

**A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 31 January 2023 at 3pm.**

**Members may attend the meeting in person or via remote online access. Webex joining details will be sent to Members and Officers prior to the meeting. Members are requested to notify Committee Services by 12 noon on Monday 30 January 2023 how they intend to access 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.**

**Please note that this meeting will be live-streamed via YouTube with the exception of any business which is treated as exempt in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.**

**Further information relating to the recording and live-streaming of meetings can be found at the end of this notice.**

IAIN STRACHAN  
Head of Legal & Democratic Services

## **BUSINESS**

**\*\* Copy to follow**

1. <b>Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</b>	
2. <b>2022/23 Policy &amp; Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 30 November 2022</b> Report by Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	<b>p</b>
3. <b>Policy &amp; Resources Capital Budget and 2022/25 Capital Programme</b> Report by Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance	<b>p</b>
4. <b>Finance Service Update</b> Report by Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance	<b>p</b>
5. <b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update Report</b> Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	<b>p</b>
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
6. <b>2023/25 Budget Update</b> Report by Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance	<b>p</b>

7.	<b>Service Concession Flexibility - Accounting Change Proposal</b> Report by Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance	p
8.	<b>Revenues Policies: Corporate Debt Recovery and Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief</b> Report by Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance	p
9.	<b>Communications and Engagement Strategy</b> Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
10.	<b>Progress for Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-2023</b> Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	p
11.	<b>2023 Coronation of King Charles III</b> Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
12.	<b>Redeployment Policy</b> Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
13.	<b>Employee Survey Results 2022</b> Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
14.	<b>Payment of Atypical Allowance – Part Time Employees</b> Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
<b>ROUTINE DECISIONS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING</b>		
15.	<b>Provision of Electronic Care Monitoring Service: Care at Home Services – Delegated Authority</b> ** Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	p
16.	<b>Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to vote on new Chair for Cooperative Councils Innovation Network</b> Report by Head of Legal & Democratic Services	p

The reports are available publicly on the Council's website and the minute of the meeting will be submitted to the next standing meeting of the Inverclyde Council. The agenda for the meeting of the Inverclyde Council will be available publicly on the Council's website.

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Enquiries to – **Colin MacDonald** – Tel 01475 712113

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**Report To:** Policy & Resources Committee      **Date:** 31 January 2023

**Report By:** Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Chief Executive      **Report No:** FIN/06/23/AP/AB

**Contact Officer:** Alan Puckrin      **Contact No:** 01475 712090

**Subject:** 2022/23 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 30 November 2022

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision                                       For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the 2022/23 Committee Revenue Budget projected position at 30 November 2022 and the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection at this date. The report also highlights the position of the General Fund Reserve.
- 1.3 The revised 2022/23 Revenue Budget for the Policy & Resources Committee is £22,642,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. The latest projection is an overspend of £1,041,000 (4.5%) and is almost entirely down to projected pay and non-pay inflation pressures which are being held centrally, off-set with additional Internal Resource Interest due to the increase in interest rates. This represents a decrease in projected overspend of £1,551,000 since the Period 6 report.
- 1.4 At November 2022 the General Fund is projecting an overspend of £203,000 after the one-off use of £4million of Reserves which was agreed by the Council in February 2022 when Members approved the 2022/23 Revenue Budget. Based on these figures the Council's unallocated Reserves are currently projected to be £1.094million more than the minimum recommended level of £4.0million by 31 March, 2023 and is after the write back of £1.46million Earmarked Reserves agreed at the 15 December Council meeting.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the current projected overspend for 2022/23 of £1,041,000 as at 30 November 2022 within the Committee's Budget.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee note that the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and Heads of Service continue to review areas where non-essential spend can be reduced in order to bring the corporate service element of the budget back on track.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee notes the projected 2022/23 surplus of £19,440 for the Common Good Budget.

2.4 It is recommended that the Committee notes the projected overspend of £203,000 for the General Fund and the projected surplus reserves of £1.094million at 31 March, 2023.

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

**Louise Long**  
**Chief Executive**

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

3.1 The revised 2022/23 Revenue Budget for the Policy & Resources Committee is £23,294,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. This is an increase of £1,602,000 from the approved budget due to additional funding from the Scottish Government for the Local Pay Offer partly offset by allocations to services from the non-pay inflation allowance. Appendix 1 gives more details of this budget movement.

#### **3.2 2022/23 Projected Outturn – Policy & Resources Committee Budget (£1,041,000 Overspend 4.5%)**

The main projected variances contributing to the net overspend are listed below –

- (a) Projected underspend of £56,000 for Finance/ICT Employee costs due to exceeding turnover targets.
- (b) ICT Computer Software Maintenance projected overspend £39,000.
- (c) Projecting an underspend within Revenues of £75,000 due to one-off administration income relating to the Cost of Living grant payments. This underspend will be off-set with various administrative costs all under £20,000.
- (d) Projected overspend of £54,000 for Legal Employee costs due to turnover target not yet met.
- (e) Projected overspend of £1,400,000 for the Non-Pay Inflation Contingency largely due to rising utility and fuel costs and contracts linked to rates of RPI.
- (f) Projected shortfall of £1,400,000 in the Pay Inflation allowance based on the 2022/23 SJC Pay Award and after netting off an additional £2.167 million recurring funding and one-off funding of £1.867 million from the Scottish Government. The projection assumes the IJB will receive £1.1 million share of this additional funding in 2022/23.
- (g) Projected over-recovery of £1,800,000 from Internal Resource Interest due to current interest rates as reported as part of the December Financial Strategy.

More details are shown in Appendices 2 and 3

#### **3.3 Earmarked Reserves**

Appendix 4 gives an update on the operational Earmarked Reserves, i.e. excluding strategic funding models. Spend to date is currently £4,927,000 largely due to the delivery of the Council Cost of Living payments. Appendix 7 gives a summary breakdown of the current earmarked reserves position. It can be seen that expenditure at 30 November was £15,905,000 which is £539,000 (3.38%) more than the phased budget and 37.89% of projected 2022/23 spend.

#### **3.4 Common Good Fund**

The Common Good Fund is projecting a surplus in 2022/23 of £19,440 as shown in Appendix 5 and which results in projected surplus fund balance of £125,110 at 31 March 2023.

### 3.5 General Fund Budget & Reserves Position

Appendix 6 shows that as at 30 November 2022 the General Fund is projecting a £203,000 overspend (excluding Health & Social Care) which represents 0.9% of the net Revenue Budget.

3.6 Appendix 8 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 31 March, 2023 is £5.094 million which is £1.094 million above the minimum recommended balance of £4 million. Further additions to the Reserves beyond 2022/23 have been identified as part of the 2023/25 Budget and will be subject to consideration by the Council on 2 March 2023.

### 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 In respect of the projected overspend of £7,000 within the 3 Corporate Services, the Interim Director and Heads of Service will ensure that further steps are taken to reduce expenditure where this will not have a direct impact on service delivery.

4.2 In relation to the General Fund overspend the Committee are asked to note that similar action is being taken by the Corporate Director of Education, Communities to bring the Committee back within the approved budgets.

### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk	x		
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		x	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			x
Environmental & Sustainability			x
Data Protection			x

### 5.2 Finance

As has been previously reported the Council is facing financial challenges it has not faced before and decisions will need to be taken in coming months to ensure the Council's Budget, service delivery requirements and priorities remain affordable in the medium term.

One off Costs

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

## Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

The approved Governance Documents set out the roles and responsibilities of Committees and officers in ensuring budgets are not overspent and the process to be followed in the event approved limits are projected to be breached.

### 5.4 Human Resources

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

### 5.5 Strategic

The current and projected financial position will require to be borne in mind when developing the forthcoming strategic plans for the Council.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive and Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 There are no background papers.



**Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2022/23****Period 8: 1 April 2022 - 30 November 2022**

Service	Approved Budget		Movements			Revised Budget 2022/23 £000
	2022/23 £000	Inflation £000	Virement £000	Supplementary Budgets £000	Transferred to EMR £000	
Finance	7,555	199	40	452	0	8,246
Legal	1,961	26	6	0	0	1,993
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,115	33	23	0	0	2,171
Chief Exec	331	0	0	0	0	331
Miscellaneous	9,730	(2,111)	0	2,934	(652)	9,901
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21,692</b>	<b>(1,853)</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3,386</b>	<b>(652)</b>	<b>22,642</b>

**Supplementary Budget Detail**

£000

Inflation

Registrars: Income Adjustment	(1)
Benefit Subsidy 2022/23 Inflation	186
Finance & ICT - Inflation adjustments	14
Legal: HOS Overbudgeted, transfer to Inflation Contingency	(7)
Legal: Councillors 22/23 Pay Award	31
Legal - Team Lead Pay Inflation	2
HR - Occupational Health contract increase	33
Miscellaneous - Non Pay Inflation allocated out	(2,111)
	<u>(1,853)</u>

Virements

Finance (ICT): New Ways of Working	40
Legal - Additional Senior Allowances Councillors	6
HR - Corp Comms Money for Post 78069 Team Lead	23
	<u>69</u>

Supplementary Budgets

Housing Benefits - Cost of Living Payment	452
Miscellaneous - SG Local Pay Offer Allocation (Ex-HSCP)	2,934
	<u>3,386</u>

**Total Inflation & Virements****1,602**

**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT****CURRENT POSITION****Period 8: 1 April 2022 - 30 November 2022**

2021/22 Actual £000	SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2022/23 £000	Revised Budget 2022/23 £000	Projected Out-turn 2022/23 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
8,144	Employee Costs	8,366	8,386	8,379	(7)	(0.1%)
487	Property Costs	569	569	569	0	-
905	Supplies & Services	888	901	945	44	4.9%
1	Transport & Plant	4	4	4	0	-
1,253	Administration Costs	1,295	1,284	1,211	(73)	(5.7%)
29,661	Payments to Other Bodies	39,866	41,444	42,417	973	2.3%
(26,838)	Income	(29,296)	(29,293)	(29,189)	104	(0.4%)
<b>13,612</b>	<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>21,692</b>	<b>23,295</b>	<b>24,336</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
	Earmarked reserves		(652)	(652)	0	
<b>13,612</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>21,692</b>	<b>22,643</b>	<b>23,684</b>	<b>1,041</b>	

2021/22 Actual £000	OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2022/23 £000	Revised Budget 2022/23 £000	Projected Out-turn 2022/23 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
7,487	Finance	7,555	8,246	8,148	(98)	(1.2%)
1,353	Legal Services	1,961	1,993	2,086	93	4.7%
<b>8,840</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</b>	<b>9,516</b>	<b>10,239</b>	<b>10,234</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(0.0%)</b>
2,117	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,115	2,172	2,184	12	0.6%
<b>2,117</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>2,115</b>	<b>2,172</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
337	Chief Executive	331	331	345	14	4.2%
2,318	Miscellaneous	9,730	10,553	11,573	1,020	9.7%
<b>13,612</b>	<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>21,692</b>	<b>23,295</b>	<b>24,336</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
	Earmarked reserves		(652)	(652)		
<b>13,612</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>21,692</b>	<b>22,643</b>	<b>23,684</b>	<b>1,041</b>	

## REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

## MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)

Period 8: 1 April 2022 - 30 November 2022

Outturn 2021/22 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2022/23 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 30/11/22 £000	Projection 2022/23 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000
	<b><u>Finance/ICT Services</u></b>					
4,753	Employee Costs	4,879	2,980	2,958	4,823	(56)
782	Supplies & Services - Computer Software Maint	780	788	676	819	39
233	Revenues - DHP Expenditure Budget Overstated	1,394	488	396	1,369	(25)
(33)	Revenues - Bad Debt Provision	0	0	18	30	30
0	Revenues - Cost of Living Award (Projected Under Spend is Funding For Admin Costs)	0	0	0	(75)	(75)
(279)	Income - Legal Expenses - Recoveries	(268)	(178)	(154)	(229)	39
(271)	Income - Statutory Additions	(294)	(159)	(134)	(267)	27
(110)	Income - Housing Benefit Recoveries	(110)	(55)	(64)	(130)	(20)
(30)	Income - ICT Recharges	0	0	(50)	(50)	(50)
	<b><u>Legal Services</u></b>					
1,321	Employee Costs	1,371	914	966	1,425	54
(576)	Income	(598)	(399)	(263)	(560)	38
	<b><u>Miscellaneous Services</u></b>					
1,014	Non Pay Inflation	2,927	773	773	4,327	1,400
2,816	Pay Inflation	2,876	0	0	4,276	1,400
(104)	Internal Resource Interest	(201)	0	0	(2,001)	(1,800)
<b>9,516</b>	<b>TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES</b>	<b>12,756</b>	<b>5,152</b>	<b>5,122</b>	<b>13,757</b>	<b>1,001</b>

## EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy &amp; Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P8	Actual P8	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
B	Early Retiral/Voluntary Severance Reserve	Alan Puckrin	1,473	0	0	1,473	0	Significant call expected on the reserve due to 23/25 Budget gap. Will be used to fund any approved early releases in IL.High likelihood that more funding will be needed.
C	Equal Pay	Steven McNab	100	0	0	0	100	Balance for equal pay which is under review on an annual basis after £100k write back.
C	Digital Strategy	Alan Puckrin	171	0	43	50	121	Project officer £70k over 2 years starting 01/10/21. £84k uncommitted. All needed for new ways of working project
C	Welfare Reform - Operational	Alan Puckrin	117	0	56	67	50	£50k to be used from 23/24.
B	Cloud Technology	Alan Puckrin	176	0	20	20	156	Cloud Migration Analyst started 23/08/21 for 1 year before post is mainstreamed. Balance required for modernisation project.
C	Anti-Poverty Fund	Ruth Binks	1,724	200	649	1,495	229	£763k of funding relates to c/f of the recurring element of the Anti Poverty fund and £309k relates to c/f for FSM holiday payments and bridging payments all of which will be fully spent. New funding relates to an underspend of SG FSM funding (£93k) and uncommitted Anti Poverty recurring budget (£559k). It is anticipated that this funding will be spent on a number of projects agreed by P&R in November 22 with a balance of £229k uncommitted.
C	Community Facilities Digital Inclusion	Alan Puckrin	16	0	2	2	14	£100k written back post December Council leaving £15k for Grieve Road Community Facility WiFi upgrade.
B	Loan Charge Funding Model	Alan Puckrin	337	0	0	0	337	December Finance Strategy forecast a balance of £0.4m by 31.3.23. Council agreed to allocate £1.2million to this reserve in 2023/24to address projected deficit over 2023/25.
C	GDPR	Iain Strachan	35	4	11	18	17	Information governance system contract (Workpro) awarded (2yr+1yr+1yr). Spend committed - £10k per year. Continued corporate training programme being organised.
C	Local Government Elections	Iain Strachan	110	110	110	110	0	Cost for May 2022 Local election. Overspend of £18k being reported as part of Legal Services overspend. Complete.
C	Contribution from the SG Omicron Funding - £350 Payment	Alan Puckrin	500	500	500	500	0	Complete.

**EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources**

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P8	Actual P8	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	£000	
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
B	2022/24 Budget Funding Reserve	Alan Puckrin	6,000			4,000	2,000	£4.0m approved for use 22/23
B	Covid - ICT Technicians to support Digital School Inclusion	Alan Puckrin	60	0	20	34	26	2 posts to 30.6.22, mainlined thereafter (from P4 being charged to 30.4.23 but with proposals, from P6, to extend). Both posts were filled from 1.11.21, but currently only one post filled/being charged to EMR.
B	Covid - Scottish Welfare Fund -Balance From 21/22	Alan Puckrin	40	0	0	40	0	All required 22/23.
CFCR	Capital funded from Current Revenue	Alan Puckrin	4,767			2,766	2,001	Due to be fully used by 31/03/23. £1.867m to be used to fund 2022/23 pay award offset by increase in SG Capital Grant.
C	Covid - Desks and Equipment	Steven McNab	6	14	5	6	0	Support Health and Safety of employees working at home providing equipment. This EMR is linked to DSE risk assessments of employees working at home. £8k budget to be written back.
C	Covid Recovery - Increased Occ Health Provision - 24 Months	Steven McNab	36	24	24	36	0	This EMR is mainly used for counselling services and providing mental health support during the covid recovery period.
C	Covid Recovery - Additional HR Support to Services - 24 Months	Steven McNab	48	32	31	48	0	Additional HR Support during the COVID Recovery period. HR Advisor ends on 15/08/23.
C	Covid Recovery - Flu Vaccines	Steven McNab	3	0	0	3	0	This EMR will be used to secure flu jabs and offered to employees through ICON and wider communications. This rollout will be around December 2022. Uncommitted £9k budget to be written back.
C	Covid Recovery - 2x Additional ICT Service Desk Technicians - 18 Months	Alan Puckrin	63	0	2	15	48	Approved P&R 25/05/21 - Covid Recovery Plans. 1 year temp Service Desk post funded from 1.9.22 to meet increased demand during hybrid working pilot
C	Extension of Corporate Policy Post	Steven McNab	44	0	0	0	44	Budget transfer from COVID Recovery budget to fund extension of Corporate Policy Post.
B	Tenant Hardship Fund	Alan Puckrin	59		59	59	0	All required 2022/23
C	Additional Payroll post - 12 Months	Steven McNab	28	17	17	28	0	Cost for senior clerical assistant within payroll team. The anticipated end date of post is 31/03/23.
C	New Ways of Working	Steven McNab	286	28	28	142	144	Ongoing to the summer of 2023. Project requires 150k employee costs alongside 150k non employee other costs. The staffing requirement has a 22.2 hour post until 03/06/23 and a further 20k for an assistant role from December 2022. The non-employee costs relate to expenditure in rationalising office estate with regards to hybrid working that will see office refurbishments, relocation of staff and IT Costs that improve digital capabilities.
C	Contribution to IJB budget 2022/23	Alan Puckrin	550	0	0	550	0	Budget transferred to IJB March 2023

**EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources**

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P8	Actual P8	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
C	Support with Energy Bill Costs - £350 Payment	Alan Puckrin	2,948	3,000	2,948	2,948	0	£52k balance forms part of the £1.46million write back approved December Council.
C	Covid Recovery - Large Outdoor Festival 2022	Ruth Binks	350	350	350	350	0	Funding supported Meliora Festival, reported to September P&R - complete
C	Covid Recovery - Marketing Post & Support for Discover Inverclyde - 2 Years	Ruth Binks	142	48	52	96	46	The EMR supports a new temporary two year communications officer (tourism) post to support local delivery of tourism activity in partnership with the discover Inverclyde tourism partnership working towards the key priority areas to embed the 'discover Inverclyde' theme and call to action focussing on marketing priorities (food and drink; film and TV; outdoor activities and sports cruise ships; heritage and walking. The spend for this EMR will be 22/23 and 23/24. The two year post is funded from Nov 21 to Nov 23.
C	HR Resources	Steven McNab	92	0	0	0	92	This is Monies to fund the 2 HR employees for 2023/24. 40k has been agreed from Covid Jobs Refresh, 17k moved from L Bryceland EMR above to here. 35k moved to here from Discover Inverclyde EMR.
<b>Total Category A</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total Category B</b>			<b>8,145</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>5,626</b>	<b>2,519</b>	
<b>Total Category C to E</b>			<b>7,369</b>	<b>4,332</b>	<b>4,828</b>	<b>6,464</b>	<b>905</b>	
<b>Total CFCR</b>			<b>4,767</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,766</b>	<b>2,001</b>	
<b>Overall Total Check</b>			<b>20,281</b>	<b>4,332</b>	<b>4,927</b>	<b>14,856</b>	<b>5,425</b>	

## REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22

Period 8: 1 April 2022 - 30 November 2022

	Final Outturn 2021/22	Approved Budget 2022/23	Budget to Date 2022/23	Actual to Date 2022/23	Projected Outturn 2022/23
<b>PROPERTY COSTS</b>	<b>72,380</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>18,700</b>	<b>29,610</b>	<b>35,660</b>
Repairs & Maintenance	47,450	9,000	6,000	8,450	11,000
Rates <b>1</b>	21,720	19,000	12,700	21,160	21,160
Property Insurance	3,210	1,000	0	0	3,500
<b>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</b>	<b>15,050</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>7,700</b>
Sundries	8,850	1,500	1,000	720	1,500
Commercial Rent Management Recharge	2,200	2,200	0	0	2,200
Recharge for Accountancy	4,000	4,000	0	0	4,000
<b>OTHER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>61,500</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>45,310</b>	<b>61,500</b>
Christmas Lights Switch On	10,500	10,500	0	0	10,500
Gourock Highland Games	0	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Armistice Service	6,530	8,300	8,300	2,610	8,300
Comet Festival	0	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300
Bad Debt Provision	8,970	0	0	0	0
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>(118,620)</b>	<b>(109,800)</b>	<b>(72,900)</b>	<b>(114,710)</b>	<b>(124,300)</b>
Property Rental	(158,050)	(159,000)	(106,000)	(147,330)	(159,000)
Void Rents <b>2</b>	39,690	49,700	33,100	32,620	35,200
Internal Resources Interest	(260)	(500)	0	0	(500)
<b>NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(5,190)</b>	<b>(11,600)</b>	<b>(2,200)</b>	<b>(39,070)</b>	<b>(19,440)</b>
<b>EARMARKED FUNDS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(5,190)</b>	<b>(11,600)</b>	<b>(2,200)</b>	<b>(39,070)</b>	<b>(19,440)</b>

Fund Balance as at 31st March 2022 **105,668**Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2023 **125,110**

## 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  
14 Bay St  
6 John Wood Street  
10 John Wood Street  
15 John Wood Street

April 2015, currently being marketed  
November 2022, currently being marketed  
January 2019, currently being marketed  
August 2018  
June 2017

Policy & Resources CommitteeRevenue Budget Monitoring ReportPosition as at 30th November 2022

Committee	Approved Budget 2022/2023	Revised Budget 2022/2023	Projected Out-turn 2022/2023	Projected Over/(Under) Spend	Percentage Variance
	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	
Policy & Resources	21,692	22,643	23,684	1,041	4.60%
Environment & Regeneration	21,424	21,458	21,323	(135)	(0.63%)
Education & Communities ( <b>Note 1</b> )	99,748	96,870	97,032	162	0.17%
Health & Social Care	65,522	66,622	65,420	(1,202)	(1.80%)
<b>Committee Sub-Total</b>	<b>208,386</b>	<b>207,593</b>	<b>207,459</b>	<b>(134)</b>	<b>(0.06%)</b>
Loan Charges (Including SEMP) ( <b>Note 1</b> )	11,977	16,633	16,633	0	0.00%
Identified Savings ( <b>Note 2</b> )	39	39	(9)	(48)	0.00%
Saving Approved yet to be Allocated ( <b>Note 3</b> )	(30)	(30)	(10)	20	0.00%
Earmarked Reserves	0	1,217	1,217	0	0.00%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>220,372</b>	<b>225,452</b>	<b>225,290</b>	<b>(162)</b>	<b>(0.07%)</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates	(185,285)	(188,498)	(188,735)	(237)	0.13%
Contribution from General Reserves	(4,000)	(5,867)	(5,867)	0	100.00%
Contribution to Reserves	1,858	1,858	1,858	0	100.00%
Council Tax ( <b>Note 4</b> )	(32,945)	(32,945)	(33,545)	(600)	1.82%
Integration Joint Board - Contribution to Reserves	0	0	1,202	1,202	100.00%
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>203</b>	

**Note 1 - Reduction reflects SEMP loans charges**

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

**Note 3 - Approved savings yet to be allocated (New Ways of Working)**

**Note 4 - Based on the most recent Council Tax Base return there is an increase in the property numbers. £600k has been allocated in the 2023/25 budget process.**



**Earmarked Reserves Position Statement**

**Appendix 7**

**Summary**

<b><u>Committee</u></b>	<b><u>Total Funding 2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>Phased Budget P8</u></b>	<b><u>Actual Spend To 30 November 2022</u></b>	<b><u>Variance Actual to Phased Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Projected Spend 2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>Earmarked 2023/24 &amp; Beyond</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23 %age Spend Against Projected</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget</u></b>
	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>		
Education & Communities	20,534	9,169	9,309	140	20,098	436	46.32%	1.53%
Health & Social Care	7,559	1,182	74	(1,108)	2,499	5,060	2.96%	(93.74%)
Regeneration & Environment	11,166	683	1,595	912	4,521	6,645	35.27%	133.48%
Policy & Resources	20,281	4,332	4,927	595	14,856	5,425	33.17%	13.73%
	<b>59,540</b>	<b>15,366</b>	<b>15,905</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>41,974</b>	<b>17,566</b>	<b>37.89%</b>	<b>3.51%</b>

**Actual Spend v Phased Budget      Ahead Phasing =      £539k      3.51%**

**Last Update (Period P6)      Ahead Phasing =      £115k**

**Decrease in slippage      £424k**

**Appendix 8**

**GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION**  
**Position as at 30/11/22**

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Usable Balance 31/3/22 (Subject to Audit)		3719
<u>Available Funding:</u>		
Share of Scottish Government one off funding £120m 2022/23	<u>1858</u>	1858
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) 2022/23	(203)	
Contribution to/(from) General Fund Reserves	<u>0</u>	(203)
<u>Use of Balances:</u>		
Local Elections	(140)	
Loans Charges Funding Model (December Financial Strategy)	(1200)	
IL Smoothing Reserve (December Full Council)	<u>(400)</u>	(1740)
<u>Agreed Write back of Earmarked Reserves:</u>		
Write Back (December Full Council)		1460
		<u><u>5094</u></u>

**Minimum Reserve required is £4 million**

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN//23/MT/GS</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 2022/25 Capital Programme</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the 2022/25 Capital Programme.
- 1.3 This report advises the Committee in respect of the progress of the projects within the Policy & Resources Capital Programme. The Committee's capital budget over 2022/25 is £2.347m with total projected spend on budget. The Committee is projecting to spend £0.732m in 2022/23 after advancement of £0.200m (36.83%).
- 1.4 The overall 2022/25 Capital Programme budget is £66.055m with projects totalling £68.676m. This represents a £2.621m (3.97%) over allocation which is within the approved 5% tolerance. In the current year net slippage of £4.983m, 21.90% is being reported with expenditure at 30 November being £9.105m (51.22% of projected spend).

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position of the 2022/25 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and the current position of the 2022/25 Capital Programme.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the ongoing pressure being experienced with regards to the cost/availability of materials and the impact this continues to have on the delivery of the 2022/25 Capital Programme.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee notes that the Members Budget Working Group is developing proposals for the 2023/26 Capital Programme which will be considered as part of the overall Budget in March 2023.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 On 24 February 2022 the Council approved the 2022/25 Capital Programme as part of the overall Budget approval. This report shows the current position of the approved Policy & Resources Capital Programme as well as the position of the overall 2022/25 Capital Programme.
- 3.2 The UK exit from the EU, the impact of COVID, increased global demand for materials and most recently the impact of the conflict in Ukraine continue to have a significant impact on the delivery of the capital programme. This has been seen in recent tender exercises and is predicted to continue in the short to medium term with the following issues likely to be faced:
- Material availability issues will potentially extend lead-in/pre-site periods and/or site programmes.
  - Price volatility may lead to contractors being reluctant to hold tenders open for the normal (120 day) period currently included in the majority of Council tenders.
  - Although the market generally remains keen, there may be a move towards more selective tendering and lower number of tenders returned.
  - Tender prices are likely to increase to reflect the rising cost of materials and future uncertainty/risk.

