

A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 23 May 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 22 May 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, Digital & Customer Services

BUSINESS

**** Copy to follow**

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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	
2. 2022/23 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 28 February 2023 Report by Chief Financial Officer, Chief Executive and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	p
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NEW BUSINESS		
7.	Reserves Policy – Triennial Review Report by Chief Financial Officer	p
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11.	Review of Committee Report Format Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	p
12.	Freedom of Information Annual Report 2022 Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	p
<p>The documentation relative to the following items has been treated as exempt information in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, the nature of the exempt information being that set out in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.</p> <p>ROUTINE DECISIONS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING</p>		
13.	Voluntary Severance Scheme Releases Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	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

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer, Chief Executive and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	FIN/31/23/AP/AB
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712090
Subject:	2022/23 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget position at 28 February 2023		

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 28 February 2023 and the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection at the same 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 £19,478,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. The latest projection is an overspend of £683,000 (3.4%) and is due to pay and non-pay inflation pressures which are being held centrally, off-set with additional Internal Resource Interest (IRI) income due to the increase in interest rates. This represents a decrease in projected overspend of £126,000 since the Period 10 report mainly due to a reduction on the call from the non-pay inflation contingency, increased turnover savings and a reduction in annual pension costs.

1.4 The latest projection for the General Fund Budget is an underspend of £1,098,000 after the one-off use of £4million of Reserves which was agreed by the Council when Members approved the 2022/23 Revenue Budget. Based on these figures the Council's unallocated Reserves are currently projected to be £1.264million more than the minimum recommended level of £4.0million by 31 March 2023. This position includes the allocation of £18.7million from Reserves approved by the Council on 2 March 2023 and additional available funding streams; Service Concession & future IRI estimates.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the projected overspend for 2022/23 of £683,000 at 28 February 2023 within the Committee's Budget.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the projected 2022/23 surplus of £18,340 for the Common Good Budget.

2.3 It is recommended that the Committee notes the projected underspend of £1,098,000 for the General Fund and the projected surplus reserves of £1.264million at 31 March 2023.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

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 £19,478,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. This is a decrease of £2,690,000 from the approved budget due to additional funding from the Scottish Government for the Local Pay Offer more than offset by allocations to services from the pay and non-pay inflation allowance. Appendix 1 gives more details of this budget movement.

3.2 2022/23 Projected Outturn – Policy & Resources Committee Budget (£683,000 Overspend 3.4%)

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

- (a) Projected underspend of £81,000 for Finance/ICT Employee costs due to exceeding turnover targets.
- (b) ICT Computer Software Maintenance one-off projected underspend £39,000.
- (c) Projected 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 over-recovery of £55,000 within Income Recharges for ICT service recharges for computer equipment for which a saving was approved as part of the 2023/24 Budget.
- (e) Projected overspend of £50,000 for Legal Employee costs due to turnover target not yet met.
- (f) Projected overspend of £1,250,000 for the Non-Pay Inflation Contingency largely due to rising utility and fuel costs and contracts linked to rates of RPI.
- (g) 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 allows for the IJB receiving a £1.1 million share of this additional funding in 2022/23.
- (h) 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 £5,476,000 largely due to the delivery of the Council Cost of Living payments. This represents 46.4% of the projected 2022/23 spend.

Appendix 7 gives a summary breakdown of the current earmarked reserves position. It can be seen that expenditure at 28 February was £11,821,000 which is £767,000 (6.94%) more than the phased budget and 58.22% of projected 2022/23 spend.

3.4 Common Good Fund

The Common Good Fund is projecting a surplus in 2022/23 of £18,340 as shown in Appendix 5 and which results in projected surplus fund balance of £124,008 at 31 March 2023.

3.5 General Fund Budget & Reserves Position

Appendix 6 shows that as at 28 February 2023 the General Fund is projecting a £1,098,000 underspend (excluding Health & Social Care) which represents 0.49% of the net Revenue Budget. This is a reduction in expenditure of £237,000 since P10. This is mainly due to an £200k increase within Education Services overall underspend due to additional Teachers strike days not included at last Committee.

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 £5.264 million which is £1.264 million above the minimum recommended balance of £4 million. The General Fund Reserve position includes additions to the Reserve beyond 2022/23 that were agreed as part of the 2023/25 Budget approved by the Council on 2 March 2023.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 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

4.2 Finance

The report highlights a small improvement in the overall projected 2022/23 General Fund Budget and Reserve position from that reported at period 10. The next update in August will advise of the position following the preparation of the 2022/23 Annual Accounts.

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					

4.3 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.

4.4 Human Resources

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

4.5 Strategic

The current and projected financial position was considered when developing the recently refreshed strategic plans for the Council.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 The reported figures are based on recent meetings with all relevant budget holders.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 There are no background papers.

Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2022/23**Period 11: 1 April 2022 - 28 February 2023**

Service	Approved Budget	Movements			Transferred to	Revised Budget
	2022/23 £000	Inflation £000	Virement £000	Supplementary Budgets £000	EMR £000	2022/23 £000
Finance	7,555	511	40	48	0	8,154
Legal	1,961	115	6	0	0	2,082
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,115	131	23	0	0	2,269
Chief Exec	331	13	0	0	0	344
Miscellaneous	9,730	(6,424)	250	3,898	(825)	6,629
Totals	<u>21,692</u>	<u>(5,654)</u>	<u>319</u>	<u>3,946</u>	<u>(825)</u>	<u>19,478</u>

Supplementary Budget Detail

£000

Inflation

Benefit Subsidy 2022/23 Inflation	186
Finance & ICT - Inflation adjustments	16
P&R Pay Award 22/23	541
Legal: HOS Overbudgeted, transfer to Inflation Contingency	(7)
Legal - Team Lead Pay Inflation	2
HR - Occupational Health contract increase	33
Miscellaneous - Pay Inflation allocated out	(3,573)
Miscellaneous - Non Pay Inflation allocated out	(2,852)
	<u>(5,654)</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
Anti-Poverty	250
	<u>319</u>

Supplementary Budgets

Revenues Redeterminations 2022/23	48
Miscellaneous - SG Local Pay Offer Allocation (Ex-HSCP)	3,898
	<u>3,946</u>

Total Inflation & Virements(1,389)

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

CURRENT POSITION

Period 11: 1 April 2022 - 28 February 2023

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	8,894	8,848	(46)	(0.5%)
487	Property Costs	569	569	569	0	-
905	Supplies & Services	888	901	946	45	5.0%
1	Transport & Plant	4	4	2	(2)	(50.0%)
1,253	Administration Costs	1,295	1,303	1,215	(88)	(6.8%)
29,661	Payments to Other Bodies	39,866	37,925	38,643	718	1.9%
(26,838)	Income	(29,296)	(29,293)	(29,237)	56	(0.2%)
13,612	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	21,692	20,303	20,986	683	3.4%
	Earmarked reserves		(825)	(825)	0	
13,612	Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves	21,692	19,478	20,161	683	

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	8,154	7,888	(266)	(3.3%)
1,353	Legal Services	1,961	2,082	2,178	96	4.6%
8,840	Total Net Expenditure Environment, Regeneration & Resources	9,516	10,236	10,066	(170)	(1.7%)
2,117	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,115	2,269	2,279	10	0.4%
2,117	Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities & Organisational Development	2,115	2,269	2,279	10	0.4%
337	Chief Executive	331	344	357	13	3.8%
2,318	Miscellaneous	9,730	7,454	8,284	830	11.1%
13,612	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	21,692	20,303	20,986	683	3.4%
	Earmarked reserves		(825)	(825)		
13,612	Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves	21,692	19,478	20,161	683	

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)

Appendix 3

Period 11: 1 April 2022 - 28 February 2023

Outturn 2021/22 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2022/23 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 28/02/23 £000	Projection 2022/23 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000	Percentage Variance %
	<u>Finance/ICT Services</u>						
4,753	Employee Costs	5,189	4,748	4,324	5,108	(81)	(1.6%)
24,407	Revenues - Benefits & Allowances	27,671	25,365	21,912	27,623	(48)	(0.2%)
(33)	Revenues - Bad Debt Provision	0	0	15	20	20	(100.0%)
0	Revenues - Cost of Living Award (Projected Under Spend is Funding For Admin Costs)	0	0	0	(75)	(75)	(100.0%)
(271)	Revenues - Income - Statutory Additions	(294)	(270)	(239)	(270)	24	(8.2%)
0	Revenues - Income- Council Tax Previous Years	(356)	(326)	0	(385)	(29)	8.1%
(30)	ICT - Income - Recharges	0	0	(55)	(55)	(55)	(100.0%)
0	ICT- Other Expenditure	40	33	0	1	(39)	(97.5%)
6	Revenues - Legal Expenses	9	8	17	30	21	233.3%
	<u>Legal Services</u>						
1,321	Employee Costs	1,643	1,386	1,429	1,693	50	3.0%
(576)	Income - Licenses	(471)	(432)	(243)	(443)	28	(5.9%)
(10)	Income - Recharges Capital	(24)	(22)	(2)	(2)	22	(91.7%)
	<u>Organisational Development, Policy & Communications</u>						
1,752	Employee Costs	1,925	1,625	1,589	1,896	(29)	(1.5%)
	<u>Miscellaneous Services</u>						
1,014	Non Pay Inflation	2,227	2,007	2,007	3,477	1,250	56.1%
2,816	Pay Inflation	2,876	3,573	3,573	4,276	1,400	48.7%
(104)	Internal Resource Interest	(201)	0	0	(2,001)	(1,800)	895.5%
2,260	Pensions	2,275	2,085	2,035	2,249	(26)	(1.1%)
37,305	TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES	42,509	39,781	36,362	43,142	633	

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total	Phased Budget	Actual	Projected	Amount to be	Lead Officer Update
			Funding	P11	28/02/2023	Spend	Earmarked for	
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	
			£000	£000	£000	£000	& Beyond	
B	Early Retiral/Voluntary Severance Reserve	Alan Puckrin	1,473	0	0	1,260	213	Projection based on agreed release costs relating to the 2023/24 Budget. £1.7m further resources allocated to the reserve in 2023/24.
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	160	0	54	66	94	Project officer £70k over 2 years starting 01/10/21. £68k uncommitted. To be allocated to the Digital Modernisation reserve.
C	Welfare Reform - Operational	Alan Puckrin	117	0	61	65	52	£52k unallocated balance which will be used from 23/24 following £36k approved write back.
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 Digital Modernisation project.
C	Anti-Poverty Fund	Ruth Binks	1,897	922	1,101	1,517	380	£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 (£118k) and uncommitted Anti Poverty recurring budget (£559k) as well as ADP funding for IRISE project (£145k). 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 £380k uncommitted.
C	Community Facilities Digital Inclusion	Alan Puckrin	16	0	2	2	14	Budget holders have confirmed that the project is delivered except for Grieve Road CC. £16k allocated for this. Balance approved for write back.
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 2023/24 to address projected deficit over 2023/25.
C	GDPR	Iain Strachan	35	17	16	16	19	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. £140k approved from Committee - £30k in 2021/22 & £110k in 2022/23 within overspend of £18k being reported as part of Legal Services overspend on 2022/23.

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P11	Actual 28/02/2023	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
C	Contribution from the SG Omicron Funding - £350 Payment	Alan Puckrin	500	500	500	500	0	Complete.
B	2022/24 Budget Funding Reserve	Alan Puckrin	6,000	0	0	4,000	2,000	£4.0m approved for use 22/23. Further £4.0m added per 2023/26 in March, 2023.
B	Covid - ICT Technicians to support Digital School Inclusion	Alan Puckrin	60	0	30	36	24	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.
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	33	33	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	44	44	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	5	1	1	2	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	12	17	46	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	Covid Recovery - Contingency for new initiatives/increased costs	Alan Puckrin	0	0	0	0	0	£278k allocated to IL utility costs September 2022, any unused balance proposed to be written back 31/03/22.
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	0	59	59	0	Complete.
C	Additional Payroll post - 12 Months	Steven McNab	28	25	25	28	0	Cost for senior clerical assistant within payroll team. The anticipated end date of post is 31/03/23.

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P11	Actual 28/02/2023	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
C	New Ways of Working	Steven McNab	286	98	41	54	232	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 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. It has also been agreed, this will fund the £7.6k capitial requirement for Online form solutions Victoria Forms.
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 HR EMR above to here. 35k moved to here from Discover Inverclyde EMR.
C	Contribution to IJB budget 2022/23	Alan Puckrin	550	0	0	550	0	Budget transferred to IJB March 2023
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	97	64	71	71	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.
Total Category B			8,145	0	109	5,415	2,730	
Total Category C to E			7,531	5,215	5,367	6,385	1,146	

COMMON GOOD FUND

Period 11: 1 April 2022 - 28 February 2023

	Final Outturn 2021/22	Approved Budget 2022/23	Budget to Date 2022/23	Actual to Date 2022/23	Projected Outturn 2022/23
<u>PROPERTY COSTS</u>	72,380	29,000	23,300	31,610	35,660
Repairs & Maintenance	47,450	9,000	7,500	10,450	11,000
Rates	21,720	19,000	15,800	21,160	21,160
Property Insurance	3,210	1,000	0	0	3,500
<u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u>	15,050	7,700	1,300	0	7,700
Sundries	8,850	1,500	1,300	0	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
<u>OTHER EXPENDITURE</u>	26,000	61,500	61,500	55,100	61,500
Christmas Lights Switch On	10,500	10,500	10,500	5,890	10,500
Gourock Highland Games	0	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Armistice Service	6,530	8,300	8,300	6,510	8,300
Comet Festival	0	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300
Bad Debt Provision	8,970	0	0	0	0
<u>INCOME</u>	(118,620)	(109,800)	(91,100)	(104,880)	(123,200)
Property Rental	(158,050)	(159,000)	(132,500)	(134,700)	(159,000)
Void Rents	39,690	49,700	41,400	29,820	36,300
Internal Resources Interest	(260)	(500)	0	0	(500)
<u>NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE</u>	(5,190)	(11,600)	(5,000)	(18,170)	(18,340)
<u>EARMARKED FUNDS</u>	0	0	0	0	0
<u>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</u>	(5,190)	(11,600)	(5,000)	(18,170)	(18,340)

Fund Balance as at 31st March 2022 105,668

Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2023 124,008**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 28th February 2023

Committee	Approved Budget 2022/2023 £,000's	Revised Budget 2022/2023 £,000's	Projected Out-turn 2022/2023 £,000's	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £,000's	Percentage Variance
Policy & Resources	21,692	19,478	20,161	683	3.51%
Environment & Regeneration	21,424	23,275	23,078	(197)	(0.85%)
Education & Communities (Note 1)	99,748	98,981	98,253	(728)	(0.74%)
Health & Social Care	65,522	65,767	63,755	(2,012)	(3.06%)
Committee Sub-Total	208,386	207,501	205,247	(2,254)	(1.09%)
Loan Charges (Including SEMP) (Note 1)	11,977	16,883	16,883	0	0.00%
Identified Savings (Note 2)	39	39	(9)	(48)	0.00%
Saving Approved yet to be Allocated (Note 3)	(30)	(30)	(10)	20	0.00%
Earmarked Reserves	0	2,444	2,444	0	0.00%
Total Expenditure	220,372	226,837	224,555	(2,282)	(1.01%)
Financed By:					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates	(185,285)	(189,806)	(190,034)	(228)	0.12%
Contribution from General Reserves	(4,000)	(5,944)	(5,944)	0	100.00%
Contribution to Reserves	1,858	1,858	1,858	0	100.00%
Council Tax (Note 4)	(32,945)	(32,945)	(33,545)	(600)	1.82%
Integration Joint Board - Contribution to Reserves	0	0	2,012	2,012	100.00%
Net Expenditure	0	0	(1,098)	(1,098)	

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

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Total Funding 2022/23</u>	<u>Phased Budget P11</u>	<u>Actual Spend To 28 February 2023</u>	<u>Variance Actual to Phased Budget</u>	<u>Projected Spend 2022/23</u>	<u>Earmarked 2023/24 & Beyond</u>	<u>2022/23 %age Spend Against Projected</u>	<u>2022/23 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget</u>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		
Education & Communities	4,545	3,565	3,515	(50)	4,010	535	87.66%	(1.40%)
Health & Social Care	4,753	951	110	(841)	837	3,916	13.14%	(88.43%)
Regeneration & Environment	11,166	1,323	2,720	1,397	3,656	7,510	74.40%	105.63%
Policy & Resources	15,676	5,215	5,476	261	11,800	3,876	46.41%	5.00%
	36,140	11,054	11,821	767	20,303	15,837	58.22%	6.94%

Actual Spend v Phased Budget Ahead Phasing = £767k 6.94%

Last Update (Period P10) Ahead Phasing = £567k

Increase in Acceleration £200k

GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION
Position as at 28/02/23

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Usable Balance 31/3/22		3719
<u>Available Funding:</u>		
Share of Scottish Government one off funding £120m 2022/23	1858	
Service Concession (P&R January 2023)	14748	
IRI Interest (2023/26)	<u>3500</u>	20106
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) 2022/23	1098	
Contribution to/(from) General Fund Reserves	<u>0</u>	1098
<u>Use of Balances:</u>		
Local Elections	(140)	
Loans Charges Funding Model (December Financial Strategy)	(1200)	
IL Smoothing Reserve	(400)	
IL - Living Wage Contribution	(77)	
Service Concession Smoothing Reserve (P&R January 2023)	(602)	
Agreed Use of Free Reserves Full Council March 2023):		
Support to 2023/26 Budgets	(4000)	
Net Zero action plan	(3300)	
Anti Poverty initiatives	(800)	
Employability Smoothing Reserve	(400)	
Digital Modernisation	(1000)	
Inflation Smoothing Reserve	(3000)	
2023/26 Capital Programme Funding	(4000)	
Clune Park Regeneration	(500)	
Voluntary Severance Reserve	<u>(1700)</u>	(21119)
<u>Agreed Write back of Earmarked Reserves:</u>		
Write Back December P&R		1460
		<u><u>5264</u></u>

Minimum Reserve required is £4 million

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/32/23/MT/GS
Contact Officer:	Matt Thomson	Contact No:	01475 712256
Subject:	Policy & Resources Capital Budget and overall 2022/26 Capital Programme		

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 2022/26 Capital Programme following approval of the 2023/26 Capital Programme on 2 March 2023.

1.3 The report advises the Committee in respect of the progress of the projects within the Policy & Resources Capital Programme which has a capital budget over 2022/26 of £6.769m with total projected spend on budget. The Committee is projecting to spend £0.639m in 2022/23 after advancement of £0.107m (20.11%).

1.4 The overall 2022/26 Capital Programme budget is £81.804m with projects totalling £84.683m. This represents a £2.879m (3.52%) over allocation which is within the approved 5% tolerance. It should be noted that this is based on a 4 year capital resource and the over provision will represent approximately 4.21% of the reduced, 3 year, resources of the 2023/26 programme which remains within acceptable levels. In the current year net slippage of £5.910m, 25.50% is being reported, this is an increase of £1.445m from the last reporting period. Expenditure at 28 February was £13.936m (80.70% of projected spend).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position of the 2022/26 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and the current position of the 2022/26 Capital Programme.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 On 2 March 2023 the Council approved the 2023/26 Capital Programme as part of the overall Budget approval factoring in additional funding to fund the shortfall in annual capital grant compared to the annual capital allocations. This report shows the current position of the approved Policy & Resources Capital Programme as well as the position of the overall extended 2022/26 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 capital projects. 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

2022/26 Policy & Resources Capital Position

- 3.3 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £6.769m. The current projection is £6.769m which means total projected spend is on budget.
- 3.4 The budget for 2022/23 is £0.532m and the Committee is projecting to spend £0.639m in 2022/23, advancement of £0.107m (20.11%) relating mainly to the Server & Switch Replacement Programme and Rolling Replacement of PC's. The spend as at 28 February is £0.586m (91.70%) 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 2022 holiday week. 631 Whiteboard/Teacher Desktop PCs were replaced with laptops. The first tranche of Phase 2 replacement programme to refresh 240 PCs in 1 x Business Education and 1 x Computing Science suites in each of the high schools was completed in the February mid-term break. A small programme to deploy outstanding docking stations delayed by manufacturing and supply issues completed the PC Refresh Programme for this FY. The remaining devices in suites and offices will be refreshed in Phase 2 tranche 2 during 2023/24. It has been agreed with Education that this will be scheduled during term time, working with the schools to ensure minimal disruption within the classroom and provide the fastest timeline for completion. A small refresh of School Senior Management Teams devices is planned prior to the main refresh programme.
- 3.6 Server and Switch Replacement – An implementation programme to replace and expand the Corporate Network Storage system is near completion and final is being scheduled for mid May 2023. 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. Six initial meeting rooms have been equipped with equipment and are available for use to host both traditional and Hybrid Meetings; Boardroom 2 and CSC Meeting Room 4 had replacement screens and videoconferencing systems installed in January 2023. The Chief Executive, Finance, ICT and HR Meeting Rooms have all had small room systems deployed as upgrades to existing systems. Engagement with suppliers to evaluate equipment for future programmes is underway
- 3.8 As part of the 2023/26 budget setting process £4m has been allocated to meet potential cost increases across the full capital programme and to protect core service delivery from unexpected fluctuations in costs. This budget has been allocated to Policy and Resources and will be allocated by Committee following the receipt of relevant reports.

Overall 2022/26 Capital Programme

- 3.9 The overall 2022/26 Capital Programme reflects both the previously confirmed 2022/23 capital grant as well as the confirmed 2023/24 capital grant. While the total grant for 2023/24 of £8.228m 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) leaving a core grant of £6.079m. The estimated capital grant allocation for 2024/25 and 2025/26 remains £6.0m.
- 3.10 The Scottish Government provided 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.
- 3.11 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 £2.879m which represents 3.52% of the 2022/26 resources. It should be noted that this is based on a 4-year capital resource and the over provision will represent approximately 4.21% of the reduced, 3 year, resources of the 2023/26 programme which remains within acceptable levels.
- 3.12 In terms of the overall Capital Programme, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that as at 28 February 2023 expenditure in 2022/23 was 80.70% 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 3.13 of this report. Overall Committees are projecting to outturn on budget.
- 3.13 In the current year net slippage of £5.910m, (25.50%) is currently being reported, this is an increase of £1.445m since the last reporting period. This is due to slippage within the Environment & Regeneration Committee (£4.232), Education & Communities Committee (£0.939m) and Health & Social Care Committee (£0.846m) offset by advancement within the Policy & Resources Committee (£0.107m).

