

**A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 19 September 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 18 September 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.**

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IAIN STRACHAN  
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

## **BUSINESS**

**\*\* Copy to follow**

1. <b>Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	Page
<b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</b>	
2. <b>2023/24 Policy &amp; Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 31 July 2023</b> Report by Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	<b>p</b>
3. <b>Policy &amp; Resources Capital Budget and Council 2023/26 Capital Programme</b> Report by Chief Financial Officer	<b>p</b>
4. <b>Finance Update</b> Report by Chief Financial Officer	<b>p</b>
5. <b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update: May-September 2023</b> Report by Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	<b>p</b>
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
6. <b>2024/26 Budget Update</b> Report by Chief Financial Officer	<b>p</b>

7.	<b>Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy – Consultation</b> Report by Chief Financial Officer	<b>p</b>
8.	<b>Update – Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention</b> Report by Interim Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	<b>p</b>
9.	<b>External Care at Home Service – Change of Cost/Quality Weighting</b> Report by Chief Officer, Health & Social Care Partnership	<b>p</b>
10.	<b>Complaint Handling Annual Report 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023</b> Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	<b>p</b>
11.	<b>Organisational Development, Policy and Communications Management Arrangements</b> Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	<b>p</b>
<b>REMITTS FROM COMMITTEES</b>		
12.	<b>Inverkip Project Update – Remit from Environment &amp; Regeneration Committee</b> Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	<b>p</b>
13.	<b>Dunrod Road – Closure and Landslip – Remit from Environment &amp; Regeneration Committee</b> Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	<b>p</b>

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

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development and Chief Executive</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/53/23/AP/AB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712090</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>2023/24 Policy &amp; Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 31 July 2023</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the Policy & Resources Revenue Budget outturn for 2022/23 and the 2023/24 projected position at 31 July 2023. The report also notes the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection and the position of the General Fund Reserve at the same date.

1.3 In 2022/23, excluding the carry forward of Earmarked Reserves, there was an underspend of £142,000 within the Policy and Resources Committee. This was a decrease in expenditure of £825,000 from the Period 11 projected outturn reported to Committee in March and was largely due to a decrease in the anticipated draw on the inflation contingencies. More details are provided in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

1.4 The revised 2023/24 Revenue Budget for the Policy and Resources Committee is £22,672,000, which excludes Earmarked Reserves. The latest projection is an overspend of £124,000 (0.50%) mainly due to unachieved turnover targets to date. More details are provided in section 3.6 and the appendices

1.5 The latest projection for the General Fund Budget is an overspend of £443,000. Based on these figures the Council's unallocated Reserves are currently projected to be £3.031million more than the minimum recommended level of £4.0million by 31 March 2024.

1.6 The report advises Committee of a change to the accounting treatment of Larkfield Industrial Estate income and expenditure which should be included within in the Common Good Fund. The report highlights the actions needed to keep both budgets within equilibrium.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 Note the final outturn for the 2022/23 Policy and Resources Budget and note the current projected overspend for 2023/24 of £124,000 as at 31 July 2023.

2.2 Note the projected overspend of £443,000 for the General Fund and the projected surplus reserves of £3.031million at 31 July 2023.

- 2.3 Note that officers are reviewing the adequacy of both the pay and non-pay inflation allowances and that an update will be provided at the next meeting.
- 2.4 Note the projected 2023/24 surplus of £5,120 for the Common Good Budget set out in Appendix 6 and approves the actions required to keep the Common Good and General Fund budgets in equilibrium set out in Appendix 5.
- 2.5 Approves the other virements in Appendix 5.

**Alan Puckrin**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & ODHR**

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

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the current position of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget as well as the 2022/23 final outturn and to highlight the main variances contributing to the £142,000 underspend for 2022/23 and the projected overspend of £124,000 for 2023/24.

3.2 The revised 2023/24 Revenue Budget for the Policy & Resources Committee is £22,672,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. This is a decrease of £457,000 from the approved budget largely due to allocations from the inflation contingency. Appendix 1 gives more details of this budget movement.

3.3 A review of Common Good properties has been undertaken and it has been identified that Larkfield Industrial Estate should be accounted for as part of the Common Good on the basis that it generates a commercial net income stream.

#### 3.4 2022/23 Outturn

The final outturn for the Policy & Resources 2022/23 Revenue Budget, excluding Earmarked Reserves was an underspend of £142,000. The main variations from budget and movements from the projected outturn position at Period 11 for 2022/23, reported to the Committee in March, were as follows:

The outturn in specific service areas was as follows:

Service	Revised Budget 2022/23 £000	Outturn 2022/23 £000	Variance to Budget £000	P11 Projected Variance £000	Movement Since P11 £000
Finance	8,154	7,874	(280)	(266)	(14)
Legal	2,082	2,176	94	96	(2)
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,269	2,313	44	10	34
Chief Executive	344	354	10	13	(3)
Miscellaneous	6,629	6,619	(10)	830	(840)
<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>19,478</b>	<b>19,336</b>	<b>(142)</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>(825)</b>

3.5 The major variances making up the under spend were as follows -

- a. Pay Inflation Contingency overspend of £627,000 for the 2022/23 Pay Award, and is net of additional Scottish Government funding. This overspend is a decrease in anticipated costs of £773,000 since last reported to Committee. Pay Inflation will continue to be a considerable pressure in 2023/24 based on negotiations to date.
- b. Non Pay Inflation Contingency overspend was mainly due to increased utility costs of £1,434,000. The Non Pay Contingency budget overspent by £1,061,000. Utility costs are recognised as a key budget risk going forward. This represents a decrease in anticipated costs of £189,000 since the period 11 report to Committee. An allowance of £2,400,000 has been made in the 2023/24 budget plus a £3.0 million one-off smoothing reserve.
- c. Over recovery £1,746,000 for Internal Resources Interest due to the significant sharp rise in interest rates.

#### 3.6 2023/24 Projected Outturn - £124,000 overspend 0.5 %

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

- (a) Overall committee Employee Costs are projected to overspend by £149,000 due to an under achievement of turnover savings to date.

- (b) Projected over-recovery of £33,000 within Income for ICT service recharges for internal maintenance recharges for computer equipment purchased outside of the refresh programme.
- (c) External Licences are currently projecting at an under recovery of £36,000 for liquor and taxi operators. These projections are in line with previous outturns.
- (d) £25,000 underspend projected for bad debt provision reduction within Housing Benefits.
- (e) Statutory Additions £25,000 under-recovery in line with last year.
- (f) The above excludes any projection for pay and non-pay inflation due to the significant uncertainty in both areas. Officers are reviewing assumptions/projections in detail and an update will be provided to the next meeting.

### 3.7 Earmarked Reserves

Appendix 4 gives an update on the operational Earmarked Reserves, i.e. excluding strategic funding models. Spend to 31 July 2023 on these operational Earmarked Reserves is £258,000 (11.14% of projected spend). Appendix 8 gives the overall earmarked reserve position which shows 28% slippage against phased budget largely within the HSCP.

### 3.8 General Fund Budget & Reserves Position

Appendix 7 shows that as at 31 July 2024 the General Fund is projecting a £443,000 overspend (excluding Health & Social Care) which represents 0.2% of the net Revenue Budget. Policy & Resources Committee are projecting £124,000 overspend as is Environment & Regeneration of £352,000 which is offset by an under spend within the Education & Communities Directorate of £33,000.

Appendix 9 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 31 March, 2023 is £7.031 million which is £3.031 million above the minimum recommended balance of £4 million. The General Fund Reserve position includes additions to the Reserve beyond 2023/24 that were agreed as part of the 2023/24 Budget approved by the Council on March 2023.

### 3.9 Common Good Fund

The Common Good Fund is projecting a surplus fund balance of £5,120 as shown in Appendix 6 and which results in projected surplus fund balance of £128,690 at 31 March 2024 before the inclusion of the changes in 5.2.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 A Common Good Asset Review was carried out during 2010/11 to identify any properties which should have been considered Common Good and thereafter transferred to the Common Good Budget. However, the properties at Larkfield Industrial Estate, Earnhill Road were not transferred to the Common Good as approved.

In order to account for this change; income generated, and costs associated with Larkfield industrial estate has to transfer to the Common Good budget. Virement from the Gourrock Highland Games budget within the Events and the Christmas Decorations budget within Ground Maintenance, included within appendix 5, has been identified to maintain equilibrium of the Council General Fund budget and Common Good budget. The virement also transfers the income generated from Larkfield to the Common Good and the associated costs.

The proposals to correct the Common Good fund are as below:

- Inclusion of Larkfield Industrial Estate income within the Common Good budget
- Realign budgets as detailed in Appendix 5 to ensure that the Common Good and General Fund budgets remain in equilibrium.

Appendix 5 also details virements from Legal Services to Property for the Energy Team and from Property to ICT Services for New Ways of Working.

4.2 The Committee is asked to note that officers are currently reviewing the inflation projections and will provide an update to the next meeting of the Committee.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

## 5.2 Finance

The Committee Budget and General Fund Budget are both projecting overspends. Whilst overspends tend to reduce as the year progresses, the uncertainty around the pay award and other inflation pressures make this assumption less certain and officers need to continue to reduce costs wherever possible.

### 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
Common Good Fund	Income	2023/24	£(69,000)		Transfers to the Common Good from the General Fund
	Property Costs	2023/24	£20,800		
G Maintenance	Christmas Decorations	2023/24	£43,700		
Corp Comms	Events	2023/24	£4,500	Other expenditure	Virement within Comms Budget required

### **5.3 Legal/Risk**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **5.4 Human Resources**

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

### **5.5 Strategic**

There are no specific strategic implications arising from this report.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The paper has been jointly prepared by the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director Education, Communities, and Organisational Development and the Chief Executive.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 There are no background papers for this report.



**Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2023/24****Period 4: 1 April 2023 - 31 July 2023**

Service	Approved Budget	Movements			Revised Budget	
	2023/24 £000	Inflation £000	Virement £000	Supplementary Budgets £000	Transferred to EMR £000	2023/24 £000
Finance	5,630		(15)			5,615
Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services	5,389		(3)			5,386
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,219	33				2,252
Chief Exec	377		(28)			349
Miscellaneous	9,514	(362)			(82)	9,070
Totals	<u>23,129</u>	<u>(329)</u>	<u>(46)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(82)</u>	<u>22,672</u>

**Supplementary Budget Detail**

£000

Inflation

HR - Occupational Health contract increase

33

Miscellaneous Pay Inflation Adjustments

2

Miscellaneous Non Pay Inflation Adjustments

(364)(329)Virements

Legal - Budget transfer to Property Services for Energy Team

(50)

Legal - ICT transfer from Physical Assets for New Ways Of Working Project

40

R&amp;B - Budget transfer to Property Services for Energy Team

(8)

Chief Exec - Management restructure within E&amp;R Directorate

(28)(46)**Total Inflation & Virements**(375)

**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT****CURRENT POSITION****Period 4: 1 April 2023 - 31 July 2023**

2022/23 Actual £000	SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2023/24 £000	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Projected Out-turn 2023/24 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
9,459	Employee Costs	8,864	8,804	8,953	149	1.7%
623	Property Costs	734	734	734	0	-
892	Supplies & Services	900	902	909	7	0.8%
2	Transport & Plant	5	5	5	0	-
1,248	Administration Costs	1,306	1,316	1,226	(90)	(6.8%)
37,596	Payments to Other Bodies	41,530	41,241	41,227	(14)	(0.0%)
(26,954)	Income	(30,210)	(30,248)	(30,176)	72	(0.2%)
<b>22,866</b>	<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>23,129</b>	<b>22,754</b>	<b>22,878</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
	Earmarked reserves		(82)	(82)	0	
<b>22,866</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>23,129</b>	<b>22,672</b>	<b>22,796</b>	<b>124</b>	

2022/23 Actual £000	OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2023/24 £000	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Projected Out-turn 2023/24 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
12,759	Finance	5,630	5,615	5,623	8	0.1%
5,234	Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Serv	5,389	5,386	5,411	25	0.5%
<b>17,993</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</b>	<b>11,019</b>	<b>11,001</b>	<b>11,034</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
2,279	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,219	2,252	2,331	79	3.5%
<b>2,279</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>2,219</b>	<b>2,252</b>	<b>2,331</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
360	Chief Executive	377	349	361	12	3.4%
2,234	Miscellaneous	9,514	9,152	9,152	0	-
<b>22,866</b>	<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>23,129</b>	<b>22,754</b>	<b>22,878</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
	Earmarked reserves		(82)	(82)		
<b>22,866</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>23,129</b>	<b>22,672</b>	<b>22,796</b>	<b>124</b>	

**POLICY RESOURCES**

**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

**MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)**

Appendix 3

**Period 4: 1 April 2023 - 31 July 2023**

Outturn 2022/23 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2023/24 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 31/07/23 £000	Projection 2023/24 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000	Percentage Variance %
	<b><u>Finance</u></b>						
2,796	Finance and R&B Employee Cost	2,851	851	845	2,880	29	1.0%
26	R&B Bad Debt Provison	0	0	(11)	(25)	(25)	
(270)	R&B Stat Adds	(294)	(88)	(72)	(269)	25	(8.5%)
	<b><u>Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</u></b>						
1,903	Employee Costs	1,880	577	591	1,935	55	2.9%
	<b><u>Legal, Democratic Digital &amp; Customer Services</u></b>						
4,415	Employee Costs	3,811	1,149	1,209	3,864	53	1.4%
(55)	ICT Income Recharges	(25)	(8)	(13)	(58)	(33)	132.0%
(276)	Legal - Licenses	(318)	(106)	(74)	(282)	36	(11.3%)
<b>8,539</b>	<b>TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES</b>	<b>7,905</b>	<b>2,374</b>	<b>2,475</b>	<b>8,045</b>	<b>140</b>	

## EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy &amp; Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P4	Actual P4	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
B	Early Retiral/Voluntary Severance Reserve	Alan Puckrin	1,995	0	0	1,750	245	Projection for 23/24 is an initial allowance which will be reviewed as decisions are taken on the 2024/26 Budget.
C	Equal Pay	Morna Rae	100	0	0	0	100	Balance for equal pay which is under review on an annual basis.
C	Digital Modernisation	Iain Strachan	1,268	0	0	182	1,086	Schools Cashless Catering System replacement and CRM Replacement systems indicative timeline.
C	Welfare Reform - Operational	Alan Puckrin	52	0	0	0	52	Phasing being reviewed due to several welfare related software changes.
C	Anti-Poverty Fund	Ruth Binks	2,084	61	61	1,200	884	Detailed report to be included at November Policy & Resources Committee.
B	Loan Charge Funding Model	Alan Puckrin	1,645	0	0	101	1,544	Projection per June 2023 Finance Strategy.
C	GDPR	Iain Strachan	19	1	1	19	0	Information governance system contract (Workpro) awarded (2yr+1yr+1yr). Spend committed - £11k per year. Continued corporate training programme being organised.
B	2023/26 Budget Funding Reserve	Alan Puckrin	6,000	0	0	3,000	3,000	Projection per March 2023 Budget decision. £2million in 24/25 and £1 million 25/26.
C	ICT Technicians To Support Digital School Inclusion/Covid Recovery	Iain Starchan	70	28	24	50	20	Ongoing Monthly Employee Costs. 1 x Service Desk Operator (until 01/09/24) and 1 x Technical Project Officer (until 01/10/23)
C	Extension of Corporate Policy Post	Morna Rae	44	14	13	44	0	To fund Grade 6 Corp Policy Post until 31st March 2024.
C	New Ways of Working	Stuart Jamieson	267	15	15	267	0	Project moving to asset based phase and use of EMR being reviewed.

**EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources**

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P4	Actual P4	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2023/24 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23		
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
C	HR Resources	Morna Rae	92	31	28	92	0	Ongoing monthly employee costs to 31st March 2024.
C	Project Resource		135	0	0	35	100	Projects approved to date. HR review, Co-operative Councils membership, Task Force support and Solace support for difficult to fill senior Regen posts.
C	Covid Recovery - Marketing Post & Support for Discover Inverclyde	Morna Rae	67	9	11	67	0	£40K Historic Links to Slavery Funding, £27K Employee Grade 6 communications officer (tourism) post until November 2023.
C	Scottish Welfare Fund	Alan Puckrin	77	77	77	77	0	Fully Spent in 23/24
C	Discretionary Housing Payments - Scottish Govt Grant	Alan Puckrin	28	28	28	28	0	Fully Spent in 23/24
C	Smoothing Reserve (Service Concession)	Alan Puckrin	602	0	0	254	348	Sum to smooth difference between approved £1.65m saving and actual saving per the funding model over 2023/28.
B	Inflation Smoothing Reserve	Alan Puckrin	3,000	0	0	1,500	1,500	Allowance to address inflation volatility over the 2023/25 period. CMT reviewing use of this EMR.
C	Student Training Fees	Morna Rae	100	0	0	10	90	Payment of training fees to aid staff recruitment and retention.
<b>Total Category B</b>			<b>12,640</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,351</b>	<b>6,289</b>	
<b>Total Category C to E</b>			<b>5,005</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>2,325</b>	<b>2,680</b>	

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****VIREMENT REQUESTS**

<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Increase Budget</b>	<b>(Decrease) Budget</b>
Legal - Budget transfer to Property Services for Energy Team		(50)
R&B - Budget transfer to Property Services for Energy Team		(8)
Property Services - Budget transfer for Energy Team	58	
IT Services - New Ways of Working Monies from Property	40	
Property - New Ways of Working Monies to ICT		(40)
Common Good Fund - Income transfer from below	69	
Common Good Fund - Property Costs transfer to Common Good		(21)
Ground Maintenance - Budget transfer from Christmas Decorations to Common Good		(44)
Corporate Communications - Budget transfer from Events to Common Good		(4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>(167)</b>

**COMMON GOOD FUND****REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24****PERIOD 4 : 1st April 2023 to 31st July 2023**

	Final Outturn 2022/23	Approved Budget 2023/24	Budget to Date 2023/24	Actual to Date 2023/24	Projected Outturn 2023/24
	£	£	£	£	£
<b><u>PROPERTY COSTS</u></b>	<b>42,400</b>	<b>35,700</b>	<b>24,900</b>	<b>24,510</b>	<b>37,670</b>
Repairs & Maintenance	17,200	11,000	3,700	1,340	11,000
Rates <b>1</b>	21,160	21,200	21,200	23,170	23,170
Property Insurance	4,040	3,500	0	0	3,500
<b><u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u></b>	<b>7,930</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,700</b>
Sundries	1,730	1,500	500	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
<b><u>OTHER EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>59,300</b>	<b>61,500</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>31,200</b>	<b>61,500</b>
Christmas Lights Switch On	10,500	10,500	0	0	10,500
Gourock Highland Games	29,400	29,400	0	29,400	29,400
Armistice Service	8,850	8,300	0	0	8,300
Comet Festival	13,300	13,300	13,300	1,800	13,300
Bad Debt Provision	(2,750)	0	0	0	0
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b>(127,520)</b>	<b>(108,900)</b>	<b>(36,200)</b>	<b>(36,340)</b>	<b>(111,990)</b>
Property Rental	(159,000)	(159,200)	(53,100)	(53,100)	(159,200)
Void Rents <b>2</b>	34,980	50,800	16,900	16,760	50,715
Internal Resources Interest	(3,500)	(500)	0	0	(3,500)
<b><u>NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>(17,890)</b>	<b>(4,000)</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>19,370</b>	<b>(5,120)</b>
<b><u>EARMARKED FUNDS</u></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>(17,890)</b>	<b>(4,000)</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>19,370</b>	<b>(5,120)</b>

Fund Balance as at 31st March 2023 123,568

Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2024

128,688**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:**

	<u>Vacant since:</u>
12 Bay St	April 2015, currently being marketed
14 Bay St	November 2022, currently being marketed
6 John Wood Street	January 2019, currently being marketed
10 John Wood Street	August 2018
15 John Wood Street	June 2017
17 John Wood Street	June 2023

Policy & Resources CommitteeRevenue Budget Monitoring ReportPosition as at 31st July 2023

Committee	Approved Budget 2023/2024	Revised Budget 2023/2024	Projected Out-turn 2023/2024	Projected Over/(Under) Spend	Percentage Variance
	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	
Policy & Resources	23,129	22,632	22,756	124	0.55%
Environment & Regeneration	22,505	22,833	23,185	352	1.54%
Education & Communities	100,759	101,173	101,140	(33)	(0.03%)
Health & Social Care	68,156	68,156	67,957	(199)	(0.29%)
<b>Committee Sub-Total</b>	<b>214,549</b>	<b>214,794</b>	<b>215,038</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>0.11%</b>
Loan Charges	16,902	16,902	16,902	0	0.00%
Saving Approved yet to be Allocated <b>(Note 1)</b>	(100)	(100)	(100)	0	0.00%
Additional Turnover Savings yet to be identified <b>(Note 2)</b>	0	(133)	(133)	0	0.00%
Service Concession Flexibility	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)	0	0.00%
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	482	482	0	0.00%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>229,701</b>	<b>230,295</b>	<b>230,539</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>0.11%</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates	(190,719)	(191,313)	(191,313)	0	0.00%
General Revenue Grant - Teachers Hold Back <b>(Note 3)</b>	(655)	(655)	(655)	0	0.00%
Contribution from General Reserves	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	0	100.00%
Council Tax	(35,327)	(35,327)	(35,327)	0	0.00%
Integration Joint Board - Contribution to Reserves	0	0	199	199	100.00%
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>443</b>	

**Note 1 - Approved savings yet to be allocated**

**Note 2 - Additional Turnover Savings yet to be identified**

**Note 3 - General Revenue Grant - Teachers Hold Back funding to be received after criteria met**

Earmarked Reserves

DMR	300
Anti-Poverty	82
Turnover Savings	100
<b>Contribution to General Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>482</b>

Redeterminations

Probationer Teachers	(594) ECOD
	<b>(594)</b>



**Earmarked Reserves Position Statement**

**Appendix 8**

**Summary**

<b><u>Committee</u></b>	<b><u>Total Funding 2023/24</u></b>	<b><u>Phased Budget to P4</u></b>	<b><u>Actual Spend To 31 July 2023</u></b>	<b><u>Variance Actual to Phased Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Projected Spend 2023/24</u></b>	<b><u>Earmarked 2024/25 &amp; Beyond</u></b>
	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>	<b><u>£000</u></b>
Education & Communities	1,495	147	147	0	1,129	366
Health & Social Care	6,463	425	59	(366)	3,098	3,365
Regeneration & Environment	9,367	493	488	(5)	5,419	3,948
Policy & Resources	17,645	264	258	(6)	8,676	8,969
	<b>34,970</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>(377)</b>	<b>18,322</b>	<b>16,648</b>

<b><u>2023/24 %age Spend Against Projected</u></b>	<b><u>2023/24 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget</u></b>
13.02%	0.00%
1.90%	(86.10%)
9.01%	(1.01%)
2.97%	(2.39%)
<b>5.19%</b>	<b>(28.36%)</b>

**Actual Spend v Phased Budget Behind Phasing = (£377k) (28.36%)**

**Appendix 9**

**GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION**  
**Position as at 31/07/23**

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Projected Usable Balance 31/3/23 (subject to audit)		7474
<u>Available Funding:</u>		
Service Concession	14,748	
IRI 2023/26	3,500	
Use of Earmarked Reserve 2022/23	452	
	<hr/>	18700
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) 2023/24	<hr/> (443)	(443)
<u>Use of Balances:</u>		
Support to 2023/26 Budgets	(4,000)	
Net Zero Action Plan	(3,300)	
Anti Poverty Initiatives	(800)	
Employability Smoothing Reserve	(400)	
Digital Modernisation	(1,000)	
Inflation Smoothing Reserve	(3,000)	
2023/26 Capital Programme Funding	(4,000)	
Clune Park Regeneration	(500)	
Voluntary Severance Reserve	<hr/> (1,700)	(18700)
Projected Reserve Balance		<hr/> <b>7031</b> <hr/>

**Minimum Reserve required is £4 million**

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/57/23/MT/GS</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Matt Thomson</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712256</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Capital Budget and Council 2023/26 Capital Programme</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the 2023/26 Capital Programme.
- 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 2023/26 of £6.407m with total projected spend on budget. The Committee is projecting to spend £0.735m in 2023/24 after advancement of £0.131m (21.69%).
- 1.4 The overall 2023/26 Capital Programme budget is £66.733m with projects totalling £69.992m. This represents a £3.259m (4.88%) over allocation which is within the approved 5% tolerance. In the current year a net advancement of £0.448m, 2.36% is being reported. Expenditure at 31 July was £3.387m (17.4% of projected spend).