For larger/longer term projects in particular Contractors may struggle to secure pricing from supply chain partners without inflated risk and additional contract protections

#### **2022/25 Policy & Resources Capital Position**

- 3.3 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £2.347m. The current projection is £2.347m which means total projected spend is on budget. This is a reduction in budget of £0.194m due to Covid Cost Pressure Budget having been released to fund increased costs for the Cremator replacement.
- 3.4 The budget for 2022/23 is £0.532m and the Committee is projecting to spend £0.732m in 2022/23, advancement of £0.200m (36.83%) relating mainly to the Server & Switch Replacement Programme and Rolling Replacement of PC's. The spend as at 30 November is £0.440m (60.11%) of current projection.
- 3.5 PC Refresh Programme – Phase 1 of the Schools PC Refresh programme, in conjunction with the Smartboard Refresh Programme, completed by Property Services as part of the SEMP, was completed in the October holiday week. 631 Whiteboard/Teacher Desktop PCs with laptops. The first tranche of Phase 2 replacement programme will replace 240 PCs in 1 x Business Education and 1 x Computing Science suites in each of the high schools. The remaining devices and office equipment will be addressed in Phase 2 tranche 2 in FY 2023/24. It has been agreed with Education HQ colleagues that this will be scheduled during the term time, working with the schools to ensure minimal disruption within the classroom and provide the fastest timeline for completion..
- 3.6 Server and Switch Replacement – An implementation programme to replace and expand the Corporate Network Storage system has been scoped and an order placed with suppliers to provide the services early in the new year . Deployment of core services in support of Office 365 and replacement of Virtual Server Estate. Infill of the School and Corporate Wireless network following availability and coverage surveys completed by ICT.
- 3.7 ICT & Digital Strategies – As part of New Ways of Working a programme to identify systems and services to support Hybrid Meetings has been completed. One meeting room has been equipped with equipment and is being used as the first Hybrid Meeting room outwith the Council Chambers and Board Room 1. Boardroom 2 and CSC Meeting Room 4 will have replacement screens and videoconferencing systems installed in January 2023. The Chief Executive's Meeting Room and

the HR Meeting Room have both had small room systems deployed as upgrades to existing systems.

## **2022/25 Capital Programme**

- 3.8 The Capital Programme reflects both the previously confirmed 2022/23 capital grant as well as the recently announced provisional 2023/24 capital grant. While the total grant for 2023/24 of £8.879m is significantly higher than previously estimated £6.0m this includes both the second year of the additional funding package for the Local Authority pay award (£1.872m) and an allocation for the expansion of Free School Meals (£0.928m) leaving a core grant of £6.079m. The estimated capital grant allocation for 2024/25 remains £6.0m.
- 3.9 The Scottish Government has announced additional Capital Grant funding for 2022/23 of £120m nationally as part of the funding package for the Local Authority pay award with Inverclyde's share of this being £1.867m. As a result of the increased grant Capital Funding the allocation to Capital from Revenue Reserves has been decreased by the same amount leaving no net impact on the Capital Programme.
- 3.10 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 £2.621m which represents 3.97% of the 2022/25 resources and is therefore within acceptable limits.
- 3.11 In terms of the overall Capital Programme it can be seen from Appendix 2 that as at 30 November 2022 expenditure in 2022/23 was 51.22% 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 in paragraph 3.12 of this report. Overall Committees are projecting to outturn on budget.
- 3.12 In the current year net slippage of £4.983m, (21.90%) is currently being reported. This is due to slippage within the Environment & Regeneration Committee (£3.428), Education & Communities Committee (£0.971m) and Health & Social Care Committee (£0.784m) offset by advancement within the Policy & Resources Committee (£0.200m).
- 3.13 The position in respect of individual Committees for 2022/23 is as follows:

### Policy & Resources

Expenditure as at 30 November 2022 is £0.440m against an approved budget of £0.532m.

Advancement of £0.200m (37.59%) is being reported at this stage within the Server and Switch Replacement Programme and Rolling Replacement of PC's.

### Environment & Regeneration

Expenditure as at 30 November 2022 is £5.615m against an approved budget of £16.257m. Net slippage of £3.428m (21.09%) and is mainly due to slippage in the Vehicle Replacement Program (£0.815m), Port Glasgow Lower Quarter (£0.428m), Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets budget (£0.150m), SPT (£0.400m), Cremator Replacement (£0.441m), West Blackhall Street (£0.337m), Place Based Funding (£0.500m) and other minor movements across the remaining elements of the capital programme.

### Education & Communities

Expenditure as at 30 November 2022 is £2.801m against an approved budget of £4.623m. Net slippage of £0.971m (22.72%) is being reported mainly due to slippage in the Indoor Tennis Facility (£0.503m), the Waterfront Leisure Centre Moveable Pool Floor (£0.340m) and PG New Community Hub (£0.672m) offset by advancement of Lady Alice Bowling Club (£0.130m), Leisure Pitches (£0.231m) and Gourrock Primary School Extension (£0.314m).

A report is due to be presented to Education and Communities Committee regarding the future of the Indoor Tennis Facility, an update on this will be given by officers at Committee.

Health & Social Care

Expenditure as at 30 November 2022 is £0.249m against an approved budget of £1.346m. Net slippage of £0.784m is being reported due to slippage in the New Learning Disability Facility (£0.784m).

- 3.14 It is likely 2022/23 will be another challenging year for delivery of the capital programme and while officers will endeavour to advance projects where possible to mitigate slippage it will be not be possible for officers to bring slippage back within the 10% threshold.

**4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress on the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the position of the 2022/25 Capital Programme.
- 4.2 The Members Budget Working Group is currently considering the 2023/26 Capital Programme. As previously highlighted, due to reductions in General Capital Grant and increased costs, the Programme is expected to be under significant pressure with Members needing to prioritise spend and/or allocate further resources.

**5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk	X		
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

**5.2 Finance**

One off Costs

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

### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

#### 5.3 Legal/Risk

The approved Governance documents set out the roles and responsibilities of Committees and officers in ensuring budgets are not overspent and the process to be followed in the event an overspend is unavoidable.

#### 5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

#### 5.5 Strategic

There are no Strategic implications arising from this report.

### 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been prepared based on updates to the relevant Strategic Committees.

### 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

COMMITTEE: POLICY & RESOURCES

Appendix 1

Project Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	<u>Est Total Cost</u>	<u>Actual to 31/3/22</u>	<u>Approved Budget 2022/23</u>	<u>Revised Est 2022/23</u>	<u>Actual to 30/11/22</u>	<u>Est 2023/24</u>	<u>Est 2024/25</u>	<u>Future Years</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<b><u>Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</u></b>								
<b><u>ICT</u></b>								
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	25		13	25	15	0	0	0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	442		73	442	287	0	0	0
Meeting Room, Videoconferencing & Hybrid Working Equipment	60	-	30	60	5	0	0	0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	195		26	195	133	0	0	0
Home Working Allocation	25	15	10	10		0	0	0
Annual Allocation	1,357	-	380	0		764	593	0
<b><u>ICT Total</u></b>	<b>2,104</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Finance</u></b>								
Modernisation Fund	112	112	0	0		0	0	0
Cost Pressure Contingency	131	-	0	0		131	0	0
<b><u>Finance Total</u></b>	<b>243</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,347</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>0</b>



**Appendix 2a**

Capital Programme - 2022/23 - 2024/25

Available Resources

	A	B	C	D	E
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Capital Support	8,664	8,879	6,000	-	23,543
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	67	890	315	-	1,272
Capital Grants (Note 2)	4,376	3,090	-	-	7,466
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	152	7,987	6,621	147	14,907
Balance B/F From 21/22	14,846	-	-	-	14,846
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	475	943	2,750	-	4,168
	<u>28,580</u>	<u>21,789</u>	<u>15,686</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>66,202</u>

Overall Position 2022/25

Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-C)	<u>£000</u>
Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-D)	66,055
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources	<u>68,676</u>
	<u>(2,621)</u>
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %	<u>(3.97)%</u>

**Notes to Appendix 2a**

**Note 1 (Capital Receipts)**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	15	615	315	-	945
Contributions/Recoveries	52	275	-	-	327
	67	890	315	-	1,272

**Note 2 (Capital Grants)**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Grant - Place Based Funding	584	-	-	-	584
Renewal of Play Parks	-	-	-	-	-
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	493	-	-	-	493
SPT	1,275	-	-	-	1,275
Road Safety Improvement Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Nature Restoration Fund	160	-	-	-	160
CO2 Monitors in Schools	42	-	-	-	42
Electric Vehicles	13	-	-	-	13
Sustrans	-	2,100	-	-	2,100
SFA Pitches	75	-	-	-	75
VDLIP - New Learning Disability Hub	-	990	-	-	990
RCGF - King George VI	1,734	-	-	-	1,734
	4,376	3,090	-	-	7,466

**Note 3 (Prudentially Funded Projects)**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Vehicle Replacement Programme	172	1,511	964	-	2,647
Asset Management Plan - Depots	156	303	-	-	459
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	15	138	60	147	360
CCTV	-	15	-	-	15
Clune Park Regeneration	276	-	-	-	276
Neil Street Childrens Home Replacement - CoS	13	-	-	-	13
Crosshill Childrens Home Replacement	192	50	-	-	242
New Learning Disability Facility	100	3,070	4,097	-	7,267
Interactive Whiteboard Replacement	28	-	-	-	28
Additional Prudential Borrowing to Fund Capital Programme	(1,000)	1,500	1,500	-	2,000
Additional Prudential Borrowing to meet anticipated Cost Pressures	200	1,400	-	-	1,600
	152	7,987	6,621	147	14,907

**Appendix 2b**Capital Programme - 2022/23 - 2024/25Agreed Projects

Committee	A Prior Years	B 2022/23	C 2023/24	D 2024/25	E Future	F Total	G Approved Budget	H (Under)/ Over	I 2022/23 Spend To 30/11/2022
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy & Resources	127	732	895	593	-	2,347	2,347	-	440
Environment & Regeneration	7,075	12,829	21,439	7,019	147	48,509	48,509	-	5,615
School Estate	2,423	2,388	5,834	3,000	1,001	14,646	14,646	-	1,880
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	270	1,264	2,627	170	-	4,331	4,331	-	921
HSCP	2,149	562	3,120	6,204	-	12,035	12,035	-	249
Total	12,044	17,775	33,915	16,986	1,148	81,868	81,868	-	9,105

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director, Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/08/23/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712090</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Finance Service Update</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on a number of matters being progressed by the service as follows:

- Welfare & Benefits Support,
- Discretionary Housing Payments Policy,
- Non-Domestic Rates Revaluation
- Migration to the Cloud,
- Digital Modernisation
- Adoption of the CIPFA Financial Management Code

1.3 Decisions are required in relation to the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy in Appendix 1 to be applied from January 2023 and the assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management (FM) Code in Appendix 2.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the updated DHP Policy to be applied from January 2023 and attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the officer self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code in Appendix 2 and the actions proposed to increase compliance.

2.3 It is recommended that the Committee otherwise notes the report.

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

## **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

### **3.1 Benefits & Welfare Update**

The Chancellor announced as part of the Autumn Statement a rise in most welfare benefits including the state retirement pension by September's Consumer Price Index inflation level of 10.1%. An exception is Local Housing Allowance rates for those renting in the private rented sector which will be maintained in cash terms at the 2020-2021 rates. The Deputy First Minister announced the same inflationary increase for the devolved benefits delivered by the Scottish Social Security Agency, having already increased the Scottish Child Payment to £25 in December 2022.

3.2 The Benefit Cap restricts total welfare benefit payments to £20,000 for families and £13,400 for single households without children, rising with inflation from April 2023 to £22,020 and £14,753. The Scottish Government is committed to mitigating the benefit cap as far as possible from 1 January 2023 within devolved powers by an award of Discretionary Housing Payment. Anyone eligible who applies is expected to receive the maximum amount allowed by regulations without having to prove hardship. The Council's DHP Policy has been amended to reflect the increased level of support from 75% to 100% of the lower of either the capped amount or the applicant's housing costs from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 and is found at Appendix 1. The Council's share of the Scottish Government's forecast of up to £2.6m additional costs to March 2023 is £35,850. It is unclear at present whether demand will exceed this sum.

3.3 Councils are encouraged to support capped claimants in exempting themselves from the cap. This can include securing the necessary hours of employment, or successfully applying for an exempting disability benefit. The Revenues and Benefits team routinely provides HSCP Advice Services with details of those affected who make contact with them offering advice and support.

### **3.4 DHP/SWF**

The 2022-2023 allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to help with the shortfall between rent and either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for reasons other than the Benefit Cap is £203,000 and includes a one off £36,000 redistribution of unallocated Covid-19 funding. Expenditure, excluding Benefit Cap commitments from January 2023 is projected to be £162,000. The remaining budget will be allocated to those who apply for DHP and are affected by the Benefit Cap and meet the conditions for an award under the Council's DHP Policy between April and December 2022.

3.5 Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) expenditure to December 2022 is £680,000 against the budget of £756,000. The budget is supplemented by £150,000 provided on a one off basis by the Council which will be required in full on the basis of the current level of demand. The most costly aspect of SWF is supporting applicants who meet the criteria for Community Care Grants move home. The number of social rented sector new builds planned for 2023-24 is a fraction of the number released in the current and recent years so demand for grants for that reason will reduce. The Scottish Government funding allocation remains the same for 2023-24 which does not allow for inflationary increases in grants nor an increased level of applications as a consequence of increased living costs. Officers will consider this in more detail and will report back with proposals if action is needed to ensure costs remain within available resources.

### **3.6 Other Welfare Matters**

The Self-Isolation Support Grant closed to new applications on 5 January 2023. The closure of the grant is expected to have limited impact given the decreased demand with only 17 awards being made between October and December 2022.

A new Energy Bill Support Scheme will be delivered by the service from late January 2023 in conjunction with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Online applications will open for households who are eligible for the £400 grant and have not received the equivalent funds from their utility provider to submit their details, alongside a helpline for those without online access. This is likely to include: self-funded care home residents; residents of park homes; tenants in certain private and social rented homes; homes supplied via private wires; residents of caravans and houseboats on registered sites; farmers living in domestic farmhouses; and off-grid households.

- 3.7 The Chancellor announced in the Autumn Statement that the move of approximately one million Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants onto Universal Credit (UC), including those on ESA who also claim Housing Benefit (HB) has been delayed for fiscal reasons until 2028. A consequence of the announcement is the Council's responsibility for administering Housing Benefit for 1,700 working age people who claim ESA will continue longer than expected.

### 3.8 **Social Security Scotland**

The Scottish Social Security Agency launches the Winter Heating Payment in February, replacing the Cold Weather Payment previously provided through the DWP. It will provide a £50 payment every winter to around 400,000 people in Scotland on low-incomes to help with their heating expenses. The payment will be made automatically and regardless of the temperature.

The latest published Scottish Child Payment statistics to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 show 2,510 applications have been approved with £1,808,730 being paid to Inverclyde families since the benefit commenced for the under 6 year olds in February 2021. Inverclyde's authorised applications represents 1.64% of the national total.

### 3.9 **Non-Domestic Rates**

A revaluation of non-domestic premises takes effect from 1st April 2023 and will be based on a Tone (valuation) date of 1st April 2022. Final Valuations will be sent to ratepayers in March 2023. Based on the information shared with the Council, and as covered in the Budget Update elsewhere in the agenda, the Rateable Values (RV) for many Council owned properties have increased significantly resulting in a £1.05million estimated Budget pressure.

- 3.10 In addition, it is estimated that there is a further Budget pressure arising from the inclusion of properties in public parks which were previously excluded from the valuation roll. The publication of a draft valuation roll on 30th November 2022 shows 19 premises where Inverclyde Council is proprietor with Inverclyde Leisure being the ratepayer for 11 premises, the others being mainly bowling clubs. A transitional relief scheme will be introduced to cap bills at 33% of the gross liability in 2023-24, 66% in 2024-25 and reaching 100% in 2025-26. Consideration will be given to any mandatory and discretionary reliefs due, including Small Business Bonus Scheme Relief which may meet rates liability in full for the smaller voluntary sector premises. A provisional pressure totalling £150,000 has been factored into the 2023/26 funding gap estimates.
- 3.11 Various other changes to thresholds and reliefs were advised as part of the Scottish Government Draft Budget and these will require changes to the Council's NDR system. These are being progressed in advance of Annual Billing in April/May.

### 3.12 **Migration to the Cloud**

Implementation of Microsoft 365 for Schools is complete. All of the main features including MS Teams, One Drive, Email are available for roll-out within the schools as required. Phase 1 of the Corporate Microsoft 365 implementation is complete. Final migration to cloud hosted mail and migration of mobile devices to the new platform was completed in December 22.

Core corporate services including, Legal and Democratic Service, Finance, Regeneration and Planning and Roads and Transportation have now been deployed. Phase 2 including HSCP, Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services is pending following the support of a key third party supplier. Testing integration with this system is nearing completion Elected Members will be issued new Mobile Devices to allow use of online services when convenient for them. A communications plan and a series of user guides were produced and distributed as part of the project.

### 3.13 **Digital Modernisation**

A report has been considered by the Members Budget Working Group which highlighted the strategic and operational need for a change to existing working practices, and the potential benefits of a major expansion in the use of EDRMS and a range of other digital initiatives to drive improvements in service delivery. The report recommended that a more tactical approach is taken whereby a number of Service driven digital developments are progressed at the same time as progressing smaller EDRMS projects.

The scale and speed of developments will depend upon the one off sums allocated and the report recommends that Members consider allocating a significant sum from the unallocated reserves towards this agenda as part of the current Budget deliberations.

- 3.14 To reflect the strategic and corporate priority being placed on these proposals in this it is intended that the Chief Executive chairs a Digital Transformation Board which will include representation from the 3 Directorates plus Legal, Finance and HR. This Board would review Business Cases, provide support and challenge and ensure that momentum is maintained in project delivery plus reviewing regular reports on overall progress to the Policy & Resources Committee

### 3.15 **CIPFA Financial Management Code**

In 2019, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) published the new Financial Management Code (FM Code). The Code is designed to support good practise in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. This is the first time a code has been set out with standards of financial management for local authorities. The code builds on the current CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management codes which require Local Authorities to demonstrate long term financial sustainability of their capital expenditure, associated borrowing and investments. The first full year of compliance of the Code was 2021/22. As part of the 2021/22 Annual Report from the Council's External Auditors, the need for the Council to carry out an assessment against the Code was agreed as an action.

- 3.16 The Code applies a principles-based approach, it requires the Local Authority to demonstrate that its processes satisfy the principles of good financial management depending on size of the Authority, circumstances, and responsibilities. The code has been developed around 6 principles of financial management:

- Organisational leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisational culture.
- Accountability – based on medium-term financial planning that drives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
- Financial management is undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer action and elected member decision making.

- Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
- Sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
- The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

3.17 The Code has developed 7 standards in which to the Local Authority should assess against:

- The responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer and the Leadership Team
- Governance and Financial Management style
- Long to Medium Term Financial Management
- The annual budget
- Stakeholder Engagement and Business plans
- Monitoring Financial performance
- External Financial reporting

3.18 Officers have undertaken the self-assessment against the above standards and the results can be found at appendix 2. Overall, the Council is assessed to be performing well against the standards and principles applied. There are two areas where further work is identified:

- A statement on the robustness of estimates to be included in the Budget Report.
- Reassess the current options appraisal policy and implementation against the IFAC/PAIB recommendations.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee approve the updated DHP Policy to be applied from January 2023.

4.2 It is proposed that the Committee consider the contents of the officer assessment of the Council's compliance with the CIPFA FM Code and the actions identified.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk		x	
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	x		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			x
Environmental & Sustainability			x
Data Protection			x



## 5.2 Finance

The amendment to the DHP Policy can be contained within the extra resources allocated by the Scottish Government. If it becomes apparent that expenditure cannot be contained within the allocated 2023/24 allowance. Officers will bring a report back to Committee with options for consideration.

### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Benefits	DHP Payments	22/23	£35,850		SG funding for amended Benefit cap policy

### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

## 5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

## 5.5 Strategic

The need for a robust Financial Management and Financial Sustainability framework is imperative for the delivery of the Council's Strategic objectives. Compliance with the FM Code will support the delivery of this requirement.

## 5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.
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## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The CMT have considered the officer self-assessment against the FM Code.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 CIPFA FM Code.

**DHP Policy – January 2023**

**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>
1a.	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	
1b.	Benefit Cap	Until end of financial year	100%	HB and CTR records	Increased from 75% to 100% from 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023 No requirement for a financial assessment
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	
3a.	Financial Hardship – Less than £20 income over expenditure each week	Until end of financial year	75%	Claimant statement/HB Assessment	
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	
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
- Those affected by the Benefit Cap– the lower of either the capped amount or the applicant’s housing costs as permitted by regulations.

**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.

**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 2023

**CIPFA Financial Management Code - Assessment**

	<b>FM Standard</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Assessment (RAG)</b>	<b>Further Action Proposed</b>
A	The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the authority provide value for money.	Value for Money underpins decisions taken by the Council. Business cases and reports consider VFM. Evidence can be seen in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and Key Performance Indicators. Key Performance Indicators included in the annual accounts management commentary.	Green	<b>None</b>
B	The authority complies with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government.	The CFO complies with the 5 key principles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFO is a key member of the Corporate Management Team,</li> <li>• the CFO bears influence via the CMT, MBWG, JBG to ensure decisions align with the Financial Strategy.</li> <li>• CFO leads in the preparation of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFS).</li> <li>• Leads and directs on the Finance function</li> <li>• and is professionally qualified.</li> </ul> The statement of responsibilities and Annual Governance Statement in the annual accounts confirms compliance.	Green	<b>None</b> Note, the FM code states the CFO should report directly to CEO or equivalent. This will be permanently effective from April 2023.
C	The leadership team demonstrates in its actions the behaviours responsibility for governance and internal control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership team follows and demonstrates the Nolan principles per the FM Code.</li> <li>• The Leadership team follows the Council code of conduct. There is a Code of Conduct for employees and members.</li> <li>• The authority demonstrates governance and internal control,</li> </ul>	Green	<b>None</b>

	FM Standard	Evidence	Assessment (RAG)	Further Action Proposed
		<p>financial regulations are updated every 4 years as well as a Corporate Governance Policy. These are approved at Council after each revision. Documents held and linked to the Finance system detailing authorisation limits of the leadership team. Budget delegation responsibilities are communicated via appraisal process and budget process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has a separate Audit Committee chaired by a member of the non-administration group.</li> <li>• Audit actions reviewed each cycle.</li> </ul> <p>The Annual Governance Statement in the annual accounts confirms compliance.</p>		
D	The authority applies the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016).	This can be demonstrated in the Annual Governance Statement.	Green	None
E	The financial management style of the authority supports financial sustainability.	<p>The Council has in place an effective framework of financial accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bimonthly revenue and capital reports to Committee.</li> <li>• Bimonthly key financial risks areas reported to CMT.</li> <li>• Annual budget process based on bottom-up employee budget calculations for key risk areas.</li> <li>• Budget process includes identification of other budget pressures.</li> </ul>	Green	None

	FM Standard	Evidence	Assessment (RAG)	Further Action Proposed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital and Treasury management strategy reported annually and is continually reviewed on a risk basis.</li> <li>MTFP linked directly to annual budget process.</li> <li>Finance team are key in developing of strategic and operational plans.</li> <li>Directorate Plans leading into the Council Corporate Plan</li> </ul>		
F	The authority has carried out a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment.	<p>The FM Code refers to factors that helps assess financial resilience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting routine financial management right</li> <li>Planning and managing capital resources well</li> <li>Using performance information affectively</li> <li>Have clear plans for delivering savings</li> <li>Managing reserves well</li> </ul> <p>The Council has measures in place to cover all of these, however, the guidance states that a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment should be completed.</p>	Green	<p><b>None.</b></p> <p>No further action proposed. External Auditors carry out financial resilience assessment as part of the Annual Audit report.</p> <p>Best practise recommends an external peer review, but this is not deemed necessary at this point.</p>
G	The authority understands its prospects for financial sustainability in the longer term and has reported this clearly to members.	The Council understands the risk to its financial sustainability, and this is presented in the Finance Strategy. The strategy covers the medium to long term. The strategy covers scenario planning on a worst- and best-case scenario. The Strategy is reported to the CMT and Committee every 6 months.	Green	<b>None</b>

	FM Standard	Evidence	Assessment (RAG)	Further Action Proposed
		Potentially, the Strategy may need to consider the results of the Financial Resilience Assessment.		
H	The authority complies with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authority.	<p>The Council follows the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance. Capital Strategy is prepared and reviewed annually, prudential indicators are set and in line with the Prudential Code. Capital programme is reviewed in line with the indicators three times per year as part of the Treasury Strategy and presented to Committee.</p> <p>Asset Management Plans are in place for the Council's key assets.</p>	Green	None
I	The authority has a rolling multi-year medium-term financial plan consistent with sustainable service plans.	The Council has a MTFP (Finance Strategy) which is prepared and presented to Council every 6 months. It covers service plans, asset management plans, funding models.	Green	None
J	The authority complies with its statutory obligations in respect of the budget setting process.	The Council is aware of its statutory obligations for the annual budget setting process. This is demonstrated by regular reports to Committee and the approval of the annual budget at Council. The Council set a balanced budget for 2022/23 in February 2022.	Green	None
K	The budget report includes a statement by the chief financial officer on the robustness of the estimates and a statement on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.	Budget report is required to include a statement by the CFO on the robustness of the estimates and a statement of the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves, the Council needs to implement statement.	Amber	<b>Action:</b> Develop a statement to be included in each budget report to Committee.