3.14 The position in respect of individual Committees for 2022/23 is as follows:

Policy & Resources

Expenditure as at 28 February 2023 is £0.586m against an approved budget of £0.532m. Advancement of £0.107m (20.11%) is being reported at this stage within the Server and Switch Replacement Programme and Rolling Replacement of PC's (£0.200m) offset with other minor slippage across the rest of the programme.

Environment & Regeneration

Expenditure as at 28 February 2023 is £9.333m against an approved budget of £16.677m. Net slippage of £4.232m (25.46%) and is mainly due to slippage in Port Glasgow Town Regeneration (£0.528m), Town & Village Centre projects (£0.681m) and Place Based Funding (£1.000m), Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets (£0.107k), SPT (£0.400m), Cremator Costs (£0.621m) as well as the Vehicle Replacement Program (£0.815m) offset with other minor advancements across the program within the Property projects as well as other minor movements across the remaining elements of the capital programme

Education & Communities

Expenditure as at 28 February 2023 is £3.633m against an approved budget of £4.623m. Net slippage of £0.939m (20.31%) is being reported mainly due to the removal of the Indoor Tennis Facility (£0.503m slipped and then total remaining £0.741m removed), the Waterfront Leisure Centre Moveable Pool Floor (£0.320m) and PG New Community Hub (£0.721m) offset by advancement of Lady Alice Bowling Club (£0.130m), Leisure Pitches (£0.231m), the Lifecycle fund (£0.095m) and Gourock Primary School Extension (£0.067m) along with other minor movements across the remaining elements of the capital programme.

Health & Social Care

Expenditure as at 28 February 2023 is £0.384m against an approved budget of £1.346m. Net slippage of £0.846m (60.30%) is being reported due to slippage in the New Learning Disability Facility (£0.784m), the Swift upgrade (£0.100m) and an advancement in the Crosshill Children's home replacement (£0.050m).

3.15 2022/23 was another challenging year for delivery of the capital programme and officers will provide a detailed update on performance to the August meeting of the Committee.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress on the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the position of the 2022/26Capital Programme.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is 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

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

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Project Name	Est Total Cost	Actual to 31/3/22	Approved Budget 2022/23	Revised Est 2022/23	Actual to 28/02/23	Est 2023/24	Est 2024/25	Est 2025/26	Future Years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Environment, Regeneration & Resources</u>									
<u>ICT</u>									
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	25		13	23	18	2	0		0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	442		73	429	429	13	0		0
Meeting Room, Videoconferencing & Hybrid Working Equipment	60	-	30	9	6	51	0		0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	195		26	178	133	17	0		0
Home Working Allocation	25	15	10	0		10	0		0
Annual Allocation	1,779	-	380	0		500	635	644	0
<u>ICT Total</u>	2,526	15	532	639	586	593	635	644	0
<u>Finance</u>									
Modernisation Fund	112	112	0	0		0	0		0
Medium Term Capital Program Support	4,000						2,000	2,000	
Cost Pressure Contingency	131	-	0	0		131	0		0
<u>Finance Total</u>	4,243	112	0	0	0	131	2,000	2,000	0
TOTAL	6,769	127	532	639	586	724	2,635	2,644	0

Appendix 2a

Capital Programme - 2022/23 - 2025/26

Available Resources

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Capital Support	8,664	8,228	6,000	6,000	-	28,892
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	67	890	315	315	-	1,587
Capital Grants (Note 2)	4,796	3,190	-	-	-	7,986
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	350	6,211	7,957	2,574	125	17,217
Balance B/F From 21/22	14,846	-	-	-	-	14,846
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	386	1,938	5,813	3,264	380	11,781
	<u>29,109</u>	<u>20,457</u>	<u>20,085</u>	<u>12,153</u>	<u>505</u>	<u>82,309</u>

Overall Position 2022/26

Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-C)	<u>£000</u>
Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-D)	81,804
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources	<u>84,683</u>
	<u>(2,879)</u>
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %	<u>(3.52)%</u>

Notes to Appendix 2a

Note 1 (Capital Receipts)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	15	615	315	315	-	1,260
Contributions/Recoveries	52	275	-	-	-	327
	67	890	315	315	-	1,587

Note 2 (Capital Grants)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Grant - Place Based Funding	584	-	-	-	-	584
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	493	-	-	-	-	493
SPT	1,275	-	-	-	-	1,275
Nature Restoration Fund	160	-	-	-	-	160
CO2 Monitors in Schools	42	-	-	-	-	42
Electric Vehicles	13	-	-	-	-	13
Sustrans	420	2,200	-	-	-	2,620
SFA Pitches	75	-	-	-	-	75
VDLIP - New Learning Disability Hub	-	990	-	-	-	990
RCGF - King George VI	1,734	-	-	-	-	1,734
	4,796	3,190	-	-	-	7,986

Note 3 (Prudentially Funded Projects)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Vehicle Replacement Programme	172	314	1,314	964	-	2,764
Borrowing in lieu of VRP Reduction	-	-	636	-	-	636
Asset Management Plan - Depots	159	-	300	-	-	459
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	15	-	110	110	125	360
CCTV	-	15	-	-	-	15
Clune Park Regeneration	276	-	-	-	-	276
Neil Street Childrens Home Replacement - CoS	1	12	-	-	-	13
Crosshill Childrens Home Replacement	299	-	-	-	-	299
New Learning Disability Facility	200	2,970	4,097	-	-	7,267
Interactive Whiteboard Replacement	28	-	-	-	-	28
Additional Prudential Borrowing to Fund Capital Programme	(1,000)	1,500	1,500	1,500	-	3,500
Additional Prudential Borrowing to meet anticipated Cost Pressures	200	1,400	-	-	-	1,600
	350	6,211	7,957	2,574	125	17,217

Capital Programme - 2022/23 - 2025/26

Agreed Projects

Committee	A Prior Years	B 2022/23	C 2023/24	D 2024/25	E 2025/26	F Future	G Total	H Approved Budget	I (Under)/ Over	J 2022/23 Spend To 28/02/2023
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy & Resources	127	639	724	2,635	2,644	-	6,769	6,769	-	586
Environment & Regeneration	7,075	12,388	15,293	15,573	9,610	125	60,064	60,064	-	9,333
School Estate	2,423	2,525	1,503	4,266	4,000	1,001	15,718	15,718	-	2,522
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	270	1,159	1,410	320	51	500	3,710	3,710	-	1,111
HSCP	2,149	557	3,182	6,204	-	-	12,092	12,092	-	384
Total	12,044	17,268	22,112	28,998	16,305	1,626	98,353	98,353	-	13,936

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/30/23/AP
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712090
Subject:	Finance Services Update		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide updates to Committee on a number of matters relating to the Finance Service and seek delegated authority for the award of the Council's Insurance and Claims Handling Service tender prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

1.3 The report contains updates in relation to the following:

- Discretionary Payments
- Energy Support Payments
- Non-Domestic Rates matters
- War Pensions discretion
- Revenues & Benefits Performance
- Treasury Management
- 2024/25 Budget development
- Insurance & Claims Handling Tender

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the updates contained in the report and the continued efforts by officers to improve uptake of the UK Government Energy Support Payments.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee approve the continuation of the application of a 100% disregard to war disablement and bereavement pensions when assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims.

2.3 It is recommended that the Committee grants delegated authority to the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services to approve the award the Insurance and Claims Handling Service tender in accordance with Contract Standing Order 20.3 (ii).

2.4 It is recommended that the Committee notes that an initial report on the 2024/25 Budget will be presented to the August Policy & Resources Committee.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Discretionary Payments

The Scottish Government announced in December 2022 mitigation of the Benefit Cap from 1 January 2023. The Benefits team worked with Advice Services and Housing Associations to support applications. Forty two of the forty three households affected by the cap engaged with the service and received the payment. DHP expenditure to help with the Benefit Cap increased to £40,300 in 2022-23. Social Sector Size expenditure in 2022-23 was £1.28 million and will be fully funded by the Scottish Government. Expenditure of core DHP allocation to help with other welfare reforms and general financial pressures, excluding Benefit Cap expenditure was £164,000. The allocation for 2023-24 is £165,000 and is supplemented by £44,500, earmarked from a late allocation in 2022/23. Expenditure will be monitored and if required officers will develop a proposal to adjust the DHP policy to disburse residual funding.

3.2 Scottish Welfare Fund expenditure of £882,000 provided almost 1,000 Community Care Grants and 2,300 Crisis Grants in 2022-23 with expenditure of £611,000 and £271,000 respectively. The core allocation of £756,000 was boosted by earmarked and anti-poverty funding of £150,000 and a top-up government allocation of £53,000. The 2023-24 budget of £873,500 comprises core Scottish Government allocation which remains unchanged, earmarked funding from 2022/23 and £40,000 anti-poverty recurring funding, which funds a 20% uplift in Crisis Grants above the Scottish Government minimum.

3.3 Inverclyde Council was one of six case study areas that contributed to an independent review of the Scottish Welfare Fund, commissioned by the Scottish Government. The final report was published in March with key findings and key questions to be addressed to ensure the fund can meet need effectively and sustainably in the future. Over and above the adequacy of the quantum, the emerging themes were around delivery of the fund, the application process, how grants are fulfilled, opportunities for improved data collection that might help Scottish Government and councils better understand the reasons for differences in spending and outcomes, and help support improvement in consistency of practice, whilst retaining appropriate local discretion.

A Policy Advisory Group will deliver an Action Plan to ministers by the summer of 2023. The objectives are to develop policy improvements in collaboration with stakeholders and support the sharing of best practice and communicate positive outcomes driven by the Scottish Welfare Fund in the longer-term. A copy of the full report can be accessed via the [link](#) in the background papers.

3.4 Energy Support Payments

Committee were previously advised on the launch of two UK Government energy support schemes. The UK Government estimated that there were 1100 eligible applicants within Inverclyde, however as at the end of April less than 100 applications have been received. The availability of the grants has been promoted by Council social media, Housing Associations and by HSCP with care home residents and therefore the low take up is a concern. However, the position in Inverclyde appears to be replicated elsewhere in Scotland. Applications are made online alongside a helpline for those without online access. Both schemes close to new applications on 31 May 2023 and officers are continuing to liaise with relevant partners to encourage increased take up.

3.5 Non-Domestic Rates

Non-Domestic Rate bills for 2023-24 were issued to rate payers during April 2023 based on the Scottish Assessors' revaluation of each subject. A review of the Small Business Bonus Scheme Relief (SBBS) was carried out during 2022 which advised ratepayers that failure to respond to requests for information would result in relief being terminated from April 2022. 250 businesses

which did not respond have been written to advising that they have been billed on the basis that they are not entitled to the relief during 2023-24 and have been re-billed withdrawing relief for 2022-23.

Relief will be reinstated if the business responds and qualifies. Work is underway on a further 80 accounts highlighted from the exercise to verify the current occupiers of the respective premises.

3.6 As part of the budget elected members were advised of the significant increase in rateable values following the 2023 Revaluation. Whilst an error identified by the assessor reduced the increase by 50%, the increase in bills for the Council remains around £500,000. Following discussions between Cosla, Directors of Finance and Mr Tom Arthur (Minister for Public Finance, Planning & Community Wealth), it has now been agreed that appropriate appeals can be lodged up to a deadline of 31 July and councils will not be penalised if the appeal is successful. Officers in Finance and Property are engaging with external advisors to agree areas where appeals could be made.

3.7 War Disablement & Bereavement Pensions Discretion

Councils have the discretion to disregard income from war disablement and bereavement pensions when calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit. The UK Government's rules are that £10 per week of income from war disablement and bereavement pensions is disregarded. Inverclyde, like most councils, operates a locally modified scheme and disregards these pensions in full. The net annual cost to the Council to support the Housing Benefit local scheme is under £5,000. War disablement and bereavement pensions are disregarded for the assessment of Council Tax Reduction in the same way as the Housing Benefit modified scheme.

Audit Scotland require evidence of committee approval to utilise this discretionary power to support the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim.

3.8 Council Tax collection & Housing Benefits verification performance in 2022/23

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) supports councils' efforts to maintain an accurate Housing Benefit caseload through the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative (HBAAI) and the Verify Earnings and Pensions Alerts service (VEP). Councils are required to complete review activities on an allocated number claims each year where the DWP have determined there is a high risk of changes of circumstances or where there is known to be a change in earnings or occupational pension. Inverclyde completed all HBAAI activities and VEP alerts resulting in performance in the top quartile of all UK councils throughout 2022-23

3.9 The level of Council Tax collected in 2022-23 was the highest ever collection "in-year" at 95.9%. Collection was assisted by credits of the Scottish Government £150 and the Inverclyde Council Cost £350 Cost of Living Award 15% of households that did not opt for the sum to be paid into a bank account. For comparison, in-year Council Tax collection in 2021-22 was 95.4% and 94.4% in 2020-21. Collection levels are expected to dip in 2023/24 due to the continuing pressures on household finances.

3.10 Treasury Activity

The last meeting of the Committee was advised that the Council had undertaken temporary borrowing from other Scottish Local Authorities rather than enter into longer term borrowing from the PWLB due to the level of interest rates which are expected to reduce over 2023/24. The Council currently has £5million of temporary borrowing until mid-June 2023 and has £5million returned from investments on 6 June leaving £10million in fixed term investments which is due to come back to the Council on 10 August this year. In line with the approved Treasury Strategy officers intend to undertake longer term borrowing later in 2023/24. More detailed updates on Treasury matters will be presented to Committee in August and September.

3.11 2024/25 Budget – Initial considerations

The Corporate Management Team began consideration of the proposed approach towards the 2024/25 Budget at a specific session on 5 May. Matters considered included the current medium term financial position, possible budget period, emerging pressures, the approach to developing savings, change projects and interface with the IJB Budget. The output from this session will form an initial report to the MBWG later in June and thereafter the Policy & Resources Committee in August.

3.12 Insurance & Claims Handling Tender

The current contract for the Insurance and Claims Handling Service is due to expire on 30 September 2023 and requires to be re-tendered. The total estimated total value of this contract is £4.0-4.5 m over a 5 year contract period. The tender will be divided into a number of lots and will include cover for insurances required by the Council, including Employers Liability, Public Liability, Motor, Officials Indemnity, Property and Museums/Fine Art.

3.13 The tender will be advertised in late June through Public Contracts Scotland with a 4 week submission deadline for responses. As the estimated value of this tender exercise exceeds 1 million pounds then delegated approval to award is required in accordance with Contract Standing Order 20.3 (ii).

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Officers will continue to work with Council services to maximise the uptake of the UK Government Energy Support Schemes prior to the cut off for applications at the end of May.
- 4.2 The Chief Financial Officer will continue to monitor the Council's cashflow and borrowing requirements and provide updates to each meeting of the Committee in line with the approved Treasury Strategy.
- 4.3 The Committee is asked to approve the continuation of 100% disregard of war disablement and bereavement pensions from the assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.
- 4.4 Following the initial CMT 2024/25 Budget discussion, an initial meeting of the Members Budget Working Group will take place prior to the summer recess and an update presented to the August Policy & Resources Committee.
- 4.5 Officers are requesting delegated authority for the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services to award the contract for the Insurance and Claims Handling Service in accordance with Contract Standing Order 20.3 (ii).

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

There are no financial Implications arising from the recommendations in this report. If there are increased costs relating to the Council's Insurance tender, these will be contained in the non-pay inflation allowance and reported to the September meeting of the Committee

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

All Treasury Borrowing by officers is carried out in line with the legislative framework and the Council's approved Treasury Strategy and Policies.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

The development of a 2024/26 Budget is a key action within the Committee's Improvement Plan.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation with colleagues in Corporate Procurement was undertaken as part of the preparation of the report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Scottish Welfare Fund review: final report - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-scottish-welfare-fund-final-report/>

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/14/23/MR
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712042
Subject:	Corporate Policy Update		

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:

- New Council Plan, Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans and performance management arrangements;
- Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23;
- Corporate awards; and
- Mid-year population data releases.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance and that the Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23 will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as per the Bòrd's instruction.

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.

NEW COUNCIL PLAN, COMMITTEE DELIVERY AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.2 As Elected Members will be aware the Inverclyde Council approved the new Council Plan 2023/28 at its April 2023 meeting. The related new performance management arrangements were agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2023. This included the development of three Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans (CDIPs). The Policy and Resources Committee Plan is included on this meeting agenda, with the Environment and Regeneration Committee and Education and Communities Committee Plans scheduled for consideration at their May meetings.
- 3.3 There has been significant work undertaken in implementing this new approach. Following the agreement of the Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans the focus will move to the introduction of Service Delivery and Improvement Plans for each Head of Service.
- 3.4 On an ongoing basis performance reports on the actions within the CDIPs will be considered at every second Committee meeting, with six monthly reports on performance indicators.

INVERCLYDE GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2022/23

- 3.5 Bòrd na Gàidhlig has written to Inverclyde Council requesting an Implementation Report on the progress that the Council has made in the delivery of its Gaelic Language Plan 2017/22, over the period 8th March 2022 to 8th March 2023. The Implementation Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.6 Within the Implementation Report, a number of the Corporate Services Aims, which apply to every public authority, have a red or amber status. These aims are included within the new Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27, along with improvement actions and timescales for delivery. Inverclyde Council's new Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27 is currently awaiting Ministerial approval.
- 3.7 The statutory deadline for submission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig is 20th June 2023. Following submission, the Bòrd will assess Inverclyde Council's progress and provide the Council with a written response.

CORPORATE AWARDS

- 3.8 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. In November 2022 the CMT agreed a corporate approach towards submissions for national awards. Services continue to apply for awards and recognition that are specific to their work with all potential applications to the national awards outlined above supported by the Corporate Policy Team and reviewed by the Chief Executive and Corporate Director (Education, Communities & Organisational Development).
- 3.9 Of particular note is the LGC awards, for which Inverclyde Council has been shortlisted for the Council of the Year category. The Chief Executive is chairing a Working Group in preparation for the judges visit on 22 May and presentation on 8 June.

MID YEAR POPULATION ESTIMATES

- 3.10 National Records of Scotland (NRS) has indicated that the mid-year population estimates for 2022, normally published in June each year, will not be published until winter 2023/24. The publication date has been pushed back due to NRS waiting on data from Scotland’s Census to be ready. NRS will also revise mid-year population estimates dating back to 2012, following the release of Census data, however these revisions will not be available until later in 2024.
- 3.11 NRS has yet to reach a decision on whether to publish life expectancy data later this year and revise it following the release of Census data, or delay publication of this also until 2024.
- 3.12 A further update on the release of NRS data will be provide in future reports as details are known.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee note the latest updates relating to the area of corporate policy and performance and that the Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23 will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig on, or before, 20th June 2023, as per the Bòrd’s instruction.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X		
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children and 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					
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5.3 Legal/Risk

Section 6(2) of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 enables Bòrd na Gàidhlig to instruct a public authority to submit a report on the extent to which it has implemented the measures set out in its Gaelic Language Plan.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

The matters referred to within this report are of relevance to the following Council Plan priorities:

- Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced;
- Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable; and
- Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG**FOIRM DÀTA BLIADHNAIL 2022-2023****ANNUAL RETURN FORM 2022-2023**

Ainm na buidhne Organisation's name	Inverclyde Council
--	---------------------------

Prìomh Dhàta Measaidh Primary Indicator Data		
Fios bhon Phoball Communications from the Public	Cia mheud brath sgrìobhte a fhuair am buidheann bhon phoball ann an Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many written communications have the organisation received from the public in Gaelic this year?	No written communications in Gaelic have been received from the public by the school or the wider Council.
A' sgaoileadh fiosrachaidh Dissemination of information	Cia mheud pìos a sgaoil am buidheann air na meadhanan sòisealta ann an Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many posts did the organisation distribute on social media in Gaelic this year?	Whinhill Primary School and Nursery Class has posted in excess of one hundred posts in Gaelic during the year. Bilingual social media posts, were issued by the Council's Corporate Communications team regarding the provision of Secondary GME.
	Cia mheud fios-naidheachd a chaidh a sgaoileadh leis a'bhuidheann anns a' Ghàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many press releases did the organisation publish in Gaelic this year?	Inverclyde Council published a bilingual press release on the public consultation of the new Council Plan and Partnership Plan in autumn 2022. Details of the public consultation were also published in both languages on Inverclyde Council's website. In addition, bilingual press releases and webpages have been published in relation to the provision of Secondary GME. Whinhill Primary School also translate wider Council communications into Gaelic for families.
	Cia meud neach-obrach a fhuair cothrom trèanaidh ann an sgìlean Gàidhlig am-bliadhna?	Two Inverclyde Council employees received Gaelic skills training during the year.

Appendix 1: Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23

<p>Luchd-obrach Staff</p>	<p>How many staff received Gaelic skills training this year?</p>	
	<p>Cia mheud dreuchd a th' agaibh an-dràsta far a bheil Gàidhlig ann mar sgil riatanach? How many posts do you currently have where Gaelic is an essential skill?</p>	<p>The following posts include Gaelic as a designated skill within Whinhill School and Nursery: 1.0 FTE PT Gaelic 2.7 FTE teachers Two 1.0 EYECO posts One 10hr support worker Within the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Service, 2 employee posts include Gaelic language skills as an essential requirement.</p>
	<p>Cia mheud neach-obrach a th' agaibh an-dràsta aig a bheil sgilean Gàidhlig? How many staff currently within the organisation have Gaelic skills?</p>	<p>The latest data available to the Council on this is from October 2021, when an employee audit of Gaelic skills was carried out by the Council via an online survey. 29 respondents noted that they have some level of Gaelic skills (ranging from a few words of Gaelic to fluent, native speaker).</p>
<p>Foillseachaidhean Publications</p>	<p>Cia mheud foillseachadh a dh'fhoillsich am buidheann gu dà-chananach am-bliadhna? How many organisational publications have been published bilingually (Gaelic and English) this year?</p>	<p>Aside from social media posts and press releases, no organisational publications were published bilingually, however the new Council Plan outcomes 2023/28 will be published bilingually in 2023. It should also be noted that no requests were received from the public to have a corporate publication translated into Gaelic.</p>
<p>Inbhe Status</p>	<p>Cia mheud soidhne dà-chànanach a chuir am buidheann an àirde am-bliadhna? How many new bilingual signs has the organisation erected this year?</p>	<p>Signage located at the entrance to Inverclyde's towns is bilingual. No additional new bilingual signage has been erected in the reporting period, however a number of actions in relation to signage have been included in the new Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan 2022/27.</p>

Prìomhachasan a' Phlana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig

National Gaelic Language Plan Priorities

Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig / Using Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' bhuidhinn a' toirt fàs air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation increasing the use of Gaelic?