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position of the 2023/26 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and the current position of the 2023/26 Capital Programme.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee note that there are reports elsewhere on the agenda seeking funding from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency in relation to Dunrod Road and Inverkip City Deal.

**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.
- 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 occur:
- 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.

#### **2023/26 Policy & Resources Capital Position**

- 3.3 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £6.407m. The current projection is £6.407m which means total projected spend is on budget.
- 3.4 The budget for 2023/24 is £0.604m and the Committee is projecting to spend £0.735m in 2023/24, advancement of £0.131m (21.69%) relating mainly to the 2023/26 Capital Programme Contingency. The spend as at 31 July is £0.089m (12.11%) of current projection.
- 3.5 PC Refresh Programme – 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 2022/23 PC Refresh Programme. The remaining devices in suites were refreshed in Phase 2 tranche 2 during the summer school break. The final tranche, School Management and offices will be completed between now and the end of 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.
- 3.6 Server and Switch Replacement – The implementation programme to replace and expand the Corporate Network Storage system is complete. A server and system upgrade to the Council's telephony system is scheduled for completion in September 2023. This will allow refresh of all current systems to the latest version and will provide the foundation of any migrations to cloud based services in the future. Planned work includes the deployment of core services in support of Office 365 and replacement of Virtual Server Estate and infill of the School and Corporate Wireless network following availability and coverage surveys completed by ICT for future programmes. These projects will utilise all allocated resources in this budget.
- 3.7 As part of the 2023/26 budget setting process £4m has been allocated to meet potential cost increases, fund unforeseen projects 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. To date £250,000 has been

allocated to the Parklea Branching Out RCGF project. In addition, reports elsewhere in this agenda request funding for Dunrod Road and Inverkip City Deal project.

### **Overall 2023/26 Capital Programme**

- 3.8 The overall 2023/26 Capital Programme reflects the 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), £150k for Coastal Protection and £126k for Play Areas leaving a core grant of £6.080m. The estimated capital grant allocation for 2024/25 and 2025/26 remains £6.0m.
- 3.9 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 £3.259m which represents 4.88% of the 2023/26 resources.
- 3.10 In terms of the overall Capital Programme, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that as at 31 July 2023 expenditure in 2023/24 was 17.4% of projected spend. Phasing and projected spend has been reviewed by the budget holders and the relevant Director. The position in respect of each individual Committee is reported in Appendix 2 and in paragraph 3.12 of this report. Overall Committees are projecting to outturn on budget.
- 3.11 In the current year net advancement of £0.448m, (2.36%) is currently being reported. This is due to advancement within the Environment & Regeneration Committee (£0.372m) and Policy & Resources Committee (£0.131m) offset with slippage in the Education & Communities Committee (£0.055m).
- 3.12 The position in respect of individual Committees for 2023/24 is as follows:

#### Policy & Resources

Expenditure as at 31 July 2023 is £0.089m against an approved budget of £0.604m. Advancement of £0.131m (21.69%) is being reported at this stage within the Medium Term Capital Program Support (£0.131m).

#### Environment & Regeneration

Expenditure as at 31 July 2023 is £1.929m against an approved budget of £13.091m. Net advancement of £0.372m (2.84%) and is mainly due to slippage in Town & Village Centre projects (£0.199m) and Coastal Change Adaptions (£0.070m) offset with advancements within the RAMP (£0.424m) and play Area Strategy (£0.126m).

#### Education & Communities

Expenditure as at 31 July 2023 is £1.356m against an approved budget of £2.713m. Net slippage of £0.055m (2.03%) is being reported mainly due to the Lifecycle fund (£0.080m) offset with advancements in the Free School Meals (0.035m).

#### Health & Social Care

Expenditure as at 31 July 2023 is £0.013m against an approved budget of £2.601m. There has been no slippage or advancement of costs within the Health & Social Care budget to date this year.

## **4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress on the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the position of the 2023/26 Capital Programme.

4.2 Environmental & Regeneration Committee on 31 August 2023 agreed to request extra funding from the Committee in relation to the re-alignment of Dunrod Road and the Council's funding of the Inverkip City Deal project. These matters are covered in more detail elsewhere on the agenda.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

## 5.2 Finance

Overall, the Capital programme remains within parameters, but considerable pressures continue to exist and require to be considered as part of the forthcoming budget.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

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

## 5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR matters arising from this report.

## **5.5 Strategic**

The overall Capital programme contains many projects which contribute to the strategic priorities of the Council. As a result, timeous delivery of projects remains a focus for officers.

## **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.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Project Name	Est Total Cost	Actual to 31/3/23	Approved Budget 2023/24	Revised Est 2023/24	Actual to 31/07/2023	Est 2024/25	Est 2025/26	Future Years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><u>Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</u></b>								
<b><u>ICT</u></b>								
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	25	23	2	2	3	0	0	0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	442	418	24	24	83	0	0	0
Meeting Room, Videoconferencing & Hybrid Working Equipment	60	9	51	51	0	0	0	0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	195	178	17	17	3	0	0	0
Home Working Allocation	25	15	10	10	0	0	0	0
Annual Allocation	1,779	-	500	500	0	635	644	0
<b><u>ICT Total</u></b>	<b>2,526</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Finance</u></b>								
2023/26 Capital Programme Contingency	3,881	-	0	131	0	1,750	2,000	0
Cost Pressure Contingency (added to Med Term Cap Prog Support)	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Finance Total</u></b>	<b>3,881</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>2,385</b>	<b>2,644</b>	<b>0</b>



**Appendix 2a**

Capital Programme - 2023/24 - 2025/26

Available Resources

	A	B	C	D	F
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Capital Support	8,228	6,000	6,000	-	20,228
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	514	315	315	-	1,144
Capital Grants (Note 2)	4,558	-	-	-	4,558
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	5,704	8,948	2,638	-	17,290
Balance B/F From 22/23	12,505	-	-	-	12,505
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	2,064	5,850	3,094	-	11,008
	<u>33,573</u>	<u>21,113</u>	<u>12,047</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>66,733</u>

Overall Position 2023/26

	<u>£000</u>
Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-C)	66,733
Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-D)	69,992
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources	<u>(3,259)</u>
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %	<u>(4.88)%</u>

**Notes to Appendix 2a****Note 1 (Capital Receipts)**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	214	315	315	-	844
Contributions/Recoveries	300	-	-	-	300
	514	315	315	-	1,144

**Note 2 (Capital Grants)**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Grant - Place Based Funding	407	-	-	-	407
Early Years	-	-	-	-	-
Renewal of Play Parks	126	-	-	-	126
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	520	-	-	-	520
SPT	790	-	-	-	790
Road Safety Improvement Fund	114	-	-	-	114
Spaces for People	-	-	-	-	-
Nature Restoration Fund	306	-	-	-	306
CO2 Monitors in Schools	-	-	-	-	-
Electric Vehicles	-	-	-	-	-
Sustrans	2,295	-	-	-	2,295
SFA Pitches	-	-	-	-	-
	4,558	-	-	-	4,558

**Note 3 (Prudentially Funded Projects)**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Vehicle Replacement Programme	481	1,314	964	-	2,759
Borrowing in lieu of VRP Reduction	-	636	-	-	636
Asset Management Plan - Depots	36	249	-	-	285
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	524	6	-	-	530
Clune Park Regeneration	(638)	750	-	-	112
Neil Street/Crosshill Childrens Home Replacement - CoS	-	-	-	-	-
New Learning Disability Facility	2,401	4,493	174	-	7,068
Interactive Whiteboard Replacement	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Prudential Borrowing to Fund Capital Programme	1,500	1,500	1,500	-	4,500
Additional Prudential Borrowing to meet anticipated Cost Pressures	1,400	-	-	-	1,400
	5,704	8,948	2,638	-	17,290

**Appendix 2b**Capital Programme - 2022/23 - 2025/26Agreed Projects

Committee	A Prior Years	B 2023/24	C 2024/25	D 2025/26	E Future	F Total	G Approved Budget	H (Under)/ Over	I 2023/24 Spend To 31/07/2023
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy & Resources	643	735	2,385	2,644	-	6,407	6,407	-	89
Environment & Regeneration	10,168	13,463	19,613	9,361	125	52,730	52,730	-	1,929
School Estate	300	1,282	4,137	5,001	-	10,720	10,720	-	568
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	509	1,376	570	50	501	3,006	3,006	-	788
HSCP	332	2,601	6,600	174	-	9,707	9,707	-	13
Total	11,952	19,457	33,305	17,230	626	82,570	82,570	-	3,387

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/54/23/AP/TB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712090</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Finance Update</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with an update on various matters relating to the Finance Service including:

- Debt Recovery 2022/23 Performance
- Welfare Benefits
- Scottish Government Consultations
- Treasury Activity
- Audit of the Annual Accounts
- Finance System – Future
- Accountancy- Service Survey

Updates in respect of each aspect are included in the body of the report.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the various updates provided relating to activity within the Finance Service.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee agrees that no single response from the Council should be submitted to the “Fairer Council tax” consultation and agree that individual political groupings may respond if they so wish.

**Alan Puckrin**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Policy & Resources Committee receive a cyclical update covering a wide variety of matters being progressed by the Finance Service. The report covers matters not covered in specific reports elsewhere on the agenda.
- 3.2 **Debt Recovery – 2022/23 Annual Performance**

There is a requirement within the Financial Regulations for the Committee to consider on an annual basis the performance of the Council in terms of Debt Recovery including the Council's Debt Recovery Partners
- 3.3 Cost of living awards totalling almost £5million credited directly to Council Tax accounts during 2022/23 assisted more than 30,000 households and this contributed to in collection reaching the highest ever in year collection at 95.9%, an increase of 0.4% from 2021/22, against the Scottish average of 96.2%. Collection of all Council Tax billed since 1993 at 31st March 2023 was 97%, an improvement of 0.1% since the same point in 2022. Collection levels now exceed the budgeted collection rate for all years up to and including 2018/19.
- 3.4 Payment of Council Tax by direct debit in 2022/23 was the highest level to date at 83.1% of in year receipts, an improvement of 2.1% on 2021/22. Direct debit continues to be promoted as the preferred payment method. Council Tax Online, launched in January 2020 allows Council Tax payers to manage their account remotely. 2,296 Council Tax payers have online accounts and of these 1,474 have opted for an e-bill. A proposal to make managing online Council Tax accounts easier to manage has been submitted to the Digital Modernisation Board and is under consideration.
- 3.5 Council Tax debt recovered by the Council's Debt Recovery Partner declined by 12% while Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debt recovery improved by 98%. Changes in NDR legislation allowed debt recovery action to commence earlier thus allowing more debt to be passed to the Debt Recovery Partner for collection in 2022/23. In-year Non-Domestic Rates collection was 92.27%, 0.73% less than 2021/22.
- 3.6 Debt recovery became more challenging in the context of rising energy bills, food costs and increasing interest rates on mortgages and loans. The increase of the protected minimum balance in bank accounts from £566.51 to £1,000 has also had an effect. Appendix 1 shows the level of debt collected against respective years; it compares total collection with 2021/22 and includes 2020/21 data for information
- 3.7 Early indications are that "in-year" Council Tax collection at August 2023 is marginally lower than pre-pandemic levels with the increased cost of living continuing to affect the financial position of the many Council Tax payers. Services are in place to support those who ask by way of spreading payment over 12 months instead of 10; help to claim Council Tax Reduction; and referral to money and debt advice services. A sensitive approach continues to be followed by the Council's Sheriff Officer.
- 3.8 Some reliefs linked to the pandemic continued to be provided by the Scottish Government in 2022/23 for Non-Domestic Rates payers. 50% rates relief was available for a period of 3 months from April until June 2022 to those operating in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors who applied and met the criteria. The relief in 2022/23 amounted to £173,550, this compared to Government support of £3.56m in 2021/22 and £7.7m in 2020/21. There are no similar relief schemes in 2023/24.
- 3.9 Per the unaudited annual accounts for 2022/23, the Council's gross debt as at 31 March 2023 is £23.6 million as shown in Appendix 2. There is a bad debt provision of £21.0 million, leaving a net debt of £2.65 million.

**3.10 Universal Credit/Housing Benefit**

People in Inverclyde who claim Tax Credits and no other benefits have started to receive notices from the DWP about the process to migrate to Universal Credit (UC). The group of claimants are most likely to be homeowners. Demand on support services is expected to be low although Financial Inclusion Partnership advice services are preparing for enquiries. The latest Government statistics show 73% of Inverclyde's migration is complete with 8,380 households (9,600 people) on UC with a further 3,070 households on legacy benefits. Inverclyde is 10<sup>th</sup> of the 59 Scottish Westminster constituencies towards reaching completion.

3.11 The next large-scale transfer to UC commences in 2024-25 however people who claim long term disability related benefits, who form the bulk of the remaining legacy benefit caseload in Inverclyde will not be in scope for UC until 2028, unless they chose to claim. The Housing Benefit (HB) working age caseload of 1,976 claims will be largely unaffected over this period because almost all are either on long term disability related benefits or live in Supported Exempt Accommodation which will remain with councils in the longer term.

3.12 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) statistics show Inverclyde's Housing Benefit service performed above average during 2022-23 with the number of days to process a new claim taking 16 days against a national average of 21 days and change of circumstances taking 2 days compared with 4 days. Inverclyde was placed 8<sup>th</sup> for new claims processing and 1<sup>st</sup> equal for processing changes in Scotland.

**3.13 Scottish Welfare Fund**

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 purpose of the review was to ensure the fund can meet need effectively and sustainably in the future. The final report in March 2023 generated an action plan of 22 proposed changes, agreed and published by the Scottish Government in June 2023. The government will work with stakeholders to implement the plan between autumn 2023 and the end of spring 2024.

3.14 Actions include a review of the eligibility criteria, evidence requirements, the calculation of award rates, the sharing of best practice to ensure consistency across decision making and improvements to access to the fund. New data collection processes including regular estimations of each council's remaining budgets will be introduced however there is no commitment for additional funding. COSLA and Local Government representatives have expressed concerns about costs considering the current pressure on the fund and the increased pressure expected with full implementation of the action plan.

Inverclyde Council routinely supplements the core allocation to meet local needs including providing an uplift of 20% against the minimum level for crisis grants. Spend as a proportion of core allocation budget including one off supplementary core government funding to July 2023 is 110%, 2022-23 was 109% and 2021-22 was 113%. National expenditure as a proportion of budget was 132% in 2022-23 and 114% in 2021-22. COSLA is recommending either additional funding (both administration and programme budgets) or adjustments to the action plan to reduce the scope/ eligibility for the fund should be pursued with the Scottish Government.

3.15 The most recent information showed that Inverclyde Council is a high performer with 99% of Scottish Welfare Fund applications being processed within the target timescale, being 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of the 32 Councils for Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants respectively.

### 3.16 **Scottish Government Consultations**

In July the SLF considered the Council's response was made to the Scottish Government consultation to changes non-domestic rates and council tax on second and empty homes. Whilst not supported unanimously by the SLF, the Council's response recommended that councils being given the flexibility to increase Council Tax charges for 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes by an additional 100% in line with the long term empty Council Tax levy. The Council's response also recommended increasing the number of days that properties were let to qualify as self-catering properties and to remove small business bonus scheme eligibility for self-catering properties to ensure these properties contribute to the cost of local service provision. The Scottish Government is considering the responses received. Any legislative amendments are expected to take effect from April 2024.

3.17 A response to a joint Scottish Government/Cosla consultation relating to proposals to increase the Council tax multipliers for Band E- H houses was prepared by officers and considered by the Members Budget Working Group (MBWG). In this instance there were strong differing views amongst elected members and therefore the MBWG recommended that Political Groupings should respond individually if they wish to contribute to the consultation which closes on 20 September.

### 3.18 **Audit of the Annual Accounts**

The Council's External Auditors are progressing with the audit of the 2022/23 Annual Accounts. A team from KPMG were in the Council offices during August and the Matters Arising meeting where the substantive issues are discussed is due to take place mid-September. Officers are working towards the Annual Accounts being presented to the Council on 28<sup>th</sup> September which meets the statutory deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> September.

### 3.19 **Treasury Activity**

On 31 March the Council had £99 million of Market Loans a number of which are Lender Option/Borrower Option loans (LOBOs) which means that at predetermined intervals the lender can choose to amend the terms of the loan and thereafter the borrower (the Council) can decide to reject the changes and redeem the loan. In late August a lender advised that it was increasing the interest rate on its £10 million loan from 4.88% to 6.35% a week later. This could cost the Council an extra £147,000/year in interest for the remainder of the term (over 42 years). The Chief Financial Officer decided to redeem the loan from 24 August and officers will manage the short term cashflow implications until interest rates reduce with the intention of borrowing £10 million at an interest rate close to, if not under the 4.88% rate of the initial loan.

This will be formally reported in the Mid-Year Treasury report at the next meeting of the Committee.

### 3.20 **Finance Management System**

The Finance Management System (FMS) is the Council's accounting system and was implemented from 2002. It is also used to process creditor payments, sundry debts and has interfaces to other systems such as payroll, income, Council tax/NDR and costing systems for Roads and Building Services. The system is also used by the IJB/HSCP as their corporate finance system. The current supplier intimated in 2017 that they planned to move away from the provision of Corporate Finance systems but have continued to enter into Service Level Agreements with Councils to maintain existing arrangements.

3.21 The current SLA with the Council is due to end in March 2025 and the Chief Financial Officer met with senior representatives of the supplier in July to discuss a further extension. The meeting was positive but it is clear any further extension will be the last and as such, in the not too distant future, officers will need to develop plans to implement a new financial management system as a lead in time of around 3 years is expected. Committee need to be aware that the replacement of the system is likely have significant financial implications, both one off and recurring. Reports will be brought back at the appropriate time.

### 3.22 Smart Survey- Accountancy Services

As part of the Finance Service Plan actions a survey of Budget holders was undertaken in the early summer. Views were sought on both the quality of support/availability of the team especially in light of hybrid working, as well as use of the FMS and any training requirements. The responses were overwhelmingly positive with 86% saying that the team were always available and 100% classifying the support as good or very good.

Some training needs around use of FMS and general budget management were requested and these are being taken forward by the team.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 There are no specific proposals relating to the report although the Committee will note the positive performance from the Finance Service in a wide range of areas.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

### 5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal or risk matters arising from the recommendations in this report.



#### **5.4 Human Resources**

There are no HR issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### **5.5 Strategic**

There are no strategic matters arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 None.

### **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

## Analysis of Debt Recovery Partner Performance 2022/23

## Council Tax

Financial Year	Payments Received £000's
Pre 2000	6
2000/01	6
2001/02	7
2002/03	5
2003/04	8
2004/05	8
2005/06	9
2006/07	10
2007/08	13
2008/09	11
2009/10	19
2010/11	23
2011/12	23
2012/13	22
2013/14	30
2014/15	30
2015/16	34
2016/17	54
2017/18	53
2018/19	65
2019/20	128
2020/21	290
2021/22	462
2022/23	845
Total	2161

## Non Domestic Rates

Financial Year	Payments Received £000's
Pre 2000	0
2000/01	0
2001/02	0
2002/03	0
2003/04	0
2004/05	0
2005/06	0
2006/07	0
2007/08	0
2008/09	0
2009/10	0
2010/11	0
2011/12	0
2012/13	0
2013/14	0
2014/15	1
2015/16	2
2016/17	1
2017/18	0
2018/19	2
2019/20	93
2020/21	86
2021/22	61
2022/23	284
Total	531

## Comparison 2020/21, 2021/22 &amp; 2022/23

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Difference: 2021/22 – 2022/23	
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	%
Council Tax	1752	2466	2161	-305	-12%
Non Domestic Rates	215	268	531	263	98%
Total	1967	2734	2692	-42	-1%

**Appendix 2**

	Position 31/03/2023 £'000	Position 31/03/2022 £'000	Movement £'000
<b><u>Council Tax</u></b>			
Gross Debt	18,325	17,854	471
Less: Bad Debt Provision	17,076	16,509	567
Net Debt	<u>1,249</u>	<u>1,345</u>	<u>(96)</u>
<b><u>Sundry Debt</u></b>			
Gross Debt	1,732	11,550	(9,818) Majority of movement £10.370m HSCP - NHS
Less: Bad Debt Provision	604	569	35 COVID Monies included in 21/22 and not 22/23
Net Debt	<u>1,128</u>	<u>10,981</u>	<u>(9,853)</u>
<b><u>Industrial &amp; Commercial Rent</u></b>			
Gross Debt	105	191	(86)
Less: Bad Debt Provision	80	130	(50)
Net Debt	<u>25</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>(36)</u>
<b><u>Statutory Additions</u></b>			
Gross Debt	3,260	3,209	51
Less: Bad Debt Provision	3,260	3,209	51
Net Debt	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b><u>Long Term Debtors</u></b>			
Gross Debt	243	311	(68)
Less: Bad Debt Provision		0	0
Net Debt	<u>243</u>	<u>311</u>	<u>(68)</u>
<b><u>Overall Totals</u></b>			
Gross Debt	23,665	33,115	(9,450)
Less: Bad Debt Provision	21,020	20,417	603
Net Debt	<u>2,645</u>	<u>12,698</u>	<u>(10,053)</u>

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/20/23/MR/KB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712042</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update: May-September 2023</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 This report provides the Committee with an update on Corporate Policy and Performance matters relating to:

- the Inverclyde Council Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2023/28;
- Corporate awards;
- New Deal with Local Government - the Verity House Agreement;
- the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee report on community planning;
- the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2021/22 (Refresh), and
- the Programme for Government 2023 - 2024.

1.3 More information is provided in the Appendix.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

1. notes the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance;
2. notes that a more detailed report on the Verity House Agreement will be submitted to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 November 2023, and
3. notes that additional information on the Programme for Government will be presented to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 November 2023.

**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; the last such report was submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 23 May 2023.

#### 3.2 Inverclyde Council GLP 2023/28

As Members are aware, the Council's GLP 2023/28 was submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development) for final assessment and approval. The Plan 2023/28 received Ministerial approval on 3 July 2023 and a bilingual version is available to view using this link:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/strategies-policies-and-plans/inverclyde-gaelic-language-plan/draft-inverclyde-gaelic-language-plan-2022-27>

3.3 As part of the governance of the Plan 2023/28, an Annual Monitoring Report will be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee and to Bòrd na Gàidhlig on progress made with its implementation.

#### 3.4 Corporate awards

Key national awards for local government include those co-ordinated by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). Gaining external recognition can increase the profile of the Council, benchmark best practice and boost morale.

3.5 At the LGC Awards 2023, the Council was shortlisted in the category entitled *Council of the Year*. The Chief Executive chaired a Working Group in preparation for a visit to Inverclyde by judges on 22 May 2023, followed by a presentation on 8 June 2023. While the Council did not win the overall Award, to be shortlisted for such a prestigious national award is positive recognition.