	FM Standard	Evidence	Assessment (RAG)	Further Action Proposed
		Reports currently set out Council reserves position and whether they are sufficient to ensure financial sustainability.		
L	The authority has engaged where appropriate with key stakeholders in developing its long term financial strategy, medium term financial plan and annual budget.	The Council is aware of the key stakeholders. Engagement is undertaken with the Community as part of the annual budget setting process which feeds directly into the Financial Strategy. The Financial Strategy use the Councils core Strategic Plan as well as information from the Scottish Government and the Director of Finance publications by John McLaren.	Green	None
M	The authority uses an appropriate documented option appraisal methodology to demonstrate the value for money of its decisions.	The Council developed a draft options appraisal policy in May 2022. A review is required of this as it potentially is not consistent with the IFAC/PAIB publication <b><i>Project and Investment Appraisal for Sustainable Value Creation: Principles in Project and Investment Appraisal.</i></b> The policy requires techniques for qualitative and quantitative assessments. The current policy covers risk.	Amber	<p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy needs reviewed and adopted,</li> <li>• Guidance developed and circulated when options appraisal should be undertaken.</li> <li>• Needs a process in place that option appraisal results are reported clearly to CMT.</li> </ul> <p>Link to Annual Governance Statement.</p>
N	The leadership team takes action using reports enabling it to identify and correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability.	Both Revenue and Capital reports are reported to the CMT prior to Committee submission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports as well as key budget line areas and earmarked reserve positions are reported timeously and bimonthly to Senior Management.</li> </ul>	Green	None

	FM Standard	Evidence	Assessment (RAG)	Further Action Proposed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information includes projections for the year and prior year performance</li> <li>Includes outturn on contract monitoring with partnerships.</li> <li>All reports incorporate financial implications, legal implications, and strategic implications.</li> </ul> <p>Governance reports are submitted to Committee regarding performance of partnership contract agreements.</p>		
O	The leadership team monitors the elements of its balance sheet that pose a significant risk to its financial sustainability.	<p>The leadership team monitor key risk areas on the balance sheet via implemented policies, reports, and strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed assets are managed via the Asset Management Plan reported to Committee, included within the MTFP.</li> <li>Debtors – The Council produces an annual corporate debt report.</li> <li>Treasury policy covering cash management and investment and regular reports to Committee.</li> <li>Service Concession arrangements are reviewed and included within the MTFP.</li> <li>Reserves policy covering the process of creating new reserves, the reserves position is reported to Committee and performance against earmarked reserves are reported bimonthly to the CMT.</li> </ul>	Green	<b>None</b>
P	The Chief Financial Officer has personal and statutory responsibility for ensuring that the statement of accounts produced by the local authority complies with the reporting	CFO is aware of statutory responsibilities, and this is covered in the Statement of Responsibilities in the Annual Accounts.	Green	<b>None</b>

	<b>FM Standard</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Assessment (RAG)</b>	<b>Further Action Proposed</b>
	requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.			
Q	The presentation of the final outturn figures and variations from budget allows the leadership team to make strategic financial decisions.	The CMT receive Revenue and Capital outturn reports in line with the Committee cycle. The also receive reports on the key risk areas that can impact on financial sustainability every 2 months. A final outturn report is reported to Policy & Resources Committee and the Service Committees, information from these leads into decisions taken as part of the annual budget process.	Green	<b>None</b>

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/01/23/MR</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</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 AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 This report provides the Committee with an update on several performance and policy matters relating to:

- A corporate approach to national awards;
- Equalities; and
- Results from the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2022 Survey.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

3.1 A Corporate Policy and Performance update report is considered at every meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

### **3.2 CORPORATE APPROACH TO AWARDS**

3.3 Key national awards for local government include APSE, LGC and COSLA. Gaining this external recognition can increase the profile of a Council, benchmark best practice and boost morale.

These operate alongside more specific awards and recognition processes in which the Council has had success in 2021-22 such as Scottish Library and Information Council Awards, Food for Life Served Here award, Digital Telecare Implementation Award and Rights Respecting Schools Awards.

3.4 The Corporate Management Team have agreed to adopt a corporate approach towards submissions for national awards to ensure that opportunities aren't missed, the quality of submissions is high and multiple Inverclyde submissions aren't being made for one category. This will involve support by the Corporate Policy Team and review by the CMT.

### **3.5 EQUALITIES**

3.6 As Members will be aware, a number of budget saving proposals were considered at the meeting of Inverclyde Council on 15 December 2022, 25 of which have related Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) (nine from the Environment, Regeneration and Resources Directorate and 16 from Education, Communities and Organisational Development Directorate). All these documents, together with a Fairer Scotland Duty Statement (FSD) on the Council's Revenue Budget 2023/25, are available to view on the Council's website:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-budget-2023-25>

Further savings will be considered in March 2023. Corresponding EIAs and a FSD Statement will also be published for these, as appropriate.

3.7 Elected Members and Officers were invited to a briefing on 30 November 2022 on the topic of gender-based budgeting. Facilitated by the Scottish Women's Budget Group, the session covered what gender-based budgeting is, how it can be used and what it aims to achieve. The briefing was well attended by both Elected Members and Officers.

### **3.8 CITIZENS' PANEL AUTUMN 2022 SURVEY**

3.9 The Citizens' Panel Autumn 2022 Survey focused on the following topics: Covid-19 recovery – Inverclyde Council events and initiatives; Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 and Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33; and digital inclusion.

3.10 The response rate to the Survey was approximately 63%.

#### **3.11 Covid-19 recovery – Inverclyde Council events and initiatives**

3.12 We introduced the first part of the Survey by advising Panel members that the Council provided a number of new and additional services to support local residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The top three services that respondents used were: food deliveries for vulnerable residents – 7%; health and social care support for extremely vulnerable local residents, including those on the *shielding* list – 5%; and the telephone helpline to support residents in need (in partnership with CVS Inverclyde) – 4%.

- 3.13 Just over half (51%) of Panel members said they were satisfied with the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a very small number (9%) said they were dissatisfied, while 40% chose the *neither/nor* option in response to this question.
- 3.14 Around two thirds (63%) of respondents said they have been well supported by the Council during the pandemic. Where Panel members (37%) indicated that they did not feel well supported by the Council during the pandemic, they were asked to indicate what else they thought could have been done. There were a range of responses to this question including improved communication, stronger enforcement of Covid-19 related rules, and different approaches to closing services.
- 3.15 We then advised respondents that the Covid-19 section of the Council's website has links to essential public health information, including NHS Inform and Public Health Scotland, as well as updates on services in Inverclyde and details of support and advice for businesses and residents. Just over a third (38%) of Panel members told us they had looked at the Covid-19 information on the website and, on the whole, most people (84%) who had done so said they found it helpful.
- 3.16 The top three challenges that respondents faced during the pandemic were: concerns about my family and friends being exposed to Covid-19 – 69%; concerns about being exposed to Covid-19 – 55%; and my or others' adherence to safety measures (handwashing/sanitising; physical/social distancing; enhanced cleaning requirements) – 43%.
- 3.17 Service commentary: Covid-19 recovery – Inverclyde Council events and initiatives

It is pleasing to note that more half (51%) of Panel members were satisfied with the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and that approximately two thirds (63%) of respondents felt they had been well supported by the Council during that time. Similarly, of the Panel members who had looked at the Covid-19 section on the Council's website, the majority (84%) found the information helpful.

3.18 Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 and Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33

We introduced the second part of the questionnaire by informing the Panel that the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22 sets out the ways in which the Council aims to deliver better outcomes for the people of Inverclyde. We explained that the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 sets out the outcomes that Partnership Planning Partners in Inverclyde, known at the Inverclyde Alliance, seek to improve and which should, in turn, improve the wellbeing and quality of life of the residents of Inverclyde.

- 3.19 We also told the Panel that the Council (and its Partners) need to devise new versions of both Plans and that we would like their views on what should be included in the documents.
- 3.20 Respondents were firstly asked what one thing would make the biggest difference to Inverclyde. The main issues raised were: increasing the number and quality of employment opportunities; improved access to suitable and affordable housing; addressing anti-social behaviour; and improving town centres, including retail and shopping provision.
- 3.21 The Panel was then asked what key policy areas they think the Council, our Partners and communities should develop to make the biggest difference in Inverclyde. The top three responses to this question were: increasing employment levels – 67%; supporting the creation of good jobs with fair pay and conditions – 47%; and reducing drugs and alcohol misuse – 42%.
- 3.22 When asked about the current shared vision across the Council and community in the local area - *Getting it right for every child, citizen and community in Inverclyde* – 86% of Panel members said they agreed with it.

3.23 Service commentary: Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 and Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33

The questions posed in the Citizens' Panel are consistent with those that were included in the wider public consultation and the Inverclyde Council Employee Survey 2022. The responses from all three surveys therefore allow us to collate common themes, and this is being compiled in an overall Council and Partnership Plan Consultation Report. This will be used to inform the Council and the Inverclyde Alliance's decision making process on the priorities within these strategic plans in early 2023.

3.24 Digital inclusion

The final section of the Survey centred on the topic of digital inclusion. We introduced this part of the questionnaire by saying that the internet and access to technology are now a huge part of everyday life for many people, both at home and in the workplace, and that we wanted to ask Panel members' views on digital inclusion.

3.25 Ninety-four per cent of respondents told us they have access to the internet at home. The top three devices Panel members use to access the internet at home are: mobile 'phone – 45%; laptop – 32%; and tablet – 27%.

3.26 When asked if they have used the IT facilities at a number of Council buildings, the responses were: library – 29%; school – 15%; and community hub – 12%. Twenty-nine per cent of Panel members also told us that they use the internet to assist with their child's education.

3.27 When asked about their preferred methods of interacting with the Council, the top four responses from Panel members were: telephone – 72%; face-to-face – 66%; Council website – 60%; and email – 57%.

3.28 The next two questions were about the format of Council Tax Bills. Three quarters of Citizens' Panel members receive their Council Tax Bills by post. Just under half (46%) of those respondents said they would be interested in receiving their Council Tax Bill electronically, an increase of 3% from when the question was posed to Panel members in 2018.

3.29 Finally, respondents were asked whether they had heard of *MyAccount*, a simple and secure sign-in service which allows people to set up an on-line account to access the range of public services provided by Councils, the NHS, the Scottish Government and other public service bodies. When asked about awareness of and use of *MyAccount*, the responses were:

	<b>Autumn 2022</b> %	<b>Spring 2018</b> %
I am aware of it and have registered	18	2
I am aware of it but have not registered yet	12	4
I am aware of it but do not plan on registering	9	10
I am not aware of it	61	84.

3.30 Service commentary – digital inclusion

The results from digital inclusion section of the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2022 Survey confirm the Council's understanding of the levels of availability and uptake of internet-based services within the local community. The use of mobile 'phones and tablets is by far the main source of access which confirms the continued move from traditional PC-based devices.

These results will be fed into an updated Customer Services Strategy and will be used as further evidence to support the current ICT and Digital Strategies which aim to provide a wider range of options to interact with the Council, while retaining as many of the existing channels as possible.

The results also have relevance to the Council's Communication Strategy 2023/25 and will inform how we can best ensure residents can easily access services.

Education Services, aware of the wider Council Digital Access Strategy, has considered its operations and the different methodologies required to deliver remote learning and blended learning. Ultimately, in response to the Digital Access Strategy, a new service Digital Learning Strategy has been created which is available to view here:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2393> (agenda item 13).

It is designed to improve the ability of early learning and childcare establishments and schools to work more responsively, flexibly and effectively through the use of digital devices and platforms.

Finally, it is pleasing to note the generally positive direction of travel around Panel members' awareness/use of *MyAccount*, this may be partially attributable to the behaviour change resulting from the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic when people were initially encouraged to minimise face-to-face interaction in the interest of public health.

### 3.31 Members' Briefing

A briefing on the results of the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2022 Survey and the Council's Employee Survey 2022 has been arranged for Elected Members.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee note the latest updates relating to the area of Corporate Policy and Performance.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

### 5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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					

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### 5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

### 5.5 Strategic

The issues referred to within this report are of relevance to the following Corporate Plan priorities:

Organisational Priority 1: To promote Inverclyde to both residents and visitors alike, as a great place to live, work, study and visit.

Organisational Priority 2: To work collaboratively to enable strong, connected and empowered communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that residents have influence and control over the things that matter to them.

Organisational Priority 9: To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director, Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/03/23/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712090</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>2023/25 Budget Update</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an update of the latest position of the 2023/25 Revenue Budget post the Scottish Government's Draft Budget announcement and to seek decisions on a number of matters.

1.3 Appendix 1 provides an analysis of the Revenue Grant settlement for Inverclyde Council and from this it can be seen that Inverclyde received a £0.96million (0.5%) net increase in grant once specifically directed sums/ new burdens are accounted for. This is partly offset by an expected reduction in previously received funding for the 2021/22 Teachers Pay Award.

1.4 The impact of the recent 2023 Non-Domestic Rates revaluation is explained in more detail within the report along with changes to the current appeals process. As things stand the NDR liability for Council owned properties is estimated to have increased by up to £1.2million.

1.5 Elsewhere on the agenda the potential one-off and recurring savings arising from the Service Concession Accounting Review are detailed. This report has been prepared on the basis that officer proposals on this matter are approved. This and other adjustments are detailed in Appendix 2 and the latest estimated remaining funding gap is shown in Appendix 3.

1.6 The Members Budget Working Group (MBWG) have commenced consideration of the use of any unallocated reserves and make up the 2023/26 Capital Programme. Updates on both these matters are included in the report and will be considered by the Council no later than the 2 March 2023.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the impact of the Draft Scottish Government Budget Settlement on the figures previously advised to Members as set out in Appendices 1 and 3.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee approve the adjustments/savings shown in Appendix 2, subject to the Council approving the Service Concession proposal at the 16 February 2023 meeting.

- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee approves the inclusion of £1.2million for increased Non-Domestic Rates as a new Budget pressure within the 2023/25 Budget and note that officers are engaging with the Assessor in order attempt to reduce this significant increase in liability.
- 2.4 It is recommended that the Committee agrees to cancel plans for a £235,000 loan to Inverclyde Leisure and to fully fund the Moveable Pool Floor from the Capital Programme.
- 2.5 It is recommended that the Committee notes the recommendation to the Education & Communities Committee not to proceed with the Indoor Tennis facility at Rankin Park and agree that, in the event this recommendation is approved by the Education & Communities Committee, the unallocated Council contribution of £740,000 is removed from the Communities Capital Programme.
- 2.6 It is recommended that the Committee otherwise notes the on going work taking place within the MBWG on a number of aspects of the Budget which will be drawn together as part of the overall Budget proposal to be presented to the 2 March 2023 Council.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 On the 15 December the Council approved £2.559million of service specific savings plus a further £1.14million of savings/adjustments. This reduced the pre-Scottish Government Budget announcement/Council Tax decision funding gaps to £6.73million (2023/24) and £6.02million (2024/25) respectively.

#### **Draft Scottish Government Budget**

- 3.2 The Deputy First Minister presented the Draft 2023/24 Budget to the Scottish Parliament on 15 December and Elected members received a briefing from the Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Government on the main factors impacting on Local Government and specifically the Inverclyde Council Grant Settlement on 22 December. The main matters highlighted were:
- The Inverclyde Grant settlement represented an approximate £0.96million increase in core grant after adjusting for ring fenced/directed funding or funding which is already funding 2022/23 commitments such as the 2022/23 pay award,
  - Empty Property Relief for non-domestic rates has, as expected, been devolved to Councils who will now be able to determine local policies and hence either give increased levels of relief or reduce/amend the level of reliefs with the consequent financial implications;
  - Councils need to increase their contributions to their IJBs by at least their share of £95million increased Social Care funding, £100 million of which remains to be distributed,
  - Councils have full flexibility when setting the level of Band D Council Tax for 2023/24
  - After adjusting for extra Capital Grant to fund the 2022/23 pay award and the expansion of P6/7 universal free school meals, capital funding at a Scotland wide level is effectively “flat cash”
- 3.3 A specific issue in relation to £32.8 million allocated in 2021/22 & 2022/23 to part fund the 2021/22 Teachers Pay Award. The report has been prepared on the basis that this funding (£488,000) will not be received in 2023/24.
- 3.4 Committee should note that the Scottish Budget is currently in draft form and is undergoing parliamentary scrutiny prior to the Parliament approving the Local Government Finance Order which is expected later in February. As a result, the figures included in this report may change.

#### **Non-Domestic Rates Revaluation**

- 3.5 The draft Rateable Values (RVs) relating to the April 2023 Revaluation have been issued by the Assessor. There has been a considerable increase in the RVs for many of the main Council properties especially schools as well as the addition of many properties within parks which were previously excluded from the Valuation Roll. This latter issue relates to a recommendation arising from the Barclay review of NDR. Initial analysis estimates a £1.2million increase in the Council and the Inverclyde Leisure NDR liability. Officers are currently looking at potential reliefs to reduce the increase in relation to those properties within parks.
- 3.6 Previously the Council would have appealed increases which they believed were unreasonable and this appeal would have been considered by the Valuation Appeals Committee over 2023/25. The Scottish Government have written to councils advising that this past practice does not represent best value for the public purse and as such Councils need to resolve any issues with RVs prior to 31 March 2023. If after that date a council has a successful appeal, then the Scottish Government Grant funding will be reduced commensurately. This clearly greatly reduces any incentive for the Council to appeal and leaves the Council heavily reliant on the Assessor having arrived at fair and robust valuations at the first time of asking.

3.7 It is expected that this change in the appeals process and the above inflation RV increases being experienced will be part of the on- going discussions between Cosla and the Scottish Government over coming weeks/months but as things stand, represents a major new 2023/24 Budget pressure.

**Members Budget Working Group**

3.8 The MBWG have continued to meet weekly and in addition to reviewing officer savings options have been considering the potential uses for the significant level of unallocated reserves, the 2023/26 Capital Programme, the Councils potential contribution to the IJB and options in respect of Council Tax.

3.9 Specifically, as part of an initial review of the Capital Programme, and after taking into account the major increase in Council funding towards Inverclyde Leisure (IL), the MBWG agreed that it was no longer practical for IL to pay £235,000, funded by a loan from the Council, towards the planned Moveable Pool Floor within the Waterfront Leisure Complex. On the basis that the project remains in the 2023/26 Capital Programme then this will increase the over provision of projects by £235,000.

3.10 At the Education & Communities Committee on 24 January, a report was presented with a recommendation from the MBWG that, due to the Council’s considerable financial pressures and the shortfall in funding of between £0.6-£1.6million, the planned Indoor Tennis facility at Rankin Park no longer proceeds.

**4.0 PROPOSALS**

4.1 Appendix 1 details the calculation of the unallocated sum of £960,000 in the draft 2023/24 Inverclyde Council Revenue Grant settlement.

4.2 Officers continue to develop proposals to reduce the funding gap and two such proposals relating to Service Concession Accounting and NDR Empty Property Relief are included elsewhere in the agenda and summarised in Appendix 2.

4.3 It is proposed that the new budget pressure of £1.2million arising from the 2023 NDR revaluation is included within the 2023/25 Budget and that the non-inclusion of £488,000 in relation to the 2021/22 Teachers Pay Award is noted.

4.4 It is proposed to no longer give a £235,000 loan to IL to part fund the Moveable Pool Floor in the Waterfront Leisure Complex and that the project forms part of the 2023/26 Capital Programme funded from Council resources.

4.5 Subject to the decision of the Education & Communities Committee, it is proposed that the Indoor Tennis facility at Rankin Park is removed from the 2022/25 Capital Programme along with the remaining £740,000 funding.

**5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk	x		

Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	x		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			x
Environmental & Sustainability			x
Data Protection			x

## 5.2 Finance

Appendix 3 shows the 2023/25 updated Revenue funding gap on the basis of the draft Scottish Government settlement and that the proposals in this report are approved. From this it can be seen that the estimated remaining funding gap in 2023/24 is £4.32million with an estimated funding gap for 2024/25 of a further £6.12million.

### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Indoor Tennis Facility	Communities Capital	22/24	(£740)k		Funding removed from the Capital Programme (Subject to confirmation)
Waterfront Moveable Pool Floor		23/24	£235k		Replacement of loan with direct capital funding

### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Various	NDR	23/24	£1.2million		Estimated impact of 23/24 Revaluation. Phased £1.0m (23/24), £0.1m (24/25) £0.1m (25/26)
Various	Various	23/24	(£1.940) million		Savings in Appendix 2

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

It can be seen from Appendix 3 that there are sufficient savings options for the Council to set a legally balanced budget in 2023/24 irrespective of the level of Council Tax agreed.

## 5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR issues arising from this report, but regular meetings of the Joint Budget Group are continuing in relation to the remaining savings options.

## 5.5 Strategic

Budget decisions take into account the Council's strategic priorities and the Budget approved on 2 March 2023 will help shape the Council's strategic plans which are currently under review.

## 5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report is supported by the CMT and the recommendations are agreed by the MBWG.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1

2023/26 Settlement Assessment - As at 10.1.23

	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
2023/24 Grant Settlement 11/22 -Issued 10.1.23		199.165
2022/23 Grant Settlement 1/22 (March 2022)		196.600
Increased Grant Funding		<u>2.565</u>
<u>Directed/Committed new Requirements</u>		
<u>General</u>		
£140m - 2022/23 Pay Award	2.167	
£105m - NDR Empty Property Relief	0.788	
£5.7m - DHP	0.079	
£2.4m - Local Heat and Energy Strategy	0.075	
(£6.0m)- Child Abuse Redress Topslice	(0.087)	
£9.6m - Other Under £50k	0.015	3.037
<u>HSCP</u>		
£15m - FPNC Inflation	0.218	
£100m - £10.90/hour Living Wage	tbc	
(£20m) - Interim Care (Removed)	(0.329)	
£1.3m Scottish Disability administration	0.026	
£7m Homelessness	0.031	
£32m - Whole Family Well Being Fund	0.421	0.367
<u>Education</u>		
£17.5m - P6/7 Universal FSM	0.301	
£10.0m - Increased PEF specific grant	0.230	
(£9.1m) - Reduced 1140 hours specific grant	(0.320)	
(1.2m) - Stop 1 + 2 Languages Funding	(0.016)	0.195
<u>Sums in 1/2022 not in 11/2022</u>		
(£68.2m) - Child Bridging Payments	(0.787)	
(£66.6m) - DHP	(1.207)	(1.994)
Total Directed Funding changes		<u>1.605</u>
Increase in unallocated Funding	£	<u>0.960</u>

Notes

1. This is compared to a £1.0m cash cut in the Budget Strategy.
2. Assumes 1140 ELC Budget is reduced by £320k in 2023/24.
3. £100m for £10.90/hour Living Wage is currently held back. Distribution to be confirmed.

AP/LA  
11/1/23



**2023/25 Budget**  
**January Policy & Resources Committee- Savings/Adjustments**

	Savings 2023/24 £000	Savings 2024/25 £000	Comments	FTE
<b>ERR</b>				
1/ Charging for street numbering	2	2	New income stream approved January Environment & Regeneration Committee	0
2/				
<b>ECOD</b>				
1/				0
2/				0
<b>HSCP</b>				
1/				
<b>Corporate</b>				
1/ NDR Empty Property Relief	288	288	See report elsewhere on the agenda. Assumes Council will mirror current Scottish Government EPR Policy for 2023/24 pending review for 2024/25	0
2/ Service Concession Accounting Review (Subject to confirmation by 16.2.23 Council)	1650	1650	See report elsewhere on the agenda. Reflects move to a 45 year annuity in accounting for the 4 PPP schools	0
3/				0
4/				0
5/				
<b>Total</b>	1940	1940		0

10/01/23

**2023/25 Estimated Funding Gap post Draft Settlement**

	2023/24 <u>£000</u>	2024/25 <u>£000</u>
Gap per December Financial Strategy	9508	6675
15 December Council Decisions:		
IL Utilities 23/24	270	0
Savings/Adjustments	-1140	0
Member Savings	-1908	-651
<b>Balance Remaining Post 15.12.22</b>	<u>6730</u>	<u>6024</u>
NDR Revaluations/Parks Properties	1000	100 NOTE1
Withdrawal of 21/22 Teachers Pay Support	488	0 NOTE2
Appendix 2 Proposals	-1940	0
Settlement Impact	<u>-1960</u>	<u>0</u>
	4318	6124
Council Tax increase(£330k/1%)	tbc	tbc
Remaining Savings Options	-6026	-2660

## Notes

1. Total estimated cost is £1.2million phased over 2023/26. Further £100k pressure in 2025/26
2. Teachers 2021/22 Pay funding of £488,000 was paid from outwith the Settlement.

AP- 16.01.23

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director, Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/01/23/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712223</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Service Concession Flexibility - Accounting Change Proposal</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to highlight the significant financial benefits to the Council over the medium to longer term of a proposed change to the accounting treatment of the Council's Schools PPP (Service Concession) contract following the issuing of revised accounting guidance by the Scottish Government.
- 1.3 As part of the Financial Flexibilities raised with the Scottish Government in 2020 arising from the significant financial pressures faced by Councils during Covid, it was agreed that Councils could decide in either 2022/23 or 2023/24 that the accounting for PPP contracts could be reviewed to better align the costs being incurred by Councils with the life of the asset being paid for in these contracts. Inverclyde has one such contract, the e4i schools PPP contract.
- 1.4 Officers have developed a proposal based on Local Government Finance Circular 10/2022 issued on 6 September 2022 and the details are contained in the body of the report along with the potential financial implications. Whilst in the immediate and medium term financial gains are significant and will be very welcome in the context of the financial challenges facing the Council, it is important that Members consider the longer term implications and recognise this proposal represents a one off benefit, the use of which needs to be carefully considered.
- 1.5 In line with the Finance Circular, any proposal will require approval by the Full Council.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the flexibility offered by Finance Circular 10/2022, the officer proposal contained in section 4 of the report and the potential financial implications.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the longer term implications, including the affordability assessment outlined in Section 5.2 and Appendix 3.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee approve the proposal contained in section 4 of the report and note that any decision to implement the proposal will require to be approved at the next meeting of the Council.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Council entered into a 30 year PPP contract with e4i in 2008 to build 4 schools. The Council pays an annual sum called the Unitary Charge to e4i which covers the capital cost of the buildings, facilities management costs, cyclical repairs, financing costs and a number of other costs such as insurance.
- 3.2 As part of the financial arrangement, the Scottish Government committed to pay £6.066million for 30 years towards the Unitary Charge which, in the first full year was £8.842million. The contract contains an indexation clause which sets the annual indexation as 2/3rds of the December RPI. In 2022/23 the Unitary Charge now sits at £10.835million.
- 3.3 The PPP contract is viewed as a Service Concession arrangement which has specific accounting requirements. However, as part of discussions between the Scottish Government and Cosla in 2020 during the early days of the Covid Pandemic it was agreed to investigate whether the accounting for Service Concessions could be reviewed in order to better reflect the expected life of the asset created which could generate a potential one off and/or recurring sum to be used to mitigate the impact of Covid on Council budgets.
- 3.4 This proposal got bogged down in a separate but related issue to do with a review of Capital Accounting and the current Statutory Mitigations which result in Council Budgets reflecting loans charges rather than depreciation and there have been several updates to Cosla Leaders over the last two years regarding developments. In the summer of 2022, the guidance regarding Accounting for Service Concessions was signed off and Finance Circular 10/2022 was issued on 6 September.
- 3.5 The Committee should note that this flexibility is temporary and needs to be approved and implemented in either 2022/23 or 2023/24.
- 3.6 Having reviewed the circular within the Accountancy team, it is the view of the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance that this flexibility potentially affords a major one off and recurring financial benefit which in the context of the significant Revenue, Capital and Reserves budgetary pressures should be seriously considered by Elected Members.
- 3.7 It is important that Members note that the foregoing proposal, if supported by the Policy & Resources Committee will require formal approval by the Full Council.
- 3.8 Advice and support regarding this issue has been received from the Directors of Finance Section, Scottish Government officials and the Council's Treasury Consultants, Link.