During the year Inverclyde Council supported an increase in the use of Gaelic in a variety of ways, including:

- Publishing details of the public consultation on the new Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 and Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 bilingually via social media and on the Council website. These Plans set out the high level outcomes for the Community Planning Partnership and Inverclyde Council;
- A new Inverclyde Communication and Engagement Strategy was approved in January 2023 which includes a commitment to promote Gaelic through communications activity.
- Plans have been progressed for the delivery of Gaelic Medium Education at secondary level within Inverclyde;
- The CLD Service hosted 3 Conversation Cafes, where learners from a range of groups could meet to speak Gaelic in a public space;
- While pupils are educated through Gaelic, the ethos of Whinhill is such that all pupils have the same opportunities. Core school values underpin all work and experiences in both English and Gaelic medium. Pupils are represented on all school committees;
- Gaelic medium staff undertake every opportunity to liaise with other Gaelic Medium provision and have had an opportunity to moderate outwith the authority this session;
- All signs and communications in Whinhill are in Gaelic and English; and
- Links to other further information / Gaelic websites are provided via the Inverclyde Council website.

Ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig / Learning Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' bhuidhinn a' toirt fàs air ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation increasing the learning of Gaelic?

During the year, Inverclyde Council supported the increased learning of Gaelic in a variety of ways including:

- Nursery staff participated in learning opportunities at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye over a 2 week period;
- As part of the 1 + 2 Strategy, children in P4-7 pupils are learning Gaelic and are confidently using Gaelic words and phrases;
- Parent homework classes have been delivered and additional resources made available to support parents to support pupil learning;
- A Gaelic Padlet has been developed by staff and is available for all families to access support for Gaelic;
- World Gaelic Week was promoted to all establishments;
- The promotion of Parent Information Session from Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- The promotion of GLE training to all primary schools;
- The promotion of Scottish Learning Festival Online related sessions with all establishments;
- Gaelic nursery staff have been trained in delivering Bookbug sessions; and
- Whinhill School and Nursery celebrations are conducted in both languages.

The Community Learning and Development Service delivered:

- Speak Gaelic A1 class with 21 learners attending over 3 terms.
- Gaelic Intermediate classes with 14 learners attending over 3 terms.
- A Scottish History with Gaelic which 13 learners attended over 3 terms.

A'cur air adhart na Gàidhlig / Promoting Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' buidhinn a' cur deagh iomhaigh air adhart airson na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation promoting a positive image of Gaelic?

During the year Inverclyde Council promoted a positive image of Gaelic in the following ways:

- Publishing details of the public consultation on the new Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 and Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 bilingually via social media and the Council website. These Plans set out the high-level outcomes for the Community Planning Partnership and Inverclyde Council;
- A new Communication and Engagement for the Council was approved in January 2023 which gives a commitment to promoting Gaelic through communications activity.
- Whinhill Primary School and Nursery was the first school to be awarded the Rights Respecting Level 2 in both English and Gaelic;
- The school has strengthened its close links with parent groups and is helping promote Gaelic through, for example, supporting the local Gaelic learners' group and links with the BBC to demonstrate Gaelic education.
- The Gaelic nursery has been participating in Gaelic Bookbug sessions;
- The Gaelic offer provided by CLD has been advertised via social media;
- Whinhill hosted this year's Gaelic Feas in March '23. Gaelic Medium schools from across the central belt provided Gaelic dramas for their parents.
- At the Inverclyde Music Festival, the Gaelic choir won the choir competition and individual pupils sang Gaelic songs which Gaelic P1-3 children recited Gaelic poetry.
- Children in Gaelic P4-7 classes have established pen-pals with children in another local authority, Sandbank Primary School, Dunoon.
- Children from Gaelic classes have also been sending artwork and details of projects/ school work to BBC Alba to be included in future programmes such as 'Aileag' the Gaelic children's radio programme.
- Fèisean na Gàidheal visited GP4-7 with a Gaelic drama workshop and performance.
- Pupils experience a wide range of activities including running a gardening club, a shinty club and a Sradagan youth group amongst others.


<p>Fiosrachadh dearcnachaidh eile Other monitoring information</p>
<p>A' brosnachadh Foghlam Gàidhlig Promotion of Gaelic Education</p>
<p>Chan fheum ach Ùghdarrasan Ionadail seo a lìonadh a-steach For Local Authorities only to complete</p>
<p>Fo Earrainn 15 de dh'Achd an Fhoghlaim (Alba) 2016, feumaidh ùghdarrasan ionadail aig a bheil foghlam Gàidhlig anns an sgìre aca seo a shanasachd ann an dòigh iomchaidh. Feumaidh gach ùghdarras ionadail sanasachd a dhèanamh air na còraichean a th' aig pàrantan gus tagradh a dhèanamh airson foghlam Gàidhlig aig ìre na bun-sgoile agus foghlam luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh. Ciamar a tha sibh a' coileanadh an dleastanais seo?</p> <p>Under Section 15 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, local authorities which already provide Gaelic education in their area must take reasonable steps to promote this. All local authorities must take reasonable steps to promote the rights which parents have under the Act to make a request for Gaelic Medium Primary Education and the potential provision of Gaelic Learner Education. Could you tell us how you are undertaking this?</p>
<p>For the Council, its primary role is in the support, promotion and delivery of Gaelic education. The Council's Gaelic Medium Education webpage has been reviewed and refreshed, reflecting all the recommendations made by the Bord.</p> <p>Inverclyde considers it essential that children and young people are given the opportunity to continue their language skills into secondary education and as such is planning for continuity. Currently, officers are engaging with the Bord to plan and deliver information sharing session on Gaelic Medium Education in autumn of 2023.</p> <p>Whinhill Primary School and Nursery continues to be rigorous in its promotion of Gaelic experiences in the school across many media outlets.</p>
<p>Pàrantan Corporra Corporate Parenting</p>
<p>Chan fheum ach Pàrantan Chorporra seo a lìonadh a-steach For Corporate Parents only to complete</p>
<p>Am b' urrainn dhuibh dàta a thoirt dhuinn air an àireimh de dhaoine òga le Gàidhlig a tha, no a tha air a bhith, fo chùram a tha clàraichte leis an Ùghdarras.</p> <p>Please provide data on the number of Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people registered with the Authority.</p>
<p>There are no Gaelic speaking care experienced young people currently registered in Inverclyde.</p>
<p>Am b' urrainn dhuibh fiosrachadh a thoirt dhuinn air tachartasan no cothroman a tha sibh a' cur air dòigh airson daoine òga le Gàidhlig a tha, no a tha air a bhith, fo chùram a tha clàraichte leis an Ùghdarras.</p> <p>Please provide information on activities or opportunities you provide for Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people.</p>


N/A as per previous response.
<p>Co-ionannachd Equalities</p> <p>Bu chòir don a h-uile buidheann seo a lionadh a-steach</p> <p>For all organisations to complete</p>
<p>An do chomharraich an t-ùghdarras poblach agaibh cùisean sònraichte sam bith co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd chothroman a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig?</p> <p>Has your public authority identified any particular issues relating to equality of opportunity with regard to the development of Gaelic language?</p>
<p>The Bord is aware of the issue regarding local access to secondary GME provision, identified by Inverclyde Council. Presently there is no secondary Gaelic provision within the authority. We are moving to consult on this as families are reliant on placing requests to continue their learning.</p>
<p>A bheil poileasaidhean, modhan-obrach no dòighean-obrach sam bith co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd a chaidh a chur an gnìomh leis an ùghdarras phoblach agaibh, no a tha gan cur an gnìomh an-dràsta, a bhuineas ri bhith a’ cur co-ionannachd chothroman air adhart an lùib leasachadh na Gàidhlig? An inns sibh dhuinn mun deidhinn?</p> <p>Are there any equalities policies, procedures or measures that have been implemented by your public authority, or are in the process of being implemented, that are relevant to advancing the equality of opportunity in the development of Gaelic language? Can you tell us about them?</p>
<p>A statutory consultation was carried out in spring 2022 with the result that the whole of Inverclyde is now established as the catchment for Gaelic provision within Whinhill Primary School and Nursery.</p> <p>A Gaelic Advisory Group for Secondary was established and an independent options appraisal carried out to consider options for secondary Gaelic provision. The recommendation reached was to establish provision within Inverclyde Academy and this was approved in March 2023. The next stage is moving to consultation.</p>
<p>A bheil eisimpleirean ann de cheumannan sònraichte a ghabh sibh gus piseach a thoirt air in-ghabhail agus com-pàirteachas a tha air obrachadh gu sònraichte math a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig taobh a-staigh an ùghdarras phoblaich agaibh? An inns sibh dhuinn nam biodh sibh toilichte nan sgaoileadh Bòrd na Gàidhlig na h-eisimpleirean agaibh agus nan dèanamaid sanasachd orra.</p> <p>Are there examples of implementing specific measures to improve inclusivity or engagement that have worked particularly well regarding Gaelic language development for your public authority? Please indicate if you would be happy for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to share and promote the examples provided.</p>
N/A

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims	Status		
Àrd Phrionnsabalan	Overarching Principles			
<p>Spèis Cho-ionann A h-uile gealladh anns a' phlana Ghàidhlig air a libhrigeadh dhan aon ìre anns a' Ghàidhlig agus anns a' Bheurla.</p>	<p>Equal Respect Gaelic language plan commitments delivered to an equal standard in both Gaelic and English.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber – Inverclyde Council awards equal respect to both Gaelic and English but it recognised that there has been slippage in delivering some of the commitments in the GLP. The Council's new Communication and Engagement Strategy seeks to strengthen the use of Gaelic in key areas of Council activity. 		
<p>Cothroman Follaiseach Gnìomhan practaigeach agus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil fios aig luchd-obrach na buidhne agus am poball daonna air na cothroman a th' ann agus Gàidhlig a chleachdadh leis an ùghdarras phoblach.</p>	<p>Active Offer Practical measures to ensure that staff and public are kept regularly informed of all opportunities that exist to use Gaelic in relation to the work of the public authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber - Whinhill PS and Nursery inform parents and pupils up to date via regular newsletters, social media etc. The CLD service also maintains ongoing contact with local Gaelic learners. For all other employees, information is sent out via the Corporate Communications team. A commitment is given in the new GLP to improve our active offer (plan awaiting approval). 		
<p>Treas Phàrtaidhean A' dearbhadh gum bi ALEOs agus cunnadairean eile ag obair gus plana Gàidhlig an ùghdarras phoblaich a chur an gnìomh.</p>	<p>Third Parties Ensure that Arm's Length Executive Organisations and other contractors help with the delivery of the public authority Gaelic language plan.</p>	<p>There are no actions in Inverclyde Council's GLP which were identified for delivery in partnership with ALEOs.</p>		
<p>Gàidhlig na nì àbhaisteach Geallaidhean bhon phlana Ghàidhlig air an gabhail a-steach ann an structaran an ùghdarras phoblaich tro thìde, le sgrùdadh cunbhalach airson cothroman a chomharrachadh taobh a-staigh bhuidseatan stèidhichte gus Gàidhlig a thoirt air adhart.</p>	<p>Normalisation Gaelic plan commitments are normalised within the structures of the public authority over time, with opportunities to grow Gaelic within existing budgets constantly assessed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber - The Council's Corporate Equalities Group provides the formal governance structure for the Plan. <p>As the Council faces significant challenges in delivering a range of competing priorities against a background of reduced resources, decisions on resource allocation including support for the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan, are difficult. Recognising this, opportunities</p>		

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims	Status		
		to source external funding for Gaelic projects were reviewed by a working group during the year, in response to the significant pressures on the Council's existing budgets.		
<p>Pàrantan Corporra Gu bheilear mothachail air na dleastanasan a th' ann mar Phàrant Corporra gum bi a h-uile pàiste is neach òg fo chùram no a b' àbhaist a bhith fo chùram le Gàidhlig a' faighinn na h-aon cothroman 's a tha clann le cànan eile.</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting That the authority is aware of the duties of a Corporate Parent to ensure that looked after children and young people and care leavers with Gaelic receive the same opportunities as those with other languages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green - There are no looked after children and young people with Gaelic at present however in its role as Corporate Parent should this change in future this would be considered as part of the assessment and support planning for the young person. 		
Inbhe	Status			
<p>Suaicheantas Ag amas air suaicheantas corporra anns a' Ghàidhlig agus anns a' Bheurla a chruthachadh nuair a thig a' chiad chothrom agus mar phàirt den phròiseas ùrachaidh. Bu chòir an aon ìre follaiseachd a bhith ann airson an dà chànan san t-suaicheantas.</p>	<p>Logo Aim to render the corporate logo in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity and as part of any renewal process. The logo should demonstrate equal prominence for both languages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber - This is a commitment within the new GLP (awaiting approval) and the Council's new Communication and Engagement Strategy. 		
<p>Soidhnichean Prìomh shoidhnichean air an dèanamh dà-chànanach nuair a thathar gan ùrachadh.</p>	<p>Signage Prominent signage will include Gaelic and English as part of any renewal process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber - Signage displayed at the entrance to Inverclyde's towns is in both languages and bilingual signs will be considered as part of the renewal process. 		
Conaltradh leis a' phoball	Communicating with the public			
<p>Adhartachadh A' toirt teachdaireachd bhrosnachail seachad gum bithear daonnan a' cur fàilte air conaltradh a nì am mòr-shluagh ris an ùghdarras ann an Gàidhlig.</p>	<p>Promotion Positive message that communication from the public in Gaelic is always welcome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green - This is a commitment within the new GLP (awaiting approval) and the Council's new Communication and Engagement Strategy. 		
<p>Conaltradh sgrìobhte Bithear daonnan a' gabhail ri conaltradh sgrìobhte ann an Gàidhlig (litrìchean, puist-d agus na meadhanan sòisealta) agus thèid</p>	<p>Written Communication Written communication in Gaelic is always accepted (post, email and social media) and replies will be provided in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green - Inverclyde Council accepts all forms of communication and if a reply was requested in Gaelic, translation services would be secured to 		

Appendix 1: Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims	Status
freagairtean Gàidhlig a thoirt seachad a rèir a' phoileasaidh choitcheinn.	Gaelic in accordance with the general policy.	provide this. A formal action on this has been added to the Communication and Engagement Strategy.
Ionad-fàilte agus am fòn Nuair as urrainn do luchd-obrach le Gàidhlig an t-seirbheis seo a thoirt seachad, gheibh iad taic airson sin a dhèanamh, agus thèid sanasachd a dhèanamh air an t-seirbheis am measg a' mhòr-shluaigh.	Reception and phone Where Gaelic speaking staff are capable of providing this service, they are supported to do so and the service is promoted to the public.	This is not viewed as an area for development at the present time. No requests for a service in Gaelic were received from the public in the reporting year. In addition, there are currently no Gaelic speaking staff within the Council's Customer Service Centre's team.
Coinneamhan Thèid coimhead gu cunbhalach air na cothroman a th' ann gus coinneamhan poblach a chumail gu dà-chànanach no ann an Gàidhlig, agus thèid sanasachd a dhèanamh orra.	Public meetings Opportunities to hold public meetings bilingually or in Gaelic are regularly explored and promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green - Prior to any public meeting, members of the public are requested to notify the Council of any individual requirements and the Council will endeavour to meet these requirements. To date there has been no requests to hold public meeting bilingually.
Fiosrachadh	Information	
Fiosan-naidheachd Prìomh fhiosan-naidheachd agus fiosan-naidheachd mu dheidhinn na Gàidhlig air an cuairteachadh sa Ghàidhlig agus sa Beurla.	News releases High profile news releases and all news releases related to Gaelic are circulated in both Gaelic and English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber - The Council increased the number of high-profile news releases (e.g. Council and Partnership Plan consultation) published in both English and Gaelic during the year however this could be increased further. News / website releases related to Gaelic were published in both English and Gaelic during the reporting year. <p>Whinhill PS also distributes school information in both English and Gaelic.</p>
Na Meadhanan sòisealta Thèid susbaint Ghàidhlig a sgaoileadh gu cunbhalach sna meadhanan sòisealta, agus sin a rèir an uiread luchd-cleachdaidh	Social Media Gaelic content distributed regularly through social media, guided by the level of actual and potential users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green - Regular tweets are issued by the school and nursery in both languages. The Council's Corporate Communications service will also retweet and re-

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims	Status
Gàidhlig a th' ann agus a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann.		post Gaelic content.
An Làrach-lìn Bu chòir susbaint Ghàidhlig a bhith ri faotainn air làrach-lìn an ùghdarrais phoblaich, agus prìomhachas ga thoirt do na duilleagan a dh'fhaodadh an àireamh as motha de dhaoine a tharraing.	Website Gaelic content should be available on the public authority's website, with emphasis given to the pages with the highest potential reach.	● Amber - The council's website includes dedicated pages on the Gaelic Language Plan and Gaelic Medium Education as well as a number of related links to Gaelic related information. It is recognised that there is scope to increase the level and range of information on the Council's website.
Foillsichidhean Corporra Thèid an ullachadh ann an Gàidhlig is Beurla, agus prìomhachas ga thoirt don fheadhainn a dh'fhaodadh an àireamh as motha de dhaoine a leughadh.	Corporate Publications Produced in Gaelic and English, with priority given to those with the highest potential reach.	● Amber -Due to budget pressures the Council does not publish corporate documents in both languages at present, however if requested documents will be translated into other formats.
Tairbhe a' Chànain Bidh pròiseas ann gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig a gheibhear san fhiosrachadh chorporra uile aig deagh ìre agus gun gabh a tuigsinn	Language Utility A process is in place to ensure that the quality and accessibility of Gaelic language in all corporate information is high.	● Green - The Council uses an independent Gaelic translation service which includes translation, independent proofreading and checking of proofs prior to its inclusion in all corporate information.
Taisbeanaidhean Bu chòir beachdachadh gu cunbhalach air cothroman gus taisbeanaidhean poblach a shealltainn gu dà-chànanach no ann an Gàidhlig, le prìomhachas ga thoirt don fheadhainn a dh'fhaodadh a' bhuidh as motha a thoirt air cùisean.	Exhibitions Opportunities to deliver public exhibitions bilingually or in Gaelic should be explored on a regular basis, with priority given to those with the highest potential impact.	● Amber - Again, due to budget pressures the Council does not host public exhibitions in both languages however a commitment is given in the new GLP to explore options for bilingual text/ signage for new exhibitions. This will likely be dependent on successful bids for external funding.
Luchd-obrach	Staff	
Sgrùdadh air sgilean Thèid sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air sgilean Gàidhlig an luchd-obrach agus na feumalachdan trèanaidh aca a thaobh Gàidhlig rè ùine gach	Internal audit Conduct an internal audit of Gaelic skills and training needs through the life of each plan.	● Green - An internal audit of skills was carried out in 2021 via a voluntary survey. The Council received 120 responses, approx. 3% of all employees. The audit

Appendix 1: Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022/23

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims	Status
plana.		informed the new Gaelic Language Plan.
Fiosrachadh Inntigidh Bidh fiosrachadh mu Phlana Gàidhlig an ùghdarrais phoblaich mar phàirt den fhiosrachadh inntigidh a gheibh luchd-obrach ùr.	Induction Knowledge of the public authority's Gaelic language plan included in new staff inductions	● Green - The Gaelic Language Plan is included in the mandatory 'Policies' section of the Council's induction course.
Trèanadh cànan Thèid cothroman trèanaidh is leasachaidh airson sgilean Gàidhlig a thabhann don luchd-obrach, gu h-àraidh mar thaic do bhith a' coileanadh Plana Gàidhlig an ùghdarrais phoblaich.	Language training Gaelic language skills training and development offered to staff, particularly in relation to implementing the public authority's Gaelic language plan.	● Green - Where the Council is aware of training opportunities in relation to Gaelic language skills these are advertised to employees by both the HR&OD and Corporate Communications Service.
Trèanadh le Fiosrachadh mun Ghàidhlig Trèanadh le fiosrachadh mun Ghàidhlig, le prìomhachas air luchd-obrach aig àrd ìre, luchd co-dhùnaidh eile agus luchd-obrach air a bheil dleastanas a bhith a' conaltradh leis a' mhòr-shluagh.	Awareness training Gaelic awareness training offered, with priority given to senior staff, other key decision makers and staff dealing directly with the public.	● Red - Training opportunities (as described above) are publicised to all employees, however Gaelic awareness training sessions are not carried out separate to this. As this would require to be externally sourced, the cost of delivering this is currently a barrier.
Fastadh A' toirt aithne do is a' cur sùim ann an sgilean Gàidhlig an lùib nam pròiseasan fastaidh air feadh an ùghdarrais phoblaich.	Recruitment Recognising and respecting Gaelic skills within the recruitment process throughout the authority	● Amber - Gaelic is only be specified in the job / person description where the role has a specific Gaelic function associated with it.
Fastadh Bidh Gàidhlig air a h-ainmeachadh mar sgil riatanach agus / no a tha na buannachd ann an tuairisgeulan obrach gus cuideachadh le bhith a' cur a' Phlana Ghàidhlig an gnìomh agus a rèir an stiùiridh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig airson luchd-obrach fhasadh.	Recruitment Gaelic named as an essential and / or desirable skill in job descriptions in order to deliver the Gaelic language plan and in accordance with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig recruitment advice.	● Green - The Council ensures that Gaelic is specified as an essential skill in all Gaelic related posts.

Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra	Corporate Service Aims	Status		
<p>Fastadh Bidh sanasan-obrach dà-chànanach ann no ann an Gàidhlig a-mhàin airson a h-uile dreuchd far a bheil Gàidhlig na sgil riatanach.</p>	<p>Recruitment Bilingual or Gaelic only job adverts for all posts where Gaelic is an essential skill.</p>	<p>● Red - Vacant posts are currently advertised in English only</p>		
<p>Corpas na Gàidhlig</p>		<p>Gaelic Language Corpus</p>		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> <div style="width: 33%; background-color: #90ee90;"></div> <div style="width: 33%; background-color: #ffd700;"></div> <div style="width: 33%; background-color: #ff0000;"></div> </div>
<p>Gnàthachas Litreachaidh na Gàidhlig Thèid cumail ris an tionndadh as ùire de Ghnàthachas Litreachaidh na Gàidhlig anns na stuthan sgrìobhaidh uile a thèid fhoillseachadh leis an ùghdarras phoblach.</p>	<p>Gaelic Orthographic Conventions The most recent Gaelic Orthographic Conventions will be followed in relation to all written materials produced by the public authority.</p>	<p>● Green - This is adhered to in our Gaelic communications</p>		
<p>Ainmean-àite Iarrar agus gabhar ri comhairle bho Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba air ainmean-àite Gàidhlig.</p>	<p>Place names Gaelic place name advice from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba is sought and used.</p>	<p>● Amber - Gaelic place names appear on signage to the main towns in Inverclyde as well as in and around Whinhill PS. There is limited usage of Gaelic place names outwith this however it will be considered as part of ongoing signage replacement and advice sought from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba, cost permitting.</p>		

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 At its meeting held on 21st March 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the development of Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans to replace the Corporate Directorate and Improvement Plans. The new model aligns each Plan to its respective Committee as shown below:

Plan Name	Scope	Reporting to:
Environment and Regeneration Delivery and Improvement Plan	Roads and Environment Regeneration, Planning and Public Protection Property Services	Environment and Regeneration Committee
Education and Communities Delivery and Improvement Plan	Education Services Communities and Educational Resources	Education and Communities Committee
Policy and Resources Delivery and Improvement Plan	Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services Finance Organisational Development, Policy and Communications	Policy and Resources Committee

3.2 The Policy and Resources Committee Plan 2023/26 is attached as Appendix 1 for the consideration and approval of this Committee. The Action Plan has been developed taking account of:

- Actions derived from the Council Plan strategic priorities, cascaded to individual Directorates / services;
- Corporate self-evaluation improvement actions;
- Priorities relating to areas of strategic service delivery;
- Improvement actions from External Audit Reports; and
- Improvement actions arising from Service Review.

