
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	21 November 2022
Report By:	Interim Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Report No:	PR/23/23/KM
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 2146
Subject:	Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 – Six Monthly Progress Report		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with the first six monthly progress report on the Council Plan 2023/28 and seek approval for its publication. The report covers the period 1st April – 30th September 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Consider the first progress report on the new Council Plan 2023/28 and;
- Approve its publication on the Inverclyde Council website.

Morna Rae
Interim Head,
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 At its meeting on 20 April 2023, The Inverclyde Council approved the adoption and implementation of a new five-year Council Plan 2023/28. The new Council Plan also detailed the range of high-level Plans and Strategies being progressed across the Council, the successful delivery of which will support the achievement of the Council Plan outcomes.
- 3.2 The Plan sets out the Council's vision: The Inverclyde Commitment: Success for All – Getting it Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community. It also established a number of high-level outcomes under the three strategic themes of People, Place and Performance.

Theme 1: **PEOPLE**

Outcomes we will achieve:

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

Theme 2: **PLACE**

Outcomes we will achieve:

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

Theme 3: **PERFORMANCE**

Outcomes we will achieve:

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

- 3.3 The Inverclyde Council also approved the governance arrangements for the Council Plan, namely the submission of a progress report to the Policy and Resources Committee every six-months. This first report, covering the period 1st April 2023 – 30th September 2023, is provided in Appendix 1 for the consideration of the Committee. The report includes information on:
- The delivery of the Council's key strategic plans;
 - The delivery of key projects and initiatives within the Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans 2023/26; and
 - Partnership projects and initiatives that are being led by Inverclyde Council and delivered under the umbrella of the Inverclyde Alliance.
- 3.4 As this first progress report on the Council Plan coincides with the publication of the last Annual Performance Report (including new LGBF data), on the former Corporate Plan, some overlap is unavoidable due to the cross-cutting nature of the outcomes within each Plan. To reduce duplicating of reporting the same KPI data at the same time, the full KPI dashboard, featuring trends and status, has not been included within this Council Plan progress report, however it will feature in future reports.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the progress made in delivering the Council Plan in the first six months of implementation and approve its publication on the Inverclyde Council website.
- 4.2 As the implementation of the Council Plan is at an early stage, future progress reports will evolve to reflect the dynamic nature of the Plan and ensure that performance reporting is as engaging and accessible as possible.

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

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a duty on Councils to publish a range of information as set out by the Accounts Commission's SPI Direction, the latest version of which is the "Publication of Information (Standards of Performance) Direction 2021 Statutory Performance Indicators". The publication of this progress report helps fulfil the Council's obligations under the Direction.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct human resources implications associated with this report.

5.5 **Strategic**

This report provides information on progress in delivering the new Council Plan in the first six months of implementation and as such, is relevant to the delivery of all Council Plan outcomes.

6.0 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 None.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Council Plan 2023/28 - Inverclyde Council - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/strategies-policies-and-plans/council-plan>



Council Plan 2023/28

Bi-annual report 2023/24

**Success for All - Getting it Right for every Child, Citizen
and Community**

INTRODUCTION

In April 2023, Inverclyde Council approved a new Council Plan for Inverclyde which set the strategic direction and vision for the organisation for the period 2023/28. The new Council Plan was developed alongside a new 10-year Partnership Plan 2023/33. The same vision has been adopted in the Council and Partnership Plan: **“The Inverclyde Commitment: Success for All – Getting it Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community”**.

The Council Plan 2023/28 builds on the progress that was made in the delivery of the Council’s previous Corporate Plan 2018/23. As this is the first biannual progress report on the new Council Plan 2023/28, there is some inevitable overlap between this performance report and the final Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report 2022/23, due to the cross-cutting nature of the outcomes within the Plans. To gain a fully rounded view of performance, both reports should therefore be considered together.

The Council Plan 2023/28 introduced a range of high-level outcomes for the Council, across the strategic themes of People, Place and Performance. The delivery of these outcomes is via the actions plans that have been developed for the Council’s Strategic Plans and the new Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans, with a golden thread bringing together the collective vision, purpose and aspirations. This Progress Report brings together a range of information on the delivery of these Strategic Plans and the projects and initiatives that are being delivered via the Committee Plans.