3.6 At the COSLA Excellence Awards 2023, the Council has been named as a finalist in the *Strengthening communities and local democracy* category for our work examining historic links to slavery. Finalists were invited to present to an adjudication panel during the third week in August 2023. The winners will be announced on 28 September 2023 at COSLA's Annual Conference and Exhibition 2023.

3.7 Inverclyde Council has also been shortlisted in the APSE awards in the *Workforce Initiative* and *Council of the Year* categories. The winners will be announced at the APSE Annual Charity Awards on 14 September 2023.

#### 3.8 New deal with local government – The Verity House Agreement

COSLA and the Scottish Government have agreed a new Partnership Agreement – The Verity House Agreement – which sets out a vision for a more collaborative approach to delivering their shared priorities for the people of Scotland. The Agreement is available to view using this link <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/agreement/2023/06/new-deal-local-government-partnership-agreement/documents/new-deal-local-government-verity-house-agreement/new-deal-local-government-verity-house-agreement/govscot%3Adocument/new-deal-local-government-verity-house-agreement.pdf>

3.9 The Scottish Government and local government will work together to:

1. **tackle poverty**, particularly child poverty, in recognition of the joint national mission to tackle child poverty;

2. **transform our economy through a just transition to deliver net zero**, recognising climate change as one of the biggest threats to communities across Scotland; and
3. **deliver sustainable person-centred public services** recognising the fiscal challenges, ageing demography and opportunities to innovate.

3.10 The Agreement also has implications for the Council's budget-setting process, as outlined in the report entitled *Approach to the March 2024 Budget* which was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 15 August 2023.

Min Ref  
P&R  
Ctee  
15.8.23

3.11 A more detailed report on the Agreement will be submitted to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 November 2023 once further information is available on how the new approach will be implemented.

### 3.12 **Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee report on community planning**

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee published a report on 22 June 2023 relating to their inquiry into community planning.

3.13 The main objectives of the inquiry were to look at the impact The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has had on community planning and to explore how Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) respond to significant events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. The report is available to view using this link:  
<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-local-government-housing-and-planning/business-items/community-planning-inquiry>

3.14 The report made a number of recommendations which include:

- The Scottish Government should consider during its review of Part 2 of The Act how CPPs can best encourage the involvement of the private sector in community planning, for example, through Business Gateway which is delivered by local authorities. It should also explore how CPPs can best contribute to increasing economic regionalisation and encourage collaboration between CPPs within regions.
- The Scottish Government's review of The Act should explore whether its ambitions for community planning are realistic without being backed up by direct investment. CPPs may have an important role to play in new priorities such as Community Wealth Building and the Scottish Government should ensure that they are sufficiently resourced before creating any additional statutory requirements.
- Community engagement requires a professional skillset that cannot be met solely by busy CPP officers in local authorities who may lack experience. The Scottish Government should explore how it can support community planning by resourcing a network of local Community Engagement Officers within local authorities, and by encouraging local authorities to ensure they have sufficient Community Planning Officers.
- In its development of a Community Wealth Building Bill, the Scottish Government should give early consideration to the role of CPPs in delivering the policy ambitions, whether any legislative changes to their role would be required to facilitate that, and should ensure sufficient guidance is provided to CPPs about their role in community wealth building.

- The work that the Scottish Government and COSLA are jointly undertaking to review Local Governance in Scotland should incorporate the role that CPPs have, and any conclusions reached should provide clarity for all partners on the importance of community planning.

### 3.15 LGBF 2021/22 (Refresh)

The LGBF performance data 2021/22 was published by the Improvement Service on 17 March 2023 and a dedicated Elected Member Briefing on Inverclyde Council's performance took place on 19 April 2023. At the Briefing, Members were informed that data for a small number of LGBF indicators was due to be published later in the year.

### 3.16 Performance data for the following measures is now available, bringing the total number of LGBF indicators for 2021/22 to 99 (excluding housing):

- The gross cost of *children looked after* in residential based services, per child per week;
- The gross cost of *children looked after* in a community setting, per child per week;
- The percentage of children being looked after in the community;
- The proportion of pupils entering positive destinations;
- The percentage of children meeting developmental milestones;
- The percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months; and
- The percentage of looked after children with more than one placement in the last year (August-July).

### 3.17 It should be highlighted that the Improvement Service has recently moved to publishing data via an LGBF performance dashboard, using *Microsoft Power BI*, which can be viewed here: <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/explore-the-data>. This means that the overall quartile analysis of Inverclyde Council's relative ranking, benchmarked against all Scottish Councils, is no longer readily available.

### 3.18 Details of Inverclyde Council's performance is provided in the Appendix, along with comparator Scotland and LGBF Family Group data 2021/22. When interpreting the data, it is important to remember that performance in any reporting year will naturally vary across Councils depending on a variety of factors including deprivation levels, population density and local investment and policy decisions in support of local priorities. To provide the Committee with some context around local performance, a commentary has also been provided by the relevant Service in this report for each Children's Services measure.

### 3.19 Performance overview

Inverclyde Council ranks in quartile 1 (i.e. a national ranking between 1 and 8 out of 32 local authorities) for the following measures:

- Gross cost of *children looked after* in community-based services, per child per week

Inverclyde's gross cost of children looked after in a community setting, per child per week, was the third lowest in Scotland at £217. Inverclyde's costs fell between 2020/21 and 2021/22, despite costs rising nationally from £392 to £402.

**Service commentary:** This performance indicator is drawn from financial information provided to Scottish Government and is cross-referenced with a separate data return. This reflects the local commitment to keeping children close to their local community, for example, within kinship arrangements or local fostering placements.

- Percentage of *looked after children* with more than one placement in the last year

The percentage of looked after children in Inverclyde with more than one placement in the last year (August-July) fell from 15.3% in 2020/21 to 9.8% in 2021/22 and was the fifth lowest (i.e. best) in Scotland. There was also a decrease nationally for this measure over the same period, although to a lesser extent, from 16.8% to 15.9%.

**Service commentary:** Local performance echoes national trends which reflect the impact of Covid-19 upon limiting placement moves for children during 2021/22. This may also reflect that children remained in placements for longer during the reporting period. It is expected that the continuing impact of the pandemic upon the capacity of foster carers and demand for residential placements will be more fully reflected in future reporting periods.

3.20 No measures rank in quartile 2 (i.e. a national ranking between 9 and 16 out of 32 local authorities).

3.21 Inverclyde Council ranks in quartile 3 (i.e. a national ranking between 17 and 24 out of 32 local authorities) for the following measures:

- The gross cost of children looked after in residential based services, per child per week

Inverclyde's gross cost of *children looked after* in a residential setting is the 11th highest in Scotland and is higher than the national average for the first time since 2011/12. According to the data, gross costs in Inverclyde increased from £3,299 in 2020/21 to £4,938 in 2021/22, an increase of almost 50%. As a result, Inverclyde's ranking moved from 7 to 22.

**Service commentary:** This increase in cost reflects the corresponding change in demand for external placements during the Covid-19 pandemic. Services continued to focus on protecting the most vulnerable children and young people during this period of restriction, within the context of increased demand across Scotland. This also reflects the need for placements for children with more complex needs and greater vulnerability. Increased earlier intervention approaches are expected to contribute to reduced demand for residential placements in the future.

- Percentage of children being looked after in the community

The proportion of children in Inverclyde being looked after in the community rose from 83.8% in 2020/21 to 86.5% in 2021/22, in contrast to a small decrease nationally, moving from 90.3% to 89.8%. This resulted in the national ranking improving by 3 places, moving from 24 to 21. The Improvement Service reports that the balance of care varies systematically with deprivation, with Councils with higher levels of deprivation reporting a higher balance of care in community settings.

**Service commentary:** This indicates that the number of children looked after in the community returned to pre-pandemic levels despite the impact of Covid-19. Most children who require to be *looked after* are looked after at home, with fostering placements and kinship arrangements also being community-based *looked after* settings.

- Percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months

The percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months in Inverclyde has fallen from the second quartile (previous rank 14) in 2020/21 to the third quartile in 2021/22 (new rank 23). Performance in 2021/22 was 10.5%, compared to 3.4% the previous year. It should be highlighted however that 2021/22 performance is the same as in 2019/20. The Scottish figure also increased, rising from 7% to 8%.



**Service commentary:** The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be seen in activity to protect children and young people. The number of children re-registered on the child protection register within 18 months returned to pre-pandemic levels, following a notable reduction in 2020/21. This may reflect the national impact of restrictions during the pandemic, with more children included on the child protection register for longer periods of time and fewer children being de-registered.

3.22 Inverclyde Council ranks in quartile 4 (i.e. a national ranking between 25 and 32 out of 32 local authorities) for the following measures:

- Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations

There was a fall in ranking for the percentage of Inverclyde pupils entering positive destinations, moving from 20<sup>th</sup> position in 2020/21 to 29<sup>th</sup> in 2021/22, due to performance decreasing from 95.4% to 94% between the two years. Both the Family Group and the Scottish average show an improvement in the proportion of positive destinations.

**Service commentary:** This is a measure of initial leaver destinations, which is taken as a snapshot when pupils leave school. As part of the Senior Phase Action Plan the employability team are looking at post school provision to ensure that suitable provision is in place when a young person leaves school. The participation measure, which is taken throughout the year (rather than just a snapshot), gives a more positive picture however this figure, highlights that there is still work to be undertaken on transition planning.

- Percentage of children meeting developmental milestones

The percentage of Inverclyde children meeting developmental milestones at their 27–30-month review in 2021/22 remains one of the lowest in Scotland, ranking at 31. Inverclyde's performance figure in 2021/22 was 74.5%. The national average is 82% and the Family Group average is just below 80%. West Dunbartonshire Council ranked 32, with a performance figure of 74%. The Scottish average has fallen for second consecutive year.

In its national overview, the Improvement Service note that persistent inequalities in the proportion of children found to have a developmental concern increased faster for the most deprived children during the first year of Covid. It is suggested that the overall national increase in concerns that have emerged in 2021/22 data may be a result of changes in how reviews were delivered, as well as changes in circumstances in the daily lives of children during the pandemic.

**Service commentary:** Inverclyde is historically low on this measure. Different health boards use slightly different measures for this outcome and the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde group results do not always correlate with performance over time. Despite this low score we typically see pupils performing above average when they enter primary school.

3.23 The latest LGBF performance has been scrutinised by the Corporate Management Team and areas for improvement will be fed into the wider Health and Social Care Partnership and Inverclyde Council strategic and service planning processes where appropriate.

### 3.24 Programme for Government 2023 to 2024

The Scottish Government published its Programme for Government 2023 to 2024 on 5 September 2023. This sets out the actions they intend to take in the coming year and beyond and the legislative programme for the next parliamentary year. Additional information can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/programme-for-government/>. Further detail will be submitted to the November meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

1. notes the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance;
2. notes that a more detailed report on the Verity House Agreement will be submitted to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 November 2023, and
3. notes that additional information on the Programme for Government will be presented to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 November 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
Financial		X
Legal/Risk	X	
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

### 5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

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 GLP.

### 5.4 Human Resources

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

## 5.5 **Strategic**

The matters referred to in this report are of relevance to the following Council Plan 2023/28 Theme:

### **Theme 3: Performance**

- High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.

## 6.0 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 None.

## 7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2018/19-2021/22

Ref		Performance				Comparator Data	Rank			
		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
CHN 8a	Gross cost of <i>children looked after</i> in residential-based services per child per week	£2,908	£2,800	£3,299	<b>£4,938</b>	Scotland £4,698 Family Group £4,973	6	4	7	<b>22</b>
CHN 8b	Gross cost of children looked after in a community setting per child per week	£244	£217	£232	<b>£217</b>	Scotland £402 Family Group £327	5	3	3	<b>3</b>
CHN 9	Balance of care for looked after children - % of children being looked after in the community	86.3%	86.6%	83.8%	<b>86.5%</b>	Scotland 89.8% Family Group 90%	22	22	24	<b>21</b>
CHN 11	% of pupils entering positive destinations	95.8%	93%	95.4%	<b>94%</b>	Scotland 95.7% Family Group 95.6%	8	15	20	<b>29</b>
CHN 17	% of children meeting developmental milestones (27-30 month review)	75.8%	75.6%	76.7%	<b>74.5%</b>	Scotland 82.1% Family Group 77.9%	32	32	32	<b>31</b>
CHN 22	% of child protection re-registrations within 18 months	9.4%	10.5%	3.4%	<b>10.5%</b>	Scotland 8% Family Group 8.4%	25	24	14	<b>23<sup>rd</sup></b>
CHN 23	% of looked after children with more than one placement in the last year (August-July)	15.6%	14.4%	15.3%	<b>9.8%</b>	Scotland 15.9% Family Group 13.3%	7	7	8	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>

Rank 1-16 (Quartiles 1 & 2)
  Rank 17-24 (Quartile 3)
  Rank 25 – 32 (Quartile 4)

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/55/23/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712090</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>2024/26 Budget Update</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on developments in respect of the 2024/26 Budget and to seek approval for the first savings/adjustments plus the creation of a Savings Workstream programme.

1.3 A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the CMT over the last 2 months relating to the 2024/26 Budget including:

- Identification of new service specific savings.
- Proposed creation of a Savings Workstream programme.
- Identification of potential Revenue Budget pressures.
- Identification of potential Capital Budget pressures supported by an all-member workshop on property assets.
- Consideration as to how the 2024/27 Capital Programme can be balanced.
- The timing of the 2024/26 Budget Consultation

These items have been discussed within the Members Budget Working Group (MBWG) and decisions in respect of each will be reported to the Council / Committee at the appropriate time.

1.4 The CMT have continued to meet with the Trades Unions via the Joint Budget Group (JBG) and have advised the JBG that currently there is no need to commence any VER trawls.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Committee note the work being progressed relating to the 2024/26 Budget.

2.2 It is recommended that Committee support the creation of a Savings Workstream programme and approve the 2024/26 target of £2.5 million for the programme detailed in Appendix 1 noting that progress on delivery will be reported to Committee on a regular basis.

2.3 It is recommended that Committee approve the initial savings/adjustments set out in Appendix 2

2.4 It is recommended that Committee note the latest 2024/26 Revenue Budget funding gap of £9.65 million in Appendix 3 on the basis that the above recommendations are approved.

2.5 It is recommended that the Committee agree that the consultation in respect of the 2024/26 Budget takes place in January 2024.

**Alan Puckrin**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 On 15 August the Committee approved the approach to the next budget. This included:
- Agreement to develop a 2024/26 Revenue Budget and 2024/27 Capital Programme
  - Assumption within the Budget Consultation of a £5.0million increase in Council tax income by 2025/26
  - Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to undertake VER trawls to inform the development of savings proposals.
  - Noted that an update on the Budget Consultation timing would be included in the September Committee update.

#### **3.2 New Savings/Approach to Savings**

The August Policy & Resources Committee noted that the CMT were developing £3.0million of new savings to be added to the remaining savings options from the March 2023 Budget. The CMT considered the proposals at a Budget CMT on 9 August. Within the CMT's new savings proposals there were several which are viewed as being adjustments or "soft" savings such as the deletion of vacant posts.

- 3.3 As part of the CMT review of the proposed new savings, the CMT considered a proposal from the Chief Financial Officer to create a Savings Workstream programme which would largely focus on corporate cost reductions and income generation targets. Savings Workstreams were last used over the 2009/14 period delivering approximately £7.0 million savings.

- 3.4 Saving workstreams largely relate to a corporate aspect of the budget with targets based on an amalgam of adjustments/efficiencies and direct savings. This approach lends itself to multi-year budgets where not every saving can be tied down in absolute detail before a decision is taken to factor into the approved budget. Due to this there are clearly risks and both elected members and the CMT need to understand the risks as well as the benefits of such an approach when setting savings targets.

#### **3.5 Budget Pressures**

Work is also on going in identifying and quantifying any recurring budget pressures. This work is informed by analysis of previous years out-turn as well as projections in the current year. Reports are being considered by the CMT and will thereafter be considered by the MBWG. It would be intended to seek decisions at the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **3.6 Capital Programme**

Committee has been advised on a regular basis via the Capital Strategy as well as Budget updates of the increasing pressures on the capital programme whether this is via increases in inflation or the condition/ maintenance requirements of a number of the key Council assets. To this is added the aspiration to achieve net zero within the Council estate. Reports elsewhere in the agenda identify two requests for increased funding and several more requests are expected in coming months.

- 3.7 An all-member workshop took place on 17 August regarding some of the potential decisions which elected members face around the number of assets held by the Council. Feedback will be factored into the officer development of proposals.

### 3.8 Budget Consultation

The August report indicated that due to several factors which are expected to be far clearer by December, a later Budget Consultation was likely to be the best approach. Section 4 contains proposals in this regard.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the six Savings Workstreams proposed by the CMT including annual and cumulative savings targets. If agreed by Committee, the overall 2024/26 funding gap would be reduced by £2.5million. Committee will receive regular updates on progress.
- 4.2 Appendix 2 details several adjustments/softer savings which if approved will reduce the funding gap by a further £421,000. There are no direct employee implications from the proposals although two vacant posts would be deleted.
- 4.3 On the basis that Appendices 1 & 2 are approved, Appendix 3 shows that the 2024/26 funding gap would reduce to £9.65million albeit there remain a large number of material matters to be resolved. These include, the pay awards for 2023/24 and beyond, continued non-pay inflation uncertainty, the Local Government grant settlement and the impact of decisions around the Verity House agreement.
- 4.4 The MBWG will initially receive reports relating to the 2024/27 Capital Programme with a view that reports will be presented to the Committee/Council at the appropriate time.
- 4.5 On the basis that a few of the material items relating to the budget are expected to be clearer by December and on the basis that the Council will receive an update on the Budget Settlement with related proposals in December, it is proposed that the overall Budget Consultation takes place during January with results analysed and reported to elected members in February.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

### 5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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



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Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Workstreams	Various	By 2025/26	(£2.500m)		Phased £1.32m 24/25 and £1.18m 25/26
Various	Various	2024/25	(£0.421m)		Per Appendix 2

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

Where appropriate consultations will be carried out as part of the savings workstream delivery.

Risks will exist (both upside and downside) on the delivery of some of the workstream targets, but regular monitoring/reporting will provide officers and members early warning of any issues

### 5.4 Human Resources

The proposals in Appendix 2 will result in the deletion of 2 FTE vacant posts. The estimated employee impact of the Savings Workstreams in Appendix 1 is 6 FTE by 2025/26.

### 5.5 Strategic

The workstreams around asset management, energy reduction and digital modernisation could impact on strategic priorities Progress will be reported to the MBWG and thereafter Committee.

### 5.6 Environmental/Sustainability

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

No SEA is required but reductions to the asset footprint and energy usage will have a positive impact on the Council's carbon footprint.

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.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The proposals in this report are supported by the CMT and MBWG and have been discussed with the JBG.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

**2024/26 Budget Process**

**Appendix 1**

**Theme: Workstreams**

<b>Saving Title</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Est Saving 2024/25 £000's</b>	<b>Est Saving 2025/26 £000's</b>	<b>Est Saving 2026/27 £000's</b>	<b>Est Saving Total £000's</b>	<b>Est FTE Impact</b>
Income Generation	General Uplift over 2024/26, Other above inflation charges and commercial income	300	400	0	700	0.0
Procurement	Residual Waste, Agency Workers, Scotland Excel opportunities	550	50	0	600	0.0
Energy	Energy efficiencies and tariff reductions	400	100	0	500	0.0
Asset Management	Property savings relating to reductions to the office, leisure, community and other operational buildings estate	50	350	0	400	Note 1
Management Restructure Ph3	Reductions in Team Leader and above posts. FTE is maximum net reduction.	0	200	0	200	3.0
Digital & Customer Services	Efficiencies arising from Digital Modernisation processes and a review of customer interfaces with the Council. FTE reduction represents the maximum to meet the target	20	80	0	100	3.0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,320</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>6.0</b>

Note 1- Asset Management Target is net of any reinvestment in either capital or recurring spend in remaining buildings.

Note 2- CMT recommend the inclusion of a teachers workstream if reductions are permitted by the Scottish Government. The target would be based on a 29FTE reduction (3.8%) which would save approximately £1.80 million

**2024/26 Budget**  
**September Policy & Resources Committee- Savings/Adjustments**

<b>E&amp;R</b>	<b>Savings 2024/25 £000</b>	<b>Savings 2025/26 £000</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>FTE</b>
1/ Recharge to Area Based Schemes Grant	35	0	The Council receives over £1million Grant for Area Based Schemes support. Proposal is to allocate a further £35k in officer costs to the grant to fairly reflect time spent.	0
2/ Delete vacant clerical post	30	0	Vacant post in Protective Services , no impact on service delivery.	1
3/ Delete Environmental & Licensing Standards Posts	44	0	Post is vacant and has been covered by remaining team members with no impact on service delivery.	1
<b>ECOD</b>				
1/ Fund existing music tuition post from increased music instruction funding from the Scottish Government	19	0	No impact on service delivery.	0
2/				
<b>HSCP</b>				
1/				
<b>Corporate</b>				
1/ Increase Turnover Target	100	0	The turnover target was significantly overachieved in 2022/23 and a one off £100k increase in turnover was agreed for 23/24. It is proposed to make this permanent .	0
2/ Internal Resources Interest	149	0	The IRI target was increased by £300k as part of the budget due to increases in interest rates. Following review, officers recommend a further increase of £149k bringing the budget to £650,000.	0
3/ Prior Years Council tax	44	0	As part of the 23/24 Budget the target for the collection of prior years Council tax was reduced in light of the economic down turn. The reduction in collection has not been as great as anticipated therefore it is proposed to increase the target by £44k to £330k from 2024/25	0
4/				
5/				
<b>Total</b>	421	0		2

28/08/23

**Appendix 3**

**2024/26 Estimated Funding Gap**

	2024/25 <u>£000</u>	2025/26 <u>£000</u>	
Gap per June 2023 Financial Strategy	5983	6593	
Sept P&R Committee Decisions:			
Savings Workstreams	-1320	-1180	Appendix 1
Savings/Adjustments	-421	0	Appendix 2
<b>Balance Remaining Post 19.9.23</b>	<u>4242</u>	<u>5413</u>	
Council Tax increase(£350k/1%)	tbc	tbc	<b>Note 1</b>
Remaining Savings Options	tbc	tbc	

Notes

1. Committee have agreed to a planning assumption of a £5.0million increase in Ctax income by 2025/26
2. The value and phasing of remaining savings is being finalised by CMT

AP- 28.8.23

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/51/23/AP/TB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712223</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy - Consultation</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 On 31 January 2023 the Committee agreed that officers develop proposals for an amended non-domestic rates empty property relief policy as part of the 2024/25 Budget. The purpose of this report is to seek Committee views on the proposed consultation questionnaire, which raises the areas for potential changes to the existing policy.

1.3 The questionnaire proposes a review of the indefinite award of 100% relief from non-domestic rates for empty listed buildings and a standardisation of the differing provision of relief for commercial and industrial premises. In addition, there are a few questions regarding the type of support which could be offered to encourage occupation of empty properties. The draft public consultation questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1.

1.4 The consultation is intended to run to the end of October with the analysis being reported, along with the proposed NDR Empty Property Relief Policy, to the February meeting of the Committee. The estimated financial implications of any proposed changes will be considered at that time.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Committee confirms the areas to be included in the attached questionnaire and notes that a further report incorporating the proposed Empty Property Relief Policy and financial implications will be brought back to the February 2024 meeting of the Committee.