### **4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 It is proposed that rather than the Council Budget reflecting the repayment of the capital investment in building the schools over 30 years as per the PPP contract, the Council account for this over a 45 year period. This compares to the current practice of writing off a Council funded new build school over 40 years. The reason for the extended life of a PPP school are the level of maintenance obligations reflected in the PPP contract.
- 4.2 In line with the current approved policy in relation to loans charges principal repayments, it is proposed that the 45 year repayment is made on an annuity basis rather than a fixed principal basis. Officers believe the overall annual cost of the annuity method better reflects the benefits received by the Council from the capital investment in the schools. Additionally, a Net Present Value (NPV) analysis shows a consistent net annual cost.

- 4.3 Officers have calculated that the principal repayments from 2009/10 to 2022/23 total £22.219 million. Based on the proposed 45 year annuity repayment then the principal repayments would be £7.471 million by 31 March 2023. This represents a one -off cost non-cash backed increase in reserves of £14.748 million which could be applied to the 2023/24 accounts.
- 4.4 It is important that the Committee understand that payments to e4i and grant payments from the Scottish Government will not be affected and will continue until 2039/40. This proposal represents a “non-cash” increase in the Council’s Reserves which will require the Council to use cash balances when spending the sums generated and will need to be managed within the overall Treasury Management Strategy of the Council.
- 4.5 Due to the 15 year extension to the principal repayment period then there is an on going revenue saving over the period 2023/24 to 2039/40 in addition to the one off sum referred to in paragraph 4.3 above. The amount saved each year varies from year to year due to the nature of the PPP principal payments profile. Over the next 5 years it is proposed to generate a fixed saving of £1.65million / year. To achieve this £600,000 smoothing reserve will be required.
- 4.6 Appendix 1 shows the estimated savings/costs over the period to the final potential repayment in 2053/54. From this it can be seen that based on a 3.5% NPV the net financial benefit of the proposal is £18.31million. Appendix 2 shows how the 5 year saving and smoothing reserve is calculated.
- 4.7 The affordability of the proposals in this report needs to be considered especially in the longer term when the Scottish Government grant stops, these are outlined in paragraph 5.2 below.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk	x		
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	x		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing			x
Environmental & Sustainability			x
Data Protection			x

## 5.2 Finance

Understandably the proposal will appear very attractive to Members given the significant financial pressures faced by the Council and the time limited period which Councils can take advantage of this flexibility. It is important however that as part of the overall consideration, Members are aware of the longer term financial implications.

Taking a prudent view, it is estimated that by 2039/40 the Unitary Charge payment will be around £15.5million. At this time the Scottish Government support will stop leaving a net Council contribution of around £9.4million of which £7.3million will be included in the Council Budget. From this sum the Council will require to fund the running costs previously paid by e4i for the 4

schools plus the deferred principal repayments which, as can be seen from Appendix 1 get as high as £4.8million in 2053/54.

When added to the estimated running costs of the four schools (suitably indexed) and the loss of investment income arising from the expending of £14.7 million “non-cash” reserves then, as can be seen from Appendix 3, the proposal is affordable and leaves some scope for reinvestment in the school estate.

#### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Reserves	General Fund	2023/24	(£14.748) million		One off back dated adjustment based on the proposal in this report.
	SCA Smoothing Reserve	From 2023/24	£0.602million		Time limited reserve per Appendix 2 to generate a £1.65million recurring saving

#### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Education	Unitary Charge Payments	2023/24	(£1.65)million		Average saving over 2023/24- 2027/28.
	Capital Repayments	From 2039 to 2054	£3.4million	Unitary Charge Allowance	Average on -going annual principal repayments over 2039-2054
Miscellaneous	Internal Resources Interest	Phased from 2023/24	£0.4million (estimate)		Estimated loss of investment income arising from spending £14.7 million “non-cash” reserves and already factored into the latest 2023/25 Budget figures.

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

The proposals in this paper have no impact on the existing PPP contract between the Council and e4i or the Scottish Government commitment to pay the Council £6.066 million each year until 2039/40.

In line with the Finance Circular 10/2022, the proposals in this report will require Council approval.

#### **5.4 Human Resources**

There are no HR implications arising.

#### **5.5 Strategic**

This decision will free up resources for use towards meeting the Council's Financial Strategy objectives. It will however also tie the Council into a commitment to repay the initial capital investment in the 4 PPP schools for a further 15 years which will impact on available funding for other initiatives post 2039/40.

### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Members Budget Working Group support the contents of this report and the Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance has consulted with Link Treasury Services, the Council's Treasury Consultants who agree the figures and technical issues arising from this proposal.

### **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Finance Circular 10/2022 - Local government finance circular 10/2022 - finance leases and service concession arrangements: statutory guidance:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-government-finance-circular-10-2022-finance-leases-and-service-concession-arrangements-statutory-guidance/>



# Appendix 1

## Total proposed rescheduling model

Year	PPP principal repayments	Current position	Principal repayments based on simple 45 year annuity @ 6.118%		
		Current repayment £000	Revised repayment £000	(Saving)/cost £000	NPV 3.5% £000
0	pre 2023/24	22,219	7,471	(14,748)	(14,748)
1	2023/24	2,206	810	(1,396)	(1,349)
2	2024/25	2,309	859	(1,449)	(1,353)
3	2025/26	2,745	912	(1,833)	(1,653)
4	2026/27	2,590	968	(1,623)	(1,414)
5	2027/28	2,374	1,027	(1,347)	(1,134)
6	2028/29	3,067	1,090	(1,978)	(1,609)
7	2029/30	2,799	1,156	(1,642)	(1,291)
8	2030/31	2,771	1,227	(1,544)	(1,172)
9	2031/32	3,100	1,302	(1,798)	(1,319)
10	2032/33	3,503	1,382	(2,121)	(1,504)
11	2033/34	3,016	1,466	(1,550)	(1,062)
12	2034/35	3,547	1,556	(1,991)	(1,317)
13	2035/36	3,559	1,651	(1,907)	(1,220)
14	2036/37	4,112	1,752	(2,359)	(1,458)
15	2037/38	4,405	1,859	(2,546)	(1,520)
16	2038/39	5,104	1,973	(3,131)	(1,805)
17	2039/40	4,212	2,094	(2,119)	(1,180)
18	2040/41		2,222	2,222	1,196
19	2041/42		2,358	2,358	1,226
20	2042/43		2,502	2,502	1,257
21	2043/44		2,655	2,655	1,289
22	2044/45		2,818	2,818	1,322
23	2045/46		2,990	2,990	1,355
24	2046/47		3,173	3,173	1,390
25	2047/48		3,367	3,367	1,425
26	2048/49		3,573	3,573	1,461
27	2049/50		3,792	3,792	1,498
28	2050/51		4,024	4,024	1,536
29	2051/52		4,270	4,270	1,575
30	2052/53		4,531	4,531	1,614
31	2053/54		4,808	4,808	1,655
<b>Total</b>		<b>77,637</b>	<b>77,637</b>		<b>(18,310)</b>

Appendix 2

**Saving Smoothing Reserve Calculation**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Actual Saving</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Proposed Saving</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Difference</u> <u>£000</u>
2023/24	1396	1650	254
2024/25	1449	1650	201
2025/26	1833	1650	-183
2026/27	1623	1650	27
2027/28	1347	1650	303
		Smoothing Reserve Required	<u>602</u>

AP  
8/12/22

Appendix 3

Affordability of Service Concession Proposal  
As at 2040

	<u>£million</u>
Estimated Unitary Charge 2039/40	15.5
less Scottish Government Grant (ends 30/9/39)	<u>-6.1</u>
	9.4
Less Principal Saving in 2039/40	-2.1
Budget available in 2039/40	<u>7.3</u>
less: 2040 post-PPP School Running costs (est)	-1.6
less: Investment Income foregone on £14.7 million	-0.4
<u>Amount of Unitary Charge Budget remaining</u>	<u>5.3</u>

Note - The remaining sum will require to fund the revised repayments set out in Appendix 1 which peak at £4.808million in 2053/54 . This demonstrates the affordability within estimated resources

Finance Services  
9/1/23

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Director, Finance &amp; Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/07/23/AP/TB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tracy Bunton</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712090</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Revenues Policies: Corporate Debt Recovery and Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the updated Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and the Council's inaugural Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy.
- 1.3 The Corporate Debt Recovery Policy is updated to reflect best practice in terms of efficient collection performance while being sensitive to challenges faced by debtors as detailed at paragraphs 3.1 – 3.8 and set out at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 The Non Domestic Rating (Scotland) Act 2020 devolves charging and rates relief on unoccupied or empty properties to Councils with effect from 1 April 2023. Legislation providing mandatory rates relief is repealed and replaced permitting a local rates relief scheme in accordance with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 1.5 The Scottish Government has committed to funding local schemes based on historical Empty Property Relief (EPR) expenditure levels. The amount allocated across Scotland of £105million is fixed for the next three years. The draft Policy in Appendix 2, which mirrors the existing Scottish Government EPR approach, is proposed to be implemented for the duration of 2023/24 during which a more detailed review will be carried out by officers and considered by the Committee for implementation in 2024/25.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the updated Corporate Debt Recovery Policy as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee approves the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Policy as set out at Appendix 2 to be implemented from 1 April 2023.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee otherwise notes that officers will develop proposals for an amended Inverclyde Empty Property Relief Policy as part of the development of the 2024/25 Budget.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

#### **3.1 Corporate Debt Recovery Policy**

- 3.2 The Council has both a legal duty and a responsibility to its citizens to collect income due promptly. The Policy, originally agreed in 2003 has been reviewed and updated to reflect operational best practice which ensures effective recovery of debt while being sensitive to the economic conditions faced by debtors.
- 3.3 The policy presents the general principles to be applied in relation to income collection and debt management across all services provided by the Council. The revised policy is set out at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Sums due to the Council can be a mixture of statutory and non-statutory charges. The methods for billing, collection and recovery of the statutory debts can be tightly prescribed by law. The recovery methods for each debt stream are detailed in the policy document.
- 3.5 Advice Services provide income maximisation and debt management support, helping people recognise which debts are a priority and those for which non-payment will have the most profound consequences. The Debt Recovery team recognises the importance of this support and works closely with the HSCP Advice Service and third parties, advocating a realistic approach to managing finances to ensure debtors sustain payments. Advice Services are promoted at each stage of debt being recovered, from reminder Notices, direct customer contact, and a range of communications issued by the Council's Sheriff Officer.
- 3.6 Amendments have been made to the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy:
- (i) Debt advice services will be actively promoted including the offer of direct referrals.
  - (ii) In order to reduce administrative costs the Council will not issue accounts for less than £10.00 in all cases. The Chief Financial Officer will have discretion to approve the non-issuing of accounts for amounts over £10.00 where it is viewed that the administrative costs are uneconomical.
  - (iii) Services will be notified of non-payment. Withdrawal of services may be considered if permitted and appropriate to do so.
- 3.7 New items included in the policy:
- (i) The Council will adopt a corporate approach to refunding credits or making payments, in that wherever possible checks will be made for other outstanding debts due to the Council, prior to a refund or payment being made. Where these checks identify outstanding debts and where legally possible, the debt will be offset and the customer advised. Where this is not the case, legal advice will be sought before any offset is applied.
  - (ii) A refund will be arranged when an account is overpaid and no other debt is identified. Refunds will be paid by BACS.
- 3.8 Elements of Scottish Government policy introduced to protect debtors during the pandemic have been extended in recognition of the current economic climate. From 1 November 2022, the amount protected in a bank arrestment increased from £566.51 to £1,000. This means that anyone subject to a bank arrestment from 1 November will be left with a minimum of £1,000 in their bank account.

### 3.9 Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy

- 3.10 With effect from 1 April 2023 the determination and administration of Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (EPR) has been devolved to local authorities in Scotland. As a result Councils will be required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs available for unoccupied or empty properties. Empty property rating and relief will no longer be a mandatory relief of rates as the current regulations will not apply from that date.
- 3.11 Section 19 of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020 repeals Section 24 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1966. The effect being all relief from Non-Domestic Rates in respect of empty property cease with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
- 3.12 Section 140 of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 adds Section 3A of the Local Government (Financial Provisions etc.) (Scotland) Act 1962, permitting local authorities to introduce a scheme to reduce or remit any rate leviable by it.
- 3.13 This provision allows Inverclyde Council to replace the current rates relief awarded to owners of empty non-domestic properties with an agreed scheme as determined by members at the appropriate committee.
- 3.14 A scheme may comprise particular categories of lands and heritages; specified areas, activities and other matters as decided. Before exercising the power or amending a scheme, there must be consideration of the expenditure and income and the interests of council tax payers.
- 3.15 Total empty property relief awarded during 2022-23 was £226,630 (£338,391 2021/22) and in each category relief was as follows:

<b>Relief Category</b>	<b>Value of Relief awarded 2022-23</b>
100% relief for empty Industrial (6 months)	£ 12,749
50% relief for other (3 month)	£ 33,459
10% long term empty (industrial)	£ 1,234
10% long term empty (other)	£ 21,878
Listed Exempt Relief (100%)	£124,973
RV less than £1700 empty (100%)	£ 10,098
Land/Ground empty/exempt (100%)	nil
Insolvency empty (100%)	£ 17,181
Other exempt (100%)	£ 5,058
<b>Total Empty Relief</b>	<b>£226,630</b>

Officers believe this figure will be significantly understated as it excludes certain known empty properties where the owner has not, at the time of writing the report, applied for the relief. In addition, the Council is undertaking an exercise to identify empty properties currently receiving Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) support. These will require to be met from the new EPR Budget going forward.

- 3.16 Local Government will receive £105 million per annum (fixed for three years) which will be distributed to each Council based on historic spend plus an element of headroom. The sum allocated to Inverclyde Council in 2023/24 is £788,000.

- 3.17 The value of funding will exceed relief awarded in recent years however there are a number of factors which will affect the value of relief potentially awarded under any new scheme introduced by the Council:
- a) The rate poundage and multiplier set each year by Scottish Government. For 2023/24 the Scottish Government propose no increase.
  - b) The revaluation of non-domestic rated properties effective from April 2023. The draft Valuation roll indicates some substantial increases for many properties. Until the full roll is made public the impact upon the cost of the EPR Policy will not be known.
  - c) There is the inherent risk that there may be some economic events which could affect the number of empty non-domestic dwellings in a specific area or nationally that cannot easily be predicted
- 3.18 However, a saving of £288,000 is proposed later in a report elsewhere on the agenda on the basis of the level of Scottish Government funding and current costs. The Scottish Government have agreed that where such an economic shock occurs, which is significant, substantial, and unmanageable to the area (or areas) that local authorities and COSLA would revert to the Scottish Government for discussion.
- 3.19 Categories of relief and the extent to which relief applies are in scope to be determined by members. Options are set out below for consideration:
- (a) Do not allow rates relief for empty properties. Inverclyde Council can choose not to award rates relief to empty property and thus retain the full grant to be used for other purposes.
  - (b) Retain the current reliefs for one year and review thereafter. Inverclyde Council can choose to replicate the current reliefs in the short term and take time to review the full empty relief scheme in future years.
  - (c) Amend the current relief scheme. Inverclyde Council can choose to reduce or enhance reliefs currently awarded. Reducing the relief on empty property could raise additional revenue for other budget priorities. Enhancing reliefs require to be funded by Inverclyde Council.
- 3.20 Through professional forums and discussions with other local authorities, the majority conclude that reliefs should remain the same in 2023-24 but reviewed in future years. This takes into account a combination of factors including the fact that businesses and the commercial property market are still adjusting to the consequences of Covid; inflationary pressures and the increasing cost of living affecting trade in addition to the operational practicalities of changing a scheme at short notice. This latter point would result in there being little time for owners to adjust and hence the potential for legal challenge.

## **4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 It is proposed to introduce the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy found at Appendix 1 which has been reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice to achieve efficient recovery of debt while being sensitive to the economic conditions faced by debtors.
- 4.2 It is proposed to maintain the current Scottish Government EPR Policies for 2023/24 on the basis that:
- (a) the timeframe to amend the current relief scheme is too short to properly communicate to owners of empty properties; and
  - (b) any changes in empty relief would be effective from April 2023 which coincides with the revaluation of every non-domestic property being assigned a new rateable value on which they pay rates. The new valuations are subject to appeal and may change through the course of the year, affecting the cost of the scheme; and

- (c) there will be the requirement to administer a new transitional protection scheme (due to the revaluation changes); and
- (d) It is in line with most other council's approach to replacing the mandatory empty property rates relief.

The Draft Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Policy is set out at Appendix 2.

4.3 Officers would propose to develop an Inverclyde NDR Empty Property Relief Scheme during 2023/24 for Committee's consideration. Thereafter appropriate consultation would take place and any financial implications considered as part of the 2024/25 Budget.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	X		
Legal/Risk	X		
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty	X		
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X	
Data Protection		X	

## 5.2 Finance

Taking into account the level of new funding for the EPR and the current cost of implementing the Scottish Government EPR criteria, officers recommend that a budget of £500,000 is created within the Finance Service Budget. If approved this would generate a saving/adjustment of £288,000 to help close the existing 2023/24 funding shortfall.

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
Finance	NDR EPR Relief	2023/24	£500,000		The allocation from Scottish Government from 23-24 until 25-26 is £788,000



### **5.3 Legal/Risk**

A policy must be in place to award Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief. The proposals within this report progress the development of such a policy should Inverclyde Council choose this option. The draft policy has been reviewed by Legal & Democratic Services

### **5.4 Human Resources**

There are no HR implications.

### **5.5 Strategic**

An agreed Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief policy is an important element of the Councils economic strategy. A Corporate Debt Recovery policy ensures clear parameters for efficient debt collection.

### **5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty**

Equality Impact Assessments have been completed and are available on the website:

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

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The draft Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief policy has been produced in consultation with peers from other Councils.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 There are no background papers.

Inverclyde Council - Finance  
Revenues and Benefits

# Corporate Debt Policy

DRAFT

Version 1.0

January 2023

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### Document Control

Prepared by:  
Approved by:

Tracy Bunton  
Policy & Resources Committee

January 2023

### Change Control Table

Version	Version Date	Revised By	Reason for Change
1.0			

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

### **1. Corporate Policy Statement**

The Council recognises its dual responsibility to collect debts in a sensitive, clear and efficient manner whilst assisting those in need to reduce overall indebtedness and break the cycle of debt.

### **2. Charging Policy**

- (a) Whilst the basis for many charges are determined externally the Council recognises that, where it has discretion in determining charges, the level of charges will reflect its Social and Financial Inclusion agenda and the Council's wider responsibilities to its citizens.
- (b) In line with the Financial Regulations all scales of charges/tariffs (not fixed by statute) shall be reviewed corporately by Chief Officers at least annually. The review will be carried out in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer.

### **3. Advice and Assistance**

- (a) The Council will provide streamlined, high quality and consistent advice to individuals seeking assistance. The Council recognises its key role in maximising individuals' income and reducing overall indebtedness.
- (b) All employees involved in the debt recovery/debt advice process will be appropriately trained, in particular to recognise the symptoms of indebtedness and the need for referral to the appropriate internal/external advisors. Debt advice services will be actively promoted including the offer of direct referrals.
- (c) The Council will require its appointed Sheriff Officer to issue Debt Advice packs at the appropriate juncture but in all cases prior to seeking an Attachment or Exceptional Attachment Order.
- (d) The Council also recognises the role played by external organisations in providing advice and support and will endeavour to optimise the benefits of joint working.

### **4. Issuing Invoices**

- (a) In order to reduce administrative costs the Council will seek payment at the point of Service booking/provision whenever practical. The specific areas where this will not occur will be determined by the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the relevant Chief Officer.

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

- (b) The Council recognises that a key factor in debt reduction is to issue invoices promptly and accurately. In line with the Financial Regulations accounts for services rendered must be raised within one month of the point of sale.
- (c) In order to reduce administrative costs the Council will not issue accounts for less than £10.00 in nearly all cases. The Chief Financial Officer will have discretion to approve the non-issuing of accounts for amounts over £10.00 where it is viewed that the administrative costs are uneconomical.

### **5. Debt Payment**

- (a) The Council recognises that a key factor in maximising its income is to provide as many methods of payment as practical and economical whilst balancing this against the costs involved. The Council will continue to develop its Income Management System with this policy in mind.
- (b) The Council will allocate payments received accurately and promptly and, where specified, in line with the instructions of the debtor.

### **6. Managing Sensitive Debt**

- (a) The Council recognises that it charges for a number of services where recovery of unpaid debt must be dealt sensitively. In these cases recovery of the debt will in the first instance be remitted to the Chief Officer of the Service concerned and thereafter managed in line with 2.3.1 of the Recovery of Sundry Debt Policy.
- (b) Services will be notified of non-payment. Withdrawal of services may be considered if permitted and appropriate to do so.

### **7. Debt Recovery**

- (a) Inevitably certain debts will need to be passed to the Debt Recovery Team and Sheriff Officers for collection. Where this is done recovery will be carried out within predefined parameters and all officers involved will deal with debtors in a courteous/discrete and non-confrontational manner.
- (b) When recovering debts the Council recognises the debtors' ability to pay by negotiating payment by instalments and encouraging debt counselling where appropriate.
- (c) The collection performance will regularly be reviewed and monitored and an annual report detailing the Council's overall performance in respect of debt recovery will be

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

presented to the Policy and Resources Committee prior to 30<sup>th</sup> September each year.

### **8. Provision for Bad Debt/Write-Offs**

At least annually, the Chief Financial Officer shall review provisions for Bad Debts and write-off debts. These actions will form part of the annual report, point 7(c) above.

### **9. Interest on Late Payment**

The Chief Financial Officer will determine those circumstances when it is appropriate to charge interest in line with Late Payments legislation.

### **10. Offset Credits against Council Debt**

The Council will adopt a corporate approach to refunding credits or making payments, in that wherever possible checks will be made for other outstanding debts due to the Council, prior to a refund or payment being made. Where these checks identify outstanding debts and where legally possible e.g. Council Tax arrears, the debt will be offset and the customer advised. Where this is not the case, legal advice will be sought before any offset is applied.

### **11. Refunds**

A refund will be arranged when an account is overpaid and no other debt is identified. Refunds will be paid by BACS.

### **12. Amendments to Policy/Procedures**

- (a) The Corporate Debt Policy can be amended only by the Policy & Resources Committee.
- (b) The Corporate Debt Policy provides the framework within which procedures for recovery of individual debts are developed. All debt recovery procedures will require the prior approval of the Chief Financial Officer.
- (c) The policy will be reviewed at intervals of no less than 4 years.

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### RECOVERY OF COUNCIL TAX

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Council Tax is a tax levied on all eligible domestic dwellings. The amount of Council Tax levied is dependent on the Council Tax band that the property falls into and the amount of tax to be raised.
- 1.2 The full rate of Council Tax is liable to be paid unless the property, owner or occupier is eligible for a reduction or exemption.
- 1.3 Council Tax is payable in line with a statutory instalment scheme or by agreement. There is a legal duty placed on the Council and its Officers to collect outstanding debts in accordance with The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Scotland) Regulations 1992.

#### 2. COLLECTION & RECOVERY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council will bill, collect and recover all debts for Council Tax purposes in accordance with legislation.
- 2.2 Demand Notices and revised Notices will be issued in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- 2.3 Each financial year a recovery timetable will be created detailing the relevant dates combined Reminder/ Final notices will be produced.
- 2.4 Combined Reminder/ Final Notices shall be issued any day after the instalment due date in accordance with legislation.
- 2.5 If the amount specified in the Reminder/Final Notice is not paid within 21 days, or an arrangement made and maintained, the Council will apply for a Summary Warrant at Greenock Sheriff Court. Once granted a 10% statutory penalty is added to the outstanding balance.
- 2.6 The amount due in terms of the Summary Warrant is then passed to an appointed Sheriff Officer for collection. If payment remains outstanding, recovery can be enforced by one of the relevant diligences e.g. earnings/bank arrestment, attachment of goods, bankruptcy.



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

- 2.7 On receipt of any of the above follow up Notices from Inverclyde Council or the Sheriff Officer, a debtor can contact the Debt Recovery team to make an arrangement to pay any balance or to query any aspect of the charge.
- 2.9 Direct deductions from DWP benefits will be used for debtors on relevant welfare benefits.

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## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### RECOVERY OF NON DOMESTIC RATES

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Non Domestic Rates is a tax levied on business properties which Inverclyde Council statutorily administers on behalf of the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 Billing is carried out annually in April and weekly thereafter. Bills contain all information required by statute together with details of common reliefs available and promotional information.
- 1.3 Non-Domestic Rates will be administered and collected in accordance with the applicable legislation.

#### 2.0 COLLECTION & RECOVERY

- 2.1 Demand Notices and revised Notices will be issued in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- 2.2 Each financial year a recovery timetable will be created detailing the relevant dates Reminder/ Final Notices will be produced.
- 2.3 Combined Reminder/ Final Notices shall be issued in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- 2.4 If a Reminder / Final Notice is not paid as requested, the Council will apply for a Summary Warrant at Greenock Sheriff Court. Once granted a 10% statutory penalty is added to the outstanding balance. Summary Warrant Notices will then be issued to the customer detailing the total amount due including the penalty.
- 2.5 If the debt due in terms of the Summary Warrant is not paid in full it will be passed to an appointed Sheriff Officer for collection.
- 2.6 The Sheriff Officer may enforce payment of the arrears by various forms of diligence available to them e.g. bank arrestment, money attachment, attachment and auction of goods, liquidation.

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

- 2.7 The ratepayer or their nominated representative can contact the Council and/or Sheriff Officers at any stage of recovery to enter into a payment plan for repayment of the sum due or to discuss issues in relation to the amount charged.
- 2.8 Insolvency proceedings will be considered, where appropriate.

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## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### RECOVERY OF SUNDRY DEBT

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council is responsible for billing and collection of all charges levied by the Council for services provided which plays a significant part in funding the Council's overall budget.

#### 2. CHARGING

- 2.1 The responsibility for charging lies with the Service imposing the charge which will:-
- 2.1.1 Ensure whenever possible that payment of the fee or charge is made in advance.
  - 2.1.2 Ensure the charge is properly due and payable, having necessary evidence available to support the issue of the invoice being raised.
  - 2.1.3 Invoices will be raised as soon as it is identified the charge is due and payable and no later than 28 days following the goods or service being supplied.
- 2.2 Invoices will not be raised:-
- 2.2.1 For less than £10. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.
  - 2.2.2 Where there is no written agreement or the debt cannot be substantiated.
  - 2.2.3 Where the current address is not known, debtor unknown and/or the amount due is unknown
  - 2.2.4 If an invoice has been raised in any of these circumstances they will be cancelled by the Debt Recovery team.
- 2.3 Disputes
- 2.3.1 Where a debt is in dispute, the responsibility for dealing with this will remain with the issuing service who should aim to resolve the dispute within 30 working days. Where a dispute cannot be resolved within 30 working days, the issuing service must notify the Debt Recovery team of the reason; indicating when the dispute is likely to be resolved. If the team are not notified after 30 working days have expired, invoices may be cancelled in full.