Public performance reporting is a core element of the Council’s Best Value activity. The publication of regular progress reports for key stakeholders helps to demonstrate how well the Council is delivering its strategic objectives, highlights achievements and where further progress is required.

This report is structured around the Council Plan themes:



THEME 1: PEOPLE

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THEME 2: PLACE

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THEME 3: PERFORMANCE

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Theme 1 PEOPLE



The people of Inverclyde and the people employed by the Council to deliver our services are the lifeblood of the area.

Making sure everyone has an equal opportunity to benefit from successes and to move forward in every area of their work and life is at the heart of how we develop individuals to reach their true potential, and ensure our community and Council are resilient to challenge.



Outcome: Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education

How are we delivering the best start in life for our young people?

Children's Services Plan 2023/26

A new **Inverclyde Children's Services Plan 2023/26** has been developed by the Children's Services Partnership (CSP) and approved by the Inverclyde Alliance. The CSP comprises of representatives from the main partner agencies, including Health and Social Care Partnership, Education and Community Services, Police Scotland, Voluntary Organisations, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Skills Development Scotland.

The Children's Services Plan contains four outcomes to improve the lives of children and young people in Inverclyde:

1. Children, young people and families are listened to and their views are instrumental in designing and delivering services.
2. Children and young people's health and wellbeing is promoted and improved.
3. Children and young people feel safe and loved, and are supported to stay in their families.
4. Children, young people and families and services work together to reduce inequalities.

The Promise and the Whole Family Wellbeing model are fully embedded within the new Plan and every opportunity for joined-up children's services and collaborative improvement is being explored.

The next step for the Partnership is to identify trends and measures of success, which has been hampered with the interruption to available data from the Health and Wellbeing survey. Progress, timescales and actions are being monitored by the lead officers, reporting to the strategic group with scrutiny provided by the Alliance Board.

Inverclyde Education Services Improvement Plan 2023/24

Education Services has implemented a new **Education Services Improvement Plan 2023/24** ([Education Services in Inverclyde - Inverclyde Council](#)). The priorities for the Service in the current year support the delivery of the new Children's Services Plan 2023/26 and the Council Plan 2023/28. These are:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people;
- Getting it right for every child; and
- Improving outcomes for care experienced children, young people and their families.

Progress in the delivery of the Improvement Plan is reported to the Education and Communities Committee.

Raising Attainment

Data on the attainment of Inverclyde pupils in 2023 was published in August. It showed an overall pass rate of 85% at National 5 level, 88% at Higher, and 93% at Advanced Higher. Success at Advanced Higher represents an increase of seven per cent on the previous year. Whilst there was a slight drop in the overall Higher pass rate compared with 2022, nearly two-thirds of candidates (63 per cent) achieved one or more passes, an increase of 3%.

There is a slight decrease in those who attained three or more passes – down one per cent – with the number of pupils gaining five or more Highers remaining the same at nearly one in five (18 per cent). At National 5s, nearly half of all students (48 per cent) achieved five Level 5 passes by the end of S4, the same as the previous year.

Improving pathways for senior phase pupils

Delivering enhanced pathways for Senior Phase Pupils is a strategic priority for Education Services within its Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan, building on the work of the Senior Phase Action Plan. Education Services works in partnership with colleagues in the More Choices More Chances team to develop services in this area. A longer-term Training Strategy has also been developed and is now in place.

The Senior Phase Governance Group continues to monitor pathways for pupils with Additional Support Needs. A revised Transition Policy has been produced in conjunction with adult and children's services and a soft launch is planned for November 2023.

Play Pedagogy

Playful Pedagogy, which is a way of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning, is being used to support learning and development of Inverclyde children at an early level. Three Inverclyde Head Teachers have been appointed to the role of Play Associate and have started initial engagement to support leadership of play and enquiry using the West Partnership Principles. This is providing an opportunity for Head Teachers to plan the individualised Play Journey for their schools, quality assure their progress and embed this practice in their schools.



Outcome: Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced

How are we reducing gaps in outcomes due to poverty?

Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Report 2023/24

The latest child poverty data shows the challenge faced in tackling local inequalities. It is estimated that the overall percentage of children living in relative poverty (after housing costs) in Inverclyde is 24.4% however, this varies across Inverclyde, ranging from 5.5% to 31.4%.

The Inverclyde Child Poverty Local Action Report 2023/24, which is an annual report that is jointly prepared with the Health Board, has recently been published. The report contains details of activities carried out by the Child Poverty Local Action Group in 2022/23, alongside a strategic action plan for delivery in 2023/24. The aspiration in year five of the strategy continues to be:

“Working together, using all available evidence, to reduce inequalities and poverty and build a community where fewer families are living in relative or absolute poverty by 2025.”

Activities in the current year are focusing on:

- Increasing income from employment by offering a range and choice of opportunities for priority parents to help them access and maintain employability and employability, learning and training.
- Increasing income from benefits to ensure systematic whole-family approach for families more likely to be living in poverty and facing financial insecurity.
- Mitigating the cost of living by providing accessible and affordable childcare activities and food for children in priority families.
- Developing our approach to communication and participation by working collaboratively with families with lived experience to ensure services respond effectively to meet their needs.

Supporting children to improve outcomes and changing the systems that can help local children and families also remains a priority goal.

Progress in the delivery of the Council’s anti-poverty measures is regularly reported to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Early Adopter Childcare

As an Early Adopter Community for out of school affordable childcare, Inverclyde has been piloting and testing a range of local services and support for children and families living on a low income or living in poverty. This pilot service, which has been running since January 2023 offers after school care within Newark Primary School, supporting 22 families and 28 children. The families who access the service are also involved in the codesign of the pilot to ensure that the service meet their needs.

A holiday childcare service was also provided from 11th July 2023 to 4th August 2023 and received a visit from Natalie Don, Communities Minister in July 2023. An evaluation of the Summer Clubs has been conducted and will report to the Education and Communities Committee in November 2023.

Literacy Framework

A new Literacy Framework was launched by Education Services in early September, with Coaching and Modelling Officer support from the Attainment Challenge put in place to support its implementation. The Framework will help to ensure that there is a consistent and coherent approach to the teaching of core literacy skills across Inverclyde establishments.

Expansion of Free School Meals

Inverclyde is the first local authority in Scotland to provide free school meals to all primary school children, commencing in August 2023. This universal service supports families who are facing financial and food insecurity by providing food, which in turn helps to reduce stigma and promote dignity across our communities.

Tackling Digital Exclusion

In May 2023, the Libraries Service resumed its Digital Skills classes, which is a tailored Digital Inclusion outreach service provided to residents within Inverclyde's most deprived communities (Greenock East & Central and Port Glasgow). People who are most disadvantaged by their lack of access to services and are also more likely to experience a significant level of digital exclusion. On offer across five library branches were:

- Computer-based 'Bring I.T. On' sessions for those with basic skills but wanting to learn more. These classes were delivered by experienced, knowledgeable staff.
- 'Let's Start I.T.' classes for those with little or no experience with digital activities.
- 'Make I.T. Real' sessions led by library staff was for those with their own device who wished to build on existing skills for life.

From April to September 2023, 211 classes were delivered with 72 attendees, many of whom attended multiple classes.



Outcome: People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing

How are we supporting improvements in health and wellbeing?

Inverclyde Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023/24

The blueprint for services that will improve health and wellbeing in Inverclyde is set out in the Inverclyde Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023/24. A refreshed strategic plan was published in 2023/24, setting out the IJB’s priorities for the year. The original vision and priorities set out in the Six Big Actions for Inverclyde have been retained reflecting that these remain relevant and importantly, are well-known and understood by communities. The Big Actions are:

<p>Big Action 1: Reducing Inequalities by Building Stronger Communities and Improving Physical and Mental Health</p>	<p>Big Action 2: A Nurturing Inverclyde will give our Children & Young People the Best Start in Life</p>	<p>Big Action 3: Together we will Protect Our Population</p>
<p>Big Action 4: We will Support more People to fulfil their right to live at home or within a homely setting and Promote Independent Living</p>	<p>Big Action 5: Together we will reduce the use of, and harm from alcohol, tobacco and drugs</p>	<p>Big Action 6: We will build on the strengths of our people and our community</p>

