
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/15/23/TM
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan	Contact No:	01475 7172828
Subject:	Children in Poverty Data and Anti-Poverty Budget Update		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is for the Policy and Resources Committee to agree spend in relation to the anti-poverty recurring funding. It also provides information on the latest DWP data on Children in Low Income Families in Inverclyde.
- 1.3 A detailed financial report was noted by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2023, identifying the recurring funding and the updated position of the ear-marked reserve in relation to anti-poverty funding. The report also advised that officers would bring back plans for the use of the remaining recurring funding and ear-marked reserve.
- 1.4 The Corporate Management Team recommends the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to using £50,750 from the anti-poverty ear-marked reserve to:
- fully fund the summer playschemes, including Play4all, to reduce costs to families over the summer holiday period in 2023 only, (£23,250 for 2023); and
 - continue to fund dedicated officer time (1 day per week) to co-ordinate and support anti-poverty initiatives (£27,500 until June 2025).
- 1.5 An evaluation report on all the projects funded through the anti-poverty budget, including the impact of free playschemes, will be submitted to the September 2023 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- agrees to the proposals set out in section 1.4 of this report;
 - notes that an evaluation report on Anti-poverty initiatives will be submitted to the Committee in September 2023; and
 - notes the latest DWP data on children living in low-income families in Inverclyde and the potential impact upon future Council funding levels.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 In March 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed a report which set out the financial position of the anti-poverty recurring budget and also the ear-marked reserve (EMR).
- 3.2 The anti-poverty recurring budget is £0.489million, of which £0.437million is committed to fund a number of previously agreed initiatives, leaving a balance of £52,000. In addition, there is an ear-marked reserve of £1.148m and at its meeting in March 2023, the Committee agreed that officers would bring back proposals for the use of the remaining £52,000 recurring budget and also any proposals for the use of the ear-marked reserve. Section 4 of this report sets out proposals for one-off spends from the EMR.
- 3.3 A further report on an evaluation of the previously agreed projects and initiatives funded by the Anti-Poverty Fund will be submitted to the September meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, with proposals for the use of recurring budget and the ear marked reserve.
- 3.4 The removal of fees for the summer playschemes in 2023 is part of a package of anti-poverty measures the Council has put in place to alleviate the cost-of-of living pressures for families over the summer holiday period 2023. Other initiatives include the continuation of the enhanced criteria for free school meal payments over the summer; the affordable childcare hub in Port Glasgow for low income families; and the continued provision of youth programmes through our active schools teams and youth services.

Children living in Low Income Families in Inverclyde

- 3.5 Annual statistics on the number and proportion of children living in low-income families were published by the DWP on 23 March 2023. The publication provides details of the number of children living in Relative and Absolute low-income families Before Housing Costs (BHC), by local area, across the United Kingdom. It should be noted that the DWP recommend caution when using data for financial years ending 2021 and 2022, particularly when making comparisons with previous years and for local areas across countries.
- 3.6 The latest figures show an increase in the number of Inverclyde children living in relative low-income families and absolute low-income families between financial year ending 2020 and 2022:
- The proportion of children aged under 16 living in relative low-income families in Inverclyde increased from 17.6% in 2020 to 21.3% in 2022, the 12th highest level in Scotland, compared to 17th in 2020; and
 - The proportion of children aged under 16 living in absolute low-income families in Inverclyde increased from 14.0% in 2020 to 15.8% in 2022, the 15th highest level in Scotland compared to 19th in 2020.

It should be noted that there was a decrease in the percentage of absolute and relative low-income families in both Inverclyde and Scotland in FYE 2021 and that for comparison purposes officers have used 2020.

- 3.7 The DWP has also published low-income family data at a Ward level:
- The Inverclyde ward with the highest proportion of children aged under 16 living in relative low-income families is Inverclyde South, 27.8% and the lowest Inverclyde West, 12.3%;
 - The Inverclyde ward with the highest proportion of children aged under 16 living in absolute low-income families is Inverclyde East Central, 20.7% and the lowest Inverclyde West, 10.1%.

	% children living in relative low income households FYE 2022	% children living in absolute low income households FYE 2022
Inverclyde East	20.1%	15.5%
Inverclyde East & Central	26.6%	20.7%
Inverclyde Central	23.0%	16.6%

Inverclyde North	17.9%	13.7%
Inverclyde West	12.3%	10.1%
Inverclyde South West	20.4%	14.2%
Inverclyde South	27.8%	19.4%

3.8 The percentage of children in low-income families (CILIF) has recently started to be used by the Scottish Government to influence the allocation of various funding schemes and indications are that the use will expand. Officers have raised concerns with the Scottish Government that Inverclyde's (CILIF) ranking is significantly lower than the current main poverty indicators and that as a result this is likely to impact on levels of funding. Discussions have recently taken place between the CMT and officers from DWP/Scottish Government on the methodology used in calculating the data and whether this is best poverty indicator for children. Updates will be given to Committee as these discussions progress.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Taking account of the levels of poverty in Inverclyde, the national cost of living crisis and the impact it is having on low-income families, including families experiencing 'in work' poverty, it is recommended the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to using a proportion (£23,250) of the anti-poverty EMR to remove the fees for the summer playschemes, for this year only. The impact of this initiative will form one of the projects evaluated over the summer and reported to the September meeting of the Committee.

4.2 The Council's Corporate Management Team has now replaced the Strategic Officer Anti-Poverty Group, although the officer implementation group continues to meet. The range of anti-poverty initiatives requires the continued resource of dedicated officer time of 1 day per week to co-ordinate and support the Council's approach to anti-poverty over the next two years. The cost of this (£27,500 until 2025) will also be funded from the EMR.

4.3 Evaluations are now taking place on the range of funded initiatives and a report containing the project evaluations and plans for the use of the anti-poverty EMR will be submitted to this committee in September 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

One off Costs

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

Anti-poverty EMR	Staff costs	2023/25	£27,500		
	Playscheme subsidy	2023/24	£23,250		

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

None.

5.4 Human Resources

None.

5.5 Strategic

Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities in Inverclyde is a key priority for the Council and HSCP. This report provides recommendations which are in line with this key priority.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

None.

(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

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

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.

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 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Anti-poverty Funding Update – Report to Policy and Resources Committee on 21 March 2023.