3.3 The Committee Plan is structured under the headings of People, Place and Performance. This is consistent with the new Council Plan approach. It aims to be simpler and more outcome focussed than the previous CDIP, setting out clearly what will be delivered and how, what the difference will be and the linkages to the Council Plan.

3.4 Progress reports on the actions will be brought to every second meeting of this Committee. Some of the performance indicators will have updates available over the course of the year and these will be reported six monthly. Other performance indicator data will be presented annually to the Committee. The Committee will also receive a number of annual reports on a range of thematic work related to its remit. These are listed in the Committee Plan.

3.5 The key risks relevant to the Committee are contained within the Committee Plan. Updates against the areas of highest risk will be provided to the Committee six monthly.

3.6 Related to this, Committee Plans for Environment and Regeneration and Education and Communities have been received by their respective Committee.

3.7 The Committee Plans will be refreshed and updated annually with new actions added and completed actions removed over their three-year lifespan. As this is the first iteration of the Plans, the improvement actions and PIs may be subject to further refinement as we move forward.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Committee is asked to approve the Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26.

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 additional costs that have not been budgeted for within this Plan.

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 associated with this report, whilst the key Committee risks are highlighted within the Plan.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

5.5 Strategic

The Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan directly supports the new Council Plan 2023/28 and is closely aligned to the delivery of the Council Plan outcomes.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team have considered and support the Plan's actions, performance measures/targets and key risks identified.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1

Policy and Resources

COMMITTEE DELIVERY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/26

APRIL 2023

Inverclyde
council

Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26

In April 2023, following a public consultation on local priorities, Inverclyde Council committed to the delivery of a new, ambitious Council Plan 2023/28. The Council Plan established a number of priorities for the Council.

Theme 1: PEOPLE

- Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education;
- Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced;
- People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing;
- More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions; and
- Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported.

Theme 2: PLACE

- Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable
- Our strategic housing function is robust;
- Our economy and skills base are developed;
- We have a sufficient supply of business premises; and
- Our natural environment is protected.

Theme 3: PERFORMANCE

- High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money; and
- Our employees are supported and developed.

This Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan is the result of a detailed assessment of how the 'enabling' Services, which support all areas of Council activity, can effectively support the delivery of the Council priorities and Best Value.

This Plan encompasses the Organisational Development, Policy and Communications Service, Finance Service and Legal and Democratic, Digital and Customer Services which deliver the key functions of:

Organisational Development, Policy and Communications	Organisational Development, Human Resources, Employee Development, Corporate Health and Safety, Payroll, Workforce Planning, Corporate Communications, Corporate Policy, Performance Management, Community Planning, Corporate Equalities
Finance Service	Strategic Finance, Directorate Finance and Accountancy, Budgeting, Statutory Group Accounts, Creditors, Insurance, Treasury Management, Council Tax Services, Revenues, Debt Recovery, Housing Benefits, Scottish Welfare Fund
Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services	Legal Service, Administration, Licensing, Litigation, Contracts & Conveyancing, Courts, Members Services and Support, Committee support, Community Council liaison, Election Management, Information Governance, Customer Services, Customer Contact Service, ICT Strategy, Operation and Support, Modernisation, Registration Services, Internal Audit, Risk Management

The Delivery and Improvement Plan sets out how the Council Plan priorities will be delivered via the implementation of the following workstreams:

Delivery and Improvement Plan

PEOPLE

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to Council Plan
1	A new Partnership Plan 2023/33 for the Inverclyde Alliance will be implemented, underpinned by an effective governance, delivery and reporting framework.	<p>Development of Partnership Action Plans and PIs.</p> <p>Further develop the Locality Planning model for Inverclyde, linked to the Community Council review</p> <p>Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications</p>	<p>31/10/23</p> <p>31/03/24</p>	Partnership working brings renewed added value and all partners are committed to the delivery of Alliance priorities and improved outcomes.	All outcomes within the Council Plan
2	A new Council Plan 2023/28, supported by Committee Delivery Improvement Plans, will be embedded across the Council.	<p>Council Plan submitted to The Inverclyde Council for approval.</p> <p>Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans are approved by their respective Committee.</p> <p>Development of Service Plans for each Head of Service to support the Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans.</p> <p>Review of the new performance management arrangements with Corporate Management Team.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications</p>	<p>20/04/23</p> <p>31/05/23</p> <p>31/10/23</p> <p>31/03/24</p>	The strategic planning framework is strengthened, with evidence of a strong 'Golden Thread', supporting the delivery of the Council's priorities and improved outcomes.	All outcomes within the Council Plan

PLACE

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to Council Plan
1	Local policies introduced in relation to both non-domestic rates empty property relief scheme and 2 nd Homes Council Tax levy.	<p>Development of a local Non-Domestic Rate Empty Relief Policy.</p> <p>Policy implementation from April 2024</p> <p>Development of a 2nd Homes Council tax levy Policy</p> <p>Policy Implementation from April 2024</p> <p>Lead Officer: Chief Financial Officer</p>	<p>30/09/23</p> <p>01/04/24</p> <p>30/9/23</p> <p>01/04/24</p>	<p>Reduced number of vacant business properties and local business needs are better met.</p> <p>A policy which reflects the balance between attracting people to stay within Inverclyde and ensuring availability of properties for local residents.</p>	<p>Our economy & skills base are developed</p> <p>Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable</p>
2	The Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils will be updated and adopted, with those Community Councils formed following elections.	<p>Drafting of, and engagement on, new Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils, including with residents, Community Councils and Elected Members.</p> <p>Adoption of new Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils.</p> <p>Elections held for Community Councils.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services</p>	<p>14/11/23</p> <p>14/11/23</p> <p>14/12/23</p>	<p>Community Councils in Inverclyde will be refreshed with all Community Councils being formed and active in their communities, helping support delivery of the Council Plan and the Partnership Plan.</p>	<p>Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable</p>
3	A new Alcohol Licensing Policy Statement will be adopted by Inverclyde Licensing Board.	<p>Drafting of, and engagement on, new Alcohol Licensing Policy Statement, including with residents, Inverclyde Licensing Forum, Inverclyde Licensing Board, Police Scotland and NHS/ADP.</p>	<p>30/11/23</p>	<p>Alcohol licensing in Inverclyde will be governed by a refreshed strategic policy statement that consider the statutory licensing objectives, including (i) preventing crime and disorder and (ii)</p>	<p>Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable</p>

What will be delivered?	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to Council Plan
	Adoption by Inverclyde Licensing Board of new Alcohol Licensing Policy Statement. Lead Officer: Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services	30/11/23	protecting and improving public health.	

PERFORMANCE

	What will be delivered?	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to Council Plan
1	The skills required to deliver key corporate initiatives will be supported via the implementation of the final year of the People and Organisational Development (POD) Strategy 2020/23 and development of a new Strategy 2024/26.	Implementation of ongoing Action Plan (2023) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching & Mentoring Scheme • Achievement of Equally Safe Accreditation • Updated performance appraisal process In consultation with key stakeholders, identify and develop new initiatives for the POD 2024/26. Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications	31/12/23 31/07/23 30/09/23 31/03/24	Workforce planning and management of change is facilitated by the effective use of employees. Employees will be supported with improved skills and knowledge to deliver corporate initiatives.	Our employees are supported and developed
2	A multi-year budget for Inverclyde Council will be approved.	Development of the Revenue Budget for the period 2024/26. Development of the Capital Budget 2024/27. Lead Officer: Chief Financial Officer	31/03/24	There is greater certainty around Council finances, allowing services to plan more effectively.	High quality and innovative services, giving value for money

	What will be delivered?	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to Council Plan
3	The approach to asset accounting and reporting will be strengthened.	<p>Revaluation of Heritage assets in line with Audit Action</p> <p>Compliance with IFRS 16 Embedded cyclical revaluations and indexations in line with audit requirements</p> <p>Lead Officer: Chief Financial Officer</p>	<p>30/06/24</p> <p>30/06/24 30/09/23</p>	<p>The Council's heritage asset valuations are up to date</p> <p>Asset accounting records comply with latest accounting standards</p>	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money
4	Modernisation of Council.	<p>Have 4 Digital Modernisation projects approved by the DMPB/P&R and implemented.</p> <p>Continue delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy to deliver better services for customers and citizens, including through Channel Shift.</p> <p>Continue delivery of the Council's ICT Strategy to support the changing face of the Council, including through progression of migration towards a cloud-based service including a hybrid telephony solution.</p> <p>Progress on the above to be reported to P&R every second cycle.</p> <p>Refresh the Council's Digital Strategy and ICT Strategy, to be adopted by P&R during 2024.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Chief Executive</p>	<p>31/03/24</p> <p>31/03/24</p> <p>31/03/24</p> <p>31/10/2024</p>	<p>Efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's services is improved along with improved customer/citizen experiences.</p> <p>New and more flexible ways of working is supported and improved information governance compliance.</p> <p>Rationalisation building, reduce buildings.</p>	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money

What will be delivered?	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to Council Plan	
		Implement New Ways of Working Phase 2, including a review of operational properties to ascertain the potential for further estate rationalisation. Lead Officer: Director, Environment and Regeneration	31/03/26		

Annual Reports

The following reports will be submitted to Committee on an annual basis.

- Equalities Mainstreaming Report
- Annual Report & Accounts
- Treasury Annual Report
- Governance of External Organisations
- FOI Annual Report
- Complaints Annual Report
- RIPSAs Annual Report
- Data Protection Annual Report
- Workforce Information Activity Annual Report
- People & Organisation Development Annual Report
- Employee Survey Plan (3 yearly)
- Equality Mainstreaming Report 2023, Equality Outcomes 2021/25 and the Equal Pay Statement 2023 (every two years)

Policy and Resources Key Performance Indicators

Services will monitor the performance of these key performance indicators over the lifetime of the Plan. Depending on the data source, new performance data will be provided to the Committee on an annual or six-monthly basis. This reflects that national data tends to be published annually.

Performance data for the following measures will be provided to the Committee annually (with the exception of the PIs where the data is sourced from the Employee Survey).

Key Performance Measures	Performance				Target	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
Total useable reserves as a % of Council annual budgeted income (LGBF)	24.2%	26.9%	23.7%	TBC – May P&R	27.0%	2021/22 Scottish average 24.4% Family group average 26.9%	Annual
Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of annual budgeted net revenue (LGBF)	2.8%	2.5%	2.3%	TBC -May P&R	2.0%	2021/22 Scottish average: 3.5% Family group average: 2.5%	Annual
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (LGBF)	12.6%	12.3%	10.2%	10.6%#	9.55%	2021/22 Scottish average: 5.9% Family group average: 5.3% # Projection March 2023	Annual
Actual outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure	98.8%	98.7%	99.4%	TBC -May P&R	99.5%	2021/22 Scottish average: 98.3% Family group average: 98.2%	Annual

Key Performance Measures	Performance				Target 2023/24	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23			
Percentage of completed appraisals	92%	N/A	92%	94%	95%	The 2021/22 PI covers an 18 month period due to the impact of Covid.	Annual
Gender pay gap (LGBF)	7.52%	7.39%	6.6%	Available August 2023	6.0%	2021/22: Scottish average: 3.5% Family Group average: 2.7%	Annual
Percentage of the population with an active Community Council	62.95%	62.95%	62.95%	62.95%	100%	Figures based upon 2018 population figures. Target is for after the 2023/24 community council elections	Annual
% of employees that said they are aware of the Council Plan	45%	Survey not conducted	Survey not conducted	46%	N/A	No comparable benchmarking data	Currently every 3 years, however to deliver more timeous data, options to move to 2 years will be explored.
% of employees that said they are aware of the LOIP / Partnership Plan	47%	Survey not conducted	Survey not conducted	48%	N/A		

Performance data for the following measures will be provided to the Committee every six months

Key Performance Measures	Performance				Target 2023/24	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23			
Council Tax in year collection level	95.4%	94.4%	95.5%	95.9% *	95%	* Draft out-turn subject to audit	Six monthly

Key Performance Measures	Performance				Target	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	96.2%	96.84%	95.5%	96% **	95.5%	**Position as at 28/02/23	Six monthly
Sickness absence (total number of FTE days lost)	9.2 days	6.9 days	8.3 days	11.1days***	9 days	***Based on quarterly data, provisional data Will be subject to further checks and reported in the WIAR.	Six monthly
Employee turnover	9.42%	7.17%	10.09%	11.6%****	10%	****Provisional data. Will be subject to further checks and reported in the WIAR.	Six monthly
Corporate Training Courses Attended	499	110	211	549	500	Data relates to Council provided courses and attendance is voluntary. Target reflects that 2022/23 performance may include a temporary increase following pandemic recovery.	Six monthly
Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (Socitm) accessibility score (Council website)	-	March 2021 87 (good)	March 2022 90 (excellent)	March 2023 94 (excellent)	March 2024 95 (excellent)		Six monthly
% of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests that were responded to within statutory timescales	2019 91%	2020 80%	2021 80%	2022 91%	2023 92%	Full year data is reported annually to P&R Committee	Six monthly
Number of complaints received per 1,000 population	5.0	3.5	4.1	4#	4	# Provisional data. Full year is reported annually to P&R Committee	Six monthly

Classification : Official

Key Performance Measures	Performance				Target	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
The number of data breaches notified to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	3	2	3	2	2	Full year data is reported annually to P&R Committee	Six monthly
Percentage of transactions dealt with through the Council's Customer Service Centre portal that are digital	2019 14%	2020 65%	2021 66%	2022 71%	2023 75%		Six monthly
Number of RIDDOR incidents (Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations 2013) per 100,000 employees	581	651	281	290	240	* While a target of zero RIDDOR incidents is the aim, this can encourage nonreporting of incidents which can result in failure to meet our legal requirement to report	Six monthly

Policy and Resources Risk Management

Risk management is an integral part of corporate governance and sound management. The effective identification, assessment and management of risk is key to helping Inverclyde Council be successful in delivering its objectives, whilst protecting the interests of their stakeholders.

The highest risks to the Committee are:

Risk No	*Description of RISK Concern (x,y,z)	IMPACT Rating (A)	L'HOOD Rating (B)	Quartile	Risk Score (A*B)	Change in Score	Current Controls	Who is Responsible? (name or title)	Additional Controls/Mitigating Actions & Time Frames with End Dates	Review Date
Corporate Finance Service (incorporating cross service risks)										
1	<p>Financial Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity to provide services to other Council services in the face of current and ongoing cuts to budgets: - Further reductions in staff in service delivery areas will result in an impact to length of time for work completion to increase. - Increased likelihood that deadlines will be missed with resultant reputational damage and potential regulatory sanctions 	4	4	1	16	No Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying extra income taking out unnecessary work and ensuring operational continuity; - Increased cross training and reliance on technology; - Review working process and look at what we need to do against what is expected; - Regular workload/ performance monitoring - Implement Workforce Development Planning; - Prioritisation of modernisation projects. - Use of Graduate Training and employment schemes 	Chief Executive / Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early warning system operated within the services to flag to relevant senior officers where deadlines may be missed and focus is required; - Cross Directorate working to improve capacity; - Prioritisation of the strategic priorities as outlined in the Committee Plan - Flag to CMT if unable to meet timescales or requests due to capacity 	Dec-23

Risk No	*Description of RISK Concern (x,y,z)	IMPACT Rating (A)	L'HOOD Rating (B)	Quartile	Risk Score (A*B)	Change in Score	Current Controls	Who is Responsible? (name or title)	Additional Controls/Mitigating Actions & Time Frames with End Dates	Review Date
2	People Risk Recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced staff	4	4	1	16	No change	<p>Developing a programme of Grow our Own whilst making Inverclyde an attractive place to work.</p> <p>Use of graduate training schemes.</p> <p>Use of modern apprenticeship training schemes.</p>	Director / Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refreshed recruitment process - High quality support to staff through HR policies and line management support outlined in the People and Organisational Development Strategy - Reductions in the use of temporary posts - Incentives to support commitment to employee development 	Dec'23
3	Partnership Risk The risk that we do not get the assurance from our partners that is required or that a major partner "fails" (Partnership/Access)	3	4	3	12	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular Financial governance reviews and report on its effectiveness. - Major partnership board presence; - Regular meetings formal and informal; Papers; Briefings - Annual reports to relevant Strategic Committee - Annual Review reported to Committee - Financial checks reviewed as part of review of Governance review. 	Chief Financial Officer/CMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlight concerns at an early stage to CMT and relevant Directors. - Support Directors at Governance meeting. 	Dec-23



Requires Active Management

High impact/high likelihood: risk requires active management to manage down and maintain exposure at an acceptable level.

Classification : Official

Contingency Plans

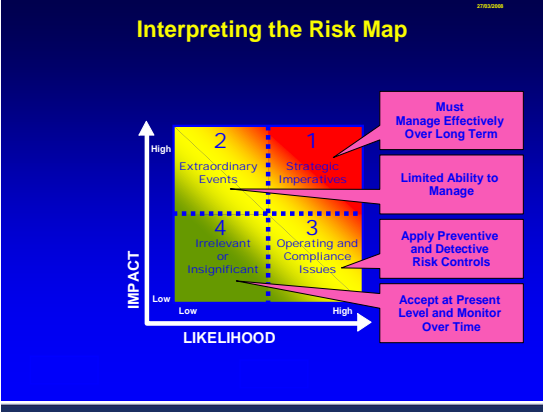
A robust contingency plan may suffice together with early warning mechanisms to detect any deviation from plan.

Good Housekeeping

May require some risk mitigation to reduce likelihood if this can be done cost effectively, but good housekeeping to ensure the impact remains low should be adequate. Reassess frequently to ensure conditions remain the same.

Review Periodically

Risks are unlikely to require mitigating actions but status should be reviewed frequently to ensure conditions have not changed.



Monitoring and Reporting

Inverclyde Council is committed to ensuring that accountability, transparency and openness is embedded throughout the organisation and in our public performance reporting.

Progress on the delivery of this Plan will be monitored using the Council's performance management system, Pentana, which allows us to track the progress of each action and review the overall progress that is being made in the delivery of the Council Plan priorities. Progress reports will be scrutinised at every second Committee meeting and published on the Council's website for the public.

These reports and a range of other performance information will be published will be available here: <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/performance>

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/26/23/AP/AE
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712223
Subject:	Reserves Policy - Triennial Review		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of the report is to seek Committee approval for the revised Reserves Policy last reviewed in September 2019.

1.3 The Reserves Policy (Appendix 1) covers 4 main areas:

- a) The statutory parameters and Professional Guidance underpinning the Reserves Policy.
- b) The type of reserves operated by the Council.
- c) The governance of the various funds and reserves.
- d) The arrangements for reporting and review.

1.4 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the movement in the Councils Useable Reserves covering the ten year period 31st March 2013 to 31st March 2022. The Reserves position as at 31 March, 2023 will be finalised as part of the 2022/23 Annual Accounts. In addition, the recent Service Concession accounting decision will have a significant impact upon the level of Useable reserves in 2023/24.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the revised Reserves Policy attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee note the movement in the Councils Reserves over 2013/22 as set out in Appendix 2.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee agreed to review the Council's Reserves Policy every 3 years with the last review undertaken in September 2019. The impact on Council business caused by Covid-19 has resulted in a nine month delay in the planned 2022 review.
- 3.2 The Council's Reserves Policy draws heavily on CIPFA Bulletin 13- Local Authority Reserves and Balances which superseded LAAP Bulletin 99 in March,2023. In addition, Local Authority (Scotland) Accounting Advisory Committee (LASAAC), have issued mandatory guidance, "The Statutory Basis for Accounting for and Disclosing Reserves" which the Council is required to follow.
- 3.3 Bulletin 13 states "CIPFA considers that local authorities should establish reserves and determine the level of those reserves based on the advice of their Chief Financial Officer. Authorities should make their own judgements on such matters taking into account all the relevant local circumstances. A well-managed authority for example with a prudent approach to budgeting should be able to operate with a level of General Reserves appropriate for the risks (both internal and external) to which it is exposed".
- 3.4 Bulletin 13 also confirms that for statutory purposes there is a single reserve, the General Fund Balance however this can have sub-reserves for 4 purposes in Scotland:
 - A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cashflows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing
 - A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies
 - Earmarked Reserves to meet known or predicted requirements (the bulletin gives examples of these)
 - Statutory Reserves (Insurance Fund, Capital Fund and Repairs & Renewals Fund)
- 3.5 The CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) published in 2019 was designed to support good practice in Local Authorities in their financial management and in demonstrating financial sustainability. The FM Code Self-Assessment of the Council's approach to financial management was presented and approved by Policy and Resources Committee January 2023. The Reserves Policy is a key document in assisting the Council with complying to the FM Code.
- 3.6 In January 2023, Policy & Resources Committee approved an accounting change in relation to Service Concession Flexibility. Approval was granted to write off the capital element of the schools PPP investment over a 45 year period. This change in accounting treatment will generate a non cash reserves balance in 2023/24 of £14.748 million. The application of the additional reserves generated has been considered as part of the 2023/24 Budget setting process.
- 3.7 Appendix 1 provides the revised Reserves Policy, the policy has been updated in line with the recently published CIPFA Bulletin 13 – Local Authority Reserves and Balances, only minor changes were required as a result.
- 3.8 Appendix 2 attached illustrates the free reserves, earmarked reserves and statutory reserves position covering March 2013 to March 2022. As can be seen from the appendix, the overall reserves position started to decline from March 2017 mainly due to the removal of the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) reserves from the Authority's Accounts. The March 2022 overall reserves position was 20% less than reserves held in March 2017. It should be noted that the free reserves position at 31 March 2022 was below the recommended balance of £4m, this however has been rectified during 2022/23.