Each action has a more detailed implementation plan, with measures that will be monitored and reported to the Strategic Planning Group, with regular progress reports to the IJB. The first progress report is available here: [Strategic Plan Quarterly Report 2023/24](#) whilst the refreshed Plan can be downloaded here: [Strategic Plan refresh 2023-24 March 2023 Approved \(1\).pdf](#)

Inverclyde Active Living Strategy 2021/24

In June 2023, the Inverclyde Alliance Board approved an Active Inverclyde Action Plan that sets out how the aspirations of the Active Inverclyde Strategy will be delivered. The Action Plan was developed by a cross partnership implementation group, comprising of local clubs and Community Sports Hubs, young people, Inverclyde Leisure, Inverclyde HSCP, SportScotland, and other local services and is structured around the four Active Inverclyde themes identified by partners to achieve a reduction in health inequalities and an increase in levels of physical activity:

- Active People
- Active Communities
- Active Partnerships
- Active Environment

Actions taken forward during the year include a survey launched in May 2023 to understand participation levels in physical activity in Inverclyde. The results of the survey are being used to inform the ongoing implementation of the Active Living Strategy.

The Active Inverclyde implementation group meets on a 4 weekly basis to ensure that momentum is maintained in the delivery of the action plan and the strategy.

Active Travel

The Inverclyde Active Travel Strategy, which was approved in August 2018, sets out the aim to create a network of safe and convenient routes to key destinations to enable more every-day journeys to be walked or cycled.

The walking network is largely in place and there is an extensive Core Path network throughout Inverclyde. Improvements to the walking network will mostly focus on upgrading the infrastructure already in place. Attention, therefore, currently focuses on maintaining and improving the National Cycle Network and further development of the Coastal Route for cycling.

A list of priority projects was approved by the Environment and Regeneration Committee in August 2023 to improve cycling infrastructure locally. This includes enhancing and completing the broken coastal route from Gourock to Port Glasgow and creating a tourist route that is safe for families, with an off-road segregated route that can be safe for an unaccompanied 12-year-old to use. The next routes on the priority list will be linking the town centres and linking to the existing NCN network, then linking to our neighbouring authorities in Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire.

Schemes for the implementation of the highest priority projects are current being developed, in accordance with current guidelines and regulations. External funding for projects is also being pursued where available.

Young People Wellbeing Service

Inverclyde Council and HSCP previously committed to improve Children and Young People's Tier 2 Mental Health in Inverclyde, based on a collaborative model. The Wellbeing Service focuses on direct counselling support as well as group work and drop-in sessions. The use of the service, and its levels of impact, are reported to the Scottish Government on a six-monthly basis. In relation to the counselling input, this was accessed by 71 pupils in total from July 2022 until June 2023, with significant outcomes being identified.

Tier two work through the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing (CYPCMHW) fund has also commenced through the commissioning of an online self-referral support service titled 'Kooth' with a specific target audience of young people aged 16 to 26. 'Kooth' has been piloted in other local authority areas to good effect and commenced in Inverclyde in April 2023 with impact information currently being collated.

School Nutrition

Inverclyde Council's catering team achieved the Food for Life Served Here Bronze award for the fifth year in a row. The Council is now serving around 5,000 nutritious, sustainable and locally-sourced Food for Life meals every day. The Bronze award recognises that a minimum of 75 percent of dishes are freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients. Meals are also free from undesirable trans fats, sweeteners, additives, and all genetically modified ingredients.



Outcome: More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions

How are we helping more people into employment with better conditions?

Local Employability Partnership

The Inverclyde Local Employability Partnership is the strategic employability partnership in Inverclyde. It supports the implementation of local and national employability policy, making best use of resources available at any given time, to enable the delivery of a range of employability services to an all-age client group, with a focus on those who have particular barriers to employment.