**Alan Puckrin**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Act 2020 devolved charging and rates relief on unoccupied or empty premises to Councils with effect from 1 April 2023. Local authorities have powers contained in section 3A of the Local Government (Financial Provisions etc.) (Scotland) Act 1962 to award discretionary local reliefs. Committee agreed in January 2023 to the introduction of the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Empty Property Relief Policy from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, mirroring the legislation it replaced and decided that officers would be required to develop proposals for an amended policy with any financial implications considered as part of the 2024/25 Budget.
- 3.2 Empty commercial and industrial premises impact both visually and economically upon communities. A recent presentation to the Inverclyde Task Force reported that there is a lack of good quality premises of appropriate size and condition available to businesses who want to locate or grow in Inverclyde. Reviewing the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property relief provides an opportunity to make changes that will encourage owners to bring empty premises back into use, therefore supporting the aims of the Economic strategy to strengthen the local economy, support existing businesses and encourage business to locate in Inverclyde.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government included £105 million per annum (fixed for three years) from 2023/24 to compensate councils for the costs of paying NDR Empty Property Relief based on historic spend plus an element of headroom. The sum allocated to Inverclyde Council in 2023/24 is £788,000 of which the Council agreed to reduce by £288,000 as part of the 2023/24 Budget based on projected costs. The latest position of Empty Property Relief expenditure allocated to 2022-23 accounts is £303,700.
- 3.4 The cost of the 2023-24 policy will be affected by a re-valuation of rateable values from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and a review of the Small Business Bonus Scheme carried out during 2022, resulting in Empty Property Relief being withdrawn from more than three hundred small businesses. While many have since responded with relief being reinstated it is anticipated that these numbers will increase throughout the year.
- 3.5 Officers reviewed the policy and identified three categories of relief for consideration: (i) empty listed buildings; (ii) empty commercial premises; (iii) empty industrial premises. Expenditure in the three categories selected totalled £227,115 representing 75% of 2022-23 total expenditure. Other categories attracting 100% relief omitted from the review are areas where restricting relief would have less impact or where it is not possible or permitted to return them back into use. These include where the rateable value of the property is less than £1,700; the person entitled to possession of the property is the executor of a deceased person; the person is insolvent; the owner of the property is prohibited by law from occupying or allowing the premises to be occupied.
- 3.6 Empty listed building relief is currently applied to the non-domestic rates accounts of seventeen premises and is projected to cost £147,100 in 2023/24. This category of relief is the highest proportion of all expenditure. Inverclyde Council owns two empty listed buildings, Riverside Inverclyde own eight with seven empty listed buildings in the private sector receiving relief. It is officers' view that ceasing the provision of 100% rates relief for an indefinite period should be explored. While there may be reasons why buildings are left unoccupied, the provision of indefinite 100% relief reduces the incentive for property owners to bring premises back into occupation.
- 3.7 Unless empty premises meet the criteria for one of the categories where 100% relief applies, the current policy provides different rates of relief for empty commercial premises and empty industrial premises. The categorisation of commercial or industrial is determined by the purpose for which premises were last used.

- 3.8 Empty commercial premises such as shops, offices, salons are eligible for relief at a rate of 50% for 3 months, followed by 10% until premises are occupied. This level of relief cost £87,900 in 2022/23 for 99 premises. Empty industrial premises including factories, warehouses, workshops, are eligible for relief at a rate of 100% for 6 months, followed by 10% until premises are occupied. This level of relief cost £20,700 in 2022/23 for 11 premises. Officers believe that a standard provision would provide clarity for the business community and remove any debate over whether a premises is industrial or commercial in nature. The potential reduction in Empty Industrial relief reduces the risk to the budget in the event of large industrial premises becoming empty.
- 3.9 The potential changes identified to listed building relief has been introduced, agreed or is being considered by most councils. A variety of other changes are being considered with some councils having already agreed or are considering more extensive changes than are contained in this report.

#### 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that three main categories of relief provided by the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Policy identified by officers are reviewed and form part of a questionnaire and public consultation.
- 4.2 Subject to agreement, a public consultation will open for a period of 5 weeks from late September 2023 to capture views. The survey will be sent by post to all non-domestic rates premises and their billing addresses with an online version of the survey promoted electronically by Corporate Communications with direct engagement with the business community through established forums. The draft questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The survey seeks opinions on the continuation, reduction or termination of relief for empty Listed Buildings and proposes equalising the provision for empty Industrial and empty Commercial premises to 50% for a period of 3 months followed by 10% until occupied. Options for the timing of the implementation of any changes have been provided along with views on financial incentives or support measures to encourage businesses to occupy empty premises.

#### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

#### 5.2 Finance

The potential financial implications of the proposals will be clarified in the next update to Committee however, it must be appreciated that the number and type of empty properties varies year on year and is influenced by many factors outwith the control of the Council.



One Off Costs/ (Savings)

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

**5.3 Legal/Risk**

There are no direct legal implications arising from consulting on proposed amendments to the policy. Any proposed amendments arising from the consultation will be subject to review by Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services.

**5.4 Human Resources**

There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report.

**5.5 Strategic**

An agreed Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief policy aims to reduce the number of empty properties within the area and as such is an important element of the Councils Economic Strategy.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The proposed areas for review and questionnaire were identified between Finance Services and the Regeneration Service. The CMT support the proposals in the report and the MBWG have considered the proposals.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Empty Property Relief Policy – Approved January, 2023.

**BUSINESS NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**

Inverclyde  
council

Dear

### ***Non-Domestic Rates - Empty Property Relief Consultation***

With effect from 1 April 2023 the determination and administration of Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (EPR) was devolved to local authorities in Scotland. As a result, Councils were required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs available for unoccupied or empty properties.

Inverclyde Council's Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy was agreed on 31 January 2023 on the basis that reliefs mirror the legislation it replaced but with a commitment to develop a local scheme during 2023/24 with any financial implications considered as part of the 2024/25 Budget.

Your views are sought on the proposed changes to the policy and financial incentives or support measures to encourage businesses to occupy empty properties.

Online responses are preferred and a QR code is provided below for your convenience. If you are not able to reply online a form is enclosed, starting on the next page. There are eight questions which will take only 10 minutes to complete.

Completed forms should be returned to the Customer Service Centre, Clyde Square, Greenock or by post using the freepost envelope provided, you don't need a stamp. The survey closes at 5pm on 31st October 2023.

Inverclyde Council's Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy and the questionnaire are found here:



## **Respondent Information Form**

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

[Privacy - Inverclyde Council](#)

### **About You**

I am:

- An owner of an empty business property in Inverclyde
- An owner of an empty listed business property in Inverclyde
- An owner of an empty property in Inverclyde with a rateable value of less than £1,700
- An owner of an occupied business premises in Inverclyde
- Someone who has tried to let a business premises in Inverclyde but doesn't at present
- A member of the business community letting premises in Inverclyde
- Responding on behalf of a community organisation
- An interested member of the public

## **Non-Domestic Rates - Empty Property Relief Consultation**

### **Empty Listed Buildings**

At July 2023 there were seventeen listed buildings with Empty Property Rates Relief costing Inverclyde Council £147,100. These buildings have each been empty and in receipt of Empty Property Rates Relief for between 5 months and 29 years.

Appendix 1 provides key points about Inverclyde Council's Non-Domestic Rates - Empty Property Relief Policy and more statistical information.



### Question 1

Inverclyde Council's Non-Domestic Rates - Empty Property Relief Policy currently provides 100% relief for empty Listed Buildings. This means that those responsible for unoccupied Listed Buildings in the local area do not pay rates for an unlimited period of time. Do you agree with this level of relief?

	Strongly Agree	<b>Go to Q4</b>
	Agree	<b>Go to Q4</b>
	Neither/nor	
	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.

### Question 2

If the Council were to restrict the level of rates relief for unoccupied Listed Buildings, how much relief should instead be provided?

- 25% relief
- 50% relief
- 75% relief
- Other. *Please State.*

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.



### Question 3

Inverclyde Council currently offers Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief for unoccupied Listed Buildings indefinitely.

If the Council were not to provide relief indefinitely for unoccupied Listed Buildings, what amount of time from the date a property was last occupied would be appropriate:

- 6 months
- 12 months
- 24 months
- Other. *Please State.*

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.



## Empty Commercial and Industrial Premises

Inverclyde Council currently provides different rates of Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief for empty commercial premises and empty industrial premises.

Empty commercial premises receive relief at a rate of 50% for 3 months, followed by 10% until premises are occupied. Commercial premises are shops, offices, salons, etc. This level of relief cost £87,900 in 2022/23.

Empty industrial premises receive relief at a rate of 100% for 6 months, followed by 10% until premises are occupied. Industrial premises are factories, warehouses, workshops, etc. This level of relief cost £20,700 in 2022/23.

### Question 4

Inverclyde Council could provide the same level of rates relief for empty commercial and empty industrial premises at a rate of 50% for 3 months, followed by 10% until premises are occupied.

Do you agree with this level of relief?

	Strongly Agree	
	Agree	
	Neither/nor	
	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.

**We would now like to ask you about the timing of potential changes to the local Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy.**

### Question 5

Changes to the Policy can be phased to allow ratepayers to adjust. When do you think that changes to the Policy should be introduced?

1st April 2024 – **Go to Q7**

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.



### Question 6

When should the changes to the Policy be introduced?

- 1st October 2024
- 1st April 2025
- Delay the introduction of Policy changes until a date beyond April 2025
- Other. *Please State.*

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.

**The last section of the Consultation asks about economic development support for local businesses.**

### Question 7

Do you agree that financial incentives or support measures would encourage businesses to occupy empty properties in Inverclyde?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither/nor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.



### Question 8

Which type of financial incentives or support measures would encourage businesses to occupy empty properties? *Please state.*

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

### Next Steps

We will carefully analyse the feedback received and report on findings. We will consider routes for funding beneficial options and use this to guide future actions and policies.

We genuinely value your input, and your participation in this consultation will play a vital role in shaping the future of our area. Together, we can unlock the untapped potential of our empty business properties and build a stronger, more prosperous community.

Thank you in advance for your time and contributions.

### Where do I return my completed form?

Completed forms should be returned to the Customer Service Centre, Clyde Square, Greenock or by post using the envelope provided. **The survey closes at 5pm on 31st October 2023.**





**More Information:**

**Appendix 1**

The Non-Domestic Rates - Empty Property Relief Policy cost £303,700 in 2022/23.

Unoccupied industrial property is eligible for 100% relief for the first six months since becoming unoccupied, and 10% awarded thereafter until occupied.

Other (non-industrial) unoccupied property is eligible for 50% relief for the first three months since becoming unoccupied and awarded 10% thereafter until occupied.

100% relief is awarded indefinitely for unoccupied properties which meet any of the following:

- Empty property is a listed building
- Empty property where the rateable value is under £1,700
- Empty property which is owned by a trustee for sequestration, liquidation, or executors
- Empty property which cannot be occupied by law
- Empty property which is under a compulsory purchase order
- Empty property which has no buildings (i.e., land)
- Empty property where the owner is in administration (or subject to an administration order)
- Empty property where the owner is a company or partnership being wound up.

**Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief 2022-23**

Relief Category	Value of Relief	Number of Properties
100% relief for empty Industrial (6 months)	£13,025.63	11
10% long term empty (industrial)	£7,628.10	
50% relief for empty Commercial (3 months)	£52,291.06	99
10% long term empty (commercial)	£35,630.29	
Listed Exempt Relief (100%)	£118,540.51	14
RV less than £1700 empty (100%)	£11,330.45	56
Land/Ground empty/exempt (100%)	£0.00	0
Insolvency empty (100%)	£57,900.35	4
Other exempt (100%)	£7,319.03	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>£303,665.42</b>	<b>187</b>

**Empty Listed Building Property Relief by Postcode (August 2023)**

<b>Postcode:</b>	PA14 5N	PA15 1E	PA15 1H	PA15 1J	PA15 1L	PA15 1Q	PA15 1R
No. of premises	1	5	2	1	2	4	2



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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Interim Head of Organisational Development, Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>HR/09/23/MR</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712015</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update – Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee on recent activity to support employee recruitment and retention and seek approval on a number of related proposals.

1.3 In May 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee considered and approved the report 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention'. This report highlighted the significant recruitment and retention concerns facing local government at a national and local level and outlined the actions and initiatives currently being progressed to mitigate against these issues and ensure effective delivery of Council services. The Policy and Resources Committee approved proposals on additional work and projects and noted an update report would be presented 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;
- approves the revised Flexible Working Policy (Appendix 1);
- approves the Positive Conversations Scheme (Appendix 2), and
- approves the recommendation that there is no longer a requirement for performance appraisals to be reported as a KPI.

### **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. The report also provides an update on progress made since consideration of the 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention' report at the May Policy & Resources Committee.
- 3.3 The 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention' report provided detail on a number of actions and initiatives progressed to address recruitment and retention difficulties, these were:
- 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 Council's 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 UPDATE ON PROGRESS SINCE MAY POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 The 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention' report also provided detail on further work being undertaken along with several proposals which were approved by the Policy & Resources Committee. An update on progress to date is provided below:
- 4.2 Flexible Working Policy

A revised Flexible Working Policy has now been developed and is outlined in Appendix 1. The revised policy has merged existing guidance on flexible working, incorporates hybrid working, complies with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and also accounts for pending legislation with

regard to the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Bill. If approved by Committee, the revised Flexible Working Policy will be relaunched using a schedule of communication methods, information and training sessions.

#### 4.3 Reduction in Standard Working Week

A working group has since been established to explore the reduction in the standard working week from 37 to 35 hours and it remains the intention to bring a detailed report back to Committee later in 2023 clarifying operational and financial implications.

#### 4.4 Payment of Professional Qualification Fees for Students

It was agreed that an allocation from existing earmarked reserves totalling £100,000 be made available to support recruitment and retention of professional roles across the Council. The funds would be used as a pilot to ascertain if by paying university fees or professional qualification fees the Council could attract graduates to 'difficult to fill' posts or support the development of existing employees with a 3 year pay back period. There has been engagement with services to invite interest and a cross service panel has reviewed the applications. It would be the intention to monitor uptake and success with a future update provided to Committee at an appropriate time.

#### 4.5 Review of Performance Appraisal

The Council's performance appraisal process has been reviewed. Following research, consultation and benchmarking from other local authorities it was identified that there is a move away from grading systems and formal, annual processes. Across various industries and organisations, there has been a shift towards a flexible and informal approach, focussed on conversations between managers and employees. Current best practice suggests that meaningful conversations held on a regular basis have a greater impact on employee engagement, performance and satisfaction, which in turn, increases productivity and efficiency. Positive Conversations introduces a new approach to performance management at Inverclyde Council. By replacing the existing policy, the previous practice of formal scoring, annual appraisals and lengthy templates have been removed and a simplified process has been designed (Appendix 2). This aims to be more effective and reflective of the practices in the workplace.

4.6 The purpose of Positive Conversations is to enable meaningful conversations between managers and their employees or teams, that are centred on building relationships, motivating, and creating value for employees. Where there are issues with an employee's performance, this will still be managed under the Managing Poor Performance guidance.

4.7 If approved by Committee, Positive Conversations will be implemented Council wide (excluding teachers) and will be launched using a schedule of communication methods, information and training sessions. By the end of March 2024, all employees should have completed an annual individual conversation as mandatory.

4.8 Previously performance appraisals have been a reported KPI (key performance indicator) for Inverclyde Council, with returns processed and recorded by Organisational Development and Human Resources. With Positive Conversations, it is proposed that this will no longer be the case. As the process moves to an informal approach, the responsibility will be with the manager to maintain the process and engage employees in Positive Conversations. They will still be responsible for recording and maintaining records of conversations, as with the current policy.

4.9 To allow the council to measure the impact and results of Positive Conversations, it is recommended that there is a form of data collection carried out. It is proposed that an open survey

is to be completed by managers. This would mean that staff could feedback throughout the year, providing a real-time data capture alongside the adoption of the new format. Additionally, this will identify the total of employees engaged in the process and provide Organisational Development with the data to support training decisions and resources such as Flexible Workforce Development Fund. The survey will focus on gathering information on training and development needs, practices that work and level of engagement. This will also sit alongside related questions in the wider Employee Survey.

#### 4.10 Employee Benefits

In partnership with Vivup, our health and wellbeing partner, we promoted the introduction of an employee benefits platform which as of 1<sup>st</sup> August, all of employees now have access to. The range of employee benefits are designed to improve employee’s financial, mental and physical wellbeing and are in addition to our existing employee benefits already in place.

4.11 Our employees, who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, will also have access to a new salary sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (Shared AVC) employee benefit that enables them to make cost efficient retirement savings alongside their Local Government Pension. Working in partnership with our Shared AVC provider AVC Wise, promotional material has been launched Council wide and information sessions are scheduled in the month of August and September.

### 5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee approve the revised Flexible Working Policy as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the Positive Conversations Scheme is approved and implemented to replace the existing “Appraisals at Inverclyde” Policy. It is also proposed that Committee note that the introduction of Positive Conversations will mean there is no longer a requirement for performance appraisals to be reported as a KPI, however, managers will be expected to engage in data collection to ensure participation and support decisions on training opportunities and resources.

### 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

#### 6.2 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					

### 6.3 Legal/Risk

None.

### 6.4 Human Resources

Appropriate communication, engagement and training will take place to ensure our employees and managers to ensure they are made aware of the revised Flexible Working Policy and Positive Conversations Scheme.

### 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, 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:

X	YES – an EqIA has been developed in relation to the Flexible Working Policy and published on the Council webpage. <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments</a>
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

#### (b) Fairer Scotland Duty

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

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

	YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) 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.

**6.7 Environmental/Sustainability**

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

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

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

**6.8 Data Protection**

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

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

**7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The trade unions are supportive of the proposals outlined in this report.

**8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None.

**Version 1.0**

**Produced by:**

*OD, Policy & Communications*

Inverclyde Council

Municipal Buildings

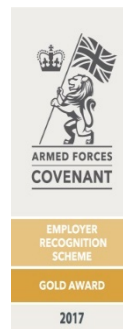
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## Appendix 1

# FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

DRAFT



**INVERCLYDE COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER  
THIS POLICY BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST,  
IN LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, ON AUDIOTAPE, OR CD.**



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DRAFT

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

<b>Document Responsibility</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Service</b>
Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications

<b>Change History</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	19th September 2023	Revised policy which merges existing flexible working policies and guides into one document and includes the new option of hybrid working. Submitted to Policy and Resources Committee for review and approval on 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2023.

<b>Distribution</b>		
<b>Name/ Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Corporate Management Team	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2023 2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2023	
Trade Unions (All)	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	
Staff Disability Forum	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2023	
Inverclyde Trauma Informed and Responsive Practice Strategic Group	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	
Corporate Workforce Planning and Development Group	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	

*Distribution may be made to others on request*

<b>Policy Review</b>		
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Service</b>
2026	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council recognises the mutual benefits of having a flexible, effective workforce to deliver the best services to our community, whilst enabling employees to balance their personal, home and work responsibilities more effectively, with a view to achieving greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity. There are also other benefits in regard to more efficient use of physical resources such as office space and ICT equipment, thus heightening our reputation as an employer of choice.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the range of flexible working options that can be requested at Inverclyde Council and how these requests will be considered, taking into account the demands of the service, customer needs, job role requirements and limitations.

## 2 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014, all employees have a statutory right to request flexible working; regardless of whether they are a parent/s and carer/s.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and employees with protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation will be supported in accessing this policy.

## 3 SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees of Inverclyde Council regardless of length of service. Employees may submit two requests in a 12-month period. Additional or earlier requests may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Applications can be made by an individual or a group of employees. Note that for Teaching employees, only part-time working and job share requests can be fully considered due to the nature of the profession and delivery of education services.

## 4 PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The Council is keen to support as many employee led requests as possible and managers will fully consider all requests made. Where a request cannot be accommodated, the reasons will be explained and will normally be in line with the reasons outlined in Section 10 of this Policy.
- 4.2 When a service management led move leads to a different way of working, the objective will be to seek the agreement from all affected employees, and only as a last resort would any change be imposed with due consultation and notice periods and full consideration of the circumstances.

## 5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The **line manager** is responsible for:
  - fostering a culture of trust in working relationships;
  - considering flexible working requests fully, fairly, and objectively, seeking to accommodate employees wherever possible. This of course is subject to service provision requirements and implications for customers, team and co-workers;

- consideration of any health and safety requirements;
- giving consideration to alternative options which may provide some level of flexibility requested by the employee in cases where the original flexible working request cannot be justifiably supported;
- seeking approval from their senior management in relation to their decision to support or deny a request;
- discuss with the employee(s) their request within 28 days of receiving the application and provide a written response within 5 days. The written response should provide a clear and detailed explanation of the reasons for the decision, whether approving or denying the request;
- ensuring robust management arrangements are in place for employees who work flexibly ensuring inclusion in communications, business and team meetings as required;
- advising employees of any difficulties arising from their flexible working arrangements, so that these can be addressed.

5.2 The **employee** is responsible for:

- working with management to facilitate a culture of trust;
- outlining and discussing flexible working requests openly with their manager to reach mutual understanding and beneficial solutions;
- fully considering the implications of any flexible working request in relation to effective service provision and impact on their own and their team's performance;
- actively engaging in team, individual and corporate communications, regular one to one support and supervision meetings, performance reviews, and attending regular team and business meetings as required;
- advising their manager of any difficulties arising from their ongoing approved flexible working arrangement, so that these can be addressed and remedied;
- making themselves aware of the terms of this policy recognising flexible working arrangements may require to be amended/ withdrawn subject to the needs of the Service and following full discussion and notice.

## 6 **SERVICE IMPACT AND CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 Employees and managers should consider the following before requesting or agreeing to a Flexible Working request:

- Customer/client impact;
- Finance/additional costs – normally there should be no additional costs;
- Statutory responsibilities, e.g., Legal requirements, staff to client ratios;
- Size of team, e.g., impact on others/workload if a working pattern is changed;
- Rotas, e.g. would negatively impact on well-established rotas at peak periods;
- Known problematic absence levels/holiday periods;
- Nature of work being undertaken;
- Management or support responsibilities, e.g. does employee support a client who requires services on a specific schedule/cover arrangements;
- The need for managers to be at a place of work to effectively manage;
- Attendance patterns of other employees in teams;
- Impact on the individual employee making the request, e.g. workload;
- Exigencies of the service;
- Practicality of working hours.

The above list is not exhaustive and is provided for illustrative purposes only.

## 7 TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

7.1 Inverclyde Council offers a variety of flexible working options which are outlined below. It may be possible to combine options, or to have options which are not listed in this section considered. Please refer to the Council's [Flexible Working Procedures](#) for details on the application and procedural process on flexible working.

- Part-Time Working
- Job share
- Term-Time Working
- Compressed Hours
- Homeworker
- Hybrid Working
- Annualised Hours
- Shift/Rota Working
- Flexible Hours
- Flexible and Phased Retirement

### 7.2 Part-Time Working

Part time working is where an employee's contracted weekly working hours are less than the contracted hours of a full-time employee, i.e., less than 37 hours per week. The salary, holiday entitlement and other conditions of service such as sick pay and maternity, paternity and adoption pay of employees who work part-time are calculated on a pro rata basis, according to the hours worked.

### 7.3 Job Share

Job share is where two employees share the responsibilities of one full-time post normally evenly. At the point of application, there does not need to be an identified job share partner, but if it is not possible to find a partner within a period considered reasonable by management, then the job share arrangement cannot go ahead.

Salary, holiday entitlement and other conditions of service such as sick pay and maternity/paternity/adoption pay of employees who work job share are calculated on a pro rata basis, according to the hours worked by each sharer. A job-sharer is differentiated from a part-time worker in that a job-sharer has a job-share partner and this is important when one part of the job-share post becomes vacant as the sharing partner has the right to be offered the remainder of the post or if unable to accept it, remain in their post until efforts to recruit a new job-sharer have been exhausted.

