proactive assistance for those likely to experience hardship. This includes people who may have been impacted by the recent UK Government reversal of the temporary increase to Universal Credit and those who may not be eligible for mainstream support.
- 4.3 Inverclyde Council already supports people on low incomes with a wide range of services and initiatives including the Anti-Poverty funded projects, the more generous criteria for school clothing grants and the enhanced criteria for those entitled to Child Payment Bridging Payments. These interventions support households facing financial insecurity during the winter months, when the pressure on household finances are likely to be higher.

## **5.0 Winter Hardship Support Funding**

- 5.1 The Council's Anti Poverty Group considered the most effective way to support local households on low income and proposals totalling £400,000 were agreed by Inverclyde Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021. These were to:
  - provide a further 20% increase in the level of Crisis grant awards for the remainder of 2021/22 plus allowance for increase in demand experienced in the last 2 months (£40,000);
  - increase funding to meet the significant increase in Community Care Grants administered via the Scottish Welfare Fund in 2021/22. Support helps individuals with costs of essential goods when moving into new tenancies/homes and reduces the risk of homelessness. (£110,000);
  - increase funding to Starter Packs to provide essential support to individuals /families settling into a new home (£10,000);
  - increase the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment by £20 to £180/eligible child (£70,000);
  - pay £100 to approximately 700 individuals not covered by earlier scheme to make £100 payments to Council Tax Reduction recipients with no children within their household (£70,000); and
  - increase funding to iHeat to increase the level of support and numbers supported via the Elderly Heating Project (£100,000).
- 5.2 The group has now considered the best use of the additional £112,000 to support households on low income during this winter and proposes the following:
  - further support is provided to families on low incomes who are entitled to the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment, by increasing the increased payment by £30 to £50 per eligible child. The payment to be made in February 2022; and support to Inverclyde foodbanks so they can support the most marginalised household with both food and fuel vouchers when necessary. (£28,000)

5.3 Payments will be made through existing service provision and to organisations within the first three months of 2022 with any unallocated sum at 31 March added to the Anti Poverty Fund.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Finance

The Scottish Government allocated £512,000 Winter Support Fund to Inverclyde Council in December 2021 to support families on low income. £400,000 of proposals were agreed in 2 December 2021. £112,000 proposed within this report.

#### Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Winter Support Fund	External Payments	2022/23	£112,000		£400k already approved by Council on 2 December 2021.

##### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

### 6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications other than those highlighted in the report.

### 6.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications are highlighted in the report.

### 6.4 Equalities

#### Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES	
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

6.5 **Repopulation**

Tackling the deep seated inequalities in Inverclyde will have a positive impact of the area’s population.

**7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The CMT support the proposals made in this report.

**8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None