The three-year Employability Delivery Plan 2022/25 has been implemented with the core purpose of supporting those at risk of being left behind to move closer to and into fair, sustainable jobs. The Plan is being delivered by the Local Employability Partnership which comprises of key partners to shape and influence employability services.

Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021/25

The Inverclyde Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021/25 and Action Plan were developed in consultation with the business community. The ambition of the strategy is to create, attract and safeguard more and better jobs in Inverclyde. Since its initial development a number of new themes have been incorporated within it, including community benefits, community wealth building, and a reduction in carbon / net zero whilst at the same time addressing the impact of Brexit, and COVID-19.

A review of the Economic Strategy is planned to take place in the first quarter of 2024 and will be carried out alongside the development of a new Strategy Development Plan 2025/28, this will involve a review of the existing economic climate, engagement with key stakeholders such as local businesses and groups and the identification of priority themes going forward.

Inverclyde Task Force

The Inverclyde Task Force was set up to address the socio-economic imbalance which Inverclyde currently faces. Since its inception in 2022, the focus of the group has been on four topic areas namely business, business premises, housing and skills. Eight key projects have been identified by the Task Force as priorities aligned to these areas to support the regeneration of Inverclyde, with formal representation made to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Tourism in August 2023.

Community Benefits

The Council's Procurement Policy stipulates that community benefits must be considered for inclusion in all works contracts with an estimated value greater than £1,000,000, and give consideration to include in all goods and service contracts above £50,000. Community benefits are requirements which deliver wider benefits in addition to the core purpose of a contract and can relate to social, economic and or environmental benefits.

When initiating procurement activity, client departments are required to consider and highlight potential community benefits considerations. Engagement with key stakeholders and market research and benchmarking activity is then undertaken to further explore potential opportunities and identify appropriate requirements for inclusion in the contract. To ensure that all

Community Benefits secured are delivered, a review will be carried out to focus on co-ordinating delivery and ensuring the process is embedded throughout the Council.

Supporting Young People into Employment

As an employer the Council is seeking to provide opportunities in the workplace wherever possible. 20 new apprenticeships were created in summer 2023, in addition to the 67 existing modern apprenticeships already in post. The recruitment programme was open only to Inverclyde residents.



Outcome: Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported

How are we safeguarding and supporting vulnerable residents and families?

Looked after children

The new Inverclyde Children's Services Plan 2023/26 sets out a commitment to fully involve our care experienced children and young people in decision making, and that there will be nothing decided about them, without them.

Delivery of the national initiative 'The Promise' locally consists of a number of strands, including the I-Promise Team, which includes a Programme Manager, Engagement/Development worker, a Coaching & Modelling practitioner and a Modern Apprentice with care experience and the Proud2Care group, which includes care experienced children and young people. All care experienced children and young people in Inverclyde have been invited to share their views about their experiences of being looked after in Inverclyde, to enhance learning; parents and carers were also consulted.

Oversight of I-Promise is co-chaired by two care experienced young people and the Chief Executive. The group meets quarterly and representation includes Corporate Directors, HSCP Chief Officer and service managers for health, Community Learning and Development, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland, Barnardo's, Your Voice, CVS, Action for Children, Children 1st, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Children's Hearings Scotland.

An I-Promise Practitioner Forum supports operational development and delivery against actions under the five local priority areas within our 'Stop/Go pledge'. A number of improvements have been, or are being taken forward, including:

- updated HSCP Wellbeing Assessment templates, co-designed by children and young people to make them more accessible.
- the 'Mind of My Own' app to gather the views of children and young people who are looked after, with training for 99 staff.
- 'hug kits', developed by young people, for children moving to live in our children's houses or with foster carers.

Further strategic and practice priorities include:

- Supporting the development of the Whole Family Wellbeing Hub.
- Contribute to strategic developments including Children's Services Planning Partnership, Whole Family Support Hub, GIRFEC sub-group and Child Poverty Action Group.
- Review of the corporate parenting plan with young people and corporate parents.
- Develop policies in partnership to improve local practice including brothers and sisters staying together where it is safe to do so, moving on support for young people and a participation strategy including the Youth Collective.
- Develop the family time improvement plan.
- Workforce resilience programme.
- Further develop methods, including digital platforms, to hear the views of children and young people including those with additional support or communication needs.