3.9 It should be noted, the Reserves balances in Appendix 2 exclude Integrated Joint Board (IJB) reserves. These are held by the IJB and not covered by the Council's Reserve Policy or reported in the Council's accounts.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Aside from the move from LAAP99 to CIPFA Bulletin 13 there are no material changes proposed to the Council's Reserves Policy.

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

There are no financial implications arising from the proposals in this report however, the level and use of reserves is one of the key strategic finance decisions required by the Council.

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

Aside from the need to comply with statutory and regulatory requirements there are no legal issues arising from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no Human Resources implications from this report.

5.5 Strategic

Reserves help support a number of the strategic objectives of the Council and as such the policy forms a key part of the consideration of the Council's Budget.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The proposed policy is supported by the Corporate Management Team.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 CIPFA Bulletin 13 – Local Authority Reserves and Balances

Reserves Policy

April 2023

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is requirement as good financial practice that the Council has a documented and approved Financial Reserve Policy.
- 1.2 CIPFA Bulletin 13 published in March 2023 provides advice in respect of Local Authority Reserves and Balances.
- 1.3 The following Policy reflects the key messages from the CIPFA Bulletin and outlines the practical application within Inverclyde Council.

2.0 CIPFA Bulletin 13 – Main Messages

- 2.1 In Scotland there are explicit statutory powers under Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 permitting Local Authorities to establish a Renewal and Repair Fund, an Insurance Fund and Capital Fund alongside a requirement to maintain a General Fund Reserve.
- 2.2 Within the General Fund Reserve, Scottish Local Authorities are allowed to earmark specific parts for specific purposes.
- 2.3 It is the duty of the Chief Financial Officer to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves as part of his statutory duty. This requirement also needs to take account of the requirements of CIPFA's Prudential Code in respect of affordability when making recommendations about the Council's future Capital Programme.
- 2.4 The CIPFA Bulletin makes it clear it is not the responsibility of External Auditors to prescribe the optimum or minimum level of reserves for individual authorities or authorities in general. It is the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer to advise the Local Authority about the level of reserves they should hold and ensure clear protocols are in place for the establishment and use of reserves.
- 2.5 It is the Chief Financial Officer's responsibility to assess the appropriate level of reserves and ensure the reserves are not only adequate but necessary. In order to assess the adequacy of reserves, the Chief Financial Officer will consider strategic, operational, and financial risks facing the Authority when setting the budget.
- 2.6 Whilst not prescribing a generally acceptable minimal level of reserves the CIPFA Bulletin makes it clear that reserves should not be held without a clear purpose. This purpose however does include "a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies".
- 2.7 Over and above the resource backed reserves outlined in paragraph 2.1 there are other reserves which are not resource backed which appear in the annual accounts.
- 2.8 In the case of Earmarked Reserves then there should be a clear protocol setting out the purpose of the reserve, how and when the reserve can be used and a process for review of the reserve to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy. The protocol for Inverclyde Council is shown in Annex 1.
- 2.9 The CIPFA Bulletin concludes that "it is not normally prudent for reserves to be deployed to Finance recurrent expenditure" and "where such action is taken it should be made explicit and an explanation given as to how such expenditure will be funded in the medium to long term"

3.0 Types of Reserves Operated by Inverclyde Council

3.1 General Fund Reserve

The General Fund Reserve can be held for four main purposes:

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid temporary borrowing.
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.
- Earmarked reserves to meet known or predicted requirements.
- Reserves covered by Statute

The Local Authority General Fund Reserve is split into a non Earmarked portion and Earmarked Reserves. The former is often referred to as the “Free Reserve” and it is held for unforeseen emergencies and contingencies. Council policy is that Free Reserves should not be lower than 2% of annual turnover where turnover is defined as General Revenue Grant Income and Council Tax Budgeted Income. Earmarked Reserves are sums of money retained for specific purposes.

Paragraphs 3.2-3.4 provide further information on the 3 specific Reserves permitted by statute.

3.2 Repairs and Renewals Fund

The Repairs and Renewals Fund contains funds which have been set aside for specific maintenance purposes sometimes arising from a commuted sum given to the Council as part of an asset transfer deal. Such cases include the Council taking on the maintenance of Greenock Cut, the Railway Bridge at Inverkip, the maintenance of some landscaping areas adjacent to the A8 in Port Glasgow Town Centre, investment in all-weather pitches and the former Housing Repairs and Renewals Fund which has been set aside to meet unavoidable contamination costs on former HRA sites.

3.3 Capital Fund

A Capital Fund receives income arising from the sale of Capital assets and can be used to incur Capital expenditure or assist meeting the principal repayments of loans charges.

3.4 Insurance Fund

The Council maintains an Insurance Fund as income and expenditure in relation to Insurance claims does not fall evenly on an annual basis. Given the long term nature of some Insurance claims then it is important that the Council has an appropriate balance to meet these claims some of which could relate to events which happened decades ago. The Council receives advice on the appropriate level of Insurance Fund via a triennial actuarial valuation.

3.5 Integrated Joint Board

Following the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act 2014 the Council no longer accounts for Social Work reserves and these no longer appear in the Council’s Annual Accounts. Decisions in respect of the use of these reserves will be taken by the Integration Joint Board.

4.0 Governance of Reserves

4.1 It is important that there is clarity on the rules and responsibilities in respect of governance of the Council’s Funds and Reserves. Taking each in turn then the governance arrangements are:-

- a) General Fund Reserve -
 - i. Level of Free Reserves agreed as part of the Reserve Policy and reviewed no less frequently than 3 yearly by the Policy & Resources Committee.
 - ii. Projected Balance of Free Reserves reported to each cycle of the Policy & Resources Committee.
 - iii. Reported six monthly to the full Council as part of the review of the Finance Strategy.
 - iv. Decisions on the use of Free Reserves will be undertaken during the annual Revenue Budget setting process.

- b) Earmarked Reserves –
 - i. Creation of Earmarked Reserves approved as part of the annual Revenue Budget setting process. Outwith the Budget process the creation of an Earmarked Reserve requires the approval of the relevant Service Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee.
 - ii. Update in respect of Earmarked Reserves given to each Service Committee.
 - iii. Update in respect of Earmarked Reserves reported each reporting cycle to the Corporate Management Team.
 - iv. Management of Earmarked Reserves covered by a Guidance Note (See Annex 1)

- c) Repairs and Renewal Fund –
 - i. New liabilities to the Repairs and Renewal Fund require Policy & Resources approval.
 - ii. Budgets can be allocated to Services from the Fund as part of the budget process and monitored via the normal budget monitoring process.
 - iii. Update in respect of the Repairs and Renewal Fund provided as part of the six monthly review of the Finance Strategy.

- d) Capital Fund –
 - i. All receipts from sales of assets are paid into the Capital Fund unless otherwise approved by the Policy & Resources Committee.
 - ii. Decisions to utilise the Capital Fund approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - iii. Capital Fund update reported as part of the Finance Strategy on a six monthly basis.

- e) Insurance Fund –
 - i. Insurance Fund Balance reviewed and reported as part of the Annual Accounts.
 - ii. Annual report in respect of the Insurance Fund reported to the Policy & Resources Committee.
 - iii. Outcome of the triennial actuarial review is reported to the Policy & Resources Committee.
 - iv. An Insurance Fund update reported as part of the Finance Strategy on a six monthly basis.

5.0 Reporting & Review

- 5.1 The Reserve Policy requires to be reviewed and approved no less frequently than three yearly and by the Policy & Resources Committee.

- 5.2 In the event that the Council's Non-earmarked General Fund Reserve fall below the 2% level, then the Chief Financial Officer should report no later than the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee explaining the reasons for this shortfall and the options available to rectify the situation.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer
April 2023

Earmarked Reserves Protocol

1/ Earmarked Reserve (EMR) establishment

- a) The usual vehicle for taking decisions around EMRs is the Budget and officers should therefore ensure that requests to establish an EMR outwith this process are by exception. In every case which uses this exception route the establishment of the EMR will require a report to Corporate Management Team, then a report to the Service Committee and final approval by the Policy & Resources Committee.

2/ Supporting Documentation

- a) For each EMR a standard pro forma requires to be completed outlining the detail of what the EMR is required for plus the amount requested, expected outcomes, milestones, phasing and areas of spend. The completed pro forma will require to be approved by the relevant Corporate Director and Finance Manager.
- b) The same process will be required for the carry forward of any year end balances where an EMR covers more than one year.

3/ Managing Delivery & Spend

- a) When establishing an EMR and each year thereafter, monthly phasing of spend will require to be agreed with Finance Services. Performance against this phasing will be reported to CMT/Committee each Committee cycle.
- b) In order to avoid the carry forward of immaterial sums and to minimise the number of EMRs in existence at any one time, any EMR with an uncommitted sum of less than £20,000 at the end of the financial year will be closed and the balance written back to the General Fund. In the event there is residual spend in the next financial year then this will require to be contained by the Committee.

Movement in Council Reserves -2013-2022

	Total	Non Earmarked	EMR	Statutory
<u>Position at:</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
31.3.22	48.067	3.719	35.390	8.958
31.3.21	53.362	4.890	39.087	9.385
31.3.20	46.671	5.305	32.678	8.688
31.3.19	44.945	5.199	29.669	10.077
31.3.18	53.995	6.665	36.621	10.709
31.3.17	60.774	6.481	44.743	9.550
31.3.16	58.831	8.783	40.297	9.751
31.3.15	54.400	4.988	40.003	9.409
31.3.14	50.834	4.793	38.097	7.944
31.3.13	52.916	5.540	39.713	7.663

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 coordinate 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.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Report No:	HR/04/23/SM
Contact Officer:	Steven McNab	Contact No:	01475 712015
Subject:	Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention		

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 recent initiatives to support employee recruitment and retention and seek agreement to progress a number of related projects and proposals.

1.3 There are currently significant recruitment and retention concerns in several areas which are placing additional pressure on local government workforce resources at a national and local level. It is important that actions are considered to mitigate against these issues to avoid pressures on workforce capacity and ensure the effective delivery of Council services in the future.

1.4 The Committee are asked to note the actions and initiatives currently being progressed and approve the additional work and projects outlined in Section 4 of this report and note that an update report will be presented the Committee later in the year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee:

- note the work being progressed to support employee recruitment and retention across the Council.
- note the view of the Corporate Management Team that the pilot hybrid working strategy has been successful and should be formally incorporated into the Councils wider Flexible Working Policy which is being revised and will be brought to the September Policy and Resources Committee for approval.
- Notes the creation of a working group to explore the reduction in the working week from 37 to 35 hours as outlined in section 4.2 - 4.4 of this report and that any proposals and implications will be the subject of a report later in 2023.
- Approves the allocation of £100,000 via a one-off increase to 2023/24 non-HSCP turnover target to support the recruitment and retention of final year university students.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Workforce planning and the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced employees has become a concern and is placing additional pressure on Council workforce resources. If actions are not taken to mitigate against these issues, this may lead to additional pressure being placed on workforce capacity and therefore place a risk on the effective delivery of Council services.
- 3.2 One of the key themes of the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy 2020/23 is making Inverclyde Council an "Employer of Choice" and this report updates the Committee on some of the key actions and initiatives which have been implemented and progressed to support the recruitment and retention of employees over the past couple of years.
- 3.3 All councils in Scotland are reporting similar recruitment and retention issues and all are considering how they can better support the retention of existing employees and attract new employees.
- 3.4 Members will have noted the positive results of the employee survey which were reported to the Committee in January. However, there were some areas for improvement highlighted which are being considered as part of the councils future People and Organisational Development Strategy.
- 3.5 Reports to the Corporate Management Team over the past year have highlighted the recruitment and retention difficulties across the Council amongst professional posts including Planning & Regeneration, Building Standards, Accountants, HR, and Social Workers. Other key areas where recruitment and retention difficulties have been experienced include Social Care and Homecare, Youth Workers in CLD, ICT Technicians and some Clerical/Admin positions. Many of these posts have been re-advertised at least once over the past year.
- 3.6 The latest employee cost monitoring information considered by the CMT shows that in 2022/23 the non-teaching turnover target is projected to be exceeded by over £2.0million. Whilst budget decisions by the IJB and Council increased the turnover target by £700,000 it can be seen there remains the potential for over £1.0million of excess turnover in 2023/24.
- 3.7 To address these recruitment and retention difficulties a number of actions and initiatives have been progressed which have been outlined below:
 - Recruitment Campaigns and branding work has been undertaken in HSCP Home Support. This has included hosting local recruitment events, involving trade unions, maximising social media, website and fast track recruitment days,
 - Workforce Refresh programme and the Council's Graduate Programme have been successful in attracting new employees into the Council from the local community,
 - Participation in wider recruitment events to promote jobs and careers with Inverclyde Council,
 - Through the Hybrid Working Pilot, reviewing and offering alternative working patterns to employees which continue to support individual and business needs,
 - Expansion of the Councils Modern Apprenticeship Programme and delivering employability skills training and pipelines into employment, such as work experience,

- Branded and improved recruitment packs for management positions which present the Council in an attractive manner,
- The redesign and re-evaluation of jobs making the remit and salary more attractive,
- Consideration and implementation of trainee grades for several professional posts,
- Promoting the completion of exit questionnaires so as to gather important data on reasons employees might be leaving (currently reported to committee on an annual basis),
- Improvements to employee terms and conditions including recent changes to atypical allowances paid to part time staff working additional hours. Further to approval from the Policy and resources Committee in January 2023, this change has been backdated to September 2022 under delegated authority at a cost of up to £25k. This has been contained within existing budgets.
- Continue to promote flexible retirement options for older employees which can assist staff retention and succession planning.

4.0 PROPOSALS TO FURTHER SUPPORT EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

4.1 Hybrid working

The pilot Hybrid Working Strategy has been in operation since spring 2022 and the outcome of the recent review indicates this initiative has been received positively. The review involved an analysis of feedback from the employee survey, workforce information activity reports, management and trade union engagement sessions and benchmarking with other local authorities. Retaining hybrid working as a flexible working option will present the Council in a more attractive manner when recruiting but also with the retention of existing employees. The Corporate Management Team are of the view that the pilot has been successful and should now be formally incorporated into the Councils Flexible Working Policy. It is intended that a revised Flexible Working Policy will be brought to the Policy & Resources Committee in September.

4.2 Reduction in Standard Working Week

As part of the 2021/22 national pay agreement for local government employees it was agreed that working parties would investigate and prepare reports surrounding the implications of a no detriment reduction in working hours. The pay claim for 2023/24 has been submitted and the ask is for “early completion of the review, established as part of the 2021 settlement, on how councils achieve a no detriment reduction in the working week to enable members to achieve a better work-life balance”.

4.3 The Corporate Management Team have undertaken an initial high-level scoping exercise on a potential reduction of the working week from 37 hours to 35 hours per week. After reviewing returns from Service Managers, the CMT are of the view it would be beneficial to explore this initiative further. With the exception of those employees covered by teaching conditions, where the standard working week is 35 hours, all remaining employees are covered by local government employee conditions and have a standard working week of 37 hours. Neighbouring local authorities operate a mix of 37 hours and 35 hours. A ‘no detriment’ reduction in the working

week would bring many benefits to the existing workforce and would also present the Council in a more attractive manner when recruiting for all local government posts.

4.4 At this point in time the Corporate Management Team are asking Committee to note this on-going work and that it is intended to bring a detailed report back to Committee later in 2023 clarifying any operational and financial implications.

4.5 Trainee Grades

Given the recruitment difficulties for professional posts it is proposed that further consideration is given to posts suitable for traineeships. This allows the Council to 'grow our own' which has already seen some success in posts within HR, Legal and Finance. This approach involves filling professionally graded posts with a trainee which may result in initial service delivery implications but has longer term benefits in terms of retention. The Council's HR team will continue to monitor any national local government trainee schemes which may be of benefit to the Council.

4.6 Payment of University Fees for Students

The Council's Learning and Development Policy allows existing employees time off and funding to attend appropriate college and university courses on the basis that they require to remain in the service of the Council for a period of 2 years or they will require to repay the funding they received. The IJB recently agreed a scheme whereby potential social worker employees can be supported financially through their final year at university on the basis that they join and remain with the Council for a period of three years. It is proposed that this scheme is widened to support the recruitment and retention of other professions across the Council and that an allocation from existing earmarked reserves totalling £100,000 is made available. The £100k would be used as a pilot to ascertain if by paying fees the Council could attract graduates to 'difficult to fill' posts with a 3 year pay back, similar to the HSCP scheme for social workers. As indicated in paragraph 3.5 this pilot could support relevant qualifications and assist to recruit into professions such as Planning and Regeneration, Building Standards, Accountants, HR Advisers and Environmental Health.

4.7 Review Recruitment Processes

It is important that the Council continues to look for a competitive advantage in a tight recruitment market. It is proposed that the following further actions are progressed to improve the Council's recruitment processes across the council:

- ensure the promotion of the benefits of working for the Council in recruitment adverts (e.g., secure employment, good training, flexible working / hybrid working arrangements, good pension and holidays etc.),
- Utilise social media better (facebook, twitter linkedin) with some eye catching material (other councils have highlighted some success with this approach),
- Continue to appear at job fairs where this can be resourced,
- Use of videos to promote living and working in Inverclyde,
- post out to community groups on facebook to generate local interest (currently doing this to a degree as part of workforce refresh programme),

4.8 Succession Planning

The current Succession Planning Programme was agreed by the Corporate Management Team in June 2017 and rolled out to all relevant employees in October 2017. There are several

activities and initiatives in place across the Council which support the current succession planning programme e.g., performance appraisal, leadership events and guidance developed to support Heads of Service and their management teams: identify and develop the potential future leaders and individuals who are required to fill business critical positions within the Council; and develop their own succession plans.

A review of current arrangements has been undertaken, and refreshed guidance has been developed and is attached as Appendix 1. The guidance promotes the importance of succession planning and highlights a number of supporting initiatives including: the introduction of mentoring/coaching; use of secondments and work-shadowing, and customised training. It is proposed that the refreshed programme will be rolled out, with the support of the OD Team, to Council Service Management who are responsible for the effectiveness of their service workforce plans and succession planning.

4.9 Employee Benefits

It is proposed that the Council continues to explore further employee benefits and salary sacrifice schemes for employees. Recent discussion with trade union colleagues have highlighted several areas which are currently being explored including staff discount and shared AVC schemes.

4.10 Council Plan Values and Employee Charter

Following the approval of the Council Plan it is proposed to promote the vision and values across the workforce and develop an employee charter which sets out what staff can expect as employees of Inverclyde Council.

4.11 Review of Performance Appraisal

The Council's Performance appraisal process will be reviewed with a renewed focus on improving employee retention and succession planning. A revised process will consider current best practice which suggests that meaningful conversations held on a regular basis have a greater impact on employee engagement, performance and satisfaction, which in turn, increases productivity, efficiency and employee retention.

4.12 National Pay Position

Following recent national pay claims from trade unions it should be noted that discussions on a no-detriment reduction in the working week (referred to in paragraph 4.2) and the payment of other professional fees, as committed to in the 2021/22 pay settlement continue at a national level. Another feature of recent national pay agreements is the bottom loading of pay awards which has an impact on the Council's pay structure and the differentials between grades. The SJC trade unions pay claim for 2023/24 is similar and seeking a significant uplift to the Scottish Local Government Living Wage. It is therefore proposed that a review of the Council's Pay and Grading structure is progressed in 2024/25.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Policy & Resources Committee note the content of this report and approves the allocation of £100,000 from existing earmarked reserves to support the recruitment and retention of final year university students.

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	

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Various	Employee Turnover		100		One-Off increase to 23/24 non-HSCP turnover target

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

None.

6.4 Human Resources

Appropriate amendments will be made to current HR procedures and policies based on the proposals within this report.

6.5 Strategic

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

6.6 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.

(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.

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

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.
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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 trade unions are supportive of the proposals outlined in the report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.



**Inverclyde Council
Succession Planning Guidance**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Council's improvement strategy 'Delivering Differently in Inverclyde' establishes a strong commitment to support employees developing the right skills, knowledge, and behaviours for current and future career aspirations. Similarly, the Council needs to plan for short and longer term workforce requirements through developing an internal talent pipeline of qualified, skilled, and motivated people who are potential successors to key roles.
- 1.2** The Council's People & Organisational Development Strategy and Service Workforce Plans are the mechanism to define current and future workforce requirements, which support the delivery and transformation of services, and align people development and change management initiatives to the required workforce profile.
- 1.3** Effective succession planning is an integral part of this and enables the Council to plan its future requirements through identifying and developing the flow of talent to fulfil critical positions and responsibilities. Equally this supports business continuity measures ensuring selection and development strategies are in place to maintain a level of stability within key positions.

2 SUCCESSION PLANNING & WORKFORCE PLANNING

- 2.1** Succession planning, undertaken along with wider workforce planning, is part of a broad approach to talent management and is defined as:

'A process to identify and develop potential future leaders or senior managers, as well as individuals to fill other positions critical to an organisation, either in the short- or the long-term.'

- 2.2** Succession Planning will help the Council reduce the impact of losing key roles and ensure it has the right people, in the right place, at the right time. It will also assist the Council promote the importance and benefits of 'career planning' and help employees assess their knowledge, skills, and experience gaps for roles they want to pursue.
- 2.3** Whilst succession planning is mainly focused on critical leadership and senior positions, it can also involve a review of a range of key roles and professions at other levels, undertaking day-to-day operations, and critical to maintain service delivery. Where relevant, this approach can extend to other business critical professions or occupational groups at other levels.

3 SUCCESSION PLANNING BENEFITS

3.1 The current financial climate places challenges on the Council to ensure it can engage, motivate, retain, and fully use the skills within the existing workforce. However as the economy improves, employees have greater opportunity to pursue alternative employment prospects out-with the Council. This is complicated further with a recognised external skills shortage in some professions which makes it increasingly competitive to attract suitably skilled successors. Given these challenges it is essential the Council has a plan in place to identify, develop, and retain its core talent and capabilities to meet critical business issues in both the short and long term.

3.2 Succession Planning needs to be led by senior management, aligned to the Councils Corporate Plan, and ensure the development of sufficient talent to achieve strategic objectives and maintain business continuity. It can deliver the following benefits:

- Alignment between the strategic direction and workforce planning and development requirements;
- Senior leaders being accountable for growing future leaders;
- Recognition of business critical roles and contingency plans in place to ensure business continuity;
- Workforce planning data and analysis informs the process;
- Provision of targeted personal, professional, and leadership development initiatives which accelerates the development of high potential;
- Cultivating leadership and 'soft skills' which are increasingly important as people progress to more senior levels;
- Employees are committed to their own self-development and career plans;
- The Council demonstrates a visible commitment to career planning, personal development, and professional progression.

