

**THE INVERCLYDE COUNCIL – 2 MARCH 2023**

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**The Inverclyde Council**

**Thursday 2 March 2023 at 4pm**

**Present:** Provost McKenzie, Councillors, Brennan, Brooks, Cassidy, Clocherty, Crowther, Curley, Daisley, Jackson, Law, McCabe, McCluskey, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Nelson, Quinn, Reynolds, Robertson and Wilson.

**Chair:** Provost McKenzie presided.

**In attendance:**

Louise Long	Chief Executive
Alan Puckrin	Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance
Ruth Binks	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Stuart Jamieson	Director of Environment & Regeneration
Iain Strachan	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Steven McNab	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications
Gail MacFarlane	Shared Head of Roads and Environmental Services
Mary McCabe	Finance Manager (Education & Communities)
Matt Thomson	Finance Manager (Environment & Technical)
Angela Edmiston	Finance Manager (Corporate Services & Strategic Finance)
Angela Rainey	Human Resources Team Leader (Operations)
Diane Sweeney	Senior Committee Officer
Colin MacDonald	Senior Committee Officer
Karen MacVey	Member' & Committee Services Team Leader
Allan MacDonald	ICT Services Manager
George Barbour	Service Manager Communications, Tourism and Health & Safety

The meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Daisley and Law attending by video-conference.

**141 Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

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An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Armstrong.

No declarations of interest were intimated.

Prior to the commencement of business, the Provost referred to the sinking of the tugboat Biter on 24 February and the loss of crewmen George Taft, from Greenock, and Ian Catterson, from Millport. The Provost sent his condolences to the family and friends of both men and paid tribute to the rescue services for their efforts.

The Provost also referred to the death of Allan McGraw, former Inverclyde Councillor and Greenock Morton F.C. player and manager, on 1 March. The Provost acknowledged the high esteem in which Mr McGraw was held and sent his condolences to Mr McGraw's family and friends.

**142 Approval of the 2023/24 Budget, 2023/26 Capital Programme and Approval of the Level of Band D Council Tax for 2023/24**

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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance, together with addenda 2a and 2b which provided additional information, seeking approval of (1) the 2023/24 Revenue Budget, (2) the 2023/26 Capital Programme, and (3) thereafter seeking approval of the Band D Council Tax for the year 2023/24.

Following discussion, Councillor McCabe, seconded by Councillor McGuire, moved that the Council approve the recommendations as contained within the report and appendices, subject to addendum 2b, with the specific savings and increase in Council Tax required to set a balanced Budget being that summarised at appendix 10a (appendix 1 to the minute).

As an amendment Councillor Wilson, seconded by Councillor Brooks, moved that the Council approve the recommendations as contained within the report and appendices, subject to addendum 2b, with the specific savings and increase in Council Tax required to set a balanced Budget being that summarised at appendix 10b (appendix 2 to the minute).

Following a roll call vote, 2 Members, Councillors Wilson and Brooks, voted for the amendment, and 18 Members, Provost McKenzie, Councillors Brennan, Cassidy, Clocherty, Crowther, Curley, Daisley, Law, McCabe, McCluskey, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Nelson, Quinn, Reynolds and Robertson voted for the motion which was declared carried. Councillor Jackson abstained from voting.

### **Decided:**

(1) that the latest update regarding the Council's 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Grant settlement from the Scottish Government, the associated conditions and the representations made by the Council seeking an improved settlement and increased flexibility in how resources can be utilised, including those in addenda 2a and 2b to the report, be noted;

(2) that (a) anticipated reduction in the previously reported increase in non-domestic rates be noted and, (b) it be agreed that in light of the volatility around inflation and the latest position in respect of the 2023/24 pay award the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance manage the 2023/24 inflation allowances as a single budget;

(3) (a) that the adjustment, as detailed at appendix 3 to the report, be approved;

(b) That, following consideration, due regard be had to the responses to the previously reported Budget Consultation and the overall and individual Equality Impact Assessments relating to the savings, as detailed at appendix 4 and referred to at section 5 of the report;

(c) that, subject to 6a, 6b and 6c below (i) the savings relating to Early Years 1140 hours grant, as detailed at appendix 5 of the report, be approved, and (ii) it be noted that a more detailed report will be presented to the next Education & Communities Committee on this matter;

(d) that (i) the Council contribution to the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board (IJJB), as detailed at appendix 6 of the report, be approved, and (ii) it be noted that this requires approval by the IJJB at their meeting on 20 March 2023;

(e) that, subject to 6a, 6b and 6c below, the 2023/26 Capital Programme, as detailed at appendix 7 of the report, be approved;

(f) that, subject to 6a, 6b and 6c below (i) the utilisation of £18.7million of unallocated reserves as set out in appendix 8 of the report be approved, and (ii) it be noted that reports will be presented to the relevant Committees, all as set out in the appendix;

(g) that the 2023/24 Common Good Budget, as detailed at appendix 9 of the report, be approved; and

(h) that, subject to 6a, 6b and 6c below, the specific savings and increase in Council Tax required to set a balanced Budget, as detailed at appendix 10a of the report, be approved (appendix 1 to the minute);

(4) that the estimated Revenue Budget funding gap of £18.1million over 2024/27, as

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detailed at appendix 11 of the report, and the remaining 2023/24 Budget risks identified by the Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Governance, as detailed at section 5 of the report, be noted;

(5) that the Council Tax Resolution be approved and that the level of Band D Council Tax for Inverclyde for 2023/24 be £1,429.77;

(6) (a) that the changes to the figures included in the report and appendices arising from the Local Government Finance (Scotland) Order 2023 on 1 March 2023, as detailed in addendum 2b to the report, be noted;

(b) that it be agreed the resultant additional £106,000 funding gap in the 2023/24 Revenue Budget, as detailed in addendum 2b to the report, be addressed by reducing the 2023/23 non-pay inflation allowance; and

(c) that (i) the removal of £928,000 set aside for capital works to facilitate the Universal Provision of Free School Meals from the 2023/26 Capital Programme, as detailed in addendum 2b to the report, be noted, and (ii) it be remitted to the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development to report to the Education & Communities Committee on the implications of the expansion of the Universal Free School Meals to primary 6 and 7 pupils from August 2023.

### 143 Valuation of Moveable Heritage Assets

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There was submitted a report by the Honorary Treasurer seeking agreement from the Council as Trustee of the Watt Institution Trust Fund to allocate up to £20,000 from the unallocated Trust balance of approximately £40,000 towards the appointment of suitably experienced experts to assist in the valuation of the Trust's heritage assets.

**Decided:** that it be agreed that up to 50% of the costs or £20,000, whichever is the lower, from the unallocated Trust balance be allocated towards the appointment of suitably experienced experts to assist in the valuation of the Trust's heritage assets.