Community Safety Strategy and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

A new Community Safety Strategy and separate Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and draft actions plans have been developed and approved by the Inverclyde Alliance Board. It was a conscious decision to develop the strategies and action plans as separate documents as it was considered that their merging could weaken their individual focus and objectives. Furthermore, there were concerns that gender-based violence, might not receive the required priority attention if it were to be subsumed within the wider Community Safety Strategy.

The first progress reports on both strategies will be presented to the Alliance Board in June 2024.

Community Hub

Plans for the development of an ambitious new Community Hub, which will be an inclusive community space for people with complex neurodiversity and learning disabilities progressed during the first half of the year.

The Community Hub will be an inclusive community space that ensures users can enjoy integrated experiences and are not stigmatised.

Consultation and engagement with service users, parents and carers, staff and other stakeholders has been integral throughout the process to ensure the design meets the brief.

Pledge to make Inverclyde Council a Trauma Informed Organisation

In June 2023, the Council gave its approval to adopt the National Trauma Training Programme Leadership Pledge of Support. This pledge was made to enable Inverclyde to continue its progress towards developing a trauma informed and responsive workforce and services. By adopting the Pledge, the Council is publicly declaring its intention to respond to needs and improve outcomes for people in Inverclyde who have experienced psychological trauma.

Redesign of the Homelessness Service

The Homelessness Service received an unannounced inspection in September 2023 and achieved the following very positive evaluation:

- 5 - Very good in both categories Leadership and Staffing
- 4 - Good in both categories Planning and Wellbeing Evidencing strengths that have a significant effect on people's experiences which outweigh the areas found for improvement.

The service has also been nominated for Scotland Housing Awards and has made the shortlist to the finals in six out of the seven categories including Housing Team of the Year, Excellence in Learning and Development, and Working in Partnership.

THEME 1: PEOPLE

52.5% of leavers from the most deprived quintile in 2021/22 achieved 1+ Award at SCQF at Level 6 or better, compared to **87%** in the least deprived quintile.

75.6% of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieved expected levels or better in literacy, whilst **83.1%** of the same cohort achieved expected levels or better in numeracy in 2022/23.

Life expectancy for females in Inverclyde in 2020/22 was **78.7 years** and **74.6 years** for males compared to a Scottish average of **80.7 years** for females and **76.5 years** for males.

203 days was the average number of days (Jan'23-Mar '23) people spent in hospital in Inverclyde when ready to be discharged. The LGBF Family Group average was 303 days.

51% of the Inverclyde school roll participated in Active Schools delivery in 2022/23

77.7% of Inverclyde population (16-64 years) were classed as economically active compared to 77.4% in Scotland (April 2022- March 2023)

The Claimant Count as a percentage of the 16-19 year old population (Jan – March 2023) was **5.2%**, compared to LGBF Family Group **4.7%** and Scottish average, **3.7%**.

The Claimant Count as a percentage of the working age population (Jan – March 2023) was **3.9%**, compared to a LGBF Family Group **4%** and Scottish average, **3.2%**.

Theme 2 PLACE



Inverclyde is a collection of places - its towns and villages – each with its own identity but with a keen sense that by being part of a wider group moving forward together helps make sure we are all benefitting from success and opportunities.



Outcome: Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable

How are we supporting thriving, growing and sustainable communities?

Locality Planning

Oversight of locality planning in Inverclyde is provided by the Inverclyde Alliance and it is the ambition of the Alliance to further develop the locality planning model to support greater community engagement and empowerment.

Each of Inverclyde's six localities has an established Communication and Engagement Group and a Locality Plan, developed in 2020, setting out the priorities for the area. The Communication and Engagement groups have continued to meet during the reporting period to discuss the issues in their area, including the next iteration of the Locality Plans. The next phase in the development of locality planning will take place following the conclusion of the Community Council review to ensure that there is a consistent approach in terms of geographies where possible. The outcome of the review of Community Learning and Development will also feed into the development of proposals going forward.