3.3 Whilst the primary purpose of succession planning is identifying and developing internal talent, it may become apparent there are no suitable internal candidates or a preferred requirement to recruit from outside the Council. To reduce any risk to service delivery, operations, or wider strategic objectives, there is a need to ensure effective plans are readily prepared and in place for any future recruitment and selection process related to critical roles.

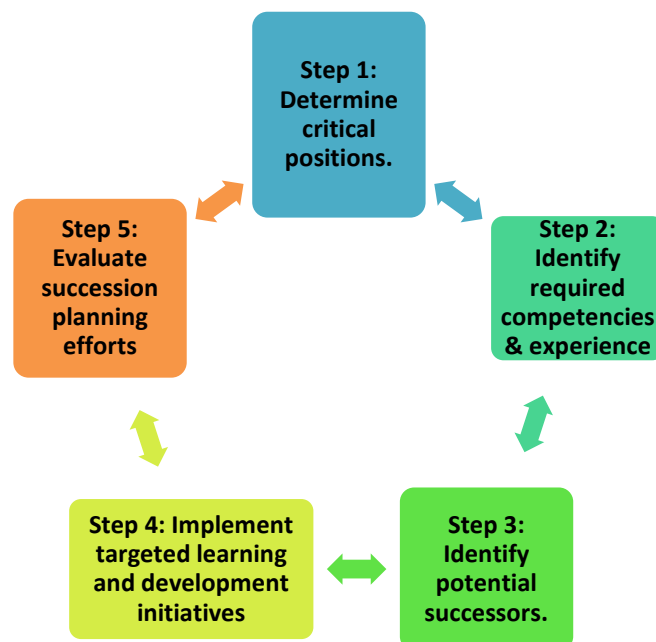
4 IMPLEMENTING SUCCESSION PLANNING

4.1 Succession planning requires a flexible approach to ensure it can adapt to changing strategies and structures. It is also important that it does not become overly prescriptive, and difficult to adapt as services and roles change. The Council's succession planning process should align with Service Workforce Plans and the Performance Appraisal annual cycle.

4.2 Developing future talent is a priority for all managers and requires strong commitment and accountability for growing and developing future leaders, managers, and professional roles. Succession planning will be undertaken through:

- Leadership Training;
- Directorate Management Teams assessing critical senior manager and occupational groups;
- All managers supporting and developing future talent through Performance Appraisal discussions

4.3 Main activities for DMT, with assistance of OD where required, undertaking succession planning:



An explanation of each step is outlined below.

STEP 1: DETERMINE CRITICAL POSITIONS

This step involves connecting succession planning to strategic and workforce planning decisions and identifying the most business critical positions.

Two important criteria should be considered:

- i. **Criticality:** positions or employee groups that, if vacant, would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to:
 - achieve its strategy or organisational success;
 - deliver operational business (e.g safety, financial operations, efficiency, reputation);
 - directly support the customer or public;
 - provide highly specialised knowledge, skills, or technical expertise that would be difficult or expensive to recruit.

- ii. **Retention risk:** positions where the departure of employees is expected or likely and:
 - there are no potential successors in the short term;
 - it may be desirable to bring in new talent from outside the organisation;
 - there is a need to plan for anticipated vacancies or future positions.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY REQUIRED COMPETENCIES AND EXPERIENCE

Once critical positions have been identified the next step is to develop the means by which to assess potential successors. All roles have prerequisite knowledge, skills, behaviours, and experience necessary for success. Understanding these criteria will act as a baseline to measure potential successors and help individuals create personal development plans aligned to the role requirements. This step will involve:

- analysing core and technical competencies, knowledge, skills, and experience essential for specific roles;
- reviewing and reassessing job profiles (including with the current appointee);
- assessing key leadership skills and behaviours ;
- identifying requirements for specific professions, compliance and statutory criteria, and professional body membership; and

STEP 3: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS

Identify and assess employees who demonstrate potential talent or suitability and focus their learning and development plans to help them prepare for future roles. It is important to measure this suitability across ; a short-term unplanned critical-vacancy and a more planned succession in the medium or long term.

This needs to be a transparent and equitable process, based on fairness and merit, and identify those individuals who demonstrate they have developed the specified competencies and experience or a close match to the requirements of the role. Useful starting points for recognising potential successors include:

- Self-identification or expressed interest through career planning discussions;
- Performance Appraisal annual review discussions;
- Employees with a track record of assuming greater responsibilities;
- Coaching and mentoring partnerships;
- Recruitment and selection exercises.

This stage should support looking beyond the service, or team where there is a succession issue. Succession candidates, particularly in leadership roles or senior positions, could potentially come from any part of the organisation providing they represent the competencies, preferred behaviours, and experience. Once identified, line managers should support individuals through developing a personalised learning and development plan targeted to develop the requisite skills and experience

STEP 4: IMPLEMENT TARGETED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Once potential candidates have been identified they require access to focused learning and development opportunities which address the gap between current and expected skills. This can be achieved through exposing the individual to the right development and work-based opportunities which develop the skills, knowledge, and experience critical to success in the targeted position. This may include:

- Leadership development programmes
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Peer learning
- Lateral job moves
- Planned role assignments;

- Shadowing;
- Professional qualifications.

Agreed learning and development activities should be incorporated within the individual's PDP. Support and guidance to facilitate any bespoke requirements can be co-ordinated through the Organisational Development Team.

STEP 5: EVALUATE SUCCESSION PLANNING EFFORTS

Evaluating succession planning efforts will help assess effectiveness of the process, appropriately monitor success, and identify where to modify the approach to address changing organisational needs. This step will involve **annually** reviewing Services succession plans to ensure:

- All key roles and occupational groups are identified and have succession plans in place;
- Measurement of the impact of succession plans on business continuity;
- Potential candidates are developing and performing well;
- Development of a diverse talent pool reflective of the Council workforce;
- Assessment of areas for improvement in the succession planning process.

5.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Recruitment and Selection

It is important to refer to the requirement of the Council to advertise certain posts, internally or externally. Inclusion in a Succession Plan as a successor will not mean guaranteed promotion or interview when a vacancy arises. However, playing an active part in service development by taking on the tasks identified as part of the planning process and committing to personal development in doing so, should have a positive impact on applications and/or interviews for named successors; but there is still a requirement to compete for vacancies.

5.2 Performance Appraisals/Teachers Professional Update

There must be a direct link between high performing employees, highlighted during performance appraisal or professional update processes, and those included on Succession Plans, therefore Succession Planning should be discussed during performance appraisal meetings, specifically in relation to development opportunities and personal development plans. Generally

speaking, when considering who is best to take on the tasks and responsibilities highlighted in your plan, it will be those employees who are graded 1 and 2 during appraisals. This is to ensure that those being identified as successors have minimal development needs in their current post, and may be more able and/or willing to play an active part in the plan quickly. This is not to say that those graded 3 are entirely excluded from inclusion in the plan; they may, for example, have it built into their own Personal Development Plan that they wish to work towards being included in the next Succession Plan.

In schools, for Teaching staff, who do not have a graded appraisal model, the development element of any professional update discussions should be referred to and successors selected on their agreed areas of depth of knowledge & skill in the key task areas.

5.3 Operational Impact

The plan is an operational management document. Inclusion on all or part of it is not contractual, is not relevant for consideration under the Job Evaluation scheme, and cannot be appealed against. Where there is dissatisfaction among a staff group with the decisions of the planning team, this should be addressed through personal development discussions.

EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSION PLANNING ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW

Stage	Activities	Outcome	Responsible
<p>Step 1: Identify key positions or occupational groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of critical leadership roles . • Assessment from DMT (OR Planning Group) PDP annual review etc. • Review of gap analysis from service workforce plans to identify critical occupational groups. • Identification of key positions or occupational groups linked to business continuity requirements. • Integrate succession planning with workforce plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of leadership succession planning process. • Assessment of roles critical for maintaining service delivery/business continuity. • Annual review of succession plans. 	
<p>Step 2: Identify competencies required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of ‘skills-and-experience’ profile for senior leadership roles. • Review job descriptions and relevant competency criteria for key positions. • Validate with current appointees. • Update with behaviours required . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation of competency and experience criteria for leadership positions. • Ensure all professional and Council behaviours integrated within job profiles. 	
<p>Step 3: Identify potential successors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review outcomes of PDP review. • DMT assessment of potential talent pool. • Gather wider ‘career planning’ information. • Develop an inventory of roles, competencies, and potential talent pool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of potential successors and agreement of leadership talent pool. • Defined succession plan identifying critical positions and potential successors. 	

Stage	Activities	Outcome	Responsible
<p>Step 4: Implement targeted learning & focused development strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of personal development plans. • Align and implement targeted/bespoke development initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leadership development initiatives. - management development programmes. - promote coaching and mentoring project. - develop informal work based development opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of individual learning plans aligned to role requirements. • Alignment of development programmes and opportunities to strategic direction and succession planning requirements 	
<p>Step 5: Evaluate succession planning efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate success of personal development plans. • Evaluate succession plan linked to annual review of workforce plans. • Complete review of succession plan in relation to business continuity measures. • Identify any changes to strategy or structure which impact succession plan. • Integration of succession planning with current strategic and HR practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and continuous improvement of succession planning efforts • Ensure succession planning process and outcomes are an integral part of workforce planning, recruitment, and development structures 	

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/044/23
Contact Officer:	Vicky Pollock	Contact No:	01475 712180
Subject:	Data Protection Policy Review		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy & Resources Committee with an overview of the Council's reviewed and updated Data Protection Policy and to seek the Committee's approval of the updated Policy.
- 1.3 The Council's Data Protection Policy was last updated and approved by the Policy & Resources Committee in November 2019 to reflect the significant changes to data protection legislation with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 1.4 The policy sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that any personal data, including special category personal data, which the Council processes, is carried out in compliance with data protection legislation.
- 1.5 The policy has recently been reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and accurate, and updated to reflect changes to legislation, operational practices, designations and contact information since the last review.
- 1.6 Section 4 of the report highlights the main changes to the policy, which are also summarised in Appendix 1. The revised policy is set out at Appendix 2.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the updated Data Protection Policy at Appendix 2.

Iain Strachan
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Data protection legislation changed significantly with the introduction of the Data Protection Act 2018 on 23 May 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation on 25 May 2018. The UK GDPR, which replicates the EU GDPR into UK law, came into force on 1st January 2021. The data protection legislation increased organisational data protection obligations and accountability, as well as enhancing individual's data protection rights. Processes and working practices across the Council have since been adapted to ensure compliance.
- 3.2 These changes were incorporated into an updated Data Protection Policy which was approved by the Policy & Resources Committee in November 2019.
- 3.3 As well as ensuring compliance with data protection legislation, the policy provide services with guidance outlining the responsibilities of employees.
- 3.4 The policy has recently been reviewed to ensure that it continues to be relevant and accurate. Since the policy was last reviewed, the provisions of the EU GDPR have been incorporated directly into UK law, as the UK GDPR. In practice, there is little change to the core data protection principles, rights and obligations which have now been fully embedded into working practices across the Council.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposed changes to the data protection policy following review are detailed in the summary table attached at Appendix 1. A clean version of the updated policy is attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.2 The proposed changes to the policy are relatively minor and include updates to reflect the implementation of the UK GDPR and various operational changes (including home working and changes to job titles) and to make the document accessible.
- 4.3 A data protection performance report, providing Committee with the Data Protection Officer's assessment of compliance with data protection legislation will be presented to Committee later in 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
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 Council is under a duty to demonstrate that it complies with data protection legislation by having in place appropriate policies and procedures. Failure to do so may leave the Council open to challenge from individuals and the Information Commissioner on the manner in which personal data is processed.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implication arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

The report will help deliver the outcomes in the Council Plan Theme 3 – Performance – high quality and innovative services are provided.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

(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

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.

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.

The data protection implications are set out in the report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO DATA PROTECTION POLICY – MAY 2023

PAGE:	TITLE	SECTION	PROPOSED CHANGE
n/a	n/a	n/a	Changes throughout the policy to amend references from EU GDPR to UK GDPR. Changes throughout the policy to reflect up to date officer titles and contact details.
3	Contents	Contents	New contents page
4	Intro & Policy Statement	1.6	Expanded bullet points to make data protection principles clearer.
4 and 5	Definitions	2.0	Updated definitions section.
5	Scope	3.2 (new)	New section to state the policy is applicable to remote and home working.
6	Responsibilities	4.7 (new)	New section to reflect mandatory data protection training for employees.
6	Responsibilities	4.8 (new)	New section to reflect managers' responsibilities for employee training.
6	Responsibilities	4.11 (new)	New section setting out the role of the IGSG.
7	Responsibilities	4.12	Updated to reflect change of SIRO from HSCP Director to Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services
7	Responsibilities	4.13	Updated to change name of Council's DPO.
7	Responsibilities	4.14 (new)	Moved from previous section 1.5. Updated to reflect new policies and guidance. Hyperlinks added.
8	Key Principles	6.1 (new)	New section to highlight need to demonstrate compliance with key principles through policies and procedures.
9	Disclosure of Data	7.0-7.1 (new)	New section setting out specific circumstances in which data can be disclosed to third parties
9	Data Subject Rights	8.2 (new)	New section to highlight that individuals have the right to make subject access requests.
9	Data Subject Rights	9.1	Council's ICO registration number inserted.
10	Data Sharing	12.2	Updated to clarify when a data sharing agreement or information sharing protocol is needed.
10	Data Sharing	12.3	Information Governance Team details updated. Additional wording inserted to reflect that data sharing agreements will be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect operational requirements
10	DPIAs	13.2	Information Governance Team details updated.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility			
Name	Title	Service	
Information Governance Team	Data Protection Policy	Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services	
Change History			
Version	Date	Comments	
01.0	October 2012	Information Governance Officer	
02.0	July 2019	Major amendments to reflect GDPR and DPA 2018	
02.1	October 2019	Minor amendments from Legal	
02.2	24 October 2019	Minor amendments from CMT	
03.0	April 2023	Minor Changes (accessibility) Amended to reflect legislative changes, operational practice, designations and contact information.	
03.1	May 2023	Minor corrections, for submission to P&R Committee	
Policy Review			
Updating Frequency	Review Date	Person Responsible	Service
3 years unless required earlier	April 2026	Information Governance Team	Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services
Document Review & Approvals – this document requires the following approvals			
Name	Action	Date	Communication
P&R Committee	Awaiting approval	TBC May 2023	

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1.0 Introduction and Policy Statement

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council ('the Council') collects and processes personal information about its customers, employees and others to allow the Council to carry out many of its functions and responsibilities. This personal information, however it is acquired, held, processed, released or destroyed, must be dealt with lawfully and appropriately in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.
- 1.2 Dealing appropriately with personal information will not only ensure that the Council complies with its legal obligations but will contribute to maintaining the confidence of customers, employees and others.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that any Personal Data, including Special Category Personal Data, which the Council processes, is processed in compliance with Data Protection Legislation. The Council seeks to ensure that good data protection practice is embedded in the culture of the Council and its employees.
- 1.4 This Policy sets out appropriate guidance and safeguards to ensure compliance with Data Protection Legislation.
- 1.5 The Council will ensure that all employees who handle Personal Data on its behalf are made aware of their responsibilities under this Policy and other relevant data protection and information security policies and that adequate training and supervision is provided.
- 1.6 To comply with Data Protection Legislation, information about individuals must be:
 - processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
 - collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes;
 - adequate, relevant and not excessive;
 - accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
 - retained for no longer than is necessary; and
 - stored safely and securely

The Council will inform individuals about the Processing that it undertakes, through privacy notices and direct contact, and will make it clear to individuals what is happening with and to their Personal Data.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 The following outlines the key definitions and technical terms that are used in this document:

Data Controller: Any person or organisation who decides how any personal information can be held and processed, and for what purposes. Inverclyde Council is a Data Controller. In addition, individual Elected Members can be Data Controllers.

Data Processor: Any person (other than a Council employee) or organisation (for example, contractors and agents) who process personal information on behalf of the Council.

Data Protection Legislation: legislation relating to data protection, the processing of Personal Data and privacy including (i) the Data Protection Act 2018 (ii) the UK GDPR and (iii) the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 (as amended).

Data Subject: Any living individual in respect of whom the Council holds or processes Personal Data.

Personal Data: Data relating to a living individual who can be identified from that information or from that data and other information in possession of the data controller. Includes name, address, telephone number, identification number, location data including online identifiers including IP address. Also includes expression of opinion about the individual, and of the intentions of the data controller in respect of that individual.

Processing: Any operation related to the holding, organisation, retrieval, disclosure and deletion of data and includes obtaining and recording data; accessing, altering, adding to, merging, deleting data; retrieval, consultation or use of data; disclosure or otherwise making available of data.

Special Category Personal Data: Different from Personal Data, relates to racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, health, sexual life or criminal convictions, biometric, genetic. This type of data is subject to much stricter conditions of processing.

Subject Access Request: A right of access by individuals to their Personal Data held by the Council.

UK GDPR: The UK General Data Protection Regulation.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all employees and Elected Members of the Council. Any breach of Data Protection Legislation or this Policy may result in disciplinary action for an employee, referral of an Elected Member to the Standards Commission and may also constitute a criminal offence.
- 3.2 The Policy is applicable to all Personal Data held by the Council irrespective of whether the information is held or accessed on Council premises or accessed remotely via mobile or home working. Personal Data held on removable devices and other portable media is also covered by this Policy.
- 3.3 Other third parties, including but not limited to, agencies, consultants, contractors, volunteers, agents or any other individual Processing Personal Data on behalf of the Council, are required to comply with this Policy.
- 3.4 This Policy applies to all situations where the Council processes (collects, stores, uses, shares) Personal Data about living individuals. It includes information stored in any format including but not limited to Personal Data held:
 - electronically;
 - on paper;
 - on CCTV;

- in photographs; and
- on audio equipment.

3.5 [Appendix 1](#) sets out the Data Protection Principles ('the Key Principles') defined in the Data Protection Legislation.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 The Council is the Data Controller under Data Protection Legislation.

4.2 The Corporate Management Team, Chief Officers and Service Managers are responsible for ensuring their teams and employees are aware of this Policy and for developing and encouraging robust information handling practices.

4.3 Compliance with Data Protection Legislation is the responsibility of all employees and Elected Members who process personal information.

4.4 Each Service and its senior management will retain a service responsibility for compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Legislation and this Policy.

4.5 All Services will nominate an officer whose role will be to:

- monitor compliance within their Service;
- pass on advice and training;
- maintain the accuracy of their Service's input into the Council's Information Asset Register (IAR) and;
- to ensure that Subject Access Requests are properly and timeously processed.

4.6 All employees will be responsible for following procedures and systems for maintaining appropriate security of the Personal Data to which they have access.

4.7 Employees are required to complete mandatory data protection and information security training provided by the Council's Inverclyde Learns platform. These modules can be completed as many times as necessary for refresher training.

4.8 Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees within their Service are trained appropriately.

4.9 From time to time, Services will monitor their compliance with the Council's policies, procedures and guidelines and review their security arrangements.

4.10 The Corporate Management Team will ensure that employees are provided with guidance, training and procedures to promote a culture of compliance with the Data Protection Legislation and with this Policy.

4.11 The Council's Data Protection work will be overseen by the Information Governance Steering Group (IGSG). The IGSG is currently led by the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer. Council Services have nominated representatives to raise and progress data protection issues with the group. The IGSG reports into the Corporate Management Team and also to relevant Council committees such as the Policy & Resources Committee.

- 4.12 The Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) sits on the Corporate Management Team and has overall responsibility for Information Management and Information Risk Management within the Council.

The SIRO:

- Acts as an advocate for information risk at the Corporate Management Team;
- Drives culture change regarding information risks in a realistic and effective manner;
- Is consulted on matters arising from information incidents; and
- In liaison with the Chief Executive and Directors, ensures the Information Asset Owner and supporting roles within Services are in place to support the SIRO role.

The Council's SIRO is the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services.

- 4.13 The Council's Data Protection Officer (DPO) has corporate responsibility to:

- Inform and advise the Council and its employees about their obligations to comply with the Data Protection Legislation and other data protection laws;
- Monitor compliance with Data Protection Legislation and other data protection laws, including the assignment of responsibilities, raising awareness, developing training, training employees involved in the Processing areas and working on audit related matters;
- Provide advice about Data Protection Impact Assessments (explained further in section 12) and monitor their performance;
- Co-operate with the supervisory authority (the Information Commissioner's Office); and;
- Act as a point of contact for the Information Commissioner's Office on issues related to the Processing of Personal Data.

The Council's DPO is Vicky Pollock who can be contacted at dataprotection@inverclyde.gov.uk.

- 4.14 In recognition of our Data Protection obligations and in addition to this policy, a range of policies, procedures and guidelines promoting compliance and best practice have been developed to support a robust data governance framework.

1. [Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy](#)
2. [Records Management Policy](#)
3. [The Policy for the Retention and Disposal of Documents and Records Paper and Electronic.](#)
4. [Code of Conduct for Employees](#)
5. [Information Sharing Protocol](#)
6. [Data Breach Management Protocol](#)
7. [Data Protection Impact Assessment Guidance](#)
8. [GDPR Employee Guide](#)
9. [Privacy Notice Guidance](#)

This list is not exhaustive, and all relevant data protection and wider information management guidance can be located under the Information Governance section on the Council intranet.

5.0 Special Category Personal Data

- 5.1 The Council processes Special Category Personal Data of employees, service users and third parties as is necessary to carry out its many functions and responsibilities.
- 5.2 Special Category Personal Data is subject to much stricter conditions of Processing.
- 5.3 [Appendix 2](#) sets out the Council's policy statement and additional safeguards on Processing Special Category Data and Personal Data relating to criminal convictions and offences.

6.0 Implementation of Key Principles

- 6.1 The Council must demonstrate that it complies with Data Protection Legislation by having appropriate policies and procedures in place by documenting the Personal Data it is processing, why it is processing and legal basis for doing so.
- 6.2 In complying with the key principles of the Data Protection Legislation set out in [Appendix 1](#), the following practices will be applied:-
 - a) The Council will ensure that the legal basis for Processing Personal Data is identified in advance and that all Processing is in compliance with the Data Protection Legislation;
 - b) The Council will ensure that all sharing of Personal Data with other organisations will be appropriately documented;
 - c) When Personal Data is collected the Data Subject will be provided with a Privacy Notice, providing information about what the Council collects, why this information is needed and how it will be processed. Any exceptions to this will be documented;
 - d) The Council will identify and collect the minimum amount of information that is necessary for the purpose. If it becomes necessary to hold or obtain additional information about certain individuals, such information will only be collected and recorded in relation to those individuals;
 - e) The Council will adopt policies that ensure that all relevant information is kept accurate and up to date. Where the Council identifies an inaccuracy or a Data Subject indicates that information held by the Council or a business partner is inaccurate, the error will be rectified by the owner of the data;
 - f) The Council will implement procedures in relation to the retention and disposal of Personal Data in accordance with the Policy for Retention and Disposal of Records;
 - g) The Council has processes in place to ensure that requests made by an individual to exercise their rights under Data Protection Legislation can be facilitated;
 - h) The Council will ensure that appropriate security measures are in place so that Personal Data can only be accessed by those who need to access it and that it is held and transferred securely;

- i) Personal Data will be appropriately safeguarded from accidental destruction, theft or any other loss; and
- j) Where there is a requirement to take Personal Data off-site, procedures will be adopted to ensure the safe keeping of that data.