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### 3 COLLECTION & RECOVERY

- 3.1 Reminders will be issued when an invoice is overdue and the issuing Service will be supplied with a list of these customers to allow them to contact the customer by telephone where possible to request payment of the debt.
- 3.2 The council will use Sheriff Officers and Legal Services to recover debts as appropriate.
- 3.3 The Debt Recovery team will monitor accounts and will liaise with the Sheriff Officer to maximise recovery.
- 3.4 Customers who receive on-going services from the council may have these services suspended or withdrawn if they have unpaid invoices relating to these services. This decision will be made by the individual Services.

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT RECOVERY

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council is responsible for the administration of Housing Benefit. The Council is committed to protecting public funds and will take all possible steps to prevent and recover overpayments of these benefits.
- 1.2 Customers are both required and encouraged to prevent overpayments occurring by notifying the council as soon as possible of any changes that may affect the amount of benefit that they are entitled to.

#### 2 RECOVERY

- 2.1 Where it has been identified that a claimant of Housing Benefit has been overpaid, and the overpayment is recoverable in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions, Inverclyde Council will consider on a case by case basis whether it is reasonable to recover the overpayment, from whom it can be recovered and the appropriate means of recovery.
- 2.2 All available methods of recovery will be employed to recover outstanding overpaid benefit. These methods include:-
- (a) Direct deductions from on-going housing benefit or arrears of Housing Benefit.
  - (b) Direct deductions from landlords' payments of housing benefit.
  - (c) Recovery from on-going housing benefit in another local authority area.
  - (d) Recovery from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) benefit.
  - (e) Issue of an invoice
  - (f) Referral to Sheriff Officers for recovery
  - (g) Diligence
- 2.3 Overpayments will be recovered from on-going entitlement to Housing Benefit at a rate set by the DWP, dependent on the reason for the overpayment, with fraudulent overpayments being recovered at a higher rate. Consideration will be given to individual financial circumstances and deductions will be reduced where appropriate.
- 2.4 If there is no on-going entitlement to Housing Benefit, direct deductions can be taken from certain other DWP benefits received by the claimant. These rates are set by the

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

DWP and based on the type of benefit being received. Any reductions to these set amounts require the customer to negotiate direct with the DWP.

### **3 APPEALS**

- 3.1 A person can appeal an overpayment decision in accordance with the Housing Benefit (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 2001. Recovery of the overpayment is suspended pending the outcome of an appeal.

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## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### RECOVERY OF SCHOOL MEAL AND EDUCATION CHARGES

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Inverclyde Council is responsible for collecting school meal charges and the billing and collection of certain education related services levied by the Council such as wraparound childcare provision and school transport.

#### 2. CHARGING - SCHOOL MEALS

2.1 School meal charges are applied to pupils' Parent Pay accounts. Primary School pupils are provided with a meal irrespective of the balance of their account. Education, Communities and Organisational Development Services imposing school meal charges will:

2.1.2 Encourage parents of those pupils not entitled to free school meals or universal provision to keep Parent Pay accounts in credit at all times.

2.1.3 Follow the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Primary School Meal Debt Recovery Procedure. The procedure stipulates:

2.1.3.1 How and when parents are informed and reminded of school meal debt.

2.1.3.2 That those with school meal debt at a specified level are referred to Home Link Workers who will provide advice or signpost parents to other agencies where it recognises that support is required. Home Link Workers liaise with Head Teachers when appropriate to do so.

2.1.3.3 That a sundry debtor account is raised and an invoice is issued when school meal debt reaches a specified amount.



## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### 3 CHARGING – ALL OTHER EDUCATION CHARGES

3.1 The responsibility for charging lies with Education, Communities and Organisational Development Services which will:

3.1.2 Ensure the charge is properly due and payable, having necessary evidence available to support the issue of the invoice being raised.

3.1.3 Invoices will be raised as soon as it is identified the charge is due and payable and no later than 28 days following the service being supplied.

3.2 Invoices will not be raised:-

3.2.1 For less than £10. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.

3.2.2 Where there is no written agreement or the debt cannot be substantiated.

3.2.3 Where the current address is not known, debtor unknown and/or the amount due is unknown.

3.2.4 If an invoice has been raised in any of these circumstances they will be cancelled by the Sundry Debtors team.

3.3 Disputes

3.3.1 Where a debt is in dispute, the responsibility for dealing with this will remain with Education, Communities and Organisational Development Services who should aim to resolve the dispute within 30 working days.

3.3.2 Where a dispute cannot be resolved within 30 working days, the issuing service must notify the Sundry Debtor team of the reason; indicating when the dispute is likely to be resolved.

3.3.3 If the team are not notified after 30 working days have expired, invoices may be cancelled in full.

### 4 COLLECTION & RECOVERY

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

4.1 Collection and Recovery of Sundry Debt is explained at Appendix 3 of the Corporate Debt Recovery Procedure.

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# Non Domestic Rates

## Empty Property Relief Policy

Version 1.0

January 2023

# Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

## Document Control

Prepared by:  
Approved by:

Tracy Bunton  
Policy & Resources Committee

January 2023

## Change Control Table

Version	Version Date	Revised By	Reason for Change

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## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document details Inverclyde Council's policy on non-domestic rates reliefs on empty property.

### 2.0 Background

2.1 With effect from 1 April 2023 local authorities will be required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs of unoccupied properties. Empty property rating and relief will no longer be a mandatory relief of rates as existing regulations do not apply from that date.

2.2 Section 19 of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020 repeals Section 24 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1966 . The effect being all relief from Non-Domestic Rates in respect of empty land and heritages cease with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

2.3 Section 140 of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 added Section 3A of the Local Government (Financial Provisions etc) (Scotland) Act 1962, permitting local authorities to introduce a scheme to reduce or remit any rate leviable by it.

2.4 The Council policy replicates the previous legislative arrangements but will be subject to review should funding arrangements change or to take account of any other local arrangements.

### 3.0 Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief

3.1 Councils can provide relief of up to 100% of the rates due.

3.2 Under this policy the Empty Property Reliefs applied by Inverclyde Council are:

3.2.1 Unoccupied industrial property is eligible for 100% relief while so unoccupied for up to the first six months of such unoccupation, and 10% relief thereafter, until occupied. Where such a six month period of unoccupancy commenced prior to the coming into force of this policy (the policy date) then relief under this paragraph 3.2.1 will only apply for the balance of that six month period that is on or after the policy date, unless earlier brought to an end by the property ceasing to be unoccupied.

3.2.2 Property other than industrial property which is unoccupied is eligible for 50% relief while so unoccupied for up to the first three months of such unoccupation and 10% relief thereafter, until occupied. Where such a three month period of unoccupancy commenced prior to the coming into force of this policy (the policy date) then relief under this paragraph 3.2.2 will only apply for the balance of that three month period that is on

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

or after the policy date, unless earlier brought to an end by the property ceasing to be unoccupied.

3.2.3 100% relief is awarded indefinitely for unoccupied properties where the property is empty and:

- is a listed building;
- subject of a building preservation order;
- the rateable value is under £1,700;
- where the person entitled to possession of the property is so entitled by virtue only of being:
  - the Trustee under a Trust Deed for creditors or under an award of Sequestration;
  - the Executor of a Deceased person;
  - a liquidator by virtue of an order made under section 112 or section 145 of the 1986 Act;
- kept vacant by reason of action taken by or on behalf of the Crown or any local or public authority with a view to prohibiting the occupation of the lands and heritages or to acquiring them;
- the owner of the property is prohibited by law from occupying them or allowing them to be occupied;
- has no buildings (i.e. ground or land that contain no buildings);
- the owner is a company or limited liability partnership, which on or after 1st April 2008— (i) remains subject to an administration order made under Part II of the 1986 Act, or (ii) is in administration within the meaning of paragraph 1 of schedule B1 of that Act;
- the owner is a company or limited liability partnership which is subject to a winding-up order made under the 1986 Act or which is being wound up voluntarily under that Act.

3.2.4 In this policy, and with particular reference to paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.3:

- “1986 Act” means the Insolvency Act 1986;
- “building preservation order” means a building preservation notice within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997;
- “industrial property” means lands and heritages (other than retail property) comprising one or more buildings which is, or all of which are—
  - (a) constructed or adapted for use in the course of a trade or business; and
  - (b) constructed or adapted for use for one or more of the following purposes, or one or more such purposes and one or more purposes ancillary thereto:—
    - (i) the manufacture, repair or adaptation of goods or materials;
    - (ii) the subjection of goods or materials to any process;
    - (iii) storage (including the storage or handling of goods in the course of their distribution);

## Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

- (iv) the working or processing of minerals;
- (v) the generation of electricity;
- “listed building” means lands and heritages included in a list compiled under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997;
- “retail property” means any lands and heritages where any building or part of a building comprised in them is constructed or adapted for the purpose of the retail provision of—
  - (a) goods; or
  - (b) services (other than storage for distribution services) on or from the lands and heritages.

### 4.0 Subsidy Control

4.1 Where a recipient or as the case may be prospective recipient (referred to in either case here as “Recipient”) of empty property rates relief is involved in commercial activity, the Council will have to consider whether an award of relief would result in the level of financial assistance received by that Recipient in the applicable period as set out in Section 36 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (“the 2022 Act”) exceeding the permitted level of minimal financial assistance (“MFA”), again as set out in the 2022 Act, and may reduce the amount of relief awarded in terms of this policy if the MFA limit would be exceeded.

### 5.0 Application Process

5.1 Applications for Empty Property Relief are made by completing a designated application form submitted with relevant supporting evidence. Application forms are available on the Council’s website: [Reductions on your Rates bill - Inverclyde Council](#).

5.2 Eligibility for Empty Property Relief will be determined in accordance with this policy.

5.3 A decision will be made on whether the property is eligible.

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

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

5.6 Officers will carry out checks to verify applications and any decision made is final subject to review.

5.7 Once the application form has been processed the owner will be notified in writing of the decision and their right to request a review of any decision and also of their responsibility to advise of any change in circumstances or of any erroneous assumptions by the Council.



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

### **6.0 Backdating**

6.1 An application for relief can be backdated to the start of the financial year in which the application is made provided the organisation satisfied the requirements at that time. Any applications for the previous financial year can be considered provided sufficient evidence is submitted in support of the application. Consideration may also be given where an organisation has been rated retrospectively either through the actions of the Council or the Assessor

### **7.0 Review Process**

7.1 The ratepayer will be notified of the decision in writing. As this is a discretionary power there is no formal appeal process against the Council's decision. However the decision can be reconsidered in light of any additional points the ratepayer wishes to make.

7.2 Applicants who disagree with a decision in relation to the Empty Property Relief policy have a right to request a review. The review will be carried out by the Director of Environment and Regeneration whose decision will be final.

### **8.0 Amendments to Policy**

8.1 The policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 3 years.

8.2 Ratepayers will be given at least 3 months notice of any change to the policy affecting their entitlement to rates relief or rates liability.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/03/23/SM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>George Barbour</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712385</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Communications and Engagement Strategy</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to propose a communications and engagement strategy for Inverclyde Council setting out strategic principles behind council-wide communications and engagement to provide a new 'one council, one voice' approach.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee review and agree the contents of the communications and engagement strategy and action plan.

**Steven McNab**  
**Head of Organisational Development,**  
**Policy & Communcation**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 4.1 The Council's most recent communications strategy set out some of the broad mechanics of how communications is delivered centrally across the council.
- 4.2 For any organisation, but particularly public services, communications and engagement are key tools in ensuring that residents, customers and clients can access services and information about those services when they need to.
- 4.3 The Council has a vast range of audiences to engage with and a new communications strategy aims to provide greater co-ordination, consistency and clarity in making sure that residents, customers and clients can access services.
- 4.4 In addition, ensuring council employees are fully engaged in the work of the Council aids both internal and external audiences as, which many local authorities, the majority of employees are also residents.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 presents a new communications and engagement strategy for the council setting out a range of communications standards and processes to aid improving the co-ordination of communications and engagement across the Council, and to ensure support is given to the HSCP in a planned and co-ordinated way.
- 5.2 Appendix 2 includes an action plan to be associated with the communications and engagement strategy to support the Council and HSCP moving towards the ambitions set out in the strategy. The action plan will be regularly reviewed by the Corporate Management Team to ensure progress.
- 5.3 Appendix 3 highlights the crisis communications cascade which provides the Council with a consistent approach to ensure a range of audiences are communicated with.
- 5.4 In the short term the strategy seeks to consolidate communications and engagement activity across the Council and HSCP to focus on the main mechanisms and longer term to put in place a new 'one council, one voice' approach to ensure consistency and clarity.
- 5.5 The strategy also seeks to embed new communications standards, put in place procedures to co-ordinate a range of activity including project communication plans and co-ordination and oversight of consultations and surveys.
- 5.6 One immediate action is to start the process for the closing of the current intranet, ICON, which is no longer supported by the Council's provider and is not considered fit for purpose. The strategy and associated action plan proposes the transfer over year one of the content to the website or another online resource if identified as being a better location (for example as the roll out of Microsoft 365 is more widespread practical areas such as people finder, room bookings may be best built within this environment).
- 5.7 The aim would be to remove all content from ICON, the council intranet, reviewing content at the same time to make it more accessible to a wider audience of employees and to build new direct communication mechanisms, potentially off the Council network direct to council employees learning lessons from the system failure during the recent power outage.

- 5.8 A survey of Council employees identified some data on the current use of ICON, the Council intranet, which will inform the prioritisation of content to be retained, updated and moved. The main areas of content employees said they used ICON, the council intranet to access, are:
- HR
  - People finder
  - News
  - Internal vacancies
  - Courses/ e-learning
  - Policies
  - Payroll
  - Training
- 5.9 When asked about the Council website, three quarters of employees said that they mostly access the site for work purposes with the remaining 25% doing so for personal reasons. The main areas of the website accessed by Council employees are:
- Schools/school holidays
  - Committee reports/meetings
  - Vacancies
  - Bin collection information
  - General information
- 5.10 The development of a range of actions as part of this communications and engagement strategy (appendix 2) seek to ensure better planning of communications and engagement activity including objective setting and measurement of success for individual activity.
- 5.11 The communications and engagement strategy and associated action plan seeks to put in place new arrangements or strengthen existing ones to support both individual service communications activity and the overarching corporate plan.
- 5.12 While measurement of success for the strategy and action plan will be on the delivery of actions, the overall aim is to increase engagement and communications activity and that each campaign, project and system change will have its own measurements such as wider recognition of the Council brand, increase audience, more traffic on mechanisms (eg website and social media). The strategy and action plans aims to put in place the underlying guidance and mechanisms to support that activity.
- 5.13 Creation of a new communications plan template, for example, aims to improve communication planning and consistency and would build in clear objective setting and measurement of success for all future communications activity across the council.
- 5.14 While the audience for the communications strategy itself is chiefly internal services and partner organisations, the implications of delivering the individual actions is to ensure that council communications activity actively identifies, examines and targets communications to its key stakeholders.
- 5.15 This includes embedding protected characteristics under the Equality Act into communications planning to ensure services actively address any particular communications needs.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Financial	X		
Legal/Risk	X		
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty	X		
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

## 6.2 Finance

Not at this time.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

## 6.3 Legal/Risk

The strategy highlights some of the areas where the Council has a legal duty when delivering communications and engagement activity and commits services to be mindful of legislation when developing activity.

## 6.4 Human Resources

The strategy includes updates on internal communications activity and mechanisms and proposes the removal of the Council's current intranet.

## 6.5 Strategic

The strategy and action plan aims to provide a framework and activity to provide greater strategic oversight and co-ordination of communications and engagement activity and aligns to the ambitions of the Council and the Inverclyde Alliance to promote Inverclyde as a place for business, visitors and potential future residents to support repopulation.

## 6.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

The strategy includes data on how the Council seeks to protect areas such as protected characteristics and Gaelic language as part of its core communications activity.

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required and will be made available on the Council website:  <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2023">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2023</a>
	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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

**6.7 Children and Young People**

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

**6.8 Environmental/Sustainability**

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

## 6.9 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 – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The range of services included in this paper have been engaged with in the preparation of the strategy and action plan including human resources, IT, customer services, legal services, civil contingencies, policy and HSCP. Further engagement will take place in development of the individual elements contained within the draft action plan with services and external partners.

In addition the council carries out regular employee surveys assessing a range of areas including effective communications by services, the most being in 2022.

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Policy and Resources Committee, 21 March 2017, Agenda Item 14, Communications Strategy (Report No: PR/08/17/WB/GB): <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1950>

## **APPENDIX 1: COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

# **One council, one voice**

## **Inverclyde Council - Communications and Engagement Strategy**

### **Introduction**

Inverclyde Council is more than the sum of their parts.

It is a collection of public service areas united by a commitment to deliver for the community it services.

Through its collective action it can help to improve the lives of each and every citizen in the community and improve the chances of growth and development of each and every community.

Communications is at the heart of its activity.

Good communication can help to inspire and engage communities while poor communications can alienate and disenfranchise.

Too often from many public services the messaging can be disparate and fragmented, the language and communications approaches can be confusing and difficult to access.

The aim of this communications and engagement strategy is to create a single 'one council, one voice' approach.

It provides the Council with a series of approaches and tactics to make sure that communications and engagement activity is planned, managed, clear, puts people at its heart and sticks to our agreed communication standards.

The 'one council, one voice' approach enables our residents, customers and clients to be as fully informed as they can be to access our essential services when they need them at any stage of life and as involved as they choose to be in how public services are run in their name and in their community.



## **Our communications standards**

As an organisation collectively and as individuals, we communicate in a range of ways with thousands of people each and every week.

As part of this communications and engagement strategy we set out our communications standards. Some are general in their nature others are specific.

Some focus on areas where communication requires to be strengthened such as increasing the use of Gaelic across some activity, others consolidate existing areas of good practice such as media relations.

The aim is to ensure that there is a consistent approach to communications and engagement through clear planning and management.

Whatever the method, we will make sure that all of our communication is:

- Clear and easy to understand
- Inclusive
- Accessible
- Approachable
- Consistent in its frequency and style
- Honest
- Reliable and up to date

## **Clear and easy to understand**

Clear language and plain English are the watchwords for all communications to ensure it is clear and easy to understand. Our language shouldn't be a barrier to communications, but it should be an aid to ensuring that residents can access our services and fully understand what we do and why.

### **One plan**

The Council is a large and complex organisation, the single largest employer in the area and delivers a range of public services touching the lives of every citizen and community.

Its service planning can appear complex and bureaucratic to those from outside and unused to it.

Making access to services easy to understand and highlighting the need for council services to be seen to be part of the Council provides clarity for residents.

### **Partners**

The Council engages with a vast range of partner organisations, agencies and contractors engaged on behalf of the Council to carry out work. An operational update to the Council's media and social media protocol will be put in place to confirm that the stipulations of the national guidance applies and that communications activity delivered on behalf of the council requires to be co-ordinated and planned.

## **Inclusive**

We aim to ensure that our activity is inclusive and welcomes engagement and dialogue with people from all parts of the community.

### **Protected characteristics**

We commit to ensuring that our communications and engagement activity takes account of protected characteristics as defined by The Equality Act 2010 including age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; sexual orientation.

To do this our draft communications plan template to be developed as part of this plan to support services to plan communications activity will include prompts on each of the characteristics listed in the Act.

In addition, the 'sign off' process for communications plans by the Council's corporate communications service will provide an opportunity to check activity against these characteristics.

### **Gaelic language**

We will support the promotion of Gaelic language through our communications activity.

That will include the use of a Gaelic version of the council logo incorporated into the brand identity and the use of Gaelic language on appropriate documents, social media content.

## **Accessible**

The Council aims to ensure that information about services and how they operate is heard by residents at a time when they need it.

As a principle the Council will adopt where practical a 'publish first' principle to information and data to encourage greater openness and accountability to ensure the council is in control of its information and to support the principles of freedom of information.

This principle could, for example, include the publication of regularly asked freedom of information data or publishing responses asked.

An examination will take place to identify proportionate opportunities to do that against best practice in the sector.

### **ICON, the council intranet, and the website**

The Council intranet, ICON, is no longer fit for purpose or supported by the council's provider in its current format.

Work has been ongoing among services, principally human resources, to put content onto the Council website. The aim of this is to test the principle of information previously considered to be 'internal' onto an external location.

The short-term benefit if this approach is to ensure that content is available to a wider pool of employees including those who do not have direct access to a computer or email through the Council network.

It also reduces the need to continue to have a dedicated intranet as a mechanism for communications.

Over the course of the first year of this plan, services will be encouraged to move content onto the Council website or another identified location easily accessible by employees.

This would work towards the closure of ICON, the Council intranet but, with the loss of a mechanism, work would be carried out to ensure direct mechanisms were in place to cascade information to council employees direct in a planned way as part of the cascade of communications identified in this strategy particularly taking account of the need for offline mechanisms in the event of a power outage.

In addition, work would be carried out to examine future options for the existing Council website on a long-term replacement or a complimentary or replacement digital communications mechanism.

### **Social media**

The Council's existing media and social media protocol sets out the procedures for council publicity to ensure the council complies with the guidance set out in the national guidance and local protocol.

As part of this strategy work will be developed to review all Council social media accounts to ensure content is focussed on the main social media accounts, that niche accounts are aligned to the overarching social media protocol and that social media sites with small audiences or rarely used are unpublished aligning with the Council's existing digital strategy.

## **Approachable**

Building a strong customer service and public service ethos approach to communications and engagement ensures the Council and its services are approachable.

As part of the communications and engagement strategy we will focus on ensuring that communications and customer service is built into how the Council does business.

Recognising the needs of our residents as customers helps to ensure we are approachable as an organisation and that our manner towards individuals reflects on the Council and our area through our professional, compassionate and caring approach.

### **Customer service**

We will dedicate time to reviewing all existing communications and customer service training modules available to Council employees and managers to ensure they reflect the 'one council, one voice' principles set out in this strategy.

We may develop bespoke training and guidance to further build customer service into the heart of how Council services are delivered encourage sector professionalism coupled with compassion and caring.

## **Consistent in its frequency and style**

Any communications and engagement activity from a single organisation is seen, by our community as being from that organisation no matter the structure behind it.

To ensure a clear consistency the 'one council, one voice' approach aims to ensure that the language, style and content of communications and engagement activity is consistent and clear.

### **Consultations**

Some consultations carried out by the council are small ad hoc surveys of service users, others are large scale such as the budget consultation and others are defined by legislation.

Because of the size of the organisation it is impossible to completely avoid date clashes of consultation and engagement activity, but new guidance and procedures will be created to support services in the co-ordination of consultation and to provide oversight.

In addition, work will be carried on reviewing options using existing mechanisms or developing bespoke ones to provide a consistent and co-ordinated online platform for digital surveys, questionnaires and consultations.

### **Communications planning**

To support services a new template will be developed to create communications plans for Council activity and projects to focus on consistent use of the communication standards and to encourage examination of the impact on activity and the need for dedicated communications activity to people with protected characteristics.

This would be reviewed and agreed by the Council's communications team to ensure consistency and to ensure the Council's purchasing of external publicity, advertising, communications or marketing activity is carried out in a consistent way through the Council's communications team confirming the current practice where all advertising and communications spending is carried out through the team.

The team would continue to provide central co-ordination of communications, marketing, advertising, including promotional and statutory, and publicity across the Council supporting services to ensure that communication and engagement is built into project planning.

### **Corporate identity**

The Council has, over the years, built a myriad of various sub brands which provide an inconsistent and fragmented picture of the council and its services.

A review of the Council, HSCP and Discover Inverclyde brand identities will be carried out to remove unnecessary sub-brands and provide an improved and clearer brand structure ensuring that the promotion of services is able to continue within a clear and consistent structure.

To support the development of place marketing a new Inverclyde tourism and place marketing strategy will be published focussing on the promotion of Inverclyde as a visitor destination and ensuring Inverclyde supports national tourism campaigning giving local businesses and venues the tools required to adopt the 'discover Inverclyde' place marketing theme to help reinforce the value of place and placemaking in all communications and marketing activity of the Council.

### **Annual plan**

An annual plan will be created setting out the main areas of communications or engagement activity across the Council to aid forward planning and ensuring the Council is able to bring together activity under themes, for example bringing all activity across services related to Christmas into a common theme or business-related activity to support new business growth or start-ups.



## **Honest**

Our communications approaches will always focus on ensuring messages and engagement can be trusted by the community as holding the highest levels of honesty and integrity.

The seven principles of public life, often called the Nolan Principles, of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership apply to political leaders, appointees, employees of all public services including the Civil Service and local government.

All communications and engagement activity carried out by the Council must comply with these principles to ensure residents have confidence and trust in what we are saying.

### **Mindful of legislation**

Our communication and engagement activity must always be mindful of the legislative framework Scottish local government and health and social care services operate.

Our partnership in health and social care must ensure that cooperation across a range of organisations require local government employees and members to support the legislative duty on, for example, NHS Boards and Integration Joint Boards.

The duty to involve people and communities in planning how their public services are provided is enshrined in law in Scotland.

NHS Boards are bound by duties of public involvement set out in the NHS (Scotland) Act 1978 as amended by National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2004.

For Integration Joint Boards engagement and participation duties are specified by the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014.

The duty to involve people in the design and delivery of care services was strengthened with the introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Publicity carried out by local authorities is guided principally by the Local authority publicity: code of practice published by the Scottish Government as directed by the Secretary of State for Scotland under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986, as amended by section 27 of the Local Government Act 1988.

Inverclyde Council's local arrangements to comply with the code of practice is the Inverclyde Council Media and Social Media Protocol which embeds the principles and responsibilities in the code of practice into all council publicity include media and social media activity.

Operational updates will be incorporated into the protocol to ensure clarity over the support given to health and social care partnership is set out, work with partner organisations and to align communications by organisations receiving grants or

working on behalf of the council is clear and aligned to the publicity code and local version.

Engagement and consultation activity is guided by a range of legislative requirements. These will be incorporated into new consultation guidance to ensure the council fulfils its requirements while maximising the opportunity for people to engage with Council consultation and engagement activity.

The Council and IJB have statutory duties placed on them as Category 1 Responders, by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005, which include ensuring arrangements are in place to warn & inform the public both before and during emergencies.

In addition, the Equality Act as the successor to the Disability Discrimination Act, seeks to ensure accessibility is not only around access to physical locations but that public agencies have a duty to ensure that communications and information is accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

By embedding a focus on protected characteristics into communications planning the aim of this strategy is to ensure that accessibility principles are built into communications and engagement activity.