Culture and Heritage

An evaluation of the Inverclyde Culture Collective was published in September 2023, highlighting the success of the project. The Collective was originally an 18-month project set up in early 2021, supported by £275,000 funding from Creative Scotland. Inverclyde was subsequently awarded an additional £198,000 to continue the project for a further 12 months.

The external evaluation report concluded that the various stakeholders involved were extremely positive about the Culture Collective and that sustained and consistent progress has been made in building and expanding local arts infrastructure, and in developing and supporting an impactful creative approach. Across the span of the Culture Collective period:

- 32 projects were funded; 791 sessions were held, engaging with an estimated 2,456 participants.
- An estimated 56 community partners were involved.
- In addition to the co-ordinating team, 116 freelance opportunities were created undertaking 2,625 hours of paid work.

Lead partners are now looking at how activity can continue following the end of the Culture Collective funding stream. The full evaluation report is available on the Council's website, [Culture and Heritage - Inverclyde Council](#)

Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan 2021/24

The Community Learning and Development 3-year strategy and action plan was developed as a result of a collaborative approach between the organisations that make up the CLD partnership. As the Strategy is now entering its final year, a self-evaluation is being carried out on the action plan to assess progress, areas for improvement and achievements. This work will inform the development of the new Strategy for 2024/27 which will take effect from 30 September 2024.

Review of Community Councils

Following the Council's decision to review the Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils, the results of the first round of consultations were reported to a Special Meeting of the Inverclyde Council on 18th May 2023.

A draft Scheme, including plans of proposed community council areas, was approved for a second round of public consultation which ran for 8 weeks and ended on 15th August 2023. The third stage in the consultation is now underway and due to close in mid-November. It is anticipated that the outcome of the final stage in the consultation process and a new Scheme will be presented to a special meeting of Inverclyde Council for adoption on 7 December 2023, with the Community Council elections following in the first quarter of 2024.

Community Grants

The Inverclyde Community Grants Fund provides one-off financial support to community, sports and voluntary organisations within Inverclyde.

In September 2023, 102 local organisations were awarded a share of over £280,000 to support community work. Organisations applying for funding had to specify how it would be used to contribute to and benefit the wider community in line with the local priorities. The money will help to support costs such as hall hire, running costs, staff and volunteer training, community events and sports kit for groups reaching all ages across the area.

Community Food Growing

Following the approval of the Alliance Board for an Inverclyde Community Food Growing Strategy in March 2023, a local Food Growing Strategic Group was established to provide governance and accountability in the implementation of the strategy.

Inverclyde Council also received an allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to implement the 'Invergrow Project' which supports the development of area wide community gardening and food growing in public spaces, to impact on climate change and help alleviate food insecurity and food waste, whilst improving mental wellbeing.

Delivering New Community Facilities

In June 2023, work started on a new multi-purpose community hub for Parklea Branching Out, which is part-funded by Inverclyde Council and the Scottish Government, with the Council also providing support to deliver the new Hub. Once completed, the Hub will offer a space that will provide a range of opportunities for local people, including vulnerable members of the community and those with learning disabilities. It will also provide important access to greenspace and facilitate valuable training and employment opportunities. The Hub is expected to be completed by winter 2024.



Outcome: Our strategic housing function is robust

How are we ensuring we fulfil our strategic housing function?

Local Housing Strategy

A draft Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023/28 has been developed for Inverclyde, setting out the plan for addressing the housing challenges facing local communities, including:

- Increasing the range of housing options to meet need;
- Developing successful places which are connected to transport, services and jobs;
- Tackling and reducing homelessness;
- Improving housing affordability;
- Supporting people with particular needs to live independently and well;
- Improving the energy efficiency of homes and tackling climate change;
- Improving the quality and condition of existing homes.

The LHS was submitted to the Scottish Government for peer review in July 2023. A delay in the return of Scottish Government comments has delayed the submission of the LHS for formal Committee approval. It is now anticipated that the LHS will be considered by the Environment and Regeneration Committee early in the new year.

Housing led regeneration

The development of the Local Housing Strategy highlighted the view of partners that housing led regeneration can play a major role in improving the quality and supply of housing and supporting wider regeneration. Similarly, the Fraser of Allander report and the Inverclyde Task Force also highlighted a role for housing led regeneration in reversing the economic decline and population loss in Greenock.