7.0 Disclosure of Data

7.1 The Council must ensure that Personal Data is not disclosed to unauthorised third parties. All employees and Elected Members must ensure there is a lawful basis to share Personal Data before disclosing to a third party. Personal Data can be disclosed where one of the following legal bases apply:

- The individual has given their explicit consent;
- Where the disclosure forms part of the Council's statutory task and where the Data Protection Act 2018 permits such disclosure without consent in relation to specific purposes;
- Where the Council is legally obliged to disclose data;
- Where disclosure of data is required in relation to a contract which the individual has entered into;
- If the sharing of information is necessary in the vital interests of the data subject.

8.0 Data Subject Rights

8.1 Data Subjects have the following rights regarding data Processing and the data that is recorded about them:

- Right to be informed;
- Right of access;
- Right to rectification of inaccurate data;
- Right to erasure in certain circumstances;
- Right to object to certain Processing, including the right to prevent Processing for direct marketing;
- Right to prevent automated decision-making;
- Right to data portability; and
- Right to claim compensation for damages caused by a data breach.

8.2 An individual has the right to access their own Personal Data and can do so by making a Subject Access Request.

8.3 The Council will ensure that the rights of Data Subjects are respected. Further information on compliance with all Data Subject rights can be sought by contacting the [Information Governance Team](#).

9.0 Data Protection Fee

9.1 The Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018 requires organisations that process personal information to pay a fee to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), unless exempt. The Information Commissioner maintains a public register of notified Data Controllers. The Council is registered under entry number [Z5004355](#). Payment of the data protection fee on behalf of the Council is the responsibility of the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services.

- 9.2 Individual Elected Members are exempt by law from payment of the data protection fee.

10.0 Documentation of Processing Activities

- 10.1 There is a legal requirement to document Processing activities under the Data Protection Legislation. The Council has an Information Asset Register (IAR) which forms the basis of the Council's documentation of Processing activities. It is the responsibility of each Service to update the IAR and ensure that the information relevant to their Service is accurate at all times.

11.0 Contracts

- 11.1 Where an organisation processes Personal Data on behalf of the Council there must be a contract in place that contains the Council's Terms and Conditions, which includes the Council's standard data protection clauses.

12.0 Data Sharing

- 12.1 Data sharing takes place when Personal Data is shared with another organisation for its own purposes. This is separate from when the organisation is Processing the Personal Data on behalf of the Council.

- 12.2 An appropriate written agreement for the sharing of Personal Data (known as a data sharing agreement or an Information Sharing Protocol) must be agreed and put in place for instances of one-off sharing as well as planned and regular sharing of Personal Data between the Council and other partners and before any systematic or large scale Personal Data sharing takes place. Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services must be consulted prior to any such agreement being made. The Council's Information Sharing Protocol is available on ICON.

- 12.3 Completed Data Sharing Agreements should be sent to the [Information Governance Team](#). A register of completed Data Sharing Agreements and Information Sharing Protocols is maintained by Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services. These will be reviewed, amended and updated on a regular basis in accordance with operational requirements.

13.0 Data Protection Impact Assessments

- 13.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be undertaken to identify and minimise the privacy risks of any new project or policy that will involve Processing Personal Data. The lead officer for the project or policy will be responsible for ensuring that the DPIA is undertaken. The DPO will assist Services to identify the need for a DPIA, provide guidance for the assessment process, and make recommendations to ensure the Council's compliance with the Data Protection Legislation.

- 13.2 Completed DPIAs should be sent to the [Information Governance Team](#). A register of completed DPIAs is maintained by Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services.

14.0 Data Breaches

- 14.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that Personal Data is processed securely, held confidentially and with integrity and accessed by only those who have a justified right of access. Despite the security measures taken to protect Personal Data held by the Council, a breach can happen.

14.2 The Council has a Data Breach Management Protocol which is to be followed in the event of a data breach.

14.3 It is a criminal offence under Data Protection Legislation to knowingly or recklessly obtain, disclose or procure Personal Data without the consent of the Data Controller and the Council reserves the right to report any such incidences to the Information Commissioner's Office and/or Police Scotland.

15.0 Governance

15.1 The Information Governance Steering Group (IGSG) will act as the forum for the consideration of any matters related to Data Protection Legislation and Policy. This Policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

15.2 Services will identify key contacts to comprise of the membership of the IGSG.

16.0 Conclusion

16.1 The Council subscribes to the principles of the Data Protection Legislation and will continue to develop policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure compliance with its legal obligations.

Appendix 1

Data Protection Key Principles

- a. Personal Data shall be processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner.
- b. Personal Data shall be processed only for the purposes for which it was obtained.
- c. Personal Data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- d. Personal Data shall be accurate and kept up to date where necessary.
- e. Personal Data shall be kept in a form which permits identification of Data Subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the Personal Data was processed.
- f. Personal Data shall be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the Personal Data.

As a Data Controller, the Council is responsible for, and must be able to demonstrate compliance with, these key principles.

Appendix 2

Inverclyde Council – policy statement and additional safeguards on Processing Special Category Data and Personal Data relating to criminal convictions and offences

Introduction

With effect from 25 May 2018, Data Protection Legislation requires Controllers who process Special Category (i.e. sensitive) Personal Data, (or Personal Data relating to criminal convictions and offences) under various parts of the Data Protection Act 2018 to have an “appropriate policy document” in place setting out a number of additional safeguards for this data.

More specifically, the law states that:

“The Controller has an appropriate policy document in place in relation to the Processing of Personal Data... if the Controller has produced a document which –

explains the Controller’s procedures for securing compliance with the principles in Article 5 of the UK GDPR (principles relating to Processing of Personal Data) in connection with the Processing of Personal Data in reliance on the condition in question, and

explains the Controller’s policies as regards the retention and erasure of Personal Data processed in reliance on the condition, giving an indication of how long such Personal Data is likely to be retained.”

This document is the policy adopted by Inverclyde Council in relation to this Processing and fulfils the above test.

Policy Statement

1: Lawfulness, fairness and transparency:

All data which flows into and out of the Council has been assessed to determine the legal basis under which that data is processed and the results of the assessment have been documented in an Information Asset Register. The Council is satisfied that it has a legal basis for holding Personal Data, and that it also has a valid legal basis for disclosing this Personal Data to third parties where this takes place. Privacy notices have been prepared to comply with UK GDPR requirements (and to reflect the legal basis of Processing). Please see [Privacy - Inverclyde Council](#) for further details.

2: Purpose limitation:

The purposes for which data is collected are clearly set out in the relevant privacy notices. A limited set of data is required for research and archiving purposes; the Council has put in place appropriate safeguards for these activities as required by Article 89 of the UK GDPR.

3: Data minimisation:

In assessing the data flows, the Council has also taken the opportunity to assess the need for each of the data fields in question and will cease to capture unnecessary data.

4: Accuracy:

The Council checks data for accuracy and, where any inaccuracies are discovered, these are promptly corrected and any third party recipients of the inaccurate data notified of the correction.

5: Storage limitation:

The Council only keeps personal information for the minimum period necessary. Sometimes this time period is set out in the law, but in most cases it is based on business need. The Council maintains a Records Retention and Disposal Schedule which sets out how long the Council holds different types of information for. You can view this on the Council's website at [Data Protection Policy - Inverclyde Council](#).

Ongoing management of the Council's records and information is subject to the provisions of the Council's Records Management Plan, which was developed in terms of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 and approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland. This is available online at [Records Management Plan - Inverclyde Council](#). The Records Management Plan sets out, in much greater detail, the provisions under which the Council complies with its obligations under public records legislation, data protection and information security and is complementary to this policy statement.

6: Integrity and confidentiality:

The Council has Security Guidelines which provides employees with guidance on how to keep personal, commercial and sensitive information secure and to share only in so far as is operationally necessary. In addition, the Council has an Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy. All employees are required to complete information security training. The Council's ICT systems have appropriate protective measures in place incorporating defence, and the systems are subject to external assessment and validation. Policies and procedures are in place to reduce the information security risks arising from use of hard copy documentation.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/050/23/IS
Contact Officer:	Iain Strachan	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Review of Committee Report Format		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Policy & Resources Committee to update the Council's corporate committee report template, following a recent review.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 21 June 2022, the Committee approved a revised Committee report format, and agreed that this would be subject to review after 12 months. That review has now been carried out. The review has only highlighted the need for two changes in the actual report template, in terms of how potential implications are identified. It has, however, been identified that the annotated template and associated guidance should also be updated, to assist officers. This includes reference to the new Council Plan and the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.
- 1.4 The adoption of a standard report format helps ensure a consistent "house style", to be used on all occasions for reports to the Council and its Committees. This approach to Council reporting aids decision making and ensures consistency in content and presentation of detail in report preparation. The reports which are submitted to the Council and its Committees for consideration form the foundation of the Council's decision-making process.
- 1.5 The proposed report template is attached at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is an updated annotated version of the template, and contains specific guidance on each section in italics, the proposed changes being shown in tracking.
- 1.6 It is anticipated that, subject to Committee approval, training and guidance will be provided to officers and the revised report format will be used by officers and presented to Committees from the start of the 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the use of the updated committee report template set out at Appendix 1 of this report; and
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee notes that, subject to approval, the updated annotated version of the template, and associated guidance, will be rolled out to officers,

with training, ready for use from the start of the 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023.

Iain Strachan
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The guiding principle in writing committee reports is that a clear explanation should be given of the background to the proposal with full details of its implications, including details of any responses to the consultations which are carried out.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 21 June 2022, the Committee approved a revised Committee report format, and agreed that this would be subject to review after 12 months. That review has now been carried out. The adoption of a standard report format helps ensure a consistent “house style”, to be used on all occasions for reports to the Council and its Committees. This approach to Council reporting aids decision making and ensures consistency in content and presentation of detail in report preparation. The reports which are submitted to the Council and its Committees for consideration form the foundation of the Council’s decision-making process. Additionally, it is a clear external indication of a professional and coordinated approach in Council reporting by all services.
- 3.3 It is recognised that good quality reports are essential for good governance, providing elected members with the right information to enable them to make good decisions, ensuring the public can understand what business the Council is considering and increased openness and transparency of decision making.
- 3.4 The essential components of a committee report are considered to include a clear purpose, officer recommendations, material considerations and the implications of making the decision, including any impacts of not making a decision.
- 3.5 The template report is attached at Appendix 1 and an updated annotated version, with proposed changes in each shown in tracking, is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The review has only highlighted the need for two changes in the actual report template, in terms of how potential implications are identified. In essence, report authors are often unclear whether to state that an implication which does not apply to a report, for example matters relating to Equalities or the Fairer Scotland Duty, should be stipulated at paragraph 5.1 of the template as “No” or “Not Applicable”. This confusion results in inconsistent reporting and a lack of clarity for Elected Members and the public. As such, it is proposed that the “Not Applicable” column in 5.1 of the template report is removed, so that such implications are either applicable or they are not. Linked to this, it would assist officers for the Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty and Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing implications to all be considered together at paragraphs 5.1 and 5.6, given their alignment and similar nature, when compared to the other identified implications.
- 4.2 It has also been identified that the annotated template and associated guidance need updated, to assist officers. In addition to reflecting the proposed changes around the Implications section, this updating is to include reference to the new Council Plan and Partnership Plan, adopted by the Council at its meeting on 20 April 2023, together with the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty is the duty on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>) when exercising certain statutory functions in the areas of healthcare, education and housing, as set out in the Armed Forces Act 2021. Elected Members will receive a separate briefing on the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.
- 4.3 The use of the proposed template for meetings outwith the Committee structure – e.g. CMT reports or reports to other groups at which Elected Members will consider the report will also continue to be required. It is noted that the template does not apply to the Council’s quasi-judicial

and regulatory functions – for example the Licensing Board, Planning Board, Local Review Body and the like.

- 4.4 It continues to be the responsibility of individual services to draft and consult upon their reports, to ensure that reports include all relevant information which is clearly expressed to enable informed decision-making by Elected Members and to submit the reports in the corporate format to the Committee Section of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services within the appropriate Committee timescales. It is the responsibility of individual services to ensure that the reports are correct and typographically accurate. Any advice on the use of the corporate format or any questions arising can be sought from or directed to the Committee Section.
- 4.5 Following consideration by Committee, the intention is to provide an updated guidance and training package for relevant officers over the next couple of months. The aim of the guidance and training would be to ensure consistency in adoption of the new template and that officers are being supported to confidently use this. Updated detailed guidance on report writing will also be made available to officers. The review of the template will be an opportunity to remind report writers to use appropriate writing styles – i.e. ensuring reports are drafted clearly, concisely, using plain English and avoiding jargon and abbreviations.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the guidance and training will be co-ordinated through the Council’s Corporate Quality Improvement Group (CQIG).
- 4.7 It is proposed that the updated version of the template, together with the updated annotated version of the template, and associated guidance, will be rolled out to officers, with training, ready for use from the start of the 2023/24 Committee cycle of meetings in August 2023. This will allow for sufficient time for training and awareness raising. Use of the new template and feedback from officers and elected members will be monitored going forward, and any proposed changes brought back to the Committee.

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 directly from this report.

One off Costs

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

N/A					
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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

Implementation of the revised committee report template assists the Council to comply with various statutory obligations.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications arising directly from this report.

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.

(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: It is a report which is solely seeking approval for a new form of committee report template, it is not considering the actual delivery of any Council services.

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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team have been consulted on this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.

Classification : Official



AGENDA ITEM NO:

Report To:

Date:

Report By:

Report No:

Contact Officer:

Contact No:

Subject:

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1

##

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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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

5.4 Human Resources

5.5 Strategic

5.6 Equalities, and Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, 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?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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(c) Children and Young People

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.

5.7(d) Environmental/Sustainability

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

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Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

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

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.

~~6.89~~ 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.

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

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1

Classification : Official



AGENDA ITEM NO:

Report To:	<i>Relevant Committee Meeting</i>	Date:	<i>Date of Meeting</i>
Report By:	<i>Relevant Director/Head of Service</i>	Report No:	<i>Unique Identifier</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Report Author</i>	Contact No:	<i>Report Author No.</i>
Subject:	<i>Report Title</i>		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting *Tick any that apply*

1.2 *Add a very brief summary of what you are asking the Committee to do and why. This section must be concise -- **3 to 5 paragraphs should normally suffice, save in exceptional circumstances** - and the summary should not be repeated in the main body of the report.*

1.3 *The summary section is necessary for officers and Elected Members to identify those reports which are the most important and require the most attention.*

1.4 *This section should be written as clearly and simply as possible to ensure that the Elected Members who are taking the decision(s), as well as the public who will have access to the report, have a full understanding of what the Committee are being asked to decide upon, why it is being asked to make decisions and the significant factors and anticipated outcomes and implications of taking such decisions.*

- e.g. previous committee decision*
- change in legislation*
- business plan – agreed project/action*
- agreed routine monitoring report*

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 *• **Decision** - Reaching a conclusion after the consideration of options and implications.*

*• **For Information/Noting***

Recommended wording to be used is either “agree”, “approve” or “note”.

2.2 *The function of recommendations is for officers to advise Elected Members as to the best course of action. The wording of recommendations is important as they will form the basis to the minute after the meeting so must not be ambiguous or vague. Everything here should be covered in the report or appendices – nothing new should be introduced in the recommendations. If reference is made to the report, specify the relevant paragraph or appendix. Each recommendation should have a separate paragraph number.*

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 *This is the main body of the report ensuring that sufficient information is there for Elected Members to make the decision:*

- *Include relevant, concise, background information;*
- *Include the broader context of relevant Council policies, priorities and previous Committee decisions that has informed the recommendations;*
- *Any previous reports referred to should be clearly specified with the name of the relevant Committee, its meeting date and its reference number.*
- *Avoid repetition, jargon and acronyms;*
- *Use a new paragraph for each point.*

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 *This section should show the options and reasons for the preferred recommendations. An options appraisal may be provided. Include arguments for and against the recommendations and details of any alternative options considered and why they are not recommended. If there are no options to be considered, explain why.*

4.2 *A section showing Conclusions is not compulsory but may be used where a number of options have been considered in a complex report.*

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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Insert an X in the relevant box.

The implications of the proposals must be shown by report writers in the report and in all cases, must include Financial, Legal, Risk, Human Resources and Strategic, with appropriate text included in paragraphs 5.2 – 5.5. Where applicable, the (i) Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/and Young People, (ii) Environmental & Sustainability and (iii) Data Protection implications must be considered and the relevant sections completed accordingly. Implications must be considered proactively and corporately in advance with relevant officers and recorded within the report with adequate reasoning.

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Where answered “yes” or “no” to (i) Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children & Young People, (ii) Environmental & Sustainability and (iii) Data Protection, relevant assessments should be carried out and, where necessary, relevant impact assessments must be completed and referenced as a background paper, it being noted that there may be occasions where it is clear why there are no such implications and no actual assessment is needed. If such assessments are available on the website, the link should be provided.

When considering whether to answer “yes” or “no” to Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People, you should only answer “no” if that is the case for all three implications, and you should answer “yes” where that is the case for at least one of the three. You will have the opportunity to expand further at paragraph 5.6.

Not all reports will require all of the assessments at 5.6 - 5.8⁹ to be undertaken and so where these implications are assessed as “no” these paragraphs can be deleted, albeit as noted above it may still be appropriate to reference any assessment as a background paper. It is not a requirement to complete all implications where recommendations are factual e.g. procedural, performance or scrutiny reports. As such, performance reports will likely not need those paragraphs, and they can be assessed as “no” in the Implications box, and those paragraphs deleted. As noted above, however, paragraphs 5.2 - 5.5 should never be deleted.

Any assessments should already have been developed as part of the development of the proposal – especially if it is significant.

It is important to have due regard **before** and **at the time** that a particular function/policy/procedure/strategy is being considered, and of exercising the duty with an open mind.

There is a duty under various pieces of legislation to assess the impact of our policies and practices.

Officers should also consider the potential applicability of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, being the duty on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. More detail can be found in the Report Writing Guidance and on Icon. If relevant, then suitable text should be inserted in paragraph 5.6.

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5.2 Finance

The source of any funding attached to the proposals in the report must be identified. Include all capital and revenue implications arising out of the report proposals. All affected budget codes should be identified with details of budget requirements and virements etc. being shown.

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

Report authors should consider the following, where there might be relevant implications that Committee should be made aware of:-

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e.g. -- Entries in any relevant Risk Register (Corporate, Directorate and/or project specific, where applicable, albeit it would only be in exceptional cases that an actual Risk Register might be suitable for attaching to a report)

- Completion of a risk assessment with plans in place to mitigate any risks identified*
- Likelihood of legal challenge*
- Legislative relevance*

Risk Management – refer to any significant risks identified in the report, including in relation to the recommended option, and how that is to be managed and the risk mitigated. If a risk assessment or risk register has been completed, this should be referenced as a background paper to the report. Consideration should also be given to the Committee Risk Register as reported with its CDIP, and to the further detail found in the Report Writing Guidance.

There also needs to be a considered review of risk in the event that the recommendation is not agreed by Committee.

Legal – Any potential legal implications arising from the report should be considered and outline any legal advice provided. Legal Services should be consulted on this.

5.4 Human Resources

- e.g.*
- Impact on existing staff*
 - Identification of training requirements*

5.5 Strategic

- e.g.*
- LOIP Partnership Pla) objectives*
 - Corporate Council Plan objectives*

Highlight how the proposed action/recommendation contributes to the targets and priorities in the Council’s Corporate Policy Framework. List the LOIP Partnership/Corporate Council Plan priorities the report relates to.

Example wording – “This report helps deliver Corporate Council Plan Theme 1 Outcome : People – Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education. “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.”

5.6 **Equalities, and Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People**

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The Council must have due regard to 3 elements of the general equality duty, which are:

- eliminating discrimination;
- advancing equality of opportunity;
- fostering good relations.

The corporate EqIA process must be followed. If the subject matter of the report requires an EqIA, it must be referenced as a background paper, and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

As noted above, authors should also consider the potential applicability of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, being the duty on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. More detail can be found in the Report Writing Guidance and on Icon. If relevant, then suitable text should be inserted.

(a) Equalities

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. <i>Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.</i>

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

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

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

5.7(c) Children and Young People

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

Where this implication is applicable, the CRWIA process must be followed. If the subject matter of the report requires a CRWIA, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.

5.78 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts, positive or negative, which relate to this report.

e.g. Net Zero Strategy.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

*The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Strategic Environmental Assessment is a systematic and effective process for ensuring that environmental issues are taken into account at every stage in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of plans, programmes and strategies. It is likely that an SEA would only be needed for notable projects and strategies.*

If the subject matter of the report requires an assessment, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.

5.89 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

Where applicable, the corporate DPIA process must be followed. If the subject matter of the report requires a DPIA, it must be referenced as a background paper and if available on the website, the link should be provided.

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
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Classification : Official



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 *Include details of consultations carried out (as appropriate). Significant issues identified in consultations should be addressed in the relevant sections of the report, as required.*

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 *Provide a list of documents used to write the report. Such documents may include:*

- *Risk Assessment/Risk Register*
- *Equalities Impact Assessment*
- *Data Protection Impact Assessment*
- *Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment*
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment.*

Please see the guidance for more information about what should be included. If no relevant documents have been used, please insert "None" for clarity.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	23 May 2023
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/045/23
Contact Officer:	Carol Craig-McDonald	Contact No:	01475 712725
Subject:	Freedom of Information Annual Report 2022		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 This is an agreed routine annual monitoring report to provide the Policy & Resources Committee with details of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the Council during the period 1 January – 31 December 2022.

1.3 The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) came into effect on 1 January 2005. Under FOISA, a person who requests information from a Scottish public authority which holds it is entitled to be given it by the authority, subject to certain conditions and exemptions which are set out in the FOISA. The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs) also came into force on 1 January 2005 and give the public rights of access to environmental information held by Scottish public authorities.