### **Clear language and plain English**

Communications plan templates will encourage services to focus content and mechanisms for communication and engagement on the needs of the audience rather than the needs of the writer.

Communication material at its best is written for the reader. Services will be encouraged to use plain English and clear language to ensure information is accessible and easily understood and unnecessarily bureaucratic language and acronyms are reduced or fully explained.

## **Reliable and up to date**

Making sure that communications is up to date is crucial to ensure trust in mechanisms.

Dissatisfaction with poor, out of date or non-existent communications breeds complaints and silent dissatisfaction from residents, customers and employees.

Content on, for example, the website must be kept up to date and the existing processes allow for cut offs for content that has not been checked within a specified time. To ensure that it is up to date and, where appropriate, content will be unpublished if considered out of date, has no legislative reason to be there or has not been checked for over a year.

The action plan set out for this strategy aligns with the council's existing digital strategy which highlights the importance of reviewing channels to identify if any could or should be closed throughout the lifetime of that strategy to provide only those needed by customers.

### **Correspondence**

As an organisation the council communicates by email and letter to a large number of people every week.

Ensuring consistency of approach is, for many organisation rooted in ensuring timescales are met for correspondence.

Outside of areas where the council has a statutory duty and reports on that either through key performance indicators or other mechanisms, arrangements for handling correspondence will be reviewed to ensure that the current timescales are being adhered to, whether they require to be altered, are in line with other similar organisations, are consistent and appropriate across services and to allow the corporate management team to review the routes into the Council.

This review will also examine the routes into the Council for correspondence from MPs, MSPs and councillors to provide the corporate management team with data on timescales and mapping the route into the Council to ensure correspondence is reliable and timely.

### **Communicating in a crisis.**

The Council aims to ensure that everyone affected by an emergency or crisis situation are fully aware and hearing any updates from the council or affecting the Council in a timely way.

As a standard, emergency situations including severe weather emergencies, strikes and health emergencies would follow the crisis communications cascade.

The cascade, highlighted in appendix 3, broadly follows this pattern but can incorporate other specific service specific communications, such as letters to parents and carers for issues affecting schools and other education establishments.

During a civil contingency or emergency event that curtails the use of electronic mechanisms through the council network, for example during a power outage of the council buildings, the communications team would continue to provide a focal point focussed on cascading information using mobile devices, potentially including those not on the Council network or personal devices to cascade non sensitive information to networks.

In addition, a business case for a new web or digital platform will incorporate options for emergency mass and targeted communications to local audiences.

In the event of a power outage organisations with mobile 'boots on the ground' such as the police and other emergency services have the capacity to carry out direct face to face communications if required.

As part of the review of communications mechanisms planning for power outages, groups of employees will be identified for potential to be physically deployed as part of a face-to-face or community communications network to allow clear, consistent messaging to be deployed in the event of a significant power outage civil contingency emergency.

**APPENDIX 2: DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY TO BE REVIEWED REGULARLY BY THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)**

**Delivering our goals**

**2023:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>What success looks like</b>
Communications plan template	Communications team	<p>The creation of a new template for use by services to build a consistent approach to communications and engagement planning and delivery for plans and projects.</p> <p>It would be used to set out the detail of a project to encourage services to build communications and engagement into project planning and would require to be logged, costed and signed off by the Council's communications team.</p>
Promote and encourage Gaelic language through our communications mechanisms	Corporate Communications and Corporate Policy	<p>Aim to render the corporate logo in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity and as part of any renewal process</p> <p>Positive message that communication from the public in Gaelic is always welcome through website, information leaflets, email signature and the intranet.</p> <p>Incorporate new written guidance on the use of Gaelic in news releases and on social media in the Council's Media and Social Media Protocol as an operational update.</p> <p>Develop the information on the Council's Gaelic web page to encompass a wider range of information, with a view to providing a higher profile of Gaelic in Inverclyde</p> <p>Publish details of public consultation on key corporate documents bilingually</p>
Co-ordination of consultation, engagement and surveys	Communications and policy teams	<p>Creation of guidance and procedures for the co-ordination of all council surveys, consultations and questionnaires to ensure consistency, compliance with legislation, avoidance or minimising clashes and regular oversight for the corporate management team.</p> <p>Options will be investigated and costed for the creation of a dedicated online space for co-ordination of online surveys and consultation across the council to allow services to carry out</p>

		<p>surveys and consultations in a planned, consistent format.</p> <p>Creation of procedures for oversight of consultations the council should be inputting to from other agencies and organisations.</p>
Update the Council, HSCP and Discover Inverclyde brand identities and streamline the current proliferation of brands and logos.	Communications team	An updated corporate identity manual published incorporating the Council, HSCP and Discover Inverclyde brand guidelines with streamlining of multiple sub brands across council and HSCP services consolidating the identity and branding for both the council and HSCP to provide clarity on the council's overarching 'look and feel' including an examination of areas such as signage, tone of voice in communications and alignment to place marketing.
Media and social media protocol	Communications team	<p>Operational update to the existing Media and Social Media Protocol to highlight the support from the communications team for the HSCP and IJB and links to NHS communications and dissemination to HSCP employees and managers.</p> <p>Operational update to the Media and Social Media protocol to incorporate guidance to all council grants schemes to incorporate principles of the publicity code and council's media and social media protocol, making observance a condition of the grant with associated management and monitoring.</p>
Review HSCP communications activity and resources	Communications service and HSCP SMT	Dedicated review carried out of HSCP communications activity and requirements including a review of existing and new mechanisms, resources and support.
Review of council groups, sub groups and working group activity	Communications team	A review of the activity of all groups and directorate planning activity (including working groups and sub groups) to identify communications activity and 'missed opportunities' to support improved forward planning
Review correspondence timescales	Communications team	A review of the council's existing correspondence timescales where they are in place and creation of proposals, if required, for change will be presented to the Corporate Management Team to ensure communications activity is timely and clear.
Discover Inverclyde place marketing strategy	Communications and Tourism team	A new Inverclyde tourism and place marketing strategy published.
Sponsorship review	Communications team	A review of sponsorship arrangements across the Council and HSCP services and creation of new guidance on sponsorship.

Support for national campaigns	Communications team	A review of arrangements for supporting national campaign requests including opportunities for 'lighting up' and other activity to prepare a clear gateway into the council for review, decision, and where appropriate, support.
Increase social media audience across main social media accounts and streamline small or rarely used sub-sites.	Communications team	Social media engagement and followers continue to increase, more and richer content focussed on main social media accounts and small audience or rarely used sub sites closed down.
Social media incorporation into customer service activity	Communications and Customer Services Team	Develop social media guidance, training and support for council employees including, potentially, customer service staff to respond to residents on council social media accounts
Develop manager training on communications and customer service	Communications and Customer Services Team	Review and updating of all existing training programmes and, if necessary, create a bespoke Inverclyde training programme for council managers on communications and customer services principles.
Develop employee training on communications and customer service	Communications and Customer Services Team	Review and updating of all existing training programmes and, if necessary, create a bespoke Inverclyde training programme for council managers on communications and customer services principles

## Delivering our goals

### 2024:

Action	Responsibility	What success looks like
Annual campaigns planner	Communications team	Creation of an annual campaigns planner setting out the council's priorities for the year promotion of its own services and opportunities to support for partner campaigns.
One plan creation and production	Communications and policy teams	In line with the 'one council, one voice' principle, creation of 'one plan' as an annual publication for dissemination to the community and stakeholders designed to inform residents, businesses and partners of the council's priorities in the coming year.  A targeted employee communications campaign is in place to support the launch and implementation of

		the 'one plan' annually encouraging employees to share the content.
Close down ICON, the council intranet	Communications, HR and IT teams	Removal of content from the existing intranet, ICON, moving it to the Council website or other more appropriate locations identified by council services
Build new direct employee communications mechanisms.	Communications team	New direct communications mechanisms to council employees across, for example, email and mobile phones for use in cascading messaging incorporating options for power outage with potential to link to, personal email/mobile contact.
Business case for a new website/digital communications platform	Communications and IT teams	Business case presented to the CMT highlighting proposals for a new website or other digital platform to improve communications and engagement by the council.
Publish first principle	Communications and information governance teams	Adopt a 'publish first' principle to information and data to encourage greater openness and accountability to ensure the council is in control of its information and to support the principles of freedom of information.

## Measuring success

Monitoring of the action plan will be six monthly updates to the Council's Corporate Management Team.

Individual actions listed above may require specific reports or updates prior to the regular updates particularly where specific proposals are being developed such as the business case for a new website.

While measurement of success for the strategy and action plan will be on the delivery of actions, the overall aim is to increase engagement and communications activity and that each campaign, project and system change developed using the tools created will have its own measurements such as wider recognition of the Council brand, increase audience, more traffic on mechanisms (eg website and social media).

The strategy and action plans aims to put in place the underlying guidance and mechanisms to support that activity.

Creation of a new communications plan template, for example, aims to improve communication planning and consistency and would build in clear objective setting and measurement of success for all future communications activity across the council.

While the audience for the communications strategy itself is chiefly internal colleagues, the implications of delivering the actions is to ensure that council communications activity actively identifies, examines and targets communications to its key stakeholders.

The aim also includes embedding protected characteristics under the Equality Act into communications planning to ensure services actively address any particular communications needs.



Measuring success against clearly set out objectives is expected to be a key component of individual measures, such as the creation of new communications plan templates.

They would aim to embed better planning of communications activity, clear objective setting and measurement of success to aid further improvement of communications activity.

## **APPENDIX 3: CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS CASCADE**

Step 1: Corporate Communications compile information and brief Chief Executive and Leader of the Council on content prior to distribution.

Step 2: Creation of a single trusted source of information for use throughout the situation to ensure people know where to go at any time for the most up to date position. Generally, this would be the council website, but may move to another location, either a physical location in a localised emergency or another off the council network digital channel such as social media in the case of a situation where the internal network is not available. That mechanism/location would be included in all cascade messages.

Step 3: Information updated to that location is then cascaded to the following groups:

- Councillors, corporate management team, council/local resilience management team (CRMT/LRMT)
- National political leaders (minimum all constituency and regional MSPs covering Inverclyde and constituency MP)
- Council customer service team
- Council and/or HSCP employees – message sent electronically must always include reference to further cascade to employees without access to internal electronic systems such as intranet/email
- Managers – reminder to further cascade to employees without access to internal electronic systems such as intranet/email.
- Media
- Website and social media updated - including relevant partners where appropriate and council sub social media sites.

Step 4: Corporate Communications manage response to any feedback or questions arising from the update into CRMT/LRMT or CMT depending on the circumstances and relevance.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/02/23/TM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tony McEwan</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712761</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Progress for Anti-Poverty Interventions 2021-2023</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on developments of funding and initiatives in relation to anti-poverty funding and measures which have been put in place to help alleviate pressures caused by the increase in costs of living.
- 1.3 The report also provides members with an update on the Integration Joint Board (IJB) funding of £330k that was made in December 2022.
- 1.4 On 15 December the Council agreed a saving of £600,000 from the recurring Anti-Poverty Budget from 2023/24. At the same time Members agreed that a one-off sum be allocated to smooth the impact of the reduction over 2023/25. The amount of this one-off sum, which will come from Reserves, will be agreed as part of the forthcoming Budget.
- 1.5 In response to a request made by the Policy and Resources Committee, this report also provides a brief update on local membership and usage of the two local credit union organisations in the Inverclyde area, the number of post offices and the number of Automated Teller machines (ATMs) in the Inverclyde area which provides cash without surcharges.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to note:
- the implementation additional anti-poverty actions of the development of the Warm Hands of Friendship Initiative and the financial support offered to people facing food insecurity during the festive period;
  - an update on the Social Workers in Schools project;
  - the saving agreed by the Council on 15 December 2022;
  - the anti-poverty initiatives approved by the IJB in December 2022;
  - the local participation and membership of the Credit Unions; and

- the access to cash through free cash machines and Post Office provision.

**Ruth Binks**

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 In May 2021 the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to fund a series of targeted interventions to address poverty and deprivation in the areas with the greatest inequalities. The interventions would be funded with an allocated £0.83 million from the Council plus £250,000 from the Integration Joint Board to focus on initiatives to address unemployment and employability, support for people experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, mental health or people who are experiencing food insecurities.
- 3.2 At the meeting of the Full Council in September 2022 a motion was agreed which instructed officers to bring forward proposals to the Policy and Resources Committee and other relevant committees as a matter of urgency on what more the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership can do to support the Inverclyde community through the cost of living crisis.
- 3.3 In November 2022 a progress report was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee which provided details of a projected £355,000 underspend from the Anti-Poverty Initiatives. The committee agreed to utilise the identified underspend and delegated authority to the Corporate Director to allocate £100,000 to fund projects linked to food insecurity.
- 3.4 It was agreed not to allocate the entire £100,000 prior to Christmas to support local anti-poverty and cost of living initiatives over the next few months as there may be some of the projects that require additional funding in addition to that already released. Progress on current Anti-Poverty initiatives and use of funding will continue to be reported regularly to the Policy and Resources Committees.
- 3.5 A saving of £600,000 from the £830,000 Council recurring Anti-Poverty Budget was agreed as part of the 15 December Council Budget meeting. In addition, Members requested that a one-off sum be allocated to smooth the impact of this reduction in funding over 2023/25. The quantum of the one-off sum will be approved at the 2 March 2023 Budget meeting. It is intended that a report will be presented to the next meeting of the Committee recommending the use of available recurring Anti -Poverty funding over 2023/24.
- 3.6 The anti-poverty implementation group continues to meet on a regular basis to monitor progress of identified projects with the support of the dedicated team leader. A strategic group continues to have an oversight of poverty initiatives across the area. This group also identifies emerging needs; maintains a strategic oversight of Scottish Government initiatives; and shares best practice. The following section provides an update on significant developments since the last report to Policy and Resources Committee in November 2022.

#### **3.7 Project updates**

##### **Utilising underspends in the Anti-poverty fund.**

At the November 2022 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee it was agreed that additional funding should be allocated to the following services using the £355,500 underspend.

- £83,000 for applying the Inverclyde enhanced criteria to the doubling of the Scottish Government child payment from £130 - £260;
- £50,000 to the Scottish Welfare Fund provision to cope with the increased demand for Community Care and Crisis Grants to 31 March 2023. This is in addition to £100,000 one off funding already allocated for 2022/23;

- £100,000 Warm Hand of Friendship Funding (Warm Spaces) to support local community and third sector organisations provide safe and warm spaces, warm food, and warm items of clothing such as gloves, scarves, and socks. This project was administered through Inverclyde CVS and a total of 32 local community and voluntary organisations have successfully received funding offer a warm space during the winter 2022/2. £98,000 of this funding has now been allocated and full details can be found on the Council's website

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/inverclyde-community-empowerment/poverty/inverclyde-s-warm-hand-of-friendship>

- £100,000 was allocated to help mitigate food insecurity during the winter months 2022/23. This funding supported local foodbanks and community organisations to open and support communities leading up to and during the festive period. The I58 Trussell Trust Foodbank will receive three instalments of £5,000 to purchase food for the increased number of service users referred to this organisation. The Port Glasgow Church Angels received an additional £3,000 to open for 4 days during the festive period, providing food and a warm space to people seeking support. Branchton Community Centre and the Salvation Army in Port Glasgow each received an allocation of funding to help them to purchase food and open their centres either leading up to Christmas or during the Christmas period. Inverclyde Council Community Learning and Development Services enhanced this offer by opening the I Youth Zone for three days during the Christmas break, offering warm food and produce to people facing food insecurity at this time; and
- The discretionary food insecurity fund will also be used to continue to support families on low income and in receipt of School Clothing Grant funding to provide free school meals during the planned strike days between November 2022 and February 2023. The approximate cost for this support will be £15,000.

### 3.8 Warm Boxes Initiative - £30,000

The Integration Joint Board agreed in November 2022 to allocate £30,000 of funding to support the Warm Boxes Initiative which will provide 500 local people with clothing and items to keep them warm during the winter period. The community learning and development team has co-ordinated the distribution of the boxes with each box containing: a hat, scarf, gloves, socks, flask, and a torch. Blankets are also being sourced to support this initiative. The clients have predominately been identified by the HSCP Homecare team. Other groups who will receive the boxes include those who will be discharged from hospital linking with Compassionate Inverclyde Jolly Boxes, Friends of Inverclyde Group, Salvation Army and the I58 clients. The boxes were delivered by local volunteers prior to the Festive Holiday period.

### 3.9 Additional funding allocated by the IJB

Working in Partnership to mitigate poverty in Inverclyde the Integration Joint Board (IJB) agreed at its meeting on 28 November 2022 to fund the following initiatives using £330,000 HSCP underspends:

- To Increase cash assistance under Social Work Section 12 (Scotland) 1968 and Section 22 of The Children's (Scotland) act 1995 to reduce the impact of harm through the cost-of-living crisis;
- Increase further the provision of warm boxes to Care at Home and Third sector; and
- Create small grants to third sector providers for hardship payments for affected individuals within the community.

The small grant to third sector providers will extend the Warm Spaces initiative from January 2023. The progress of the additional initiatives to mitigate poverty will be reported to both the IJB and the Policy and Resources Committee as part of the Anti-Poverty Initiatives Progress Report:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2509>

### 3.10 **Social Workers in Schools Project – Project spend for 2022/23 is £81,000**

This project had been making some positive progress against its targets and timescales, however, due to the long-term difficulties with staffing which will not be resolved over the next few months, and the continued challenge of recruiting qualified social work staff in HSPC, it has been necessary to return the social workers involved in this project back to the core social work team in HSPC.

Given the longer term recruitment issues anticipated in Social Work and the fact that the project was a pilot project, the intention is to cease the project.

Some areas of work undertaken within the project (e.g. increasing attendance) displayed impact. However, it is important to note that this was due to the multiagency nature of the project and, in these circumstances, it is difficult to attribute impact solely to the social worker role. It is also important to note that the local authority is currently generating an overarching attendance strategy, which is centred on a robust evidence base, involving social work managers at a strategic level. This is anticipated to have a significant impact on attendance over time and negate the role of the social worker in school.

The project also demonstrated that, in order to have impact, there was the need to utilise a significant level of social work resource. For example, the two social workers appointed to post were linked to one primary and one early years establishment each. This was not felt to be a sustainable use of resource going forward.

Ongoing evaluations of the project also indicated that there could be the potential for blurred lines between roles. A number of professionals are deployed centrally and from other sources such as the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to support improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. In this context there was an indication that duplication of activity could occur.

### 3.11 **Credit Unions in Inverclyde**

Credit Unions can serve a specific geographical area or can be focussed around themes. There are two local Credit Unions based in Inverclyde, Port Glasgow Credit Union and Tail O' the Bank in Greenock. Port Glasgow Credit Union has around 4,500 members. Of this number between 1200 – 1400 are saving and borrowing regularly. This represents a very high proportion of the town of Port Glasgow, about 27%. The national target is 7% participation rate. Tail O' the Bank Credit Union in Greenock has around 7,000 members with around 4,500 active members. This represents approximately 15.8% of the population.

Nationally there are other Credit Unions will which undoubtedly have Inverclyde members. Scot West serves the former Strathclyde Regional Council Area and Police Scotland and Glasgow Taxi Drivers have their own Credit Unions. [www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk) gives a link to Credit Unions that are available in an area.

At a time of increasing interest rates; changes to the local banking systems; high inflation and financial insecurity the Credit Unions are an important part of the Inverclyde response to the cost-of-living crisis. Both local Credit Unions continue to engage with the HSCP as part of the Financial Inclusion Partnership Strategy. This work includes work currently being undertaken to explore

the facilitation of an emergency loan fund through the two local Credit Unions. If progressed this would provide an emergency line of low-cost credit and increase membership of Credit Unions and access to ethical and sustainable alternatives to high-cost credit.

Early discussions are also underway to link the maturation of Child Trust Funds with the opening of a Credit Union account as part of financial literacy and capacity building activities.

Discussions have taken place between HSCP Advice Services staff and both of the local Credit Unions about actively promoting Credit Union membership at the planned outreach activity in the coming months.

### 3.12 Update on access to cash through Post Office and access to cash through Automatic Tellers (ATMs)

In response to a previous request from Policy and Resources Committee research from Link UK concludes that there are currently 12 Post Offices delivering services including mobile post offices on certain days in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay, 79 ATMs or free cash at the till, 56 (71%) of these are free to use. <https://www.link.co.uk/consumers/locator/>

	<b>Post Office</b>	<b>Free ATMs / Free Cash at Till</b>	<b>ATM Charges</b>	<b>Total</b>
PA11	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
PA13	1	2	0	<b>3</b>
PA14	2	4	4	<b>10</b>
PA15	4	34	6	<b>44</b>
PA16	3	8	10	<b>21</b>
PA18	1	2	2	<b>5</b>
PA19	1	6	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>91</b>

The provider of ATMs - LINK has had a Financial Inclusion Programme in existence since 2006 which continues to be developed and is focused on improving free cash access in the most deprived and remote areas of the UK. LINK also produces monthly Footprint and Dashboard Reports which give the public a view on the current status of the coverage of the ATM network in the UK and the latest reports can be downloaded from their home page.

In addition, LINK has also commissioned a number of important reports to help understand the issues around access to cash. These reports include a 2019 independent Access to Cash Review including the impacts of COVID and the 2022 Cash Census report exploring Britain's relationship with cash and digital payments,

LINK has committed to maintain the coverage of free ATMs at the time it announced the future reform of interchange in January 2018. This means that any ATM at that time that didn't have another free-to-use within 1 kilometre will not have its interchange reduced. In addition, since the Autumn of 2018. LINK has also committed to protect the interchange for any free-to-use ATMs live in January 2018 that no longer have another free-to-use within 1 kilometre. Premiums of up to £2.75 have also been made available to the Protected ATMs that are used least to maintain a high level of coverage.

If communities or elected members think that an area needs better access to cash then LINK can be contacted through their website to request a review.

<https://www.link.co.uk/initiatives/financial-inclusion/>



Members of the public can also use this site to request that a cash machine dispenses £5 notes.

The Chief Executive wrote to the Local External Affairs Manager for the Post Office in November 2021 to raise concerns about the closures of Post Offices in Inverclyde.

#### 4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk		x	
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	x		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty	x		
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	x		
Environmental & Sustainability		x	
Data Protection		x	

#### 4.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti Poverty		2022/23	£355k		One-off spend on projects utilising underspends in the Anti-Poverty budget approved November 2022.

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

#### 4.3 Legal/Risk

N/A.

#### 4.4 Human Resources

N/A.

#### 4.5 Strategic

This paper addresses the inequalities priority of the LOIP.

#### 4.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

The mitigations proposed in this report address Fairer Scotland duty which requires particular public bodies in Scotland to pay due regard to (actively consider) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

##### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

##### (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.
	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

#### 4.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

#### 4.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

#### 4.9 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 – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

#### 5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 A senior officer group meets to identify best practice and recommend allocation of resources.

#### 6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/04/23/SM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>George Barbour/Barbara McQuarrie</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712385/ 01475 712845</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>2023 Coronation of King Charles III</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to highlight national proposals and local arrangements for marking the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III with a new Council and Public Holiday on Monday 8 May 2023.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the committee note the national and local arrangements to mark the Coronation and to agree that the Council makes arrangements to mark the occasion with a new one-off Public and Council Holiday on Monday 8 May 2023.

**Steven McNab**  
**Head of Organisational Development,**  
**Policy & Communications**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 4.1 His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation will take place on Saturday 6 May 2023.
- 4.2 Both the Scottish and UK Governments are encouraging the introduction of an additional bank holiday on the following Monday to allow individuals, businesses and other organisations to celebrate the Coronation.
- 4.3 The Privy Council, at its meeting on 9 November 2022, made the following proclamations related to the creation of a Bank Holiday:

(1) appointing Monday 8th May 2023 as a bank holiday in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to commemorate His Majesty's Coronation;

(2) appointing Monday 8th May 2023 as a bank holiday in Scotland to commemorate His Majesty's Coronation.

- 4.4 This arrangement is expected to create a three-day 'Coronation Weekend'.
- 4.5 The council has seven declared 'council holidays' in 2023 where council offices and buildings are closed:

New Year - Monday 2 January 2023 and Tuesday 3 January 2023

Good Friday - Friday 7 April 2023

Easter Monday - Monday 10 April 2023

May Day - Monday 1 May 2023

Christmas - Monday 25 December 2023 and Tuesday 26 December 2023

The most recent additional bank holiday arrangement was a new public holiday to mark the Platinum Jubilee of HM The Queen on Friday 3 June 2022.

## 5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that a new one-off Council and Public Holiday is created on Monday 8 May 2023 to mark the Coronation Day.
- 5.2 Any employees requiring working on Monday 8 May 2023 to provide essential services or where there are exceptional work pressures that day which will require employees to work would receive enhanced payments/time off in lieu at a later date. Any additional costs are expected to be contained within existing Directorate budgets.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	X		
Legal/Risk			X
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)			X
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

## 6.2 Finance

Any additional costs for enhanced payments for employees requiring to work during a council holiday will require to be absorbed by existing Directorate budgets.

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					

## 6.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

## 6.4 Human Resources

The creation of a new public and council holiday seeks to strike the balance between supporting the national celebration with the requirements of services to deliver projects and work activity. Councils services will require to accommodate a new council and public holiday within their existing workplans to ensure no or minimal loss of productivity.

## 6.5 Strategic

N/A

## 6.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

N/A

### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

### (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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

### 6.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

### 6.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

### 6.9 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 – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Engagement with trade unions over arrangements will take place.

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Privy Council Meetings: Orders approved and business transacted at the Privy Council held by The King at Buckingham Palace on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022:

<https://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/orders/orders-in-council/>

Agenda item No 11 (HR/28/21/GB) Policy and Resources Committee, 14 September 2021, 'HM The Queen Platinum Jubilee 2022.



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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>HR/24/22</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Barbara McQuarrie</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712845</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Redeployment Policy</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to the refreshed Redeployment Policy attached at Appendix1. The Policy has been updated following discussions with the Corporate Management Team and trade union colleagues and aims to ensure the employee implications of service reviews and budget savings can be managed effectively.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee approve the refreshed Redeployment Policy attached at Appendix 1.