### 7.4 Term Time Working

Term time working is where an employee attends work during the school timetable and does not work during the school holidays. Term time working is most common to services that provide and operate primarily during the school term but is not restricted to these services (for example, an employee in a post not connected to school term but for whom term time working arrangements would suite their personal circumstances).

The employee's salary and holiday entitlement is pro-rata'd based on hours worked and weeks worked and is paid in equal amounts over 12 months. The term-time salary calculation can be found within the Conditions of Service [here](#):

It is essential to stress that in term-time working, except for the floating day, annual leave is allocated during the predetermined school holidays only and cannot be taken at any other time.

#### 7.5 Compressed Hours

Compressed hours are where an employee works their contracted weekly hours over fewer days e.g., a full-time employee may work their contractual hours over 9 days per fortnight instead of 10 days. It is also possible for part time employees to be considered for this type of flexible working, for example 18.5 hours per week - 18.5 hours worked over 2 days rather than the traditional 2.5 days or 20 hours per week – 20 hours worked over 2.5 days rather than the traditional 3 days. Although the working pattern may vary, an employee receives their salary in equal instalments.

#### 7.6 Homeworker

Based at home for at least 90% of working time. Duties can be undertaken out-with an office environment, requiring remote access to ICT systems, equipment, and support. There is no allocated desk within the office environment. Requests must take into consideration potential costs which would be covered by the Service.

#### 7.7 Hybrid Worker:

Hybrid working usually means that employees undertake some of their responsibilities at their contractual place of work and some remotely (usually at home). The exact balance will vary depending on the role and responsibilities and how the team has locally decided to undertake hybrid working. When making decisions, managers need to balance the operational needs of the Service, and office and building capacity, with individual preferences. Hybrid workers will be office based for a minimum 20% of their contracted hours. Hybrid working will be non-contractual.

#### 7.8 Annualised Hours

Annualised hours involve organising working time flexibly across a 12-month period rather than over a fixed standard working week. Although the working pattern varies, an employee receives his/her salary in equal instalments, irrespective of the actual number of hours worked in any given period. Annualised hours are likely to be best suited to posts in which demand varies seasonally, and as such attendance is best suited to particular times of the year.

#### 7.9 Shift/Rota Working

It is important that employees are working at times which meet service demands and any costs associated with changes to working hours are fully considered in line with the Councils agreed working-time envelope.

Shift working can help meet demands placed on services and also provide an opportunity for a greater work life balance as often it means non-working days do not necessarily fall only on weekends. There are numerous models for shift working, but some of the most common are “4 on, 4 off” rotations, split shifts or “earlies/lates”.

Shift working may be suitable if there are demands to be met particularly early in the morning, in the evenings or at weekends. Rotas play a key role in shift working, and rotas are normally agreed some time in advance.

It is likely that any move to shift work will affect a team/group of employees rather than an individual, as such, full consultation will be required with the affected group and HR will be involved in consultations.

#### 7.10 Flexible Hours

Flexible hours is an alternative to the traditional Monday-Friday 9am-5pm workweek in that it provides flexibility in the start and finishing times, e.g. an employee/team might be provided with flexibility to arrive for work between 8am-9am. Flexible hours can be requested on an individual or team basis. Flexible hours are not a replacement of the previous Flexitime Scheme, there is no accrual of time off. It is important that employees are working at the times that meet service demands and that any costs associated with changes to working hours are fully considered in line with the Councils agreed working-time envelope.

#### 7.11 Flexible Retirement

Flexible retirement involves a reduction in your hours/grade and partial/full withdrawal of pension benefits while still being able to continue in employment. Only Local Government Employees, aged 55 and over with at least two years pension membership can apply for flexible retirement. For flexible retirement to be considered the reduction in hours/salary should normally be at least 20% but no more than 50% of the current hours/salary. Approval from the employer is required and requests for flexible retirement must be done so using the form (HR/LGPS) and associated guidance which can be found [here](#).

#### 7.12 Phased Retirement

Phased retirement requires a reduction in salary of at least 25% for a minimum of 12 months. The reduction may be due to either a reduction of hours or salary. Only employees covered by Teaching conditions, aged 55 and over with at least 5 years pension membership can apply for phased retirement. Any applications for such a request must be done so using the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) form which can be reached using this [link](#).

### 8 **APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

- 8.1 All decisions on requests made must be ultimately approved by the relevant Head of Service. Line managers will also undertake discussions with more senior managers as part of their decision making and completing the necessary paperwork. Please refer to the Council's [Flexible Working Procedures](#) for full details on the application and approval process.
- 8.2 The proposed start date of any change should normally be at least 8 weeks from when the written request is submitted to allow time for full management consideration, employee meetings, and any required administrative changes to take place.
- 8.3 All approved arrangements will be reviewed as required to ensure the needs of the service continue to be met, as well as the employees, and may be subject to change giving 12 weeks' notice either by the council or employee for contractual arrangements; and 4 weeks' notice, either by the council or employee, for non-contractual arrangements, i.e., hybrid working.

## 9 SERVICE LED CHANGES

- 9.1 Service Management may consider posts or groups of posts which may benefit from introducing new ways of working. For example, if there are considerable potential service delivery or efficiency benefits to be gained from making a change to working patterns/methods as well as providing a greater opportunity for Work-Life Balance for employees, but where those employees have not requested a change.
- 9.2 In these circumstances, the proposals will be formulated with the support of Human Resources and include full consultation with Trade Unions, with the ultimate goal being able to gain agreement on any changes.

## 10. REASONS FOR REJECTING REQUESTS

10.1 The following list, although not exhaustive, are acceptable reasons for rejecting a request under the Policy:

- Insufficient work during the period the employee proposes to work;
- Burden of additional cost – normally requests must be cost neutral to be approved;
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand;
- An inability to reorganise work amongst existing employees;
- An inability to recruit additional staff (e.g. to fill part of a post if employee requests less hours);
- A detrimental impact on quality or performance;
- Inability to effectively manage performance
- Planned structural changes (e.g. the timing is not good as service is reviewing how it operates and no decisions can be made until afterwards);
- Corporate position and wider implications due to volume of requests.
- The post holder has supervisory or line management responsibilities that require them to be available at all working times in line with the attendance of their team or customers;
- Inability to meet Statutory Responsibilities

10.2 The above list is not exhaustive and is provided for illustrative purposes only. Managers are encouraged to contact Human Resource for advice if there are any concern over reasons for rejecting a request.

## 11. APPEAL PROCESS

- 11.1 Where a request is rejected, an appeal can be made to the next level of manager and should be submitted within 5 working days of the rejection being received. The appeal must outline why the employee believes the rejection is not reasonable. Appeals will normally be heard within 28 days by a Corporate Director and a member of the HR team, neither of whom should have been involved in the original decision making.
- 11.2 The employee may be accompanied by a current work colleague or their trade union representative. The manager who made the decision at the application stage will be present at the hearing to put forward their reasons for rejecting the request.
- 11.3 The final decision will be given in writing within 14 days of the appeal being heard. There is no further right of appeal. Please refer to the Council's [Flexible Working Procedures](#) for full details on the appeal process.



## 12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS & CONTRACTUAL STATUS

- 12.1 Any changes agreed under the scheme will be subject to at least annual review. Managers will consider if arrangements are still a best fit and to determine if any changes are required consultation will begin with HR involvement.
- 12.2 In some circumstances, trial periods may be agreed in the first instance, and it is important that a decision is made to either agree to the change or revert to previous way of working at the end of the trial period. An example of a reasonable trial period might be 3 months.
- 12.3 Where there is a large demand or numerous staff wishing to change their hours/working arrangements but not their contractual (paid) hours, it will be acceptable for managers to agree a rota of arrangements, for example if 4 employees request to move to condensed hours, managers may agree a few months each as an operational but not contractual change.
- 12.4 Any arrangements under this policy which are for a reduction in hours are normally permanent, unless otherwise agreed (for example during a trial period). There is no right to revert to full time hours once a permanent change to reduced hours has been agreed.
- 12.5 Requests which do not affect contractual (paid) hours may be agreed on a temporary basis. End dates or review dates should be clearly documented and adhered to.
- 12.6 Any change under this Policy which reduces employee's contractual hours will require an adjustment of annual leave, public holiday entitlement and pay. This is a manual calculation and will normally be carried out by the Service with HR advice as necessary. Balances either owed to the employee or to the service must be taken as annual leave and cannot be given as payment.
- 12.7 The Council, will reserve the right, following consultation and appropriate notice, to end existing arrangements and look into other working arrangements:

Inverclyde Council

Appendix 2

# Let's Talk: A Positive Conversation

# What are Positive Conversations?

Positive Conversations are about managers and their employee(s) having regular discussions which are focussed on work related goals for the year ahead, providing feedback, agreeing support and identifying development needs for individuals and teams. The approach to these conversations is that it's all about the employee having the opportunity to talk about their job. The process is designed to be flexible to suit the needs of different teams and employees, and to fit into practices already present in services without adding to workload, such as supervisions and regular conversations or team meetings.

# What is the purpose of Positive Conversations?

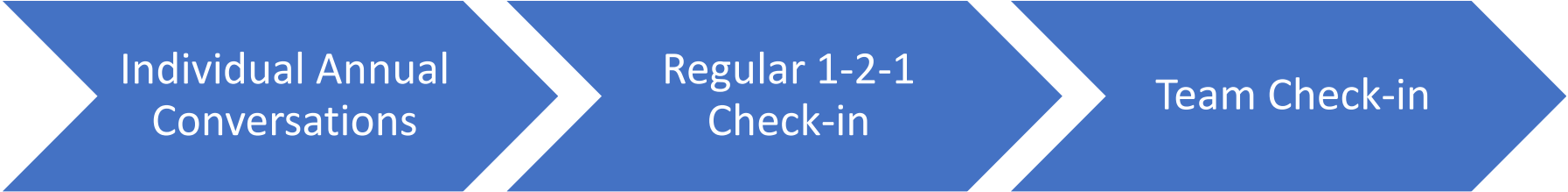
The purpose is to enable meaningful conversations between managers and their employees to support relationship building, motivation, engagement and the creation of value for individuals. The goal of the conversations is to boost confidence and morale, whilst producing high performing individuals and teams. For managers to achieve high performing teams they must consider their individuals, tasks and the team as a whole. It is important to utilise conversations to support workforce and succession planning activity.

Any performance issues should be dealt with appropriately, using the Managing Poor Performance guidance.

# What do Positive Conversations look like?

They are a relaxed but focussed conversation between and managers and their employee or team. They should be used to discuss performance and progress, and how can they be the best at work.

The 3 stages of conversations are:



# Individual Annual Conversations

Every employee will be invited to attend an annual conversation with their manager, which will be centred around 3 discussion areas. This is an opportunity for reflecting and taking a look over what has been accomplished and what is to come in the year ahead. It is not about completing a form, but instead having a valuable conversation which will be centred around the employee, their role and their goals. This is mandatory for all employees and should be completed on an annual basis.

The 3 areas are: What has gone well over the last year?

What might have gone even better?

What do you want to achieve in the year(s) ahead?

## Supporting questions for annual conversations

The below is a list of supplementary questions which can be used to aid conversations and help managers and employees get the most out of the discussion, these can be adapted to suit the individual and job role:

What has gone well over the last year?	What might have gone even better?	What do you want to achieve in the year(s) ahead?
What do you feel the proudest of in the last 12 months?	What has been challenging or had you out of your comfort zone?	What do you think your objectives should be? How do you plan on achieving these?
What have you enjoyed working on most?	What have you learned from this experience?	What barriers or challenges might get in the way? How do you think these can be overcome?
What sense of achievement did you gain this last year?	What support could have helped you achieve your goals easier?	How can I help? What support do you need?
Did you feel recognised for your achievement(s)?		How are you hoping to develop in the next 12 months? Where do you see yourself/career in the future?

# Template for Individual Annual Conversations

Employee Name		Employee Number	
Job Title		Date	

RECORD BRIEF BULLET POINTS - GOALS CAN BE SHORT AND LONG TERM

What has gone well this year? (Achievements)	What might have gone even better this year? (Challenges)
Commitments (What do you want to achieve and focus on in the future?)	
Objectives	Development
Manager Signature	Employee Signature

# Regular 1-2-1 Check-in

In addition to the annual conversation, it is best practice that managers carry out regular 1-2-1 check-in conversations with their employees throughout the year, this is optional. Check-ins should cover specific topic areas, as identified below. Research shows that regular, valuable conversations between managers and employees leads to improved performance, motivation and productivity within teams.

The conversations can be easily incorporated into scheduled supervision and meetings, or simply be a standalone protected time to catch up. The frequency and topics to be discussed are entirely flexible and can change based on the needs of the individual or what the manager and employee want to focus on - they can also vary from one check-in to another. It would be good practice for managers to hold more regular check-ins with employees they don't often see eg Hybrid Workers.

Life and Wellbeing	This topic focusses on the employee's health and wellbeing. It should cover areas such as resilience and dealing with change. Through the conversation any support the manager can provide in the workplace should be identified.
Personal Development	This should cover any development that was planned and any future needs that have been identified, this can be from the annual conversation or points raised in previous check-in.
Objectives and Performance	Review of objectives and performance goals agreed at the beginning of the year. This is important to regularly discuss throughout the year to ensure that progress is being made and actions can be taken.
Improvements	The focus of this topic is on what the employee thinks about improvements that can be made within the team or service. Is there a new way of working that could support service delivery?
Feedback	The conversations within this process should be focussing on the employee's strengths and building on these. The manager should start the conversations by asking the employee what they believe their strengths are and then present their views on the employee's strengths. If there are areas of concern with the employee's performance feedback should be given and if required, the 6 steps included in the Managing Poor Performance Guidelines should be implemented. Where performance is an issue more regular meetings would be beneficial.
Council's Vision and Priorities	This focusses on the impact of the employee in delivering council's vision. Through a coaching style, discuss areas with the employee and find out where they think they model the values and where they could improve. Provide context for how their contribution at work impacts the delivery of objectives and priorities.

Supporting questions for regular 1-2-1 check-in conversations

The below is a list of supplementary questions which can be used to aid conversations and help managers and employees get the most out of the discussion, these can be adapted to suit the individual and job role:

Life and Wellbeing	How do you feel about your work and work-life balance?	What worries or concerns do you have? How can we support your wellbeing?
	How resilient do you feel at present?	What impact is hybrid working having on your wellbeing?
Personal Development	Have you organised or completed any of your agreed development needs?	What did you find most useful?
	What might be an area of development that will help you further in your job?	What support would help you achieve your development needs?
Objectives and Performance	How are you progressing with your objectives?	Are any of your objectives causing you concern or might not be met? How could you overcome this?
	Which objectives are you able to progress the best?	What support do you need to meet your objectives?
Improvements	What, if any, improvements to your job have you identified since our last meeting?	What impact would the suggested improvements make?
	What organisational/service improvements would you like to see?	How successfully do you think the improvement could be implemented?
Feedback	What has been your biggest achievement so far this year?	What feedback would you like to give me?
	What has been your biggest challenge so far this year?	What other feedback would you like/want to discuss?
Council’s Vision and Priorities	How well do you think your role supports Council objectives?	What can I do to support you model the values/objectives?

## Optional Template for Regular 1-2-1 Check-in Forms

OPTIONAL - MANAGERS MAY WISH TO USE THEIR OWN OR EXISTING RECORDING PROCESS

Employee Name		Employee Number	
Job Title		Date	
Life and Wellbeing			
Personal Development			
Objectives and Performance			
Improvements			
Feedback			
Council's vision and priorities			



# Team Check-in

Managers should allow time for check-ins with their team which are focussed on the team working well together. The frequency of team check-ins will vary across the Council; however it is recommended that a minimum of 2 check-ins per year should be completed. The below topics are suggested areas that can be the focus of team check-in conversations. Many teams will have regular team meetings, which managers should continue to have, however, throughout the year it is important that time is dedicated to discussing certain topics as identified below. Team check-in's aim to support succession planning activities and improve team adaptability.

<p>1</p>	<p>Council's Vision, Values and Priorities</p> <p>What is happening in the service and project work that supports the council's vision and values? How does the team represent these?</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Employee Engagement</p> <p>Every 3 years the employee engagement survey will be completed, this will allow managers to communicate results and findings, discuss actions points.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Celebrating Achievements</p> <p>This is an opportunity to celebrate what the team are doing well, where they have gone the extra mile and reflect on the impact the team has had - any projects achieved etc.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Current Performance</p> <p>This is an opportunity for the team to review their performance and achievements against action plans and targets. Or take time to establish new goals and actions for the team.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Challenges and Ideas</p> <p>An open forum for the team to discuss challenges they are facing as a team/with work. A chance to explore and try solutions and find ways to support each other and work collaboratively.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Team Learning</p> <p>This focusses on empowering the team to share knowledge and experiences; from training events, articles found, new tasks or from trying something new.</p>

## Optional Template for Team Check-in

OPTIONAL - MANAGERS MAY WISH TO USE THEIR OWN OR EXISTING RECORDING PROCESS

Date of Meeting		
Updates from Previous Meeting		
Topic of Conversation	Key Discussions	Actions

### Our Council Vision and Priorities:

Employees at inverclyde play a vital role in the Council delivering the vision and priorities. These are listed here and should be used to support the positive conversations between managers and employees.

Understanding how your role, no matter what grade, plays a part in ensuring the Inverclyde performs to its highest potential, keeping employees engaged and committed to performing, whilst achieving personal development.



**We are nurturing**

*we care, we deliver our work in a supportive way*



**We are inclusive**

*we challenge inequalities and ensure that all our citizens can access services*



**We are focused on wellbeing**

*we support good health and wellbeing for our citizens and employees*



**We support empowerment**

*we believe we can produce better results through collaboration with communities*



**We are focused on achieving**

*we are positive and ambitious for everyone who lives in Inverclyde*



**We are respectful and responsible**

*we deliver our work with honesty and integrity, we listen*



**We provide a safe environment**

*we work with partners to ensure Inverclyde is a safe place to work and live*

### Process for Positive Conversations:



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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Officer, Inverclyde HSCP</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/16/23/KR/AB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Best</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 715212</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>External Care at Home Service – Change of Cost/Quality Weighting</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 This report outlines the need to change the cost/quality weightings for external care at home service provision in favour of a qualitative weighting as part of the Care at Home review and to request approval to change the tender weightings as per Contract Standing Order 16.3.

1.3 The paper presented to the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board (IJB) on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and the Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023 outlined the review of home support and the move to a social care workforce. This is the key stone to all subsequent improvement and capacity building.

1.4 A key concern for the Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is to promote quality and continuity of service provision given the increased complexity of care required with the associated greater increase in staff skills necessary to maximise the best impact on care for our service users and the promotion of best practice. It promotes and strengthens safe care and evidence shows that it increases both user satisfaction and wellbeing, but also outcomes. The essential nature of this service and the standards required to attract external commissioned services should be reflected in the cost / quality ratio for evaluation of tender submissions. A greater emphasis on quality attracts providers and supports the viability of current providers. Approval is required to change the tender weightings from 60%/40% cost/quality to 30% / 70% cost/quality. The quality of the service provision is of greater importance and the committee is asked to approve the variation in the cost / quality split as requested.

1.5 The Ethical Care Charter is included in the service specification as part of Inverclyde's affiliation with the charter and fairer working practice. Through the Care at Home Review there has been progress made including improved travel cost and time for staff, and compliance with the charter standard, a full report will be presented to the IJB by March 2024.

1.6 The Ethical Charter is central to all service redesign within the HSCP and the commissioning approach has been redesigned as part of the market facilitation in consultation with local providers with a view to increasing capacity on the framework and ensuring sustainability.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- a) approves the change of tender weightings for the Care at Home Services Framework Tender to 30% cost and 70% quality of service to ensure the required quality of service can be procured, in terms of Contract Standing Order 16.3.

**Kate Rocks**  
**Chief Officer**  
**Inverclyde HSCP**

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The current care at home framework has been in place since April 2022 and is due to end in March 2024. The new procurement exercise is anticipated to be issued to the market from October 2023 and concluded and awarded in advance of the current framework agreement ending. The service specification is being reviewed to reflect recent guidance and has been simplified in response to provider feedback.
- 3.2 There has been a 30% reduction in commissioned hours since March 2020 with only four providers on the Care at Home Services Framework and two providers meeting the requirements of a direct award from June 2023 to increase available service. There is also a reduction of between 12% and 30% in the difference between planned and actual provision which shows a lower level of service received by the service user compared to assessed need. This is an indication of quality and consistency of provision.
- 3.3 An increase in concerns and complaints to the service reflects an overall reduction in quality standards and it is a priority to improve standards and development within the service.
- 3.4 There is a statutory duty to facilitate the Self-Directed Support agenda, it is essential that a mixed market is provided to support people at home. There is lack of choice and availability on the framework with an elevated level of dependency on two main providers which brings a fragility to service delivery. The HSCP continues to be the provider of last resort as per Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.
- 3.5 Service delivery must be safe, effective, provide good experiences for service users, continuously improve and compliment integrated working. The HSCP will be actively seeking feedback from service users as part of the commissioning process. The framework ensures service is responsive, delivered on time and meets needs. The report that will be presented in March 2024 will outline our compliance with the Ethical Care Charter highlighting joint work, valuing the workforce and the shared accountability between all parties and stakeholders involved in delivery. It will also consider how we have designed services with people with lived experience.

### 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The quality of service is of paramount importance therefore it is proposed to move to 30% cost and 70% quality split to evaluate tenders. The aim of the tender is to accurately describe the high-quality service required for Inverclyde and identify good quality providers to deliver the service ensuring consistency, sustainability, fair work practice and secure Best Value.

### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk	X	
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X

Data Protection		X
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## 5.2 Finance

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Moving to 70% quality and 30% Cost is likely to lead to increased financial costs. However, this will be assessed as part of the tender acceptance process and any likely financial implications will be reported accordingly.

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

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

Legal Services have been consulted and are working through the legal risks of this tender.

## 5.4 Human Resources

The previous report to IJB has outlined the impact for home care staff. There are no Human Resources implications directly arising from this report.

## 5.5 Strategic

There is a high level of risk identified by the Homecare Review Programme Board if we are unable to sustain the external market.

- Sustainability of the service, short, medium, and long term.
- Poor delivery of outcomes for users and carers.
- Increased delayed discharges due to inadequate capacity.
- Instability care home marked and uncertainty around the financial impact.
- Continued uncertainty about capacity within the external market that is adversely affecting quality outcomes for older people.