1.4 The Council has adopted the Model Publication Scheme 2016 which was produced and approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner on 29 March 2016. The Model Publication Scheme (MPS) and the Council's Guide to information available through the MPS are on the Council's website at - <http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/>

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) Notes the information provided in relation to FOI requests received by the Council during 2022.
- (2) Approves the publication of the annual performance report on the Council's website.
- (3) Notes that going forward officers will cease the collection of information on the time spent on, and estimated costs of dealing with, FOI and EIR requests across the Council, which will no longer be reported annually to Committee.

Iain Strachan
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 FOISA provides a right of access to recorded information held by Scottish public authorities subject to certain conditions and exemptions which are set out in the FOISA.
- 3.2 The Council has adopted the Model Publication Scheme 2016 which was produced and approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner on 29 March 2016. The Model Publication Scheme (MPS) and the Council's Guide to information available through the MPS are on the Council's website at <http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/> . The Council's Guide provides information on:-
- what information is available (and what is not available) in relation to each class;
 - charges that may be applied;
 - how to find the information easily;
 - contact details for enquiries and help with accessing the information; and
 - how to request information held by the Council that has not been published.
- 3.3 An applicant for information has the right to ask the Council to review its action and/or decisions if they are dissatisfied with the way in which the Council has dealt with the request for information. If still dissatisfied with the review decision, or if the review decision has not been received within 20 working days, an applicant may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner.
- 3.4 The Scottish Information Commissioner has since April 2013 asked all Scottish public authorities to provide statistics on FOI requests and requests under the EIRs, the number of Subject Access Requests received, details of reviews dealt with and exemptions/exceptions applied on a quarterly basis. These statistics are available on the Scottish Information Commissioner's website at <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/>
- 3.5 Although the Scottish Information Commissioner has no locus in relation to Subject Access Requests (SARs), this information is collected to see how the number of FOI and EIR requests authorities receive compares to the number of SARs received.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 During 2022, a total of 1044 requests under FOI, 103 under the EIRs and 88 SARs were received. The annual report on performance during 2022 is appended to this report.
- 4.2 Section 2 of the appended report provides a comparison with the number of FOI and EIR requests received by the Council from 2016 to 2022. Members will note that, in comparison with volumes received during 2021, that there has been a 22% increase in the overall number of FOI/EIR requests dealt with by the Council. The volumes of requests being received appears to be normalising post the COVID-19 pandemic, when previous years' numbers are also reviewed, albeit a further increase can also perhaps be anticipated.
- 4.3 Section 2 of the appended report details in full the source of applicants who submitted requests over the course of the year. The top three sources of requestors who submit FOI requests are recorded as Individuals at 37.8%, Media and Newspaper Sources at 15.07% and Parliamentary Assistants 14.02%. Additionally, there were 14.2% of requests associated under the category of Others however this can not be quantified from the source of where these requests came from.
- 4.4 The Council's responses to FOI and EIRs for on time, late and failed to respond rates, as well as percentages of key performance indicators which is used by the SIC when comparing performance of other Scottish local authorities, is detailed in section 4 of the appended report. The Council responded to 91% of information requests on time and had a failure rate of 9% for responding late or failing to

respond to information requests during 2022. This reflects an 11% improvement on both the on-time and failure response rate which is reflective of the increased monitoring, and work by service areas, that has been undertaken throughout 2022. The Council is continuing to work on sustaining the time taken to respond to requests, following the intervention that was opened by SIC earlier in 2022, and reported to the Committee with the 2021 Annual Report, on 15 November 2022.

- 4.5 FOI/EIR requests are dealt with within existing staff resources and are recorded and co-ordinated centrally by Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services. In addition, Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services deals with any requests which are specific to the service and all of the corporate requests, the preparation and submission of quarterly statistical returns to the SIC and quarterly monitoring reports to the Corporate Management Team (CMT). This is supported by staff within the directorates who deal with service specific requests.
- 4.6 Quarterly reports on progress throughout the year are submitted to the CMT for overall review and any actions on a service specific basis and to ensure awareness of the impact on staff resources.
- 4.7 The information management system Workpro has been in use throughout 2022 for the processing of FOI requests, having been introduced in November 2021. Benefit from the system has been realised in terms of how we are responding to and managing the FOI requests across all services and in particular timescale management using the reports within the suite. Further training was delivered to support the ongoing development of knowledge across all officers who deal with FOI requests.
- 4.8 Monitoring of performance has been undertaken using the Day 15 FOI work progress report, the revised process which was implemented on 15 January 2022. The Information Governance and Complaints Officer continues to issue this report on a weekly basis to the Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT). The report highlights those cases that may require assistance from and escalation to managers to expedite prompt responses to requests. This is particularly important when a response has not yet been issued and the statutory response deadline is approaching. The implementation of this process is continuing to have a positive effect – in that improved response times generally and for more complicated requests have been noted. Monitoring will continue in the coming year routinely to maintain oversight on performance.
- 4.9 Additionally in January 2022, a new FOI workflow summary was developed to improve officer understanding of the FOI process and to introduce escalation points to assist with improving focus on the response timescales being met and the quality of responses being improved. There are more stringent measurements in place within services to ensure the appropriate timely actions are taken by services when responding to requests. The FOI workflow process summary also clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of officers at key stages of the process timescales. The new stringent measures sit alongside the above-mentioned Day 15 report that is issued weekly to senior managers to highlight cases that may require assistance from managers in order to expedite a prompt response to requests. The CMT along with the Information Governance Team are supporting the focus on key actions that are required each week, which have assisted in the improving performance in subsequent quarterly performance statistics to date.
- 4.10 As noted above, and reported to the Committee last year, in February 2022, the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) opened a Level 1 Intervention in respect of the Council's failure to comply with FOISA. Specifically, this action was taken by SIC as a result of concerns with the high levels of both late responses and requests where the Council failed to respond. The Council responded to the Level 1 Intervention providing supporting information and details of actions that were being taken to address non-compliance with the statutory timescales. Ongoing monitoring was also implemented to support the improvements sought by the SIC and the Council. The table below highlights the quarterly trends for the Council's FOI response failure rate. The SIC wrote to the Council on 26 January 2023 noting the positive improvements evident in the submission of statistics since the Level 1 Intervention was

opened. The failure rate statistic finished up at 5.2% for the last quarter of 2022, and 91% of responses were issued on-time over the whole of 2022, which is the best performance achieved since close monitoring was introduced. The SIC have indicated that if the performance remains at this level, they will be looking to close the Level 1 Intervention which the Council are awaiting confirmation of.

Period	FOI/EIRs responded to within Statutory Timescale	% On time	FOI/EIRs responded to out with Statutory Timescale	Requests not responded to	% of failed to respond within statutory timescale rate
Jan - Mar 2021	152	82.6%	32	0	17.4%
Apr - Jun 2021	155	68.9%	70	0	31.1%
Jul - Sept 2021	180	79.6%	43	3	20.4%
Oct - Dec 2021	269	85.4%	43	3	14.6%
Jan - Mar 2022	324	90%	33	3	10%
Apr - Jun 2022	344	91%	29	2	9%
July - Sept 2022	280	89.2%	32	2	10.8%
Oct - Dec 2022	395	94.7%	22	0	5.3%

- 4.11 An internal audit of the FOI process was undertaken between August and October 2022 in accordance with 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan. The audit identified 6 green issues which if implemented by management would enhance the control environment. The overall control environment opinion for this audit review was Satisfactory. The Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Service are implementing the agreed actions in the action plan, which it is hoped will further improve the Council's performance.
- 4.12 As noted below, information on the time spent and estimated costs of dealing with FOI and EIR requests across the Council has been collated from May 2016. Officers now consider that there is no tangible benefit from the collection of this information, and no statutory requirement for local authorities to report on it. Given this, and considering other operational priorities, it is intended that this collation will cease, and this information will not be reported to Committee in future years.

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

All costs associated with dealing with FOI and EIR requests, reviews and appeals and SARs are contained within existing budgets. Information on the time spent and estimated costs (based on the mid-point of the relative salary grade) of dealing with FOI and EIR requests across the Council has been collated from May 2016. Services are conscious of the need to accurately record the costs incurred and guidance and support are offered to assist in ensuring the Council has a clear view of

the resources utilised. The time spent on and estimated cost of dealing with FOI and EIR requests during January-December 2022 is set out in the table below and shows an increase in time and costs associated with dealing with FOIs. Throughout the year there has been anomalies in the capturing of this information by services in real time although this has been remedied by service areas. Reminders of the importance of completing this information at time of responding to the request has been reiterated to support the timely preparation of reporting.

Period	No of Requests	Time Spent	Estimated Cost
January - December 2017	1281	1814.4 hours	£30,112.93
January – December 2018	1305	1412.20 hours	£23,953.28
January – December 2019	1298	1934.95 hours	£39,122.34
January – December 2020	1042	1398.02hours	£29,553.44
January – December 2021	937	1222.34 hours	£24,919.80
January – December 2022	1142	2576.00 hours	£39,574.00

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 makes a limited provision for refusing requests which incur an excessive cost, and partially for recharging those that would cost the authority more than £100 to process. The Environmental Information Regulations allows for full recharge of the cost of dealing with requests. During the period of this report 2 requests were refused on the grounds that answering them would exceed the statutory cost limit and 1 fees notice was issued, however did not progress as payment was not received.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

The Council is legally bound to comply with FOISA and the EIRs. The Scottish Information Commissioner has powers of enforcement which can be used where a public authority is consistently failing to comply with the legislation.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications directly arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

This report helps deliver Council Plan Theme 3 Outcome: Performance – high quality and innovative service are provided, giving value for money.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

Inverclyde Council

Freedom of Information

Report on information requests received from
1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

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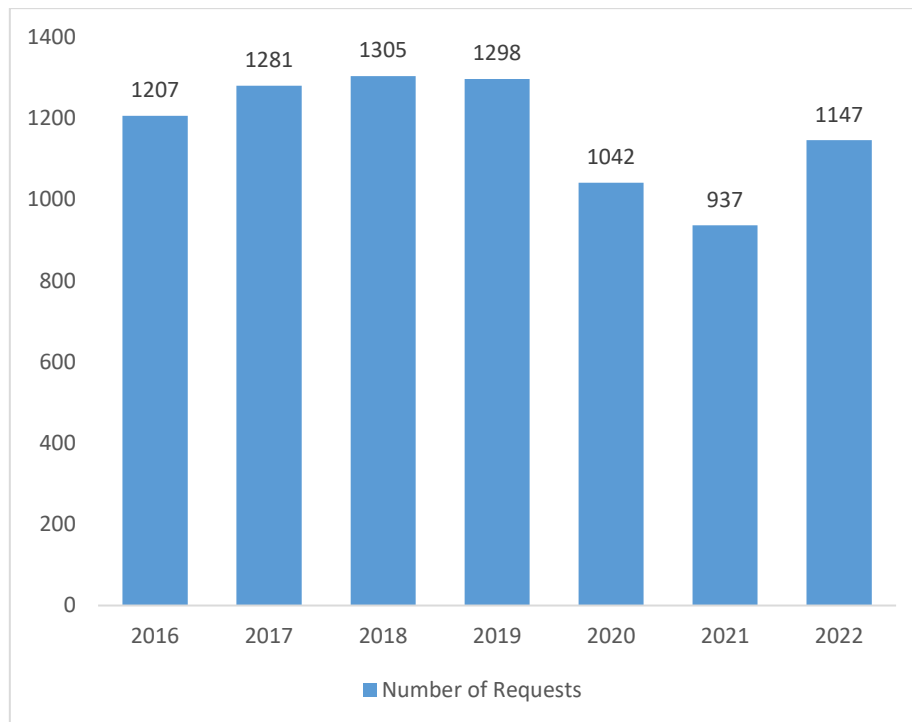
1. Introduction

This report outlines the volume of information requests received during the period 1 January to 31 December 2022 and provides a performance review across the Council's processing of these requests. It also considers the use of exemptions, fees, reviews, and appeals.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) provide a statutory right to access information that is held by Scottish Public Authorities. FOISA encourages openness and accountability and helps to build trust between the Council and the public it serves.

2. Volume of requests received

Inverclyde Council (including the HSCP) received 1147 requests for information in 2022 compared to 937 received in the previous year. This figure represents a 22% increase in the number of information requests received during 2022. This total comprised of 1044 requests under FOISA (929 in 2021) and 103 under the EIRs (8 in 2021). This is an increased number of EIRs which is largely down to more accurate categorisation of these requests. The Council also received 88 Data Subject Access Request (SARs) which is a 60% increase when comparing to last year's SARs of 55 requests. The Council responds to more requests than are received in the year, which is due to the natural carry over from each quarterly period and the legacy of requests which were not responded to in 2021 which were responded to in 2022. The carry over requests can, however, still be responded to within the statutory response time, where there is time available.



3. The Nature of requests

The requests for information have been received from a variety range of sources as noted in the table below. The top three sources of requests have been received from individuals – 37.8%, media and newspaper sources - 15.07% and parliamentary assistants - 14.02%. Additionally, there were 14.2% of requests associated under the category of Others however this cannot be quantified from the source of where these requests came from.

Source of request	% Of requests - 2021	% Of requests 2022
Individual	42.9%	37.80%
Commercial Firm	18.3%	9.41%
Media / Newspaper	15.7%	15.07%
Parliamentary Assistant	9.28%	14.02%
Charity / Third Sector	4.2%	3.31%
Legal Firm	2.5%	2.44%
Other	1.3%	14.20%
Students	1.28%	0.44%
Trade Union	1.17%	0.44%
Researchers	1.06%	1.48%
Client	0.4%	0.52%
Employee	0.3%	0.44%
Political Party MSP	0.1%	0.44%

4. Performance

The table below compares the Council's responses to FOIs and EIRs for on time, late and failure to respond rates as well as percentages of key performance indicators which are used by the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) when comparing performance with other Scottish local authorities. The statistics reflect what was reported to the SIC at the time of submitting the Council's statistical return. The Council responded to 91% of information requests on time and had a failure rate of 9.1% for responding late or failing to respond to information requests during 2022. A decrease is evident in the number of FOIs/EIRs failure rate when comparing the key performance indicators in 2022 to the previous year. The Council ended the year with 7 requests, which were not responded to, and 116 requests which were responded to late. Those FOIs which were not responded to now have FOIs been, which reflects the position as noted as part of the quarterly provision of the Council's statistical updates to the SIC.

No of requests received	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No of FOIs rec in calendar year	1193	1265	1273	1282	1009	929	1044
No of EIRs rec in calendar year	14	16	32	16	33	8	103
Total requests rec in the year	1207	1281	1305	1298	1042	937	1147

On time Response Performance numbers and %	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No of responses issued within timescales during the year	1010	1063	1042	1144	820	748	1049
Percentage of requests answered within timescale	86%	92%	84%	91%	80%	80%	91%

FOI not responded to failure rate numbers & %	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No of request where we failed to respond during the year	0	0	0	0	15	4	7
No of responses issued late during the year	151	95	197	119	187	188	116
Failure rate for responses issued during the year%	14%	8%	16%	9%	20%	20%	9%

During 2022, there was an increased focus on the Council's performance when responding to FOIs as it recognised the number of responses being issued late was too high. In January 2022, a new FOI workflow summary was developed to improve officer understanding of the FOI process and to introduce escalation points to assist with improving focus on the response timescales being met and the quality of responses being improved. The summary also clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of officers at key stages of the process timescales. There are more stringent measurements in place within services to ensure the appropriate timely actions are taken when responding to requests. The more stringent measures sit alongside a new Day 15 report that is issued weekly to senior managers to highlight cases that may require assistance from managers to expedite a prompt response to requests. The Corporate Management Team along with the Information Governance Team supporting the focus on key actions required each week have assisted in the improving performance in subsequent statistics seen to date.

In February 2022, a Level 1 Intervention was opened by SIC with the Council in connection with its 2021 submitted statistics. This action was taken by SIC because of concerns with the Council's recording for both late responses and requests where the Council failed to respond, which was at a rate of 29% or more in quarter 1 and 20% or more in quarter 2 of 2021. The aim of the intervention is to support the Council to improve its performance with regard to providing timely responses to information requests. In replying to this intervention, the Council provided SIC with a written response, along with supporting information, including details of actions taken to address non-compliance with the statutory timescales required under FOISA.

The SIC noted that the Council's response was comprehensive and noted that the Council's quarter 3 submission in 2021 for both late responses and failures to respond was at a rate of 20%, therefore demonstrating a continued improvement in response rates. The SIC sought a continuing downward trend for both late and failure to respond rates in the next couple of quarterly submissions to match the significant steps the Council has taken to improve performance. The table below shows the continued reduction over 2022 in the number of late and not responded to requests each quarter, as well as the noted increase in the number of on time responses issued up to the most current period's statistics. This shows the continuing improvement desired for these performance indicators.

Period	FOI/EIRs responded to within Statutory Timescale	% On time	FOI/EIRs responded to out with Statutory Timescale	Requests not responded to	% of failed to respond within statutory timescale rate
Jan - Mar 2021	152	82.6%	32	0	17.4%

Apr - Jun 2021	155	68.9%	70	0	31.1%
Jul - Sept 2021	180	79.6%	43	3	20.4%
Oct - Dec 2021	269	85.4%	43	3	14.6%
Jan - Mar 2022	324	90.0%	33	3	10.0%
Apr - Jun 2022	344	91.0%	29	2	9.0%
July - Sept 2022	280	89.2%	32	2	10.8%
Oct - Dec 2022	395	94.7%	22	0	5.3%

5. Exemptions

Most requests which have been responded to have resulted in full disclosure of all the requested information in 1023 (89%) of information requests. However, for some requests some information is exempt from disclosure in terms of FOISA or the EIRs. In such instances, FOI or EIR exemptions and exceptions are applied. The table below provides further information as to the use of these exemptions and exceptions. Partial disclosures, where some but not all information was released, accounts for 77 (6%) of information requests. The Council relied on exemptions or exceptions for all requested information in 47 (4%) of information requests received although this is largely attributable to information sought not being held by the Council or being otherwise accessible through other sources such as already published on the Council's website or on the Scottish Government website as part of statutory duties to report data.

Section	Exemption / Exception Cited	No of times cited
Section (12)	Excessive cost of compliance	3
Section (17) Regulation 10(4)a	Information not held	67
Section (25) Regulation 6(1)b	Information otherwise accessible	11
Section (26)	Statutory Prohibition	0
Section (27)	Future Publication	2
Section (30)	Substantial prejudice	5
Section (33), Regulation 10(5)e	Commercial interests and the economy	5
Section (34)	Investigations	0
Section 35 Regulation 10(5)b	Law Enforcement	0
Section (36) Regulation 10(5)d	Confidentiality	5
Section (39)	Health and Safety	0
Section (38) Regulation 11	Personal Information	9
Regulation 10(5)f	Interests of the supplier of information	0
Regulation 10 (4)c	Request formulated in too general a manner	0

6. Fees

FOISA makes limited provision for refusing requests, which incur an excessive cost and for partially recharging those that would cost the authority more than £100.00 to process. The EIRs allow for the full recharge of the cost of dealing with requests. The table below sets out the number of requests where fees notices were issued. If the applicant does not pay the fees notices within a certain period of time, the request will not be progressed. The Council tends to release the information in most cases without a fee. In relation to EIRs, services are encouraged to charge for information particularly when a significant amount of information is required. The Council has a charging schedule on the Council's website to assist officers with this.

Quarterly Period	No of Requests where fees notices issued	No of requests fee notice not paid	No of Requests where fees notice paid
Jan to Mar 2022	0	0	0
Apr to Jun 2022	0	0	0
Jul to Sept 2022	0	0	0
Oct to Dec 2022	1	1	0

7. Time and Cost Involved in Responding to FOIs

All costs associated with dealing with FOI/EIR requests, reviews, and appeals and Data Subject Access Requests are contained within existing budgets. However, information on the time spent and estimated cost (based on the mid-point of the relative salary grade) of dealing with FOI and EIR requests across the Council has been collated since May 2016.

The time spent and the estimated cost of dealing with FOI and EIR requests during 1 January to 31 December 2022 is set out in the table below with comparison data for the same period in previous years. A noted improvement in the level of detail recorded for time and costs is evident in the recorded detail across all services. This is the first year where we have seen the new Workpro process embed, which has seen the FOI designated officers recording this information directly to each case real time. Whilst there have been anomalies in capturing of this detail real time each quarter, all corrective work has been actioned by all services to close of recording gaps. This is the most accurate view seen over recent years for the time and cost detail and represents officer involvement at all grades which was evidenced during the compilation of the data. Reminders has been issued to officers involved in the process to remind them of the importance of inputting this information at time of responding to the FOI requests to support prompt reporting.

Period	Time spent in hours	Estimated costs
1 January – 31 December 2017	1814.4 hours	£30,112.93
1 January – 31 December 2018	1412.20 hours	£23,953.28
1 January – 31 December 2019	1934.95 hours	£39,122.34
1 January – 31 December 2020	1398.02 hours	£29,553.44
1 January – 31 December 2021	1222.34 hours	£24,919.80
1 January - 31 December 2022	2576.00 hours	£39,574.00

8. Reviews and Appeals

During 2022 of the 1147 information requests received, the applicants formally asked the Council to review its decisions on 12 FOIs and 1 EIR requests. The table below outlines the outcome of the reviews. Applicants submitted appeals to the SIC in 4 cases. The SIC have notified the Council of receipt of requests for an appeal in 2 cases, the Council await the formal request for submissions from the SIC on these 2 cases. The Council have also received

notification of application for appeal on 2 further cases and the Council have provided further comments to the SIC to consider these further for both cases.

Type of review	Number of reviews
No of requests for internal reviews	12 FOIs & 1 EIR
Outcome of internal reviews:	
- upheld the Council's decision	4
- partially upheld the Council's decision	5
- did not uphold the Council's decision	4
- internal review submitted outside of timescale	0
Appeals to Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC)	
- Awaiting request for submissions from SIC	2
- Notification of application and the Council has supplied comments requested	2
Outcome of SIC Appeal:	
-upheld the Council's decision	0
-did not uphold the Council's decision	0
-withdrawn by applicant	0

9. Conclusion

The Council's performance during 2022 improved following the close monitoring process that was implemented early in the 2022 to support improvement required in statutory response timescales. During the year, training has been delivered to support FOI designated officers and those officers involved in responding to requests to refresh knowledge and support confidence in application of exemptions and exceptions.

The Workpro System which is the case management system used to support the end-to-end process has made difference to the way in which the process requests and how we monitor performance. The recent audit of the Freedom of Information process has also identified that the process is working well and the Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services are working on the action plan to further strengthen the process. It is anticipated that the recently implemented system Workpro together with ongoing work on policy, procedures and training will continue to support the improvements required in the coming year's performance.