**Steven McNab**  
**Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications**

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's current Redeployment Policy, which was originally approved in 2009 and updated in 2014, demonstrates the Council's commitment to protecting the employment security of staff as far as possible. The Policy provides an effective redeployment framework which supports the delivery of savings, service reviews and supports employees suffering from ill health to maintain employment with the Council.
- 3.2 Given the scale of the budget challenge ahead it was considered appropriate to undertake a review of the existing redeployment policy to ensure it continues to support employees and is fit for purpose. Following discussions with trade union colleagues and members of the Extended Corporate Management team, a few minor updates have been made to the existing policy.
- 3.3 The Redeployment Policy has been refreshed to reflect good practice and support the workforce planning challenges currently faced by the Council. The key aim of the refreshed policy is to manage workforce change effectively and avoid compulsory redundancy where practicable.
- 3.4 The key change to the existing Policy is in relation to temporary employees and there is now greater flexibility to support the retention of existing temporary employees where temporary contracts are coming to an end. The updated policy provides greater scope to extend the redeployment search period for temporary employees. This approach will potentially assist the Council in addressing some of the recruitment and retention challenges it currently faces.
- 3.5 The refreshed Policy reaffirms the Council's commitment to avoid compulsory redundancies where practicable. Where employee(s) are displaced from their job(s), have gone through the redeployment process without success and do not wish to opt for voluntary severance, the Policy confirms that a report will be prepared for the Policy and Resources Committee to advise of the position and to seek authority to make a displaced employee or employees compulsory redundant.

### 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Policy & Resources Committee approve the refreshed Redeployment Policy attached at Appendix 1.

### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk	X		
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty	X		
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X	
Data Protection		X	

## 5.2 Finance

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					

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are potential legal implications which may be associated with individual cases of redeployment. Legal Services will be consulted in more complex cases to minimise any risk to the Council.

## 5.4 Human Resources

The recommendations in this report will support the retention of existing temporary employees and workforce planning arrangements and ensure the employee implications of service reviews and budget savings can be managed effectively

## 5.5 Strategic

The report helps deliver Corporate Plan Organisational Priority 10 – to develop motivated, trained and qualified employees that deliver services that meet current and anticipated service needs.

## 5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
	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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA 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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

### 5.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

### 5.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

### 5.9 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 – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The trade unions are supportive of the changes to the redeployment policy outlined in the report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

*Organisational Development, Policy & Communications*

# **REDEPLOYMENT POLICY**

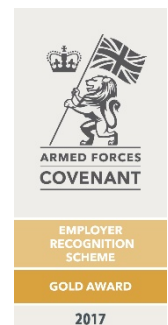
Version 5

Produced by:

*Organisational Development, Human Resources & Communications*

Inverclyde Council  
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Revised December 2022



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## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Name	Title	Service
	HR Team Leader	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications

Change History		
Version	Date	Comments
1	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2009	Policy and Resources Committee
2	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2010	Updated to reflect changes in pay protection.
3	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	Updated to reflect changes in SPPA guidance and the approved Temporary Employee Protocol
4	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2014	Removal of excess travel payments
5	October 2022	Updated to reflect changes to redeployment of Temporary Employees
6	December 2022	Considered by CMT

Distribution		
Name/ Title	Date	Comments
Corporate Directors, Heads of Service, Trade Unions, & ICON	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	Circulation of approved document
ICON	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2010	Version 1 replaced with Version 2 on ICON
HR Contact List, Trade Unions & ICON	9 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	Version 2 replaced with Version 3 on ICON
ICON	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2018	Updated to reflect changes to protection arrangements for health related redeployments

*Distribution may be made to others on request*

Policy Review		
Review Date	Person Responsible	Service
2026		Organisational Development, Policy & Communications

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## **1 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 The Council is committed to protecting the employment security of staff, as far as possible, by planning effectively to meet current and future staffing needs. Where, however, a situation arises which results in an employee not being able to continue in the role they were originally engaged to fulfil (e.g. illness, capability, redundancy, or restructuring), it will seek to support an individual to maintain employment with the Council in so far as this is consistent with the individual's wishes and the Council's requirements.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that an effective redeployment framework can support the delivery of savings and service reviews through redesigning structures; making best use of existing skills and reducing release costs; through the assessment of transferable skills and competencies, assisting at risk employees find a "positive destination" .

## **2 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 To provide fair and consistent consideration of an employee who is subject to redeployment and to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its legal obligations,

## **3 REASONS FOR REDEPLOYMENT**

### **3.1 Redeployment within the Council may be necessary as a result of one of the following:-**

#### **a. Capability**

##### **➤ Medical grounds**

Changes in the employee's capability of carrying out their remit. This will include employees considered as being disabled under the terms and conditions contained in the Equality Act 2010'

##### **➤ Performance Issues,**

Where compulsory redeployment is the outcome of a formal process.

#### **b. Redundancy**

#### **c. Efficiency of the Service**

(where there is no redundancy situation but there would be efficiency improvements resulting from the retirement).

#### **d. Displacement due to budget savings, restructures, job redesign**

**Selection for redundancy will be in line with the Council's Voluntary Severance Policy.**

e. Some Other Substantial Reason (SOSR)

For example it is recognised that personal relationships with colleagues can deteriorate or that circumstances outwith the work environment can adversely affect an employee's ability to function in the job.

To be included on the Redeployment Register for SOSR a report into the circumstances would be required, e.g. a recommendation through the Council's Dignity & Respect at Work Processes. This would also need to be approved by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications and the relevant Head of Service.

#### **4 STAFF COVERED BY ARRANGEMENTS**

The following Council staff are covered by this Policy.

4.1 **All permanent employees of the Council.**

4.2 **Temporary Employees as Detailed Below**

For temporary employees (as defined in the Temporary Employee Protocol), who are due to be terminated, redeployment to a suitable alternative position or vacancy will be sought in accordance with the undernoted arrangements. Temporary teachers will be dealt with in terms of the relevant Local Negotiating Committee Teachers (LNCT) and Scottish Negotiating Committee Teachers (SNCT) provisions. There can be no guarantee that a suitable alternative position will be found and, if not, this will result in the termination of employment in the normal manner, and with notice in accordance with contractual entitlement.

- a. < 2 years service – Redeployment Register checked, at employee or managers request for up to a 6 week period, to be agreed between Head of Service and HR, but ending no later than the contractual notice end date.

Management must advise the employee, in accordance with the Temporary Employee Protocol, that the end of a fixed term /temporary appointment is being considered and the reasons for this. The employee must be invited to a meeting with management to discuss the circumstances, to establish whether the contract might be extended or whether there is any alternative work the employee could do.

If no suitable alternative vacancy found then the employee's dismissal shall take effect – if suitable redeployment found and agreed to by the employee then existing contract will be terminated by mutual consent, in writing, and subsequent offer of employment in new role offered at rate for the post (no salary protection consideration).

- b. >2 years service – Redeployment Register checked at employee or manager's request for up to a 12 week period, to be agreed between Head of Service and HR, but ending no later than the contractual notice end date.

Management must advise the employee, in accordance with the Temporary Employee Protocol, that the end of a fixed term /temporary appointment is being considered and the reasons for this. The employee must be invited to a meeting with management to discuss the circumstances, to establish whether the contract might be extended or whether there is any alternative work the employee could do.

If no suitable alternative vacancy found then the employee's dismissal shall take effect and the contract terminated with redundancy payment, in redundancy situation – if suitable redeployment found and agreed to by the employee then existing contract will be terminated by mutual consent, in writing, and subsequent offer of employment in new role offered at rate for the post (no salary protection consideration).

Notwithstanding the above, the Council may exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances (Head of OD, Policy & Communications in consultation with Chief Financial Officer & relevant Head of Service) e.g where any employee with over 2 year's temporary service is to be displaced and face a "redundancy" situation and where an alternative post is sourced but at a substantially reduced grade. In such cases employees may be eligible for salary protection up to a maximum of 1 year.

**Managers are advised of Temporary Employees anticipated contract end dates by HR on a quarterly basis.**

- 4.3 Teachers will only be covered where the following are not applicable: LNCT 15- 'Future Provision - School Accommodation Staffing Policy', 'Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006' and 'Parental Involvement in Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Appointments (Scotland) Regulations 2007'.
- 4.4 The Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme (SPPA) circular 09/2012 referring to redeployment on the grounds of ill health for Teachers may apply. Details of the process to be followed is explained in the Council's Redeployment Guidelines.
- 4.5 Redeployment is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. If there are no reasonable adjustments that would enable a disabled employee to do their current job, employers must look for suitable alternative vacancies to which the employee can be transferred.

## **5 TERMS OF REDEPLOYMENT**

- 5.1 Redeployment will be looked for with reference to the following terms and conditions, subject to paragraph 2 in respect of Temporary Employees:-
- (i) Consideration will only be given to an employee whose circumstances are as detailed in sections 3 and 4 of the policy.

- (ii) Organisational Development, Policy & Communications will keep a central Redeployment Register. Consideration will be given to temporarily placing individuals in temporary posts in the interest of utilising an employee's skills, improving the skills base of an employee, and as a consequence positively affecting absence levels. Employees receiving retraining of some description not with their own service will, however, continue to be paid by their own service.
- (iii) Where an employee is included in the Redeployment Register on health grounds a search for a suitable alternative role will commence within their current service, then directorate.
- (iv) A suitable alternative post has to be a substantive, temporary or fixed term vacancy - established post i.e. a post is not created to accommodate an individual.
- (v.) Pregnant Employees who have actually commenced their maternity/family leave; or Shared Parental Leave/Adoption Leave who are selected for redundancy, special provisions apply to them. They must be given first refusal on any available suitable alternative.
- (vi) A suitable alternative employment opportunity may be at a lower, or similar salary level. Where an employee can demonstrate to management that they meet all essential criteria of a vacant higher salaried post then this may be considered. The job description and person specification for the vacancy will be the factors which determine if there is the possibility of a match. The associated remuneration package is not a determining factor, although any salary differential would have to be "reasonable" as determined by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications.
- (vii) Offers of redeployment will be made at the salary rate attached to the post. Protection in terms of conditions of service and 1 year's salary protection will apply where redeployment occurs due to reasons of restructure, redundancy or for health reasons when recommended, by the Council's Occupational Health Adviser, as essential. Further details can be found under section 7.
- (viii) The redeployment will be subject to consultation with the relevant Head of Service. Should a vacancy be considered appropriate then the employee to be redeployed may be considered without recourse to the advertising process or on a restricted basis (i.e. when limiting leeting to a retriected pool and not advertising competitively, with other employees on the Redeployment Register) and slotted in where they meet the essential criteria for the post. Individuals alternatively may be interviewed as part of the normal recruitment and selection process, depending on the circumstances of the post and subject to agreement by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications and relevant Head of Service.

- (ix) The authorised signatory of a 'Request to Advertise' form should consider all requests to advertise a post as potential redeployment opportunities, and, therefore, ensure that the central Redeployment Register is considered prior to the authorisation to advertise a vacancy. A suitable candidate for the vacancy found on the Redeployment Register may circumvent the traditional recruitment and selection process at any stage prior to having made an offer of employment to a candidate.
- (x) In determining the suitability of any offer of alternative employment, cognisance will be taken by HR and the appointing Head of Service of the following factors: pay; status; location; working environment; hours of work; job description; person specification.
- (xi) Any offer of alternative employment will be subject to the Council's safer recruitment practices e.g entitlement to work in UK check, references, PVG check, Pre- Employment Health Check.
- (xii) The redeployment will be subject to a four week trial period during which time the employee and the new service will be able to assess the suitability of the transferee. In the event of either party - employee or service - considering the alternative as unsuitable the reason offered should be captured in writing and reported to the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications. Where the reason is agreed by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications as a justifiable one, the employee will return to the Redeployment Register and remain attached to their substantive service.
- (xiii) An employee who rejects the offer of redeployment, which is considered a reasonable match by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, without good reason may result in their dismissal taking effect subsequent to the employee having, in the view of the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, unreasonably refused the offer of a suitable alternative post. Employees will be given 2 working days to consider an offer. The Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications has discretion to extend the two day period for acceptance in appropriate cases.

When determining whether a suitable offer of redeployment has been made, a variety of factors require to be considered including rate of pay, duties of the job, location, any family friendly issues. The deciding factor will be where an employee has no justifiable reason for refusing a job that the employer deems a suitable alternative offer of employment.

- (xiv) Where possible, the period on the Redeployment Register will be determined at the outset. In determining the period for redeployment, consideration will be given to a number of factors, eg. the remaining sickness allowance of an employee, the expiry date of the existing contract of employment, how long a service can maintain an employee on redeployment who may be on restricted duties or work placement. Where staff are displaced as a result of a service review /budget saving the custom &

practice for employees is a maximum of 12 weeks and will be agreed by Head of Service and HR, in consultation with Trade Union, Budgetary and financial constraints will also be a key determining factor when deciding on the period for redeployment. For example, when the Council carries out its annual budget review, or where redundancies are necessary, redeployment periods will be determined based on the financial circumstances of the Council at that time.

Financial liability will remain with employing service up until the beginning of the trial after which it is new service. If trial does not work out liability returns to employing service. There have been occasions however e.g if a funded post, where the new service has agreed to meet, where applicable, half salary protection costs.

Depending upon the circumstances, a time period for employees of up to 6 months (inclusive of notice period) will be set for redeployment at the point of the redeployment process commencing. This timescale may be extended in exceptional circumstances for an additional 6 months (for example, due to serious health issues) by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications and relevant Head of Service.

If no suitable alternative employment is found then the employee's dismissal will take effect and the contract of employment will be terminated at the end of the redeployment and notice period.

- (xv) Restructure -.In circumstances in which post(s) have been removed from the organisational structure as a result of organisational change the employee(s) in the post(s) find themselves in a displacement situation.

Where more than one employee is affected by an organisational change and all options under the voluntary redeployment and voluntary severance routes are entirely exhausted, the Council will identify which employee is displaced by applying the Displacement Selection Criteria Matrix. Details are contained in the Voluntary Severance Policy., and the employee will be placed on the Redeployment Register.

- (xvi) The Council will attempt to avoid compulsory redundancy where practicable but where an employee(s) are displaced from their job(s), have gone through the redeployment process without success and do not wish to opt for voluntary severance, then a report will be prepared for the Policy and Resources Committee to advise of the position and to seek authority to make a displaced employee or employees compulsory redundant. Any severance payment made will be the same that is offered under voluntary severance. All appropriate notice periods will apply.
- (xvii) Retraining will be available within reasonable boundaries, that is to say with reference to previous experience, qualifications already gained, time and cost constraints. This process should be considered immediately and is the responsibility of senior management within the transferee service to instigate.

## **6 PROCESS**

- 6.1 The operational process for redeployment is expressed in the Redeployment Guidelines. An Employee Information Pack on Redeployment is issued to employees at the point they are included on the Council's Redeployment Register.

## **7 OTHER CONDITIONS**

- 7.1 Where an employee, has been redeployed as a result of a service restructure/ redundancy situation the following additional conditions will apply: -
- (i) Where the alteration results in a move to a post which has earnings lower than the employee's previous salary then a Certificate of Material Change will be issued. This certificate has the effect of protecting pension rights for a period of ten years, by recognising the employee's most advantageous salary arrangements over the prescribed period.
  - (ii) Where the alteration results in a move to a post which has earnings lower than the employee's previous salary then pay protection on a cash conserved basis will apply for up to one year.
- 7.2 The Certificate of Material Change detailed in paragraph 7.1 (ii) above will also be applicable to employees who have been redeployed due to the ill health criteria, as outlined by Strathclyde Pension Fund Scheme and whose earnings are now lower than their previous salary.

## **8 RIGHT OF APPEAL**

- 8.1 Where a dismissal is due to the expiry or termination of a temporary/fixed term contract, then the right of appeal is one internal stage and to a Corporate Director (or nominated senior officer not previously involved). For all other dismissals, the right of appeal will be to the Human Resources Appeal Board or HR Appeals Panel (Officers), for absence related dismissals
- 8.2 An employee who is of the opinion that their circumstances have been considered unfavourably can raise a grievance using the Council's Grievance Procedure, subject to the terms of that Procedure.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>HR/23/22/AH/BMcQ</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Hannah McGinty</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712760</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Employee Survey Results 2022</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee on the results of the latest 3 yearly Council wide Employee Survey, carried out in September-October 2022. These results reflect Employee's opinions as the Council continues to recover from the pandemic. A presentation to members will take place on the survey results prior to the Policy and Resources Committee.

1.3 The survey response for this year was 42%, which is a 10% increase on the 2018 rate of 32%. A contributing factor has been the ability of Lowland Market Research to capture partially completed responses through the online digital format.

1.4 The Employee Survey Results are available here:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/assets/attach/15746/Inverclyde-Employee-Survey-Report-2022-Full-Results.docx>

In summary, the survey results are positive overall, although there are some areas for improvement. A comparison between 2012, 2015, 2018 and the latest survey results are presented in Appendix 1 and show minor variations in results since the last survey. There are also new questions in this year's survey to reflect changes in the Council such as Hybrid working, which will be highlighted in this report.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- note the positive results from the recent survey and the identified areas for addressing improvement;
- note that the survey results and intended actions will be shared with Council employees ensuring that communication is made with those who are non-PC users;
- note the actions outlined in paragraph 3.9 and 3.10 to address the issues arising from the survey.



**Steven McNab**  
**Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications**

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council is committed to undertaking Employee Surveys on a three yearly cycle, to gain feedback on our performance as an employer. This enables us to measure employee satisfaction, the effects of change within the organisation and to compare outcomes over time. This survey is particularly important to provide information as the Council continues to recover from the pandemic.
- 3.2 The Employee Survey Questionnaire was developed in conjunction with Lowland Market Research to enable the Council to obtain feedback from employees on issues affecting them in the workplace. The questions are designed for both comparison purposes over time and to measure the effect of new policies and procedures etc. on the workforce.

Lowland Market Research will provide a member's briefing presentation of this year's survey results prior to the P&R scheduled 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

- 3.3 The objective of the survey, therefore, was to measure the effect of organisational changes on employees over the past 2-3 years and to gain feedback on the following areas:
- The Council as my employer
  - Me and my job
  - My performance, development and recognition
  - My working environment and my wellbeing at work
  - Supporting attendance
  - Communication across the Council
  - My supervisor/manager and me
  - Senior management (Directors and Heads of Service)
  - Supervisors/managers
  - Workplace Policies and Procedures
- 3.4 The Employee Survey was launched on the 18 August 2022 and remained open until the 14 October 2022. Every Council employee at the time was given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire. Employees who are desk based were sent a link to complete the questionnaire online. Whilst employees without PC access were sent a hard copy of the questionnaire to their home address with a return envelope. Regular reminders were sent by Lowlands and the OD service via email and ICON during the live period to encourage as many responses as possible to the survey, with the deadline date being extended twice. Due to the online format, Lowland was able to capture data from the incomplete surveys which also supported the level of response rate.
- 3.5 There was a 42% response rate, with 1,737 returns in total of the questionnaire. This is a 10% increase on the previous survey response rate where 32% (1,270) questionnaires were returned. This is the highest response total for the Council's employee survey. From the responses where the directorate was provided, the largest response was from Education, Communities & Organisational Development with 49%, and this is reflective of the workforce given the size of the directorates. The breakdown of responses is as follows:
- 30 paper/hard copies
  - 1707 online responses – 1082 completed, 655 partially completed (one or more completed questions)
- 3.6 An addition to the survey this year was the section on Hybrid working, given the ongoing pilot taking place at the Council. 37% of respondents identified that they were working as part of the new hybrid working pattern. Overall, hybrid working is reflected positively, but is not without challenges which are identified as:
- Technology – 44%

- Communication – 23%
- Social Isolation – 19%

These are juxtaposed to the benefits of hybrid working which showed 53% of responders having a better work life balance, and 34% being less distracted by working at home.

3.7 There are a number of positive results emerging from the survey, with a summary of these included available here:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/assets/attach/15747/Summary-of-Highlighted-Points-Employee-Survey-Report-2022.docx>

- Employees agree that Inverclyde Council accepts and supports equality and diversity – 91% - with 83% aware of the relevant policy.
- 88% of employees understand how their work contributes to achieving the Council's aims and objectives.
- Employees have a clear understanding of the purpose of their jobs – 96% - and what their duties are – 92%.
- 94% of employees believe they have the skills and knowledge needed for their job, and 92% know what is expected of them.
- Employees feel supported by their colleagues – 92% - and managers – 87%
- Managers are confident in their ability to manage their teams - 98% - and their budget responsibilities – 90%
- 82% of respondents were aware of e-learning training, of which 63% agree there is enough relevant content.

To reflect a majority of responses, results that equate to approximately 3 quarters (70%) is considered representative of opinion. Hence, scores over 70% indicates that we are performing very well as an employer. Anything below 70% indicates there are issues which need to be looked at and improved for employees. For example, as above, 63% agree there is relevant content available on the e-learning platform. Therefore, improvements in awareness of available resources are required. This can be done through low-cost solutions such as communication on courses through ICON and Z-cards, to increase awareness, improve accessibility, and encourage completion of courses that are already available on the platform.

3.8 There are a number of areas where improvements are required, further details can be found here:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/assets/attach/15747/Summary-of-Highlighted-Points-Employee-Survey-Report-2022.docx>

- More than half of respondents are unaware of Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Council Corporate Plans.
- 40% of employees don't receive regular recognition or praise for doing a good job
- 19% of respondents are considering leaving the council in the next 6 months.
- 68% of managers feel their workload is excessive, with 27% of employees saying their workload was not manageable. These figures peaked in ECOD managers at 72% and HSCP employees at 28%.
- 28% of employees have experienced harassment or offensive language/behaviour from customers and clients.
- 55% of employees hear important Council news through gossip, this increases to 66% in HSCP.
- Perception and connection to Directors and Heads of Services to employees is considered low, with 60% disagreeing that time is taken to meet with staff and 45% believe that they are interested in staff opinions.

With the pandemic impacting the Council over the last 2-3 years, it is important work is done to address these areas, to engage and motivate employees, and promote Inverclyde Council as an Employer of Choice.

- 3.9 The results of the Employee Survey are vital to informing and supporting the Council actions and activities. There are current actions and work being undertaken through plans already agreed in regard to strategies such as the Communication Strategy, New Ways of Working and Hybrid working policy for example which address areas within section 3.8. A refreshed leadership programme is being rolled out which will provide managers with the skills and techniques needed to manage a flexible/hybrid workforce and address issues such as social isolation. Any revision to ongoing strategies/action plans will consider the results of the employee survey 2022.
- 3.10 The Corporate Policy Team will be supporting the completion of a Council wide self-evaluation exercise. This will be mapped against the Best Value: Revised Statutory Guidance 2020 and the PSIF Framework and will be informed by overall and service level survey results which will be shared directly with each Head of Service and Service managers. The outcome of the self-evaluation exercise will be a Council wide understanding of the key workforce areas of focus for improvement and will inform the future People and Organisational Development Strategy 2024-26, along with the Workforce Planning and Development Group and their service workforce plans.

#### 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- note the positive results from the recent survey and the identified areas for addressing improvement;
- note that the survey results and intended actions will be shared with Council employees ensuring that communication is made with those who are non-PC users;
- note the actions outlined in paragraph 3.9 and 3.10 to address the issues arising from the survey.

#### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		X	
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X	
Data Protection		X	

#### 5.2 Finance

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					

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal/risk issues concerned with this report.

### 5.4 Human Resources

The results of the survey will be used to inform the development of future strategies such as the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy and Workforce Planning.

### 5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic issues concerned with this report. Recommendations seek to promote and enhance the strategic plans in place.

### 5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

#### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

#### (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
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NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

**5.7 Children and Young People**

Has a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

--

YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.

X
---

NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

**5.8 Environmental/Sustainability**

There are no environmental issues concerned with this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

--

YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

X
---

NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

**5.9 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
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NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The survey results have been shared with the Trade Unions locally who are supportive of the proposed actions.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Employee Survey Results 2012, 2015 and 2018.