## 5.6 Equalities, 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:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required, a copy of which will be made available on the Council's website: <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments</a>
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

### (b) Fairer Scotland Duty



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

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

X	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) 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 CVS Market Facilitation.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LS/68/23</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Carol Craig-McDonald</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712725</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Complaint Handling Annual Report 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023</b>		

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## **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 the annual performance of all complaints received and handled by Inverclyde Council, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), and both Arms-Length Organisations (ALEOs), Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde, for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 1.3 The appended report (appendix 1) provides the annual complaint handling statistical information for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The report has been prepared by the Council's Information Governance Team and provides the following information:
- i. Performance Information.
  - ii. Analysis of complaint activity; and an
  - iii. Update on learning from complaints.
- 1.4 The SPSO has provided statistical information on the Council's complaint handling during the above period, which is included in section 4.10 of this report. There have been no cases involving the Council or the HSCP investigated by the SPSO in this reporting period.
- 1.5 The Council remains committed to investigating, learning from, and taking appropriate action where it is found that standards have fallen below the level expected or where it is recognised that services could be improved.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (1) notes the annual performance of Inverclyde Council's complaint handling procedure; and
  - (2) approves the publication of the Annual Complaint Handling Report on the Council's website.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Local Authority Complaint Handler Network (LACHN) is a national forum for local authority complaint handlers to meet quarterly to assist in the development of professional practice in relation to complaint handling. The Council's Complaints Officer alongside representatives represents Inverclyde Council at this forum from 32 Scottish Local Authorities. The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) attends these meetings to support the ongoing development of complaint handling within local authorities and to achieve consistency in approach.
- 3.2 There is a requirement for Councils to report complaint handling performance for ALEOs. Inverclyde Council have two ALEOs, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde, and they both require to report on complaints handled. Inverclyde Council is adhering to the reporting requirements for ALEOs set out by the SPSO.
- 3.3 The SPSO has confirmed that they will be moving to a quarterly submission of complaint handling statistical data from all Councils. This is intended to ease the collation of management information on an annual basis. Inverclyde Council has agreed to supply this statistical data each quarter, as it is currently prepared on a quarterly and annual basis. The draft report is issued to LACHN for discussion at the network meeting and any inconsistencies in data interpretation and analysis is resolved before the formal annual submission to the SPSO each year.
- 3.4 Inverclyde Council, the HSCP and both ALEOs implemented revised model complaint handling procedures on 1 April 2021.

### **4.0 PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council, the HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde received and handled 306 complaints and closed 278 complaints within the relevant period.
- 4.2 Section 3 of the appended report provides a comparison of the complaint handling performance by the Council from 2018/19 to 2022/23. Members will note that, in comparison with volumes received during 2021/22, there has been a decrease in the overall number of complaints dealt with by Inverclyde Council. However, for the number of complaints dealt with by the HSCP, and Inverclyde Leisure, statistics show an increase in the complaints received. This is in line with a normal volume distribution post pandemic.
- 4.3 Section 3.6 to 3.9 of the appended report shows the breakdown of complaint volumes per service and the percentage of complaints per service area against the total number of complaints received for the reporting period. The numbers remain low within some services; however, they are proportionately higher in those services that have historically received higher complaint volumes based on the nature of work undertaken. Riverside Inverclyde was the only area which did not receive a complaint during the reporting period and some individual service areas within Inverclyde Council did not receive any complaints across the year which is in line with previous year trends.
- 4.4 Section 3.10 – 3.13 of the appended report shows the outcome of complaint investigations at each stage of the complaint handling procedure, the collective view of which is summarised below:
  - 88 complaints were upheld across all complaint stages.
  - 57 complaints were partially upheld across all complaint stages.
  - 109 complaints were not upheld across all complaint stages: and
  - 24 complaints were resolved across all complaint stages.

- 4.5 Section 3.13 to 3.21 of the appended report details the Council's responses to complaints at each of the complaint stages. The HSCP's performance has shown strain in timescale management due to the complexity of complaints being received at both complaint stage 1 and stage 2. This should remain an area of focus for the HSCP. When comparing in isolation the Council's complaint handling performance it is noted that the timescales taken to resolve complaints have increased at stage 1 and escalated stage 2, which affects the average days reported. There is scope to improve timescale management in some complaints that exceed the expected timescales across all stages of the complaints. A further recommended action is for proactive actions to be taken on receipt of complaints to reduce the number of late responses or responses that are running very close to timescales to support remaining within the timescales expected for each stage of the complaint.
- 4.6 Stage one of the complaint handling procedure should be attempted where there are straightforward issues potentially easily resolved with little or no investigation. This should be completed within five working days. If the service user remains unhappy following the stage one complaint investigation, they can request that their complaint be escalated to stage two of the procedure. The performance of complaints handled at stage one of the complaint handling procedure has been summarised in the table below.

Stage 1 Complaints	Indicators 2022/23	Indicators 2021/22	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints closed	187	222	A reduction of 35 stage 1 complaints
% Of complaints closed on time within 5 days (including cases where a time extension was approved)	79.7%	83%	3.3% decrease of on time responses
Average number of days taken to close complaints	4.4 days	4.1 days	An increase by 0.3 on the average days, but still below the figure for 2020/21

Outcome of complaints	No of cases 2022/23	%	No of Cases 2021/22	%	Trend when comparing to 2021/22
No of complaints upheld & as % of all stage 1 complaints	70 cases	37.4%	68 cases	30.6%	An increase of 6.8%
No of complaints partially upheld & as % of all stage 1 complaints	28 cases	15%	36 cases	16.2%	A reduction of 1.2%
No of complaints not upheld & as a % of all stage 1 complaints	65 cases	34.8%	103 cases	46.4%	A reduction of 12%
No of complaints resolved & as a % of all stage 1 complaints	24 cases	12.8%	15 cases	6.8%	An increase of 6%

- 4.7 A stage two complaint is for complex complaints, or for serious issues where a thorough investigation will be undertaken. It should also be used for complaints that cannot be resolved at the stage one of the procedure. This typically requires a more thorough investigation to establish facts prior to reaching conclusion and allows 20 days for the investigation to be completed. The performance of

complaints handled at stage two of the complaint handling procedure has been summarised in the table below.

Stage 2 Complaints	Indicators 2022/23	Indicators 2021/22	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints closed	76	73	An increase of 38 complaints
% Of complaints closed on time within 20 days & where we applied time extension	67.1%	63%	An increase of 4.1%
Average number of days taken to close complaint	20.8 days	23.1 days	A 2.3-day decrease

Outcome of complaints	No of cases 2022/23	%	No of Cases 2021/22	%	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints upheld & as % of all stage 2 complaints	17 cases	22.4%	9 cases	12.3%	An increase of 10.1%
No of complaints partially upheld & as % of all stage 2 complaints	23 cases	30.3%	16 cases	21.9%	An increase of 8.4%
No of complaints not upheld & as a % of all stage 2 complaints	36 cases	47%	42 cases	57.5%	A decrease of 10.5%
No of complaints resolved & as a % of all stage 2 complaints	0 cases	0%	6 cases	8.2%	A decrease by 8.2%

4.8 Escalated stage two complaints are ones where the service user remains dissatisfied with the way the Council dealt with their complaint at frontline resolution, the complainant can request a detailed investigation under stage two of our complaints handling procedure. This allows 20 days for completing the investigation. This must be undertaken before the complainant can take their complaint to the SPSO to review. The performance of complaints handled at escalated stage two of the complaint handling procedure has been summarised in the table below. It is noted that the HSCP have not seen any complaints escalate from stage 1 to stage 2 during the year.

Escalated Stage 2 Complaints	Indicators 2022/23	Indicators 2021/22	Trend when comparing to 2021/22
No of complaints closed	15	20	A reduction of 5 complaints
% Of complaints closed on time within 20 days & where we applied time extension	80%	65%	A 15% increase in those complaints meeting timescale
Average number of days taken to close complaints	20.5 days	19.8 days	An increase of 0.7 days

Escalated stage 2 outcomes	No of cases 2022/23	%	No of cases 2021/22	%	Trend when comparing to 2021/22
No of complaints upheld & as % of all escalated stage 2 complaints	1 case	6.7%	1 case	5%	No change in case numbers 1.7% change in percentage
No of complaints partially upheld & as % of all escalated stage 2 complaints	6 cases	40%	6 cases	30%	No change in the case numbers although a decrease of 10%
No of complaints not upheld & as % of all escalated stage 2 complaints	8 cases	53.3%	13 cases	65%	A decrease of 11.76%
No of complaints resolved & as a % of all escalated stage 2 complaints	0 cases	0%	0 cases	0%	No historic data to compare due to introduction of new outcome 1/4/21

- 4.9 Section 4 of the appended report provides further detail on the next steps that the Council requires to take in implementing the Customer Satisfaction Survey for complaint handling to meet the expectations set out by the SPSO. Implementation has been delayed and will be revisited in the coming year to develop the technical process for implementing the survey. The HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde will also be required to develop their processes for implementation to meet this requirement. Engagement with the appropriate officers will be undertaken to support the delivery of this work.
- 4.10 Section 5 of the appended report provides an overview of service improvement recording which commenced in November 2016. This has been embedded within services and is reported quarterly to Directorate Management Teams. The HSCP requires to implement this process within their complaint handling process in the coming year. Training has been delivered to officers to highlight the importance of learnings being taken from complaints. The process to record and report service improvements quarterly as part of the management information provision by the Complaint Manager for the HSCP requires to be developed and delivered within the year. The Council publishes learnings taken from complaints on a quarterly basis, along with statistical information, in compliance with the SPSO's expected requirements of all Scottish local authorities. The Council is currently in the process of procuring a new complaint handling relationship management system through the Digital Modernisation Project Board. This will replace the current system, Verint, which has come to its end of life, and this is likely to be implemented during 2023/24.
- 4.11 Section 6 of the appended report provides detailed information on the complaints which were taken to the SPSO. The SPSO received 10 complaints for Inverclyde Council which is a reduction from the 12 cases reviewed last year. One complaint was dealt with under the advice stage and 9 complaints were dealt with at early resolution stage. No complaints were investigated. The SPSO recognised that the Council had demonstrated good complaint handling in 3 of the complaints they reviewed. The SPSO received 1 complaint for the HSCP which is a reduction from the 4 received last year. The complaint was dealt with at early resolution stage, and no complaints were investigated. This reflects a reduction in the complaints received by the SPSO for both Inverclyde Council and the HSCP. It is also an indication of good complaint handling where a right of review was exercised, as the complainant remained dissatisfied with the Council's handling of their complaint.

(Tab 4 Joint Health & Social Care Cases Determined and tab 6 Local Authority)  
<https://www.spsso.org.uk/statistics-2022-23>

- 4.12 The Council is responsible for ensuring the services provided by Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde meet the required standards and adhere to the complaint handling procedure. In doing this, the Council must establish mechanisms to identify and act on complaint handling performance issues found.
- 4.13 Inverclyde Leisure implemented their complaint handling procedure in March 2017 and have provided their management information for inclusion into the Council’s quarterly and annual reporting requirements to the SPSO.
- 4.14 Riverside Inverclyde implemented their complaint handling procedure from 1 April 2018 and provide quarterly statistical information for inclusion in the reporting for the Council. The volume of complaints from this ALEO continue to be extremely low with an entire year noted where no complaints were received.
- 4.15 Quarterly reports on progress throughout the year are submitted to the Directorate Management Teams for overall review and any actions on a service specific basis and to ensure awareness of the impact on staff resources.

## 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		x
Legal/Risk		x
Human Resources		x
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

## 5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### One off Costs

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

There are no legal or risk implications arising from this report.

**5.4 Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications arising from this report

**5.5 Strategic**

This report will help deliver the outcomes in the Council Plan Theme 3 – Performance - high quality and innovative services are provided giving value for money.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

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

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None



**Inverclyde Council**

**Appendix 1**

**Annual Complaints Report**

**1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Inverclyde Council, along with all other Scottish Local Authorities, follows a model complaint handling procedure (MCHP) which was created by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). This report demonstrates how Inverclyde Council has performed against the 8 key performance indicators that are set by the SPSO and provides an overview of improvements made to services along with positive feedback from service users.

## **2. THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE**

- 2.1. Inverclyde Council co-ordinates the reporting of complaints to the SPSO and this includes the HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde. Each area is responsible for recording their own complaints and providing their management information to Inverclyde Council to enable the consolidated statistical report to be produced quarterly and annually.
- 2.2. The procedure provides a quick, simple and streamlined process with a strong focus on local, early resolution. This enables issues or concerns to be dealt with as close as possible to the event which gave rise to the service user making the complaint. As far as possible, the complainant should be actively and positively engaged with the process from the outset.
- 2.3. Stage one of the complaint handling procedure should be attempted where there are straightforward issues which are potentially easily resolved with little or no investigation. This should be completed within 5 working days. If the service user remains unhappy following the stage one complaint investigation, they can request that their complaint be escalated to stage two of the procedure.
- 2.4. Stage two of the complaint handling procedure should be used for those matters which are complex, or for serious issues where a thorough investigation will be undertaken. It should also be used for complaints that cannot be resolved at stage one of the procedure. This typically requires a more thorough investigation in order to establish facts prior to reaching conclusion. The complaint points and resolution outcome sought is agreed with the complainant. This complaint should be completed within 20 working days. Should the service user remain unhappy with the investigation of the stage 2 complaint they can exercise their right of review and request the SPSO to look at the issues raised and determine whether they can investigate the matter further.
- 2.5. Escalated stage two of the complaint handling procedure can be used where the service user remains dissatisfied with the way the Council dealt with their complaint at frontline resolution. The complainant can request a detailed investigation under stage two of our complaints handling procedure. This must be undertaken before the complainant can take their complaint to the SPSO to review.
- 2.6. The SPSO reviews complaint outcomes that are referred to them by the service user and decide whether they should investigate the complaint.

### 3. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE BY INDICATORS

#### Indicator 1: the number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population.

- 3.1. To allow a fair comparison to be made across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities, this indicator looks at the figure of “Complaints per 1,000 of the population”. The total number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population in Inverclyde Council during the reporting period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023 was 4.0 complaints. This reflects a decrease of 0.1 when comparing the indicator to the same period last year. The population of Inverclyde Council is estimated to be at around 76,700 residents.
- 3.2. This means that there were 4.0 complaints per 1,000 of the population, or roughly one resident in 250 made a complaint about services. A comparison of this indicator over the past 4 years is shown in the table below.

**Table: Number of Complaints received per 1,000 of the population**

Year	No of Complaints	Complaints Per 1,000 of the population
2022/23	306	4.0
2021/22	317	4.1
2020/21	269	3.5
2019/20	389	5.0

#### Indicator 2 the number of complaints closed at each stage of the complaint handling procedure.

- 3.2 In the reporting period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 Inverclyde Council, Inverclyde Leisure and the HSCP received and handled 306 complaints and closed 278 complaints. It should be noted that Riverside Inverclyde did not receive any complaints. The table below shows the percentage of complaints received at each stage of the complaint procedure.

**Table: Percentage of complaints closed at each stage of the procedure**

Area	Stage 1 % of all closed complaints	Stage 2 % of all closed complaints	Esc stage 2 % of all closed complaints
Inverclyde Council	75%%	17.8%	7.2%
HSCP	33.9%	66.1%	0%
Inverclyde Leisure	85.7%	14.3%	0%
Riverside Inverclyde	0%	0%	0%
Collective Performance	67.3	27.3%	5.4%

- 3.3. The tables below show the number of complaints received and closed in total, as well as at each stage of the complaint handling procedure for each area over the last 5 years for comparison purposes.

**Table: Total number of complaints received by each area**

Area	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
<b>Inverclyde Council</b>	225	244	213	274	256
<b>HSCP</b>	70	61	39	73	44
<b>Inverclyde Leisure</b>	14	12	14	40	*29
<b>Riverside Inverclyde</b>	0	0	0	2	13

\*Inverclyde Leisure had a loss of data for the data covering the period 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2018 which will have impacted the extent of complaints finally recorded in 2018/19 the collective reporting of complaint

**Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at stage 1**

Area	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Inverclyde Council	156	195	162	220	214
HSCP	19	20	25	39	17
Inverclyde Leisure	12	7	13	40	29
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	0	2	12

**Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at stage 2**

Area	2023/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Inverclyde Council	37	30	24	20	8
HSCP	37	38	10	27	22
Inverclyde Leisure	2	5	0	0	0
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	0	0	1

**Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at escalated stage 2**

Area	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
<b>Inverclyde Council</b>	15	20	12	21	13
<b>HSCP</b>	0	0	1	3	0
<b>Inverclyde Leisure</b>	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Riverside Inverclyde</b>	0	0	0	0	0

3.4. The tables below provide a monthly breakdown of complaints closed and the percentage of complaints received within each service each quarter covering the reporting period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. For Inverclyde Leisure, Riverside Inverclyde and HSCP the breakdown is only provided for the annualised volume. The volumes of complaints being received has returned to pre-pandemic norms when comparing to previous years.

**Table: Breakdown of closed complaints by service areas each quarter Q1 & Q2**

Service Area	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Qtr. 1 22/23	% Of complaints	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sept 22	Qtr. 2 22/23	% Of complaints
Chief Exec Office	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0%
Education	1	11	6**	18	20.6%	1	2	6	9	15%
Culture, Comm & Educational Resources	1	0	1	2	2.3%	0	1	8	9	15%
Org Dev, Policy & Communication	0	2	0	2	2.3%	0	0	0	0	0%
Finance	7**	9	10**	26	29.8%	1	2	5	8	14%

Legal & Democratic Services	2	1*	0	3	3.4%	1	0	1	2	3.5%
Property Services	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Regeneration & Planning	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	1	1	1.8%
Environmental Services	3	7	2	12	13.7%	2	1	1	4	7%
Public Protection	1	2***	0	3	3.4%	0	4*	0	4	7%
Roads Shared Service	1	0	1	2	2.3%	0	1	1	2	3.5%
Inverclyde Leisure	-	-	-	6	6.9%				3	5%
Riverside Inverclyde	-	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>HSCP</b>	-	-	-	<b>13</b>	<b>14%</b>				<b>15</b>	<b>26%</b>

includes \*indicates a withdrawn complaint & \*\* indicates complaint remains open, the table does not contain the complaints that have been identified as invalid or service requests

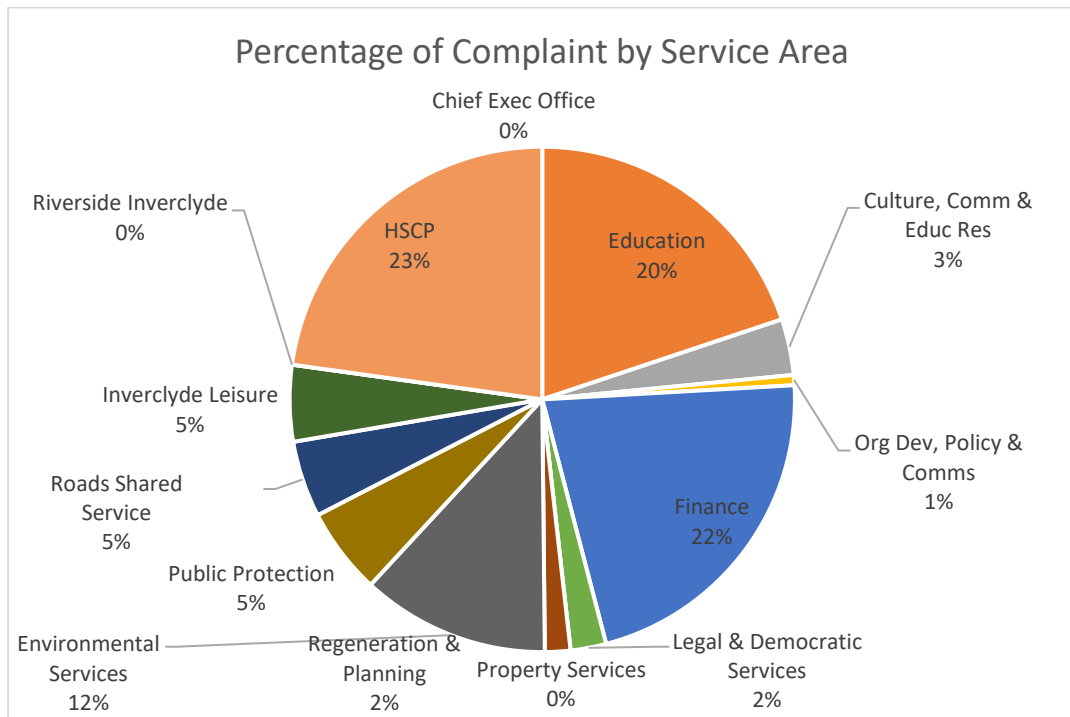
**Table: Breakdown of closed complaints by service areas each quarter Q3 & Q4**

Service Area	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Qtr3 22/23	% Of complaints	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Qtr. 4 22/23	% Of complaints	22/23 Year End Total	% Of Complaint
Chief Exec Office	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
Education	2	7	6	15	21.73%	7	9	3	19	21.11%	61	19.86%
Culture, Comm & Educational Resources	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%	11	0%
Org Dev, Policy & Comms	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%	2	0.65%
Finance	4	7	7	18	26.08%	2	6	7	15	16.66%	67	21.82%
Legal & Democratic Services	1	0	0	1	1.446%	1	0	0	1	1.11%	7	2.28%
Property Services	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
Regen & Planning	1***	1	0	2	2.89%	0	0	2***	2	2.22%	5	1.62%
Environmental Services	3	2	1	6	8.69%	6*	6	3	15	17.77%	37	12.05%
Public Protection	2	0*	2*	4	5.79%	2*	2	2	6	6.66%	17	5.53%
Roads Shared Service	1**	4	1	6	8.69%	1	1	3	5	5.55%	15	4.88%
Inverclyde Leisure	-	-	-	2	2.89%	-	-	-	3	3.33%	15	4.88%
Riverside Inverclyde	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	-	0%	-	0%
<b>HSCP</b>	-	-	-	<b>17</b>	<b>24.63%</b>	-	-	-	<b>25</b>	<b>27.77%</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>22.80%</b>

excludes complaints that are: \* invalid complaint discovered during investigation and includes \*\* withdrawn complaint & \*\*\* complaint remains open

3.5. Outlined in the chart below is the percentage of complaints received by each service compared against the total number of complaints received for the reporting period. Riverside Inverclyde, Property Services and the Chief Executive's Office are the only areas that that did not receive any complaints in the reporting period.

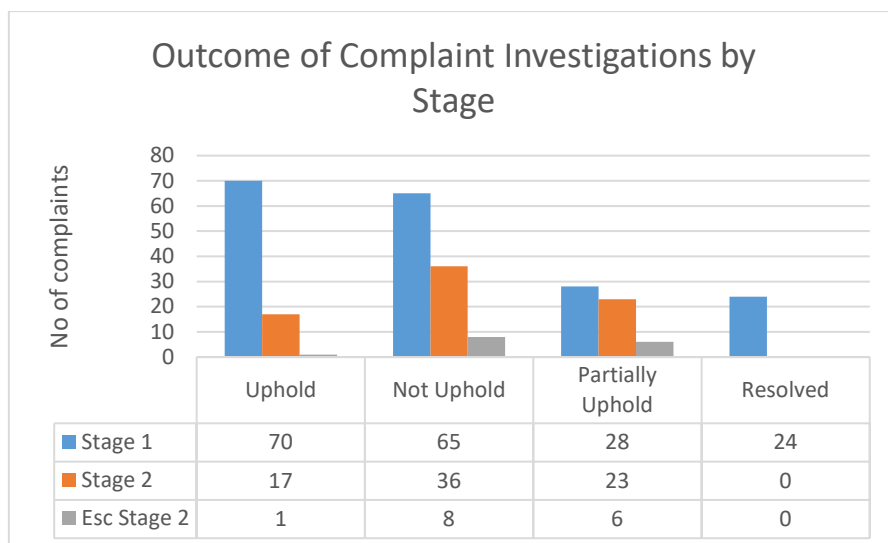
**Chart: Annual complaint volumes received 2022/23**



**Indicator 3 Outcome of Complaint Investigation**

3.6. The graph below outlines the outcomes of investigations of all complaints at each of the complaint stages. For every complaint the Council investigates, the service user will be contacted and an explanation of the outcome of the complaint investigation will be confirmed as being either upheld, not upheld, partially upheld, or resolved.

**Chart: Complaint Investigation Outcome by each complaint stage**



**3.7. In summary:**

- 88 complaints were upheld across all complaint stages
- 57 complaints were partially upheld across all complaint stages
- 109 completed were not upheld across all complaint stages
- 24 complaints were resolved across all complaint stages.

