
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	7 March 2023
Report By:	Ruth Binks, Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/18/23/TMcE
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan, Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	Free Swimming for Under 16s		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee agreement of the Under 16 Free Swimming Policy and agree how the proposed policy will be funded..
- 1.3 The Council agreed to reduce the budget for Under 16 Free Swimming from £180,000 to £80,000 as part of the budget process for 2021/22. Since that date the reduced budget has been exceeded each year as the policies approved by the Committee have resulted in costs greater than Budget.
- 1.4 A short life working group consisting of elected members from all parties, officers and Inverclyde Leisure was set up to consider the many different options available and to identify options if the budget required is more than is allocated. The working group recommend the proposal outlined in section 4.2 of this report which is to have free swimming available during the Easter, Summer and October school holidays and an early bird slot for other weekends.
- 1.5 The recommended approach is estimated to cost £115,000 ie: £35,000 more than the available budget. Paragraph 4.3 outlines how this shortfall can be overcome.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Communities Committee:
- Agrees to the provision of swimming during the Easter, Summer and October school holidays and early bird slots for weekends as outlined in paragraph 4.2
 - Agrees to vire money from the CLD employee costs to the free swimming budget subject to Policy & Resources Committee agreeing to fund the one off early release costs.

- Agrees that the Council return to a fixed fee payment to IL for the option selected in order to give greater financial certainty to the Council whilst noting that IL will continue to gather and share uptake data.

Ruth Binks

Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 As part of the 2021/2022 budget process the Council agreed a saving of £100,000 from the £180,000 budget for free swimming for Under 16s. Despite several reports to the Education & Communities Committee the saving has not been fully implemented and as such is projected to cost over £120,000 more than the £80,000 approved budget in 2022/23.
- 3.2 In March 2021, the Education and Communities Committee agreed that IL should be paid for each swim rather than a set annual amount.
- 3.3 IL recorded approximately 40,500 swims between Jan and Dec 2022: a level of usage that is unable to be contained within the £80k allocated to the policy, which equates to around 14,500 swims. If the budget is not increased then only one option, to provide free swimming in the summer holiday period only, would be available to members. In 2022, 14,629 swims were recorded over the summer holiday period
- 3.4 While the service has been able to contain the cost in 2021/2022 and is currently working to do so in 2022/23 through utilising one-off underspends in other budgets, it is unable to continue to do so beyond 2022/23 without an adverse impact on funding for other services.
- 3.5 A short life working group consisting of elected members from all parties, officers and Inverclyde Leisure has been set up to consider the many different options available and to identify options if the budget required is more than is allocated.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The working group worked on the principle that free swimming should be available during school holidays and on a weekly basis. They also identified that it is easier for the Committee to monitor and manage budgets if payment to IL revert to block funding for the provision rather than payment per swim.
- 4.2 The proposed option is to provide free swimming Monday to Sunday on main school holidays and a two-hour "early bird" slot on all other weekends which would cost £115,000 (£35,000 above the available budget). The school holidays would be the Easter, October and Summer holidays. The holidays would start the first full day after the last day of term for pupils and end on the last day of the holidays before pupils go back to school. The early bird slot would be from 9am to 11am with a last admittance 10.30 am and may be banded to control the session. The costs are based on actual usage per site from Jan 2022 – Dec 2022.
- 4.3 In order to fund the £35,000 shortfall the intention is to remove a post from the Youth Work and Sport Team. Further details to this proposal are attached in the Appendix to this report (in private) The deletion of this post would result in a saving to the committee of £46,872 but it would be subject to release costs. It is proposed that it be remitted to Policy and Resources to agree to fund the release. It should be noted that the balance of the salary saving will be taken as a corporate saving.
- 4.4 Given the timescales for the Council considering the saving proposal then the current policy will remain in place until the end of March 2023, with the Education & Communities Committee managing the overspend within the bottom line of the Committee's 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

The release of the employee will be a cost to the Council. After the £35,000 virement this will deliver a net saving which will be held centrally .

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Reserves	VER	23/24	tbc		Release costs subject to P&R approval

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Communities	U16 Swimming	23/24	£115,000	CLD employee costs	£35k from CLD employee costs savings to be identified.
CLD	Employee costs	July 2023	(£12k)		Balance of saving to be taken as a corporate saving

5.3 Legal/Risk

Reverting to a fixed fee will reduce the risk of the Council overspending this budget

5.4 Human Resources

Proposed release through the Voluntary Severance Process.

5.5 Strategic

There are implications for reducing inequalities

5.6 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: EqIA completed as part of the savings exercise.

	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.

5.7 Children and Young People

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

x	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
	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.

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 CMT supports the options advanced in this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Budget saving sheet and EqIA