## Appendix 1

### **Inverclyde Council Employee Survey**

#### **2012, 2015, 2018 and 2022 Comparison Tables**

Prepared for:  
Inverclyde Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Greenock  
PA15 1LY

Prepared By:  
Lowland Market Research

November 2022

## 1 The council as my employer

### I have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the Council

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	18%	17%	19%	14%
Agree	66%	71%	67%	64%
Disagree	14%	10%	12%	18%
Strongly Disagree	2%	1%	2%	4%

### I understand how my work contributes to achieving the Council's aims and objectives

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	26%	27%	27%	20%
Agree	62%	66%	62%	63%
Disagree	9%	7%	10%	14%
Strongly Disagree	2%	1%	1%	3%

### I am aware of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017/22

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	9%	10%	13%	11%
Agree	39%	37%	38%	40%
Disagree	42%	44%	37%	38%
Strongly Disagree	10%	9%	12%	11%

### I am aware of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	8%	9%	10%	10%
Agree	38%	36%	42%	42%
Disagree	44%	46%	37%	39%
Strongly Disagree	10%	10%	10%	10%

### I am aware that my Directorate has a Directorate Improvement Plan

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	11%	13%	16%	12%
Agree	40%	44%	49%	44%
Disagree	40%	35%	28%	34%
Strongly Disagree	9%	9%	7%	10%



**I am kept up to date about the changes to the Council's policies and procedures**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	13%	11%	10%
Agree	53%	58%	54%	52%
Disagree	28%	24%	28%	29%
Strongly Disagree	6%	5%	6%	9%

**Inverclyde Council accepts and supports equality and diversity**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	25%	27%	25%	15%
Agree	66%	65%	64%	65%
Disagree	8%	7%	8%	15%
Strongly Disagree	2%	1%	3%	5%

**Inverclyde Council is open and honest with its employees**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	11%	11%	9%	5%
Agree	56%	58%	55%	44%
Disagree	26%	24%	27%	37%
Strongly Disagree	7%	6%	8%	14%

**Inverclyde Council is a caring and supportive employer**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	14%	14%	11%	7%
Agree	58%	60%	58%	52%
Disagree	23%	20%	24%	29%
Strongly Disagree	6%	5%	7%	12%

## 2 Me and My Job

### Overall, I am satisfied with my job

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	23%	23%	22%	18%
Agree	58%	59%	58%	61%
Disagree	16%	14%	16%	15%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	4%	6%

### My job makes good use of my skills and abilities

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	32%	32%	30%	23%
Agree	53%	52%	53%	58%
Disagree	12%	12%	14%	14%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	4%	4%

### I have a clear understanding of what my duties are

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	42%	44%	42%	45%
Agree	50%	47%	51%	51%
Disagree	6%	6%	6%	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	1%	1%

### I have a clear understanding of the purpose of my job

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	47%	49%	45%	39%
Agree	49%	47%	50%	53%
Disagree	3%	3%	4%	6%
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	1%	2%

### My performance affects Inverclyde Council's overall performance

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	34%	35%	33%	35%
Agree	55%	55%	57%	54%
Disagree	10%	7%	8%	10%
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	2%	2%

**My work gives me a sense of personal achievement**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	39%	40%	37%	-
Agree	47%	45%	46%	-
Disagree	11%	10%	11%	-
Strongly Disagree	3%	5%	5%	-

**I am encouraged to make suggestions to improve service delivery and/or make it more efficient**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	26%	26%	24%	34%
Agree	45%	48%	45%	47%
Disagree	22%	19%	24%	14%
Strongly Disagree	7%	7%	8%	5%

**I have a say in decisions that affect my work**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	20%	20%	18%	14%
Agree	45%	46%	46%	44%
Disagree	28%	27%	27%	30%
Strongly Disagree	8%	8%	9%	12%

**I get feedback on my work**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	21%	22%	19%	14%
Agree	52%	52%	55%	48%
Disagree	21%	19%	20%	28%
Strongly Disagree	6%	7%	6%	10%

**I feel motivated to do the best job I can**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	29%	30%	28%	22%
Agree	49%	48%	46%	50%
Disagree	18%	16%	19%	19%
Strongly Disagree	4%	6%	7%	9%

**Morale is good within my team**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	18%	18%	14%	12%
Agree	39%	42%	42%	41%
Disagree	31%	27%	29%	28%
Strongly Disagree	12%	13%	15%	20%

**I have the tools and equipment necessary to do my job**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	16%	17%	17%	13%
Agree	53%	56%	59%	54%
Disagree	22%	19%	18%	24%
Strongly Disagree	9%	7%	6%	9%

**Inverclyde Council's processes and procedures help me to do my job effectively**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	12%	11%	8%
Agree	53%	57%	56%	53%
Disagree	28%	25%	27%	29%
Strongly Disagree	7%	5%	7%	10%

**I am encouraged to solve my own work related problems**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	20%	18%	19%	18%
Agree	62%	64%	64%	62%
Disagree	15%	15%	14%	14%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	4%	5%

**I have a strong sense of loyalty to the Council**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	22%	23%	24%	19%
Agree	54%	55%	51%	52%
Disagree	19%	17%	18%	20%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	7%	9%

**Are you considering leaving Inverclyde Council in the near future? (i.e. within the next 6 months)**

	2022
Yes	19%
No	81%

**If yes, please indicate if any of the following are contributing factors in this decision?**

	2022
Working environment	37%
Job satisfaction	35%
Career development	29%
Conditions of Service	24%
Prospects	20%
Remuneration	16%
Conflict with colleagues/management	16%
Flexible working options	15%
Commuting	11%
Training/Further Education opportunities	10%

### 3 My performance, development and recognition

#### The Council is committed to staff training and development

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	16%	18%	17%	15%
Agree	60%	61%	59%	60%
Disagree	19%	17%	19%	18%
Strongly Disagree	5%	4%	5%	7%

#### I have the skills and knowledge I need to do my job

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	35%	30%	30%	31%
Agree	59%	64%	63%	61%
Disagree	5%	5%	5%	7%
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	1%	1%

#### In the last year, I have had opportunities to learn and develop

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	24%	27%	23%	19%
Agree	47%	51%	53%	46%
Disagree	22%	17%	18%	24%
Strongly Disagree	6%	5%	7%	11%

#### My supervisor / manager and I discuss my training and development needs

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	26%	27%	25%	16%
Agree	48%	52%	50%	43%
Disagree	18%	15%	17%	27%
Strongly Disagree	7%	6%	8%	13%

#### I understand clearly what is expected of me in my job

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	37%	37%	34%	30%
Agree	55%	54%	57%	60%
Disagree	6%	6%	7%	7%
Strongly Disagree	2%	2%	2%	3%

**I receive regular recognition or praise for doing good work**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	19%	18%	16%	11%
Agree	41%	42%	42%	38%
Disagree	29%	28%	29%	34%
Strongly Disagree	11%	12%	13%	17%

**Council's e-learning training programme**

**Are you aware of the Council's training programme which is called E-learning?**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Yes	82%	88%	73%	67%
No	18%	12%	27%	33%

**Did you know that you can access e-learning from home?**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Yes	78%	52%	45%	NOT ASKED
No	22%	48%	55%	NOT ASKED

**Have you accessed any of the e-learning content from your personal tablet or smart phone at home?**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Yes	34%	11%	NOT ASKED	NOT ASKED
No	66%	89%	NOT ASKED	NOT ASKED

**Do you use e-learning on a regular basis?**

	2022
Yes	27%
No	73%

**Do you think there is enough content that is relevant to you on the e-learning platform?**

	2022
Yes	63%
No	37%

**Have you had a Performance Appraisal in the last 12 months?**

	2022
Yes	67%
No	24%
Not applicable for teachers	9%

**I believe having a yearly Performance Appraisal is beneficial to my role**

	2022
Strongly Agree	26%
Agree	47%
Disagree	21%
Strongly Disagree	7%



#### 4 My working environment and my wellbeing at work

##### Overall, I am satisfied with my physical working conditions

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	20%	21%	18%	13%
Agree	58%	60%	60%	60%
Disagree	17%	15%	16%	19%
Strongly Disagree	6%	5%	5%	8%

##### I am satisfied with the noise level

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	20%	21%	19%	15%
Agree	64%	64%	62%	67%
Disagree	13%	12%	15%	13%
Strongly Disagree	3%	4%	4%	4%

##### I am satisfied with cleanliness

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	23%	22%	20%	13%
Agree	60%	59%	64%	61%
Disagree	13%	16%	13%	19%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	3%	7%

##### I am satisfied with space

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	21%	21%	17%	13%
Agree	59%	57%	60%	57%
Disagree	16%	17%	17%	22%
Strongly Disagree	4%	5%	5%	8%

##### I am satisfied with layout of working area

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	19%	20%	17%	10%
Agree	60%	56%	59%	62%
Disagree	15%	19%	17%	19%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	6%	9%

### I am satisfied with quality of equipment

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	15%	16%	13%
Agree	52%	60%	63%	62%
Disagree	24%	19%	16%	19%
Strongly Disagree	12%	6%	5%	6%

### I am satisfied with maintenance of equipment

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	15%	15%	13%
Agree	53%	64%	67%	66%
Disagree	25%	15%	14%	15%
Strongly Disagree	9%	5%	4%	5%

### I am satisfied with availability of supplies and materials

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	14%	16%	15%	12%
Agree	62%	62%	66%	64%
Disagree	18%	16%	16%	18%
Strongly Disagree	6%	6%	4%	6%

### I am satisfied with health and safety precautions

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	22%	21%	19%	14%
Agree	65%	68%	68%	71%
Disagree	10%	8%	10%	10%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	4%	1%

### I am satisfied with heating

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	19%	16%	14%	8%
Agree	64%	59%	54%	53%
Disagree	13%	18%	23%	26%
Strongly Disagree	4%	6%	9%	12%

### I am satisfied with lighting

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	21%	19%	17%	12%
Agree	67%	65%	65%	68%
Disagree	10%	12%	13%	14%
Strongly Disagree	2%	4%	5%	5%

### I am satisfied with ventilation

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	19%	16%	14%	11%
Agree	60%	61%	58%	57%
Disagree	15%	15%	19%	22%
Strongly Disagree	6%	7%	8%	10%

### I am satisfied with general security

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	24%	21%	18%	14%
Agree	67%	69%	69%	71%
Disagree	7%	7%	9%	10%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	4%	4%

### I am satisfied with security, of me and my personal belongings

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	24%	23%	19%	11%
Agree	66%	68%	67%	69%
Disagree	7%	7%	11%	13%
Strongly Disagree	3%	2%	3%	7%

### My workload is manageable

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	13%	10%	12%	10%
Agree	60%	60%	61%	66%
Disagree	19%	22%	20%	17%
Strongly Disagree	8%	8%	7%	7%

### I get help and support from colleagues

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	31%	27%	25%	21%
Agree	61%	63%	64%	65%
Disagree	6%	8%	9%	11%
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	3%	3%

### I am under more pressure than I was last year

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	30%	26%	28%	25%
Agree	35%	38%	34%	38%
Disagree	31%	31%	32%	32%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	6%	4%

### I experience personal harassment in the form of offensive language or behaviour from colleagues / managers

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	6% (Yes)	2%	3%	5%
Agree		5%	6%	8%
Disagree	94% (No)	40%	42%	48%
Strongly Disagree		53%	48%	39%

### I experience personal harassment in the form of offensive language or behaviour from customers/clients

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	28% (Yes)	8%	9%	7%
Agree		19%	20%	19%
Disagree	72% (No)	41%	42%	47%
Strongly Disagree		33%	30%	27%

### I experience sexual harassment in the form of offensive language or behaviour from colleagues / managers

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	0% (Yes)	0%	-	-
Agree		1%	-	-
Disagree	100% (No)	34%	-	-
Strongly Disagree		65%	-	-

**I experience sexual harassment in the form of offensive language or behaviour from customers/clients**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	3% (Yes)	1%	-	-
Agree		3%	-	-
Disagree	97% (No)	37%	-	-
Strongly Disagree		59%	-	-

**I experience sectarian abuse in the form of offensive language or behaviour from my colleagues/managers**

	2022
Yes	1%
No	99%

**I experience sectarian abuse in the form of offensive language or behaviour from customers/clients**

	2022
Yes	2%
No	98%

**I have experienced/witnessed nepotism in the workplace**

	2022
Yes	13%
No	87%

## Bullying

### I am bullied at work

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Yes	3%	4%	3%	5%
No	97%	96%	97%	95%

### If yes - I am bullied at work due to: (number of responses, not %)

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Age	10	5	5	7
Disability	2	4	1	3
Gender	3	2	3	5
Race	0	0	1	1
Religion	1	1	1	6
Sexual orientation	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	24	--

### If you have answered yes to any of the above statements, did you access support from a manager/HR?

	2022
Yes	22%
No	78%

## Hybrid Working

### Are you or will you be working a new hybrid working pattern?

	2022
Yes	37%
No	63%

### I have adjusted well to my new hybrid working pattern?

	2022
Strongly Agree	44%
Agree	49%
Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	1%

### What are the challenges faced when working a hybrid working pattern?

	2022
Technology	41%
Communication	23%
Social isolation	19%
Distraction in the office	18%
Physical workspace	12%
Distraction at home	8%

### What are the benefits of working a hybrid working pattern?

	2022
Better work life balance	53%
Less distractions at home	34%
Less distractions in the office	10%

## 5 Supporting attendance

### Have you had a period of sickness absence during the past 12 months?

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Yes	50%	46%	49%	NOT ASKED
No	50%	54%	51%	NOT ASKED

### If Yes, when you came back to work, did your supervisor/manager conduct a return to work interview with you?

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Yes	69%	78%	77%	NOT ASKED
No	31%	22%	23%	NOT ASKED

## 6 Communication across the Council

### My manager keeps me informed about what is happening in the Council

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	20%	16%	14%	10%
Agree	51%	54%	55%	46%
Disagree	23%	24%	26%	34%
Strongly Disagree	7%	5%	6%	10%

### If something important is happening that affects my job, I usually hear about it first from my manager

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	23%	21%	18%	13%
Agree	48%	50%	51%	49%
Disagree	22%	23%	24%	27%
Strongly Disagree	7%	6%	7%	11%

### Management decisions are effectively communicated to me

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	19%	16%	14%	9%
Agree	47%	51%	50%	45%
Disagree	27%	26%	28%	35%
Strongly Disagree	7%	7%	8%	11%

### When important things happen in the Council, I usually hear about them from gossip

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	9%	11%	19%
Agree	43%	41%	40%	43%
Disagree	39%	40%	41%	33%
Strongly Disagree	6%	10%	8%	5%

### Communication is good between my manager and me

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	29%	27%	24%	20%
Agree	51%	52%	53%	54%
Disagree	15%	15%	17%	18%
Strongly Disagree	5%	6%	5%	8%



### Communication is good within my team

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	32%	27%	24%	13%
Agree	54%	56%	58%	59%
Disagree	12%	13%	14%	20%
Strongly Disagree	3%	4%	4%	7%

### Communication is good between teams in my Directorate

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	10%	8%	NOT ASKED
Agree	50%	52%	48%	NOT ASKED
Disagree	29%	31%	34%	NOT ASKED
Strongly Disagree	8%	7%	9%	NOT ASKED

### Team Meetings

#### Please indicate how often you have team meetings?

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Weekly	27%	24%	24%	17%
Fortnightly	10%	12%	10%	12%
Monthly	23%	25%	29%	29%
Quarterly	10%	15%	8%	11%
Less often	19%	14%	16%	18%
Never	11%	10%	13%	14%

#### I would like to have more team meetings than we currently do

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	12%	10%	9%	13%
Agree	27%	25%	26%	30%
Disagree	52%	56%	56%	49%
Strongly Disagree	9%	9%	9%	8%

#### My team meetings provide a means of communicating information to employees which affects their jobs

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	21%	20%	17%	15%
Agree	64%	65%	63%	62%
Disagree	11%	11%	15%	17%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	5%	6%

**Questions asked during team meetings usually receive an answer**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	20%	18%	16%	10%
Agree	64%	65%	62%	63%
Disagree	12%	13%	15%	19%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	7%	7%

**I am satisfied with the frequency of team meetings**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	18%	17%	16%	11%
Agree	50%	50%	53%	53%
Disagree	23%	24%	22%	26%
Strongly Disagree	9%	9%	9%	11%

**My manager listens to me and takes reasonable action in response to feedback I give to him or her**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	23%	22%	18%	13%
Agree	59%	59%	61%	61%
Disagree	13%	15%	14%	18%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	7%	8%

**Forms of communication used are generally easy to understand**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	22%	20%	16%	NOT ASKED
Agree	68%	71%	70%	NOT ASKED
Disagree	7%	6%	9%	NOT ASKED
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	5%	NOT ASKED

**I am kept up-to-date about my Service's achievements**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	15%	16%	13%	NOT ASKED
Agree	51%	56%	51%	NOT ASKED
Disagree	26%	22%	28%	NOT ASKED
Strongly Disagree	8%	6%	8%	NOT ASKED

**Inverclyde Council - Internet/Online presence.**

***Are you aware that Inverclyde Council has the following? (Yes)***

	2022
Twitter	83%
Facebook	71%
Instagram	29%
TikTok	9%
ICON	90%
A council website – Inverclyde.gov.uk	98%
A tourism/visitor website – discoverinverclyde.com	66%

**How often do you access the Council website?**

	2022
Daily	11%
Weekly	20%
Monthly	16%
Less frequently	40%
Never	13%

***Do you mostly access the council website for work purposes or for personal reasons?***

	2022
Work	75%
Personal	25%

**How often do you access the ICON, the council intranet?**

	2022
Daily	33%
Weekly	24%
Monthly	10%
Less frequently	18%
Never	15%

## 7 My supervisor/manager and me

### My supervisor/manager is approachable

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	52%	48%	45%	38%
Agree	41%	45%	48%	51%
Disagree	5%	5%	5%	7%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	3%	4%

### My supervisor/manager supports and helps me to do the best job I can

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	45%	40%	38%	30%
Agree	42%	46%	44%	50%
Disagree	11%	11%	14%	15%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	3%	5%

### My supervisor/manager understands what I do in my job

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	46%	40%	39%	30%
Agree	42%	46%	47%	52%
Disagree	9%	10%	11%	14%
Strongly Disagree	2%	4%	3%	4%

### My supervisor/manager lets me know the performance standards that are expected of me

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	43%	37%	34%	24%
Agree	44%	48%	52%	51%
Disagree	11%	12%	11%	20%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	3%	5%

### My supervisor/manager deals with employees who are performing poorly

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	23%	19%	16%	11%
Agree	46%	45%	50%	47%
Disagree	23%	26%	24%	32%
Strongly Disagree	8%	9%	10%	10%

**My supervisor/manager regularly monitors my performance and discusses it with me**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	25%	23%	20%	13%
Agree	45%	47%	49%	39%
Disagree	25%	24%	24%	39%
Strongly Disagree	5%	6%	7%	9%

**My supervisor/manager lets me know when I have done a good job**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	32%	26%	25%	20%
Agree	41%	47%	45%	46%
Disagree	20%	20%	21%	25%
Strongly Disagree	7%	8%	9%	9%

**My supervisor/manager encourages me to think of new ways to improve service delivery**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	29%	26%	24%	18%
Agree	44%	46%	46%	44%
Disagree	22%	21%	22%	30%
Strongly Disagree	5%	7%	7%	9%

**My supervisor/manager considers my ideas and suggestions**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	33%	27%	28%	21%
Agree	48%	54%	51%	53%
Disagree	14%	14%	15%	18%
Strongly Disagree	5%	6%	6%	8%

**My supervisor/manager is available when I need to see him or her**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	37%	30%	30%	23%
Agree	49%	56%	57%	56%
Disagree	11%	10%	10%	15%
Strongly Disagree	3%	4%	4%	6%

**My supervisor/manager clearly explains decisions that affect my Service, my team and me**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	32%	25%	25%	20%
Agree	47%	53%	51%	52%
Disagree	16%	17%	19%	21%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	6%	7%

**My supervisor/manager provides opportunities for me to express my views on my job**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	32%	26%	27%	20%
Agree	47%	53%	52%	49%
Disagree	17%	16%	16%	24%
Strongly Disagree	4%	5%	6%	7%

**My supervisor/manager consults me on matters where I can contribute**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	34%	27%	27%	20%
Agree	47%	53%	53%	53%
Disagree	15%	15%	14%	21%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	6%	7%

**My supervisor/manager gives me the information I need to do my job properly**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	34%	27%	25%	19%
Agree	50%	56%	57%	57%
Disagree	13%	14%	14%	19%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	5%	6%

**My supervisor/manager is good at delegating**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	33%	28%	28%	20%
Agree	49%	54%	51%	53%
Disagree	13%	13%	14%	19%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	7%	8%

**My supervisor/manager takes decisions quickly when needed**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	35%	28%	26%	19%
Agree	47%	53%	52%	54%
Disagree	13%	15%	15%	18%
Strongly Disagree	5%	4%	7%	9%

**My supervisor/manager effectively deals with poor attendance**

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	27%	21%	20%	14%
Agree	53%	60%	60%	62%
Disagree	15%	13%	15%	16%
Strongly Disagree	5%	6%	5%	8%

## 8 Senior Management

### I know who my senior managers are

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	32%	42%	49%	38%
Agree	47%	50%	43%	52%
Disagree	16%	7%	6%	6%
Strongly Disagree	6%	1%	2%	3%

### I know who my head of service is

	2022
Strongly Agree	36%
Agree	54%
Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	3%

### Directors and heads of service take time to meet staff / Senior managers take time to meet staff

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	11%	18%	18%	12%
Agree	29%	36%	38%	33%
Disagree	40%	34%	32%	41%
Strongly Disagree	20%	12%	12%	14%

### Directors and heads of service are interested in staff's opinions / Senior managers are interested in staff's opinions

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	10%	15%	15%	11%
Agree	35%	40%	43%	36%
Disagree	37%	32%	31%	37%
Strongly Disagree	18%	13%	12%	16%

### Directors and heads of service provide a clear vision for my Directorate on where the Council is going / Senior managers provide a clear vision for my Directorate on where the Council is going

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	11%	16%	15%	9%
Agree	41%	44%	42%	41%
Disagree	32%	31%	32%	36%
Strongly Disagree	16%	9%	10%	14%

## 9 Supervisors / Managers

### I am confident in my skills and abilities to manage my team

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	49%	40%	37%	43%
Agree	49%	57%	58%	55%
Disagree	1%	2%	3%	2%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	2%	0%

### My current workload is excessive

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	30%	25%	25%	25%
Agree	38%	36%	31%	39%
Disagree	31%	37%	41%	36%
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	3%	1%

### I understand my budget responsibilities

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	31%	33%	30%	37%
Agree	59%	56%	55%	54%
Disagree	8%	8%	13%	6%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	3%	3%

### I can easily access professional advice and support to help me work effectively

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	27%	26%	19%	25%
Agree	57%	59%	63%	61%
Disagree	15%	12%	15%	12%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	3%	3%

### My supervisor/manager provides the information, guidance and support to help me work effectively.

	2022	2018	2015	2012
Strongly Agree	37%	30%	22%	29%
Agree	47%	53%	60%	54%
Disagree	15%	13%	12%	14%
Strongly Disagree	25%	4%	6%	4%



## 10 Workplace Policies and Procedures

### How aware are you of the following policies and/or practices? (Aware)

	2022	2018
Equality and Diversity Policy	83%	84%
Cycle to Work Scheme	80%	--
Family Friendly and Work Life Balance Policy	76%	78%
Dignity and Respect at Work Policy	73%	70%
Performance Appraisal Scheme (SJC)/Professional Update (Teachers)	72%	84%
Employee Benefits Booklet	60%	--
Buy and Bank Leave Scheme	54%	60%
Health and Wellbeing Hub	52%	--
Domestic Abuse Policy	50%	--
Corporate Induction Programme	44%	48%
Menopause Policy	38%	--
Carer's Positive Award and Support available to Carers	36%	36%
Reservist Policy	19%	17%

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/05/23/SM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Barbara McQuarrie</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712042</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Payment of Atypical Allowance – Part Time Employees</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek the agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee to confirm a change in the way in which Atypical Allowance payments are applied to part time employees who work additional hours up to 37 per week.

1.3 Since the implementation of Single Status agreement in 2008 the Councils conditions of service have stated that atypical allowances only be paid in relation to contractual hours worked. To support service delivery and the recruitment and retention of employees it is proposed atypical allowances be paid for all contractual and additional hours worked, up to 37 per week.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to agree that atypical enhancements are paid in respect of all normal working hours (i.e. for the first 37 hours whether contractual or not), with effect from the next pay period – 2 February 2023.

**Steven McNab**  
**Head of Organisational Development,**  
**Policy and Communications**

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Following the implementation of Single Status in 2008, atypical allowances were applied to contractual hours only. Consequently, any part time employees working additional hours in the evenings and weekends would not attract the atypical allowance. This has impacted on the willingness for part time employees to undertake additional hours which can impact on service delivery and potentially on the recruitment and retention of employees.

3.2 The Atypical allowance scheme currently attracts payment for contracted hours as follows:

	Hours Worked	Rate of Pay
<b>Daytime Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6am and 7.59pm, Monday to Friday, and</li> <li>6am – 12.59pm, Saturday</li> </ul>	No enhancements apply
<b>Evening Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8pm and 11.59pm, Monday to Friday</li> </ul>	Evening enhancement of 10% for all evening hours
<b>Weekend Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1pm and 11.59pm, Saturday</li> <li>6am to 11.59pm, Sunday</li> </ul>	Weekend enhancement of 10% for all weekend hours
<b>Nighttime Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>midnight and 5.59am, Monday to Sunday</li> </ul>	Nighttime enhancement of 33 1/3 <sup>rd</sup> % for all night time hours

3.3 It is the Councils Home Care Service which is most impacted by these conditions. The Service is currently having difficulty covering the ‘out of hours’ service as the atypical allowance is only paid on contractual hours, and part time employees don’t want to work additional hours if they are not receiving the atypical allowance. This has resulted in some shifts being covered by full time employees working overtime which attracts a higher rate than the atypical allowance. Accordingly, there would not be an increased cost for the service if all atypical hrs attracted the allowance as it would be offset by reduced requirement for overtime enhancements.

### 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree the application of the atypical allowance to all hours up to 37 per week with effect from the beginning of the next pay period - 2 February 2023.

### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)			X
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

#### 5.2 Finance

It is not anticipated that the proposed change will generate additional costs.

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					

5.3 **Legal/Risk**

The proposed change to the application of atypical allowances will mean a more consistent application of our terms and conditions to all employees.

5.4 **Human Resources**

If agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee the appropriate amendments will be made to employee terms and conditions of service.

5.5 **Strategic**

None

5.6 **Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty**

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

X	<p>YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required and will be made available on the Council website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2023">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2023</a></p>
	<p>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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.</p>

(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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

### 5.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

### 5.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

There are no environmental issues concerned with this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

### 5.9 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 – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Trade Unions locally have been consulted on this proposal and are supportive of the proposed change to employee terms and conditions of employment.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 January 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Legal &amp; Democratic Services</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LS/002/23/IS</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Iain Strachan</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712710</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to vote on new Chair for Cooperative Councils Innovation Network</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to note the use of emergency powers in December 2022 to enable the Council to cast its vote to elect a new Chair of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (the Network).
- 1.3 The use of these powers enabled the Council, as a recently joined member of the Network, to cast its vote to elect a new Chair. In accordance with the Network's constitution, the vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe.
- 1.4 In addition, and further to the report to the 1 December 2022 meeting of the Inverclyde Council, this report also updates the Committee that Cllr Cassidy's appointment to the Executive Oversight Committee of the Network has now been confirmed.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note that the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to agree that the Council cast its vote to elect a new Chair of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network, which vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe, in terms of the Network's constitution.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee also note that Cllr Cassidy's appointment to the Executive Oversight Committee of the Network has now been confirmed.

**Iain Strachan**  
**Head of Legal & Democratic Services**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 At the 20 September 2022 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee it was agreed that the Council should apply to become a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (the Network). This application was approved in October, and all councillors advised on 2 November. <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2487>.
- 3.2 The Network, established in 2012, describes itself as “the fastest-growing network in local government”, having over 100 councils, organisations and supporters from across the UK. The Network states that member councils are committed to reforming the way they work by building an equal partnership with local people based on the values and principles of the International Co-operative Alliance. In particular, the Network promotes the transformation of communities through community action, community engagement and civic empowerment.
- 3.3 More information on the Network can be found on its website: <https://www.councils.coop/about-us/>.
- 3.4 The most senior tier of the Network’s governance structure is its Executive Oversight Committee. More information on this Committee, comprising elected members from different local authority members, can be found on its website, including its terms of reference. The Executive Oversight Committee meets quarterly, in person or remotely.
- 3.5 In November 2022, the Network announced vacancies on its Executive Oversight Committee. In respect of this, at its meeting on 1 December 2022, the Council approved Cllr Cassidy appointment to the Executive Oversight Committee, subject to the approval of the Chair of the Network, whose approval is necessary given that Cllr Cassidy is not a Council Leader or Portfolio Holder/Cabinet Member, as those positions are understood in English local authorities. The position of the Chair of the Network was also vacant, there being 3 candidates, which meant the election of the Chair had to go to a ballot of members. None of the candidates were members of a Scottish local authority.

### **4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 As a new member of the Network, it was considered important that the Council exercised its right to vote in the election of a new Chair. As such, and in light of the timescales associated with the election of the new Chair, on 8 December 2022 the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to agree that the Council cast its vote to elect a new Chair of the Network. This vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe, as it is a requirement of the constitution of the Network that such a vote is cast by the Leader of member local authorities. In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, Cllrs McCluskey and Robertson were also consulted on the proposed use of emergency powers. This report is being submitted to the Committee for transparency, as required under the Scheme of Delegation. For the Committee’s information, the new Chair is Cllr Louise Gittins from Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- 4.2 Linked to the above, and further to the above-mentioned report to the 1 December 2022 meeting of the Council, this report also updates the Committee that Cllr Cassidy’s appointment to the Executive Oversight Committee of the Network has now been confirmed. All members of the Council were advised of this by email on 15 December 2022.

### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

## 5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal risks/implications arising from this report.

## 5.4 Human Resources

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

## 5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications arising directly from this report.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.