**Indicator 4 – average timescales for resolving complaints**

**3.8.** The table below outlines Inverclyde Council’s collective performance measures on timescale management across all stages of the complaint procedure and covering the last 5 years for comparison purposes. The average time taken to close a complaint at each complaint stage has been:

- Stage 1 - 4.4 days.
- Stage 2 – 20.8 days; and
- Escalated stage 2 – 20.5 days.

Table: Collective complaint handling – average timescale for resolving complaints

<b>Stage 1 Frontline Resolution</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints received	187	222	200	287	272
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	146	187	138	229	222
% Complaints meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	78.1%	84.3%	85.2%	83.6%	82%
No of complaints closed at stage 1 as a % of all complaints closed	67.3%	70.5%	80%	80.2%	86.1%
Ave working days taken stage 1 complaints	4.4 days	4.1 days	4.6 days	3.7 days	4.1 days
<b>Stage 2 Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints received	76	73	35	47	31
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	51	46	19	34	21
% Complaints Meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	67.1%	63%	79.2%	76.7%	68%
No of complaints closed at stage 2 as a % of all complaints closed	27.3%	23.2%	14%	13.1%	9.8%
Ave working days taken stage 2 complaints	20.8 days	23.1 days	15.2 days	18 days	18.1 days
<b>Escalated Stage 2 Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints received	15	25	15	24	13
No of complaints – closed at escalated stage 2 within 20 days	12	13	11	14	13
% Complaints Meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	80%	65%	91.7%	75%	100%
No of complaints closed at escalated stage 2 as a % of all complaints closed	5.4%	6.3%	6%	6.7%	4.1%
Ave working days taken escalated stage 2 complaints	20.5 days	19.8 days	16.6 days	18.3 days	14 days



3.9. The tables below outline the management of complaints within the prescribed timescale for each complaint stage and broken down by each area's complaint handling performance.

**Table: Inverclyde Council Only Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints**

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	129	167	138	172	171
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	83.6%	87.4%	85.2%	87%	80%
Ave working days taken stage 1	4.0 days	3.6 days	4.6 days	3.9 days	4.4 days
<b>Stage 2 Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	31	23	19	14	7
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	83.8%	76.7%	79.2%	80%	88%
Ave working days taken stage 2	13.9 days	17 days	15.2 days	16.1 days	18.4 days
<b>Stage 2 Escalated Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	12	13	11	14	13
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	80%	68.4%	91.7%	81.8%	100%
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	20.5 days	20.8 days	16.6 days	15.7 days	14 days

**Table: HSCP Complaint Handling Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints**

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	7	15	14	39	12
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	36.84%	75%	56%	72%	71%
Ave working days taken stage 1	9.7 days	4.4 days	9.3 days	5.3 days	7.5 days
<b>Stage 2 Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	20	20	6	27	13
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	54.1%	52.6%	60%	74%	59%
Ave working days taken stage 2	28.5 days	30.8 days	22.3 days	19.5 days	18.2 days
<b>Stage 2 Escalated Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	1	3	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	0	-	0%	0%	0
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	-	-	27 days	31 days	0

**Table: Inverclyde Leisure Performance \*\*\* – average timescale for resolving complaints**

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020 /21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	12	6	13	40	29
% Complaints Meeting timescale	100%	85.7%	100%	100%	100%
Ave working days taken stage 1	1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day
<b>Stage 2 Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	2	5	1	0	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale	100%	100%	100%	0	0
Ave working days taken stage 2	5 days	10 days	10 days	0	0
<b>Stage 2 Escalated Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	0	0	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale	0	0	0	0	0
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	0	0	0	0	0

\*\*\* Inverclyde Leisure data only available from the period 2017/18

**Table: Riverside Inverclyde \*\*\*\* – average timescale for resolving complaints**

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021 /22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	0	0	0	2	12
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	0	0	N/A	2	100%
Ave working days taken stage 1	0	0	N/A	2 days	1.6 days
<b>Stage 2 Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	0	0	1
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	0	0	N/A	0	100%
Ave working days taken stage 2	0	0	N/A	0	14 days
<b>Stage 2 Escalated Investigation</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	0	0	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	0	0	N/A	0	0
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	0	0	N/A	0	0

\*\*\*\*Riverside Inverclyde data only available from the period 2018/19

**3.10.** Services must maintain focus on ensuring complaints received are recorded and that officers follow the complaint handling procedure. Particular attention should be given to the timescales for resolving complaints at stage one and stage two. When comparing in isolation the Council's complaint handling performance it is noted that the timescales taken to resolve complaints have increased at all stages, which affects the average days reported. Most of the delays have been during periods when services were under considerable pressure responding to the COVID19 pandemic.

**3.11.** The average days taken to resolve complaints in all stages of the complaint procedure have increased in HSCP's complaint performance. Most of the delays have been during periods when HSCP services were under considerable pressure with

increased volumes returning across complaints, Freedom of Information Requests and Subject Access Requests, which have increased considerably in response to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and the related Redress Scheme. Additionally, the complexity of some of the complaints has seen thorough and considerable investigations being undertaken. This will be an area for focus in the coming year. Training has been rolled out across the HSCP on the importance of complaints, together with support from the management team and greater collaboration within service areas supporting the improvements required.

**Indicator 5 - Performance against timescales for Stage 1 Complaints:**

3.12. The Council aims to close all stage 1 complaints within 5 working days. In 2022/23 the Council closed 187 complaints, with 146 of these closed within timescale which equates to 78.1% response within timescale. 3 (1.6%) complaints were closed after an extension was agreed with the service user.

**Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages stage 1**

Reporting period	No of complaints closed	Within timescale	%	No with extension	%
2022/23	187	146	78.1%	3	1.6%
2021/22	222	186	83.8%	7	3.2%
2020/21	200	169	84.5%	5	2.5%
2019/20	287	229	79.8%	27	9.4%
2018/19	272	222	82%	21	7.7%
2017/18	265	214	80.8%	9	3.4%

**Indicator 5 – performance against timescales for Stage 2 Complaints**

3.13. The Council aims to close all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. In 2022/23, the Council closed 76 complaints, with 51 of these complaints being closed within timescale, which equates to 67.1% response within timescale.

**Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages stage 2**

Reporting period	No of complaints closed	Within timescale	%	No with extension	%
2022/23	76	51	67.1%	0	0%
2021/22	73	46	63%	5	6.8%
2020/21	35	26	74.3%	3	8.6%
2019/20	47	34	72.3%	11	23.4%
2018/19	31	21	68%	10	32.3%
2017/18	40	31	77.5%	10	25%

### Indicator 5 - performance against timescales escalated stage 2 complaints

3.14. The Council aims to close all escalated stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. In 2022/23, the Council closed 15 complaints, with 12 of these complaints being closed within timescale which equates to 80% response within timescale.

**Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages escalated stage 2**

Reporting period	No of complaints closed	Within timescale	%	No with extension	%
2022/23	15	12	80%	0	0%
2021/22	20	13	65%	2	10%
2020/21	15	12	80%	0	0%
2019/20	24	14	58.3%	6	25%
2018/19	13	13	100%	1	7.7%
2017/18	21	18	85.7%	3	14.3%

### Indicator 6 - Extensions to Complaint Timescales

3.15. The complaint handling procedure allows officers to seek an extension to the timescales permitted for stage one and stage two complaint investigations. The maximum period permitted to extend the timescale of a complaint is 5 days for both complaint stages. This indicator reports the number and percentage of complaints at each stage of the procedure, which were closed after an extension to the 5 days, or 20-day timescale was authorised.

Complaint stage	No of extensions agreed	% as a total of all complaints
Stage 1 complaints	7 extensions were agreed	3.2% of total complaints
Stage 2 complaints	5 extensions were agreed	6.8% of total complaints
Escalated stage 2 complaints	2 extensions were agreed	10% of total complaints

## 4. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

4.1. The SPSO has recommended that all Local Authorities should be completing customer satisfaction surveys with service users regularly to gain true insight on how well they are handling complaints. This standardised approach has been delayed this year to allow the development of a straight through process within the complaint handling system to support capturing this feedback in an efficient manner. The Council is developing the process to enable a customer satisfaction survey to be automatically issued once a complaint is closed. The survey will seek feedback using a standard set of questions that have been agreed for use by the SPSO as part of the collection of feedback to assist with suggestions and opportunities for improvement. The HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure, Riverside Inverclyde are also required to implement the survey being issued to complainants.

## 5. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- 5.1. The Council is committed to reflecting on occasions when it does not get it right in order to highlight opportunities for improvement. As such, where a complaint has been upheld or partially upheld, the service determines what actions are required to support improvement and prevent a repeat of circumstances that led to the complaint.
- 5.2. Service improvement recording commenced in November 2016 for Inverclyde Council only. Service improvement tracking requires to be developed for the HSCP as this is not currently in place, although work is underway to implement this.
- 5.3. The Council shares the outcomes of complaint investigations and a selection of actions taken as a result of complaints on a quarterly basis with the Corporate Management Team. The learnings are published on the Council's website each quarter along with the quarterly statistics.

## 6. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO) – RIGHT OF REVIEW

- 6.1. Following a stage two investigation and written response, if a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation, they have a right of review through the SPSO. The table below outlines the number complaints received at the SPSO for Inverclyde Council and HSCP.

**Table: Complaints received by the SPSO for a review**

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Inverclyde Council	12	12	7	15	15
HSCP	1	4	3	11	6

- 6.2. The SPSO reviewed 10 complaints for Inverclyde Council of which 1 complaint was reviewed at the advice stage and this complaint was not taken forward. Nine complaints were reviewed at the early resolution stage of the procedure. The outcome of these reviews were as follows:
- 3 complaints were recognised as examples of good complaint handling;
  - 2 complaints were reviewed and insufficient benefit would be gained from further investigation of the complaint;
  - 1 complaint was an alternative route used.
  - 2 complaints were where there existed a right of appeal to court/tribunal/ or Scottish Ministers. and,
  - 1 case was taken forward prematurely to the SPSO and not progressed.
- 6.3. There were no complaints taken through the investigation stage by the SPSO. The table below outlines the SPSO's published statistics for Inverclyde Council. This reflects a reduction of 2 complaints being reviewed by the SPSO when comparing the data to the same period last year.

**Table: SPSO breakdown by reviews by stage and outcomes for Inverclyde Council**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Outcome Group</b>	<b>Inverclyde Council</b>
Advice	Advice & Guidance - Complaint submissions - mature	0
	Advice & Guidance - Complaint submissions - premature	0
	Advice & Guidance -Enquiries	1
	Organisation not in jurisdiction	0
	Unable to proceed	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>
Early Resolution	Cause and impact test not met (s 5 (3))	0
	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	2
	Discretion – alternative action proposed	0
	Discretion – Alternative route used or available	1
	Discretion - Good complaint handling	3
	Discretion – referred back	0
	Discretion - Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome	0
	Member of the public test not met (s 5 (6))	0
	Organisation not in jurisdiction	0
	Premature	1
	Right of appeal to court/tribunal/Scottish ministers (s 7 (8))	2
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	0
	Time limit (s 10)	0
	Unable to proceed	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>
Investigation	Fully upheld	0
	Not duly made or withdrawn	0
	Not upheld	0
	Resolved	0
	Some upheld	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>

**6.4.** The SPSO reviewed one complaint for the HSCP and no complaints were investigated. One complaint was taken through an alternative proposed action. Overall this reflects an decrease of 3 complaints when comparing data to the same period last year. The table below outlines the SPSO’s published statistics for the HSCP.

**Table: SPSO breakdown by reviews by stage and outcomes for HSCP**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Outcome Group</b>	<b>HSCP</b>
Advice	A&G - Complaint submissions - mature	0
	A&G - Complaint submissions - premature	0
	A&G - Enquiries	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>
Early Resolution	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	0
	Discretion – alternative action proposed	1
	Discretion – Alternative route used or available	0
	Discretion - Good complaint handling	0
	Discretion – referred back to the area	0
	Discretion - Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome	0
	Premature	0
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	0
	Time limit (s 10)	0
	Unable to proceed	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>
	Investigation	Fully upheld
Not duly made or withdrawn		0
Not upheld		0
Resolved		0
Some upheld		0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
		<b>1</b>

## **7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**7.1.** The Council reports and publishes its complaint statistics in line with performance indicators published by the SPSO. Some aspects of the indicators are currently being developed and will be included in the core performance indicators applicable to all sectors (similar to those released in the draft MCHP).

## **8. POSITIVE COMMENTS**

**8.1.** Throughout the year the Council receives positive comments and compliments from service users across all services. These recognise where employees have gone above and beyond the normal standard of service delivery and these compliments are shared with the service teams concerned.

## **9. TRAINING**

**9.1.** Complaint handling training forms part of the induction process for all new staff joining the Council. Line managers identify which new staff require training, which involves completion of the complaint handling procedure e-learning module followed by attendance at a digital or face-to-face training course on the more practical aspects of dealing with complaints using the complaint handling procedure. Each year, the Education Service provides an induction training programme to all relevant staff who will be required to deal with complaints which also includes the use of the complaint handling system training.

**9.2.** Refresher training is provided on a regular basis on request from service areas and where it is deemed necessary. This includes the use of the complaint handling system. All training is tracked using personal individual development plans. A total of 94 hours training has been delivered during the course of 2022/23 for the Council.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

**10.1.** The Council is committed to investigating, learning from and taking action as a result of individual complaints where it is found that standards have fallen below the level expected and where services could be improved. By listening to the views of service users who make a complaint, the Council can improve its services.

**10.2.** In the coming year the key action for services to focus on is to reduce the time taken to respond to complaints at each stage of the complaint handling process. This is particularly relevant when the Council is seeing an increase in the complexity of complaints received by it. Balancing the need to deal with complex complaints timeously alongside all other priorities and challenges facing the Council will be essential whilst also managing the resources required to support this.

**10.3.** The Council will also be preparing for the implementation of the Child Friendly Complaint procedure, which will be included within the Model Complaint Handling Procedure. The principles of the Child Friendly Complaint Procedure will underpin how to handle and investigate complaints involving children in a way that respects their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC). A pilot involving local authorities who agreed to test the process and guidance materials is underway. Feedback arising from the pilot will be factored into



the materials in preparation for the wider roll out which will be implemented in 2024. Training will be undertaken in preparation for this change. The Council will also be preparing for the new complaint handling system which will be introduced in late 2023..

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/21/23/MR</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712042</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Organisational Development, Management Arrangements</b>	<b>Policy and</b>	<b>Communications</b>

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 This report provides the Committee with an update on management arrangements within the Organisational Development (OD), Policy and Communications Service and seeks approval to make changes to the remits of Service Manager posts.
- 1.3 The changes proposed are in response to the recommendations of the Review of the Human Resources (HR) and OD Service and the opportunities arising from a vacancy in the Team.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees that:
1. the post of Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety is deleted;
  2. the remit of the Service Manager - Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships post is extended to include that of the Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety (with the exception of Health and Safety management responsibility);
  3. an additional Service Manager post is created which will have responsibility for OD, HR Support and Payroll, and
  4. the remit of the Service Manager - HR and OD is changed to cover HR Operations and Health and Safety.

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

### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 There are currently three permanent Service Manager posts within the OD, Policy and Communications Service:

- Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety;
- Service Manager – Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships; and
- Service Manager – HR and OD.

In addition there is a temporary post of Service Manager - People and Change Management which is due to terminate in December, 2023.

3.2 The findings of the Review of HR and OD Service were reported to the 15 August 2023 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee. Members approved a recommendation to strengthen the management capacity within the HR and OD Service, with the aim of providing assistance to progress a number of service improvements and provide additional resilience within specific parts of the Service. It is therefore proposed to establish a second permanent Service Manager with responsibility for OD, HR Support and Payroll.

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15.8.23

3.3 The Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety post is currently vacant. The substantive postholder for the Service Manager - Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships role has agreed to an extension in remit to incorporate the duties and responsibilities of the Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety post. This is with the exception of the Health and Safety management responsibility which will move to the Service Manager - HR Operations and Health and Safety. The Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety role will consequently be deleted.

3.4 In summary, the proposed changes, as illustrated in Appendix 1 are:

Post	Permanent/ Temporary post	Postholder	Proposed change
Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety	Permanent	Vacant	Delete post
Service Manager - Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Permanent	Vacant (the postholder is currently seconded to the Head of OD, Policy and Communications role)	Extend remit to include that of Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety (with the exception of Health and Safety management responsibility)
Service Manager - HR and OD	Permanent	Postholder	Change designation and remit: Service Manager - HR Operations and Health and Safety
Service Manager - OD, HR Support and Payroll	Permanent	New post	Create new permanent post

3.5 While the proposed changes in the remits of Service Managers will give additional management resource to the HR and OD part of the Service, support to the Corporate Policy and Partnership Team and to the Corporate Communications Teams will consequently reduce. As a result, the capacity for media relations work in particular will be kept under review.

#### 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee agrees that:

1. the post of Service Manager – Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety is deleted;
2. the remit of the Service Manager - Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships post is extended to include that of the Service Manager - Corporate Communications, Tourism and Health and Safety (with the exception of Health and Safety management);
3. an additional Service Manager post is created which will have responsibility for OD, HR Support and Payroll, and
4. the remit of the Service Manager - HR and OD is changed to cover HR Operations and Health and Safety.

#### 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 (Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33/Council Plan 2023/28)	X		
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Environmental and Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

#### 5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report as one Service Manager post is being deleted and another created.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/(Savings)

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

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal/risk implications arising from this report.

### 5.4 Human Resources

The human resources implications arising are detailed in the report.

### 5.5 Strategic

The content of this report is of relevance to the following Council Plan 2023/28 Themes:

#### **Theme 3: Performance**

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

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

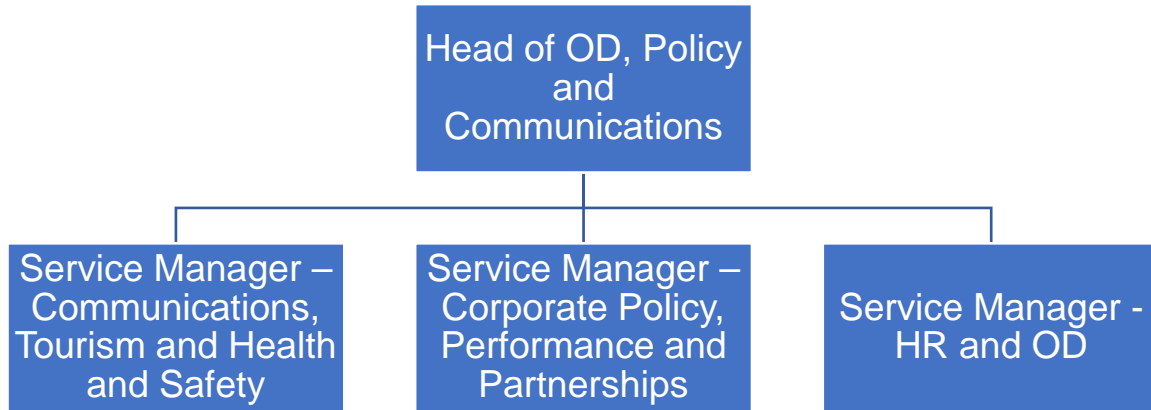
6.1 There has been consultation with the postholders referenced in this report, Trade Union engagement and engagement with the wider Service Teams whose line management may change following implementation of the recommendations.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

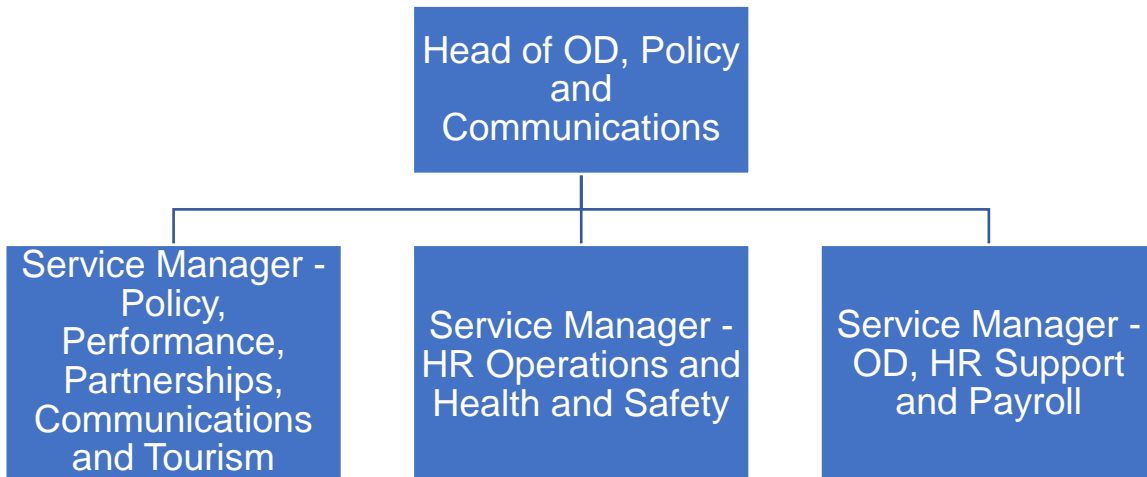
7.1 Review of HR and OD Service.

## APPENDIX 1

Current Structure (permanent posts)



Proposed Structure (permanent posts)



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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LS/086/23/IS</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Colin MacDonald</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712113</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Inverkip Project Update – Remit from Environment &amp; Regeneration Committee</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee consider a remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee relative to the City Deal project at Inverkip.

1.3 The Environment & Regeneration Committee at its meeting of 31 August 2023 considered a report by the Head of Physical Assets.

1.4 A copy of the report to the Environment & Regeneration Committee is attached as Appendix 1.

1.5 The Environment & Regeneration Committee decided:

(1) that (a) the submission of the Outline Business Case for submission to the City Deal be approved, and (b) it be agreed that Officers should proceed with the detailed design of the junctions;

(2) that the following be noted, (a) the increase in construction costs from those set out in the 2015 Strategic Business Case, and (b) the funding proposals; and

(3) that it be agreed to remit the report to the Policy & Resources Committee to seek approval of £0.3million funding from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency allocation as detailed in section 5.2 of the report.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee, which seeks approval of £0.3m funding from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency allocation.

**Iain Strachan**  
**Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customers Services**

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Regeneration Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 August 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Physical Assets</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>ENV043/23/SJ/EM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Eddie Montgomery</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 714800</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Inverkip Project Update</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the submission of the Outline Business Case for the City Deal project at Inverkip and to advise on the current estimated project costs.

1.3 The proposed funding is detailed in section 5.2 and will require the financial implications to be remitted to the Policy & Resources Committee for approval.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the committee:

- approve the submission of the Outline Business Case for submission to the City Deal and agree that Officers should proceed with the detailed design of the junctions;
- note the increase in construction costs from those set out in the 2015 Strategic Business Case and the funding proposals;
- agree that it be remitted to the Policy & Resources Committee seeking approval of £0.3m funding from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency allocation as outlined in section 5.2.

**Eddie Montgomery**  
**Head of Physical Assets**



### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Inverkip City Deal project is a regional regeneration priority that recognises the need to address vacant and derelict land, address housing needs supporting population growth and secure economic and environmental benefit. It aligns with the fundamental principles of City Deal namely early intervention infrastructure projects to unlock follow on economic investment. The project addresses the restricted network and junction capacity on the A78 trunk road at locations in and around Inverkip, the strategic business case for the project was approved by the City Deal Cabinet. The project will release investment and enable the development of a 43hectare brownfield site at the former Inverkip Power Station, providing for up to 650 houses and 3,000 sqm commercial / community / office floorspace and 3,000 sqm of outdoor community formal activity space, including children's play facilities. In addition, the scheme protects and enhances 25ha of the local Green Network.
- 3.2 When the project was first developed in 2014, the intention was that the City Deal Funding would be used as a conditioned grant to Scottish Power Energy Networks and for them to carry out the works. Whilst the initial allocation of the project from City Deal Funds was identified at £3.77m which required a 14% contribution (£0.527k) from the Council, it was argued that the follow on investment from Scottish Power removed the requirement for the Council to contribute and the project value was established at £3.25m. In the intervening period the property market has changed along with Scottish Power's risk attitude. In order to progress the project it has been necessary to remove the clawback condition and indeed the delivery model has changed to the extent where the project will be delivered by the Council.
- 3.3 The vision for Inverkip is to support the delivery of the following outcomes:
- Tackle socio-economic deprivation and health and wellbeing challenges within communities and deliver inclusive growth;
  - Address depopulation;
  - Deliver sustainable economic investment;
  - Regenerate key economic sites and communities.
- 3.4 The site is identified within the Inverclyde Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021-2025, The Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan, as a key strategic site, and as a 'Priority Place' within the Local Development Plan.
- 3.5 The original project scope included the following elements:
- A 3 leg roundabout at Main St Inverkip
  - Lengthen Slip way Northbound
  - Lengthen Slip way Southbound
  - 5 leg Roundabout at bottom of slip roads not on the A78
- 3.6 The project is being delivered in partnership with the landowner, Scottish Power Generation (Assets) Limited and all works require to be approved by Transport Scotland who own and maintain the truck road network. All of the works are being carried out on the public road network.

#### **Planning Approval Requirements**

- 3.7 Scottish Power Generation (Assets) Limited was granted Planning Permission in Principle in 2022. A number of conditions were placed on the application, and these are as follows:

Pre commencement of construction of any part of the development:

- Approval of detailed design of new access roundabout on A78;
- Construction of new access roundabout to the satisfaction of Planning Authority and Transport Scotland;
- Submission and approval of the Construction Traffic Management Plan to the Planning Authority in liaison with Transport Scotland; and
- Upgrade of Main Street (North) and Harbourside (Kip Marina) with the A78 to traffic signal control to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland.

Pre occupation of 200 residential units:

- Upgrade of new access roundabout to traffic signal control to satisfaction of the Planning Authority after consultation with Transport Scotland; and
- Blocking off of A78 northbound on-slip to satisfaction of the Planning Authority after consultation with Transport Scotland.

### Strategic Business Case 2015

3.8 The Strategic Business Case was developed in 2015 and included the following elements:

- A 3 leg roundabout at Main St Inverkip
- Lengthen Slip way Northbound
- Lengthen Slip way Southbound
- 5 leg Roundabout at bottom of slip roads not on the A78 including access to the site

Element	Construction Cost Est £m	Preliminaries £m	Total £m
3 leg roundabout on A78 @ Main Street	0.900	0.126	1.026
Amendments to Northbound slip road	0.400	0.056	0.456
Amendments to Southbound slip road	0.400	0,056	0.456
5 leg roundabout	0.800	0.112	0.912
Fees & consents	0.400	n/a	0.400
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>0.350</b>	<b>3.250</b>

### Outline Business Case 2023

3.9 The Outline Business Case has been undertaken and the development of this document along with an outline design has changed the project deliverables as agreed at this committee on 2nd May 2019. The changes are detailed below:

- Signalised junction Main Street (North) on A78
- Signalised junction Harbourside (Kip Marina) on A78
- Widen Road to 2 lanes between the signals on A78
- 3 leg Roundabout at Development on A78

This reflects input from Transport Scotland received through the planning process as the A78 is owned and maintained by the Trunk Road Authority.

3.10 Officers engaged with Balfour Beatty through the scape framework and an outline budget cost to complete the works is detailed below:

Element	Construction Cost Est £m	Preliminaries £m	Total £m
Signalised junction @ Main Street*	1.147	0.506	1.653
Signalised junction @ Kip Marina*	0.911	0.402	1.313
3 leg roundabout on trunk road	0.934	0.412	1.346
Design & Project Management	0.500	n/a	0.500
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.492</b>	<b>1.320</b>	<b>4.812</b>

\* includes carriageway works

3.11 As the construction costs were significantly higher than the budget, Officers have been working with the contractor and consultant to challenge the outline design and value engineer the project. At the same time new traffic volume surveys was undertaken.

3.12 The outcome of the value engineering and the new traffic counts is that there is now no requirement to widen the A78 between Harbourside and Main Street Inverkip junction as a single carriageway can cope with the revised traffic volumes that have changed after the covid pandemic.

3.13 The revised construction costs for the new project are detailed below:

Element	Construction Cost Est £m	Preliminaries £m	Total £m
Signalised junction @ Main Street*	0.961	0.366	1.327
Signalised junction @ Kip Marina*	0.799	0.315	1.114
3 leg roundabout on trunk road	0.620	0.239	0.859
Design & Project Management	0.500	n/a	0.500
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.880</b>	<b>0.920</b>	<b>3.800</b>

\* includes carriageway works

3.14 The reduction in costs have come from the following savings:

- Reduction in area of road widening as a consequence of only single lane requirement through the traffic single (still to be approved by Transport Scotland).
- Remove full road re-construction on existing road and change to replacing wearing course only (still to be approved by Transport Scotland).
- Removal of traffic signal costs at roundabout. These will now be borne by the developer once 200 houses are constructed.

3.15 Following completion of construction the works will be adopted by Transport Scotland.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Officers will continue with the detailed design of the scheme whilst submitting the outline and final business cases.

4.2 Officers will continue to work with the consultant and the contractor to further value engineer the project and achieve Transport Scotland approval. Officers will also engage with funding partners to increase the funding.

4.3 The proposed funding is outlined in section 5.2 below. The £550,000 increase in costs requires to be met by the Council as part of the requirement for the Council to contribute 14% to the project.

## 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	x	
Legal/Risk	x	
Human Resources		x
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	x	
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

## 5.2 Finance

The Capital Programme contribution will require approval from the Policy & Resources Committee.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Capital Programme	City Deal	2024/25	3,250		Original allocation
RAMP		2024/25	250		
Capital Programme	Contingency	2023/25	300		Funding from £4.0m Reserves allocation approved March 2023

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					All ongoing maintenance will be the responsibility of Transport Scotland

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

External Legal Advisors have been appointed to support the development of legal agreements between Scottish Power (Generation) Assets Limited and the Council.

The Council will act as agent for SPGAL for the procurement of the roundabout through the SCAPE framework. A Legal Agreement will be put in place to set out governance arrangements.

The final proposals will be subject to Transport Scotland approval.

### 5.4 Human Resources

None.

### 5.5 Strategic

Should the project not be delivered this will impact on the Strategic regeneration aims and outcomes for Inverclyde Council.

### 5.6 Equalities, 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:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required and will be made available on the Council website: <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments</a>
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

#### (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.

#### (c) Children and Young People

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

X

YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.

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

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services and the Chief Financial Officer have been consulted on this report. The CMT support the proposals.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Budget Cost – Balfour Beatty - S22028 SCAPE2 - A78 Improvements, Inverkip Rev01

7.2 Outline business case will be distributed to Members Lounge

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LS/087/23/IS</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Colin MacDonald</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712113</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Dunrod Road – Closure and Landslip – Remit from Environment &amp; Regeneration Committee</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee consider a remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee relative to the closure and landslip at Dunrod Road.

1.3 The Environment & Regeneration Committee at its meeting of 31 August 2023 considered a report by the Head of Physical Assets.

1.4 A copy of the report and appendix to the Environment & Regeneration Committee is attached as Appendix 1.

1.5 The Environment & Regeneration Committee decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Landslide Risk Map regarding the slippage risk over a 460m section of Dunrod Road be noted;
- (2) that it be agreed to proceed with the Officers' recommendation of Option 3 to re-align Dunrod Road up the slope towards the Greenock Cut;
- (3) that it be agreed to assign Cycling Walking and Safer Roads (CWSR) and Village Centre funds to the project as part of the funding mix; and
- (4) that it be agreed to remit the report to the Policy & Resources Committee to seek approval of £1.5million from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee, which seeks approval of £1.5m from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency.

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

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Regeneration Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 August 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Physical Assets</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>ENV045/23/EM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Eddie Montgomery</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 714800</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Dunrod Road – Closure and Landslip</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of proposed solutions for re-instating access following the landslip on Dunrod Road, Inverkip
- 1.3 The option recommended by the CMT requires a significant contribution from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency and as such the financial implications will require approval by the Policy & Resources Committee.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- Notes the contents of the Landslide Risk Map regarding the slippage risk over a 460m section of Dunrod Road;
  - Support Officers recommendations to proceed with Option 3 to re-align Dunrod Road up the slope towards the Greenock Cut;
  - Agree to assign CWSR and Town and Village Centre funds to the project as part of the funding mix;
  - Agree that it be remitted to the Policy and Resources Committee seeking approval of £1.5m from the 2023/26 Capital Programme contingency.

**Eddie Montgomery**  
**Head of Physical Assets**



### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Dunrod Road links the A78 west of Spango Valley with the Old Largs Road and provides access to the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park visitor centre at Cornalees from the western side of the local authority area. It is a single track road with passing places popular with walkers, cyclists and other road users. As well as being used for pleasure uses it has been used extensively by Scottish Water and Scottish Power Energy networks for major infrastructure works as well as providing access to farm and business premises.
- 3.2 Heavy rain in November 2011 caused a major landslide on Dunrod Road approximately 600m west of Shielhill Farm, Inverkip. Half of the road collapsed and moved down the hill. A geotechnical consultant was engaged with remedial works undertaken in October 2012 to stabilise the embankment.
- 3.3 In 2020 due to poor weather conditions and heavy rain the next section of Dunrod Road downhill from the section that was repaired in 2012 showed signs of movement, with cracks appearing in the road surface. Geotechnical consultants were engaged and the cause of the cracking was attributed to water ingress. Remedial works were undertaken to improve the drainage and resurface the road. These works were completed in March 2021.
- 3.4 By the end of 2021 cracks were again starting to appear in the road surface and this may be attributed to the additional large vehicle movements or underground subsidence. The road was monitored on a monthly basis and showed a steady increase in movement. To reduce the stress and load on the road, vehicle movements were restricted to 3 tonnes, however by the end of July 2022 the movement was deemed too severe to allow any more vehicles to pass as cars were grounding over the subsided surface and the embankment was also showing signs of further movement.
- 3.5 Temporary signs and cones were placed to close the road however these measures were being moved and vehicles were still driving over the cracked road. A permanent barrier system was then erected to protect the general public as there was a risk of a road collapse, the signage of which has been subsequently enhanced.
- 3.6 A detailed geotechnical study was undertaken and completed in April 2023 and this included deep boreholes to determine the cause of the failure. The borehole survey results have shown a notable displacement to a depth of 3m, indicating mass movement of the superficial soil and additional investigation works are required prior to determining a solution.
- 3.7 On reviewing the geotechnical study and given the significant costs to repair 80m of road due to the mass movement of soil 3m deep and that other sections of the road down to the bends over the past 10 years have shown signs of movement. Officers engaged the consultant to undertake a desktop study of the entire area above and below the failed section to determine if there were other areas of concern.
- 3.8 The Geohazard Mapping Survey and Desk Study investigated the stability of Dunrod Road over a length of 460m including areas above and below the road. The report concluded that 160m of the existing road is at high risk of slippage and 80m of the high risk area was repaired in 2012. Another 300m should be avoided as it is at medium risk as these areas would require significant mitigation measures. The study also suggested that an alternative route should be investigated in the low-risk zone between the Cut and the top of the slope above the road. A copy of the risk map is contained in Appendix 1.
- 3.9 On completion of the Geohazard Mapping a roads feasibility study was undertaken in May 2023 to determine if an alternative route was possible. The report concluded that there was a feasible alternative route but this would require further investigation works including drainage.

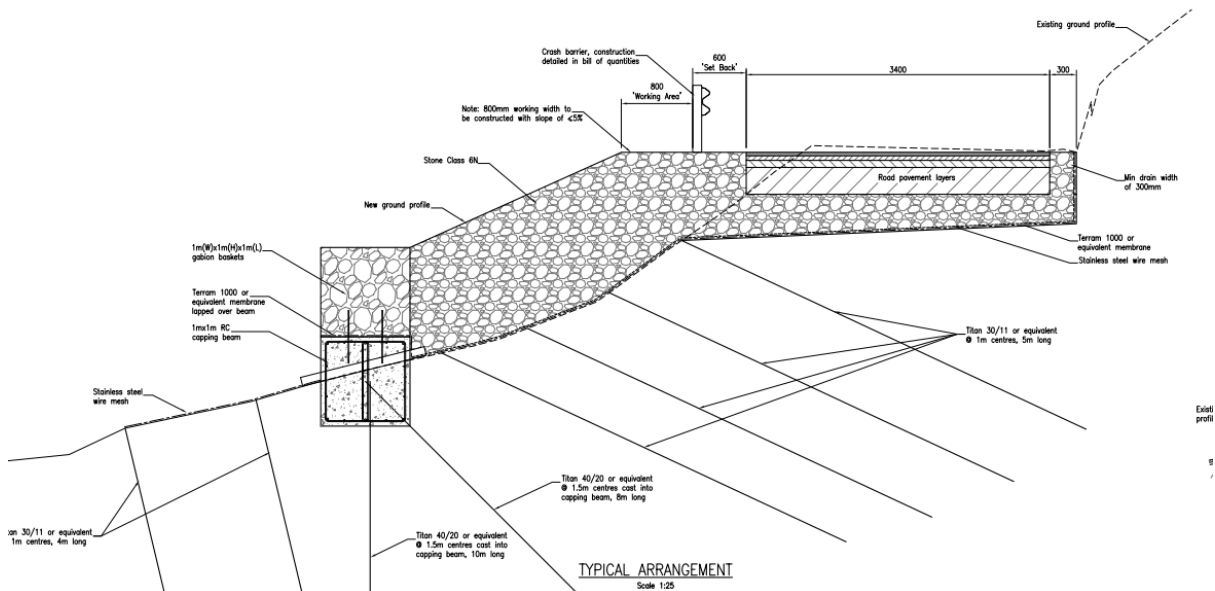
3.10 Engagement has been carried out with a number of affected individuals impacted with the closure. In order to achieve a positive outcome, the adjacent farmer has offered use of the field required to deliver Option 3. All of the proposals require a drainage solution to be delivered which prevents the ongoing water run off issue.

#### 4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 As the repairing and re-opening of the road has significant cost implications Officers have looked at a range of options to repair and open the road, to either vehicles or pedestrians and cyclists.

##### Option 1 - Repair 380m of road with Soil Nails - £5.0-5.5m

Install Soil-nails to stabilise the weak sections of slope by tying them back into the rock face, along with the installation of a soil-nailed capping beam tied into the soil nails and then gabion baskets. The upfilling of the road make-up would then be constructed and resurfaced over the entire length. Installation of Vehicle Restraint System along the length. This would allow the road to open along the same alignment as the existing. This construction would be the same for the 380m of high and medium risk areas.



Previous typical soil-nailing detail

##### Option 2 - Repair slippage section only with Soil Nails - £1.45-1.65m

Repair the slippage section over a length of 80m by soil nailing the slope back into the rock and the installation of a soil-nailed capping beam and then gabion baskets. The upfilling of the road make-up would then be constructed and resurfaced over the 80m of failure. Installation of Vehicle Restraint System along 80m. This would repair the worst section of road however there is still another 300m of road in the medium risk zone and could start to fail at any time. With this proposal there would be a need to weight restrict the road to reduce the deterioration of the weaker areas. The 3.5t weight limit would still need to stay in place.

### Option 3 - Construct a new road 3.5m wide with passing places - £2.0m

Construction a new road 3.5m wide, 1m verges, with passing places further up the hill towards the cut. The road would cut into the hillside between the cut and the top of the steep slope. The upfilling of the road make-up would then be constructed and resurfaced. The length of newly constructed road would be 650m. A Vehicle Restraint System will be required along parts of the road. This would remove the risk of further slippage and would future proof the road. A weight limit would be advisable for this option as well but may not be as severe as Option 2. It might be a 7t weight limit instead of a 3.5t weight limit.

### Option 4 - Construct a new cycle and walking route and closed to vehicular traffic - £1.8m

Construction of a 2m wide walking, wheeling and cycling route along the same route as Option 3 but a narrower route with footpath construction instead of road construction. The road would remain closed to vehicular traffic but would allow cyclists and pedestrians to access the area. Turning areas and signage would be constructed to allow vehicles to turn.

### Option 5 - Do nothing and leave the road closed - £0.3m

Will require additional signage and turning areas to be constructed at the fences to allow vehicles to turning around safely.

- 4.2 Officers would recommend Option 3 as this opens the road up and reduces the risk of further slippage. To shut the road to vehicular traffic entails an eleven mile diversion route and the other access whilst it is open is not ideal in the long term as there are two sharp hair-pins bends and the road past Whinhill course has been subject to failure in the past as it is a floating road on peat. Therefore, additional permanent traffic on this alternative route would result in the Old Largs Road requiring upgrading works. The next preferred option would be Option 1 as this again opens the road but has more significant cost implications.
- 4.3 Closing the road to vehicular traffic would be the last option due to the length of the diversion route and as the Cornalees Visitor Centre is a prominent leisure facility for the area. Old Largs Road has steep inclines and sharp corners and is susceptible to deterioration with additional traffic over a prolonged period of time. A cycle and walking route would be a compromise, however it is a steep climb from Inverkip to Cornalees and this option would also require consideration of a turning area as per Option 5 due to the vehicular restrictions increasing the overall cost beyond that of Option 3.

## 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	x	
Legal/Risk	x	
Human Resources		x
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	x	
Environmental & Sustainability	x	
Data Protection		x

## 5.2 Finance

One off Costs – based on **Option 3** Construction costs £1.795m + Consultant and Project Management costs of £0.205m = £2.00m.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Capital Programme	Contingency	2023/25	1,500		Capital contingency, requires P&R Committee approval.
External Funding	CWSR Grant	2023/25	200		
External Funding	T&VC unallocated sum	2023/25	300		Resources freed up by use of Place Based Funding Grant
			<b>2,000</b>		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

Conveyancing will be required for the land use however it is anticipated that there will be no cost associated with the acquisition of the land. Traffic Regulation Orders may also be required.

## 5.4 Human Resources

None

## 5.5 Strategic

The proposed option would ensure access to a popular outdoor recreational facility for residents and visitors alike.

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

The project could restrict access to the Cornalees Centre or keep as same. The design is compliant with the Equality Act –suitable for all. An EqIA has yet to be completed, along with a monitoring and evaluation report once the scheme is completed.

### (a) Equalities

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

X	YES – Assessed as relevant, an EqlA is required and will be made available on the Inverclyde Council website: <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments</a>
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqlA 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.

(c) 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.

5.7 **Environmental/Sustainability**

The realignment of the road associated with Option 3 involves some minimal tree removal. The reopening of the road will address the current significant traffic diversion route and the associated vehicle emissions impact.

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.

6.0 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services and the Chief Financial Officer have been consulted on this report. The CMT support the recommended option.

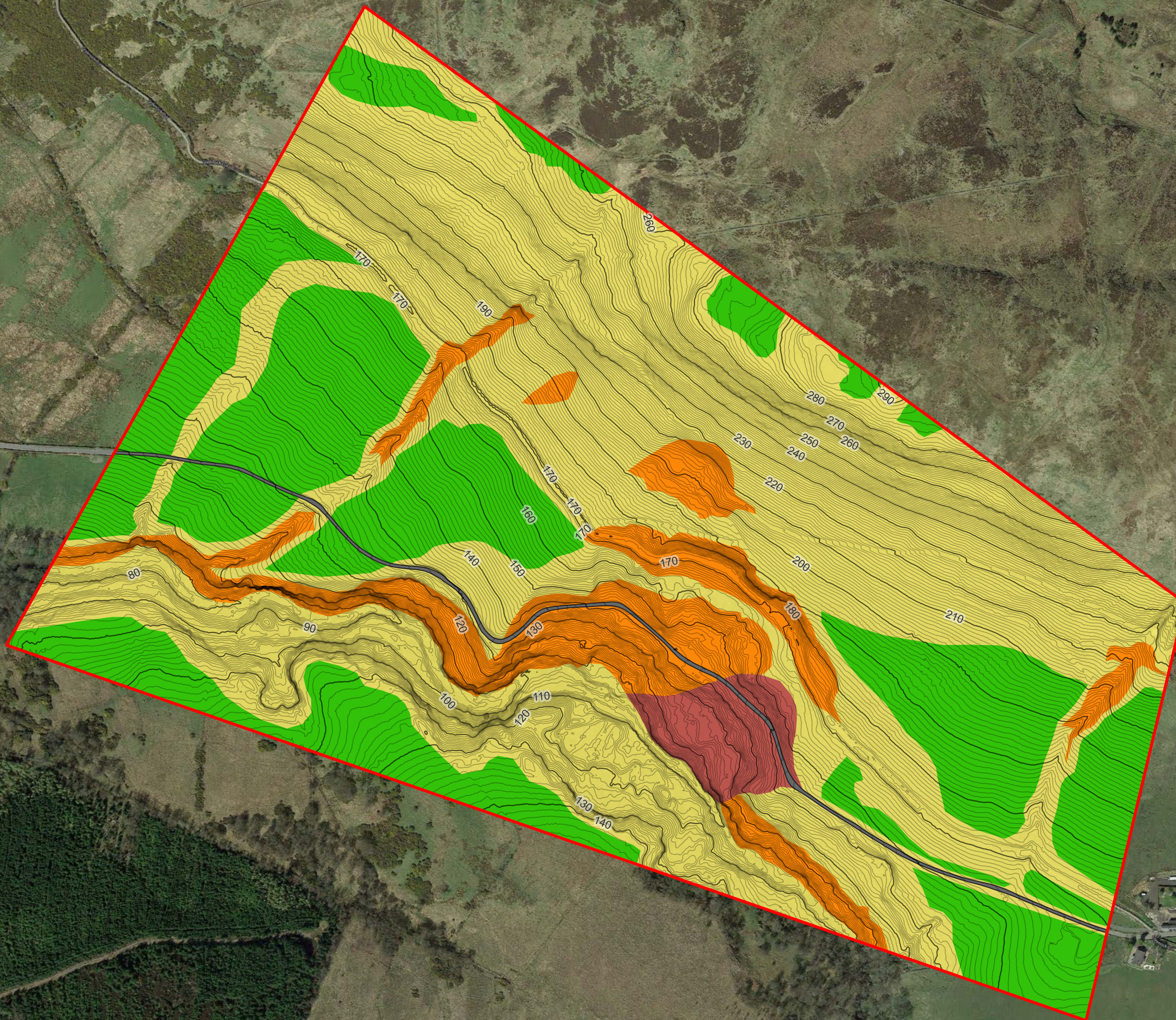
## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Dunrod Road Stability Assessment, Geotechnical Interpretative Report and Slope Repair Options – Sweco – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

Dunrod Road, Geohazard Mapping Survey and Desk Study – Sweco - 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

Dunrod Road Realignment, Outline Feasibility Summary Report – Sweco – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023

- Survey Area
- Dunrod Road
- Watercourses
- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Negligible Risk
- Low Risk
- Contours (1m)
- Contours (10m)



A	16/05/2023	First Issue	FS	DK	GG
Rev	Date	Amendment Details	By	Chk	App

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Client: **Inverclyde council**

Project Title: **Dunrod Road - Slope Stability Extended Study**

Drawing Title: **Figure 4: Landslide Risk Map**

Sheet Size	Scale	Sweco Ref	Revision
A3	1:4000.0	65208087-SW/E-XX-00-G-G-0004	A

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