A central Greenock Regeneration Strategy has been developed and approved by the Environment and Regeneration Committee. The study identifies five potential sites for housing led regeneration which can be considered with partners going forward, each with its own level of challenge and achievability. The detailed proposals from the study will be considered further as potential regeneration projects following on from the Levelling Up project already underway in Greenock Town Centre.

Clune Park Masterplan

A revised Masterplan for Clune Park, setting out proposals for the regeneration of the area has been finalised. The Masterplan has been prepared with a view to harnessing the potential of the site and acting as a guide for future development. It will also be used as the basis for the appointment of a Registered Social Landlord as a partner to the Council to take the Clune Park development through to its conclusion. The Masterplan will be considered by the Environment and Regeneration Committee on 2nd November 2023.

Local Development Plan

Preparations for a new Inverclyde Local Development Plan commenced in September 2023. A significant part of the preparation of the Plan will involve the appointment of third-party consultants to aid its delivery. A survey has been issued to over 30 Planning consultancies,

with participants asked to answer relevant questions on the Local Development Plan key stages to determine their suitability for appointment.

Responses to the market research questionnaire will be evaluated and then followed with an open tender process to achieve Best Value. Following on from this, the first stage of the Local Development Plan (i.e. Development Plan Scheme), setting out the full approach and associated timescales, will be presented to the Environment and Regeneration Committee.



Outcome: Our economy and skills base are developed

How are we developing our economy and skills base?

Investment in skills, employment and infrastructure

A series of investment plans have been approved for delivery over the next two years, funded from Inverclyde's allocation of the £3.5 million Shared Prosperity Fund. In total, 23 initiatives have been approved by the Environment and Regeneration Committee, including:

- over £1 million for employability schemes to help residents, particularly those in hard-to-reach areas and who are currently out of work, to help equip them with skills for employment, training or further or higher education.
- Just under £750,000 for a range of schemes supporting local businesses covering everything from budgeting and growth to developing net zero plans and networking.
- Six projects amounting to more than £600,000 aimed at developing numeracy skills for people aged 19 and over, supported specifically through the Shared Prosperity Fund's Multiply grants scheme.

Some of the projects will be delivered wholly or alongside partner organisations, including CVS Inverclyde, Parklea Branching Out and West College Scotland.

Other investment

The Council has also been successful in securing significant additional investment in the previous six months, including:

- ***City Region Investment***

As part of the Glasgow City Region (GCR), Inverclyde will benefit from the region being selected as one of two Scottish locations to become an Investment Zone, with investment of £80million. This provides the opportunity to build on the work already delivered as part of the Inverclyde City Deal projects. The premise at the heart of the zones will be innovation and fair work, which aim to boost the economy, stimulate business growth, and create high-quality, well-paid jobs.

- ***Long Term Plans for Towns***

At the end of September 2023, it was announced that Greenock town centre was chosen as the recipient of £20 million investment from the UK Government to improve the town centre and boost regeneration. Under the new approach, local people will be put in charge, and given the tools to change their town's long-term future. The aim of the investment is to generate more jobs, more opportunities, and a positive future for towns and the people who live and work in them.

City Deal Projects

Ocean Terminal - Following the terminal and restaurant elements of Greenock Ocean Terminal becoming fully operational in July 2023, the new cruise ship visitor centre was officially launched in August 2023.

The project is expected to deliver a £26 million boost to the Scottish economy and over 70 new jobs have been created. It is also expected that the new facility will play a role in attracting and growing tourist numbers to the terminal in the future years.

Inverkip - The Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Inverkip City Deal Project has been submitted to the City Deal Infrastructure Programme. Once approval has been received, the Full Business Case will be progressed. It is anticipated that the Inverkip City Deal project will provide many benefits which support the strategic needs of Inverclyde and the wider city region, including on-site jobs in new commercial and industrial space, outdoor community activity space, residential units and commercial and industrial floorspace.

Inchgreen - Work packages are underway at Inchgreen, including quay wall repairs and structural improvements. The overall project remains on course for delivery in December 2023.

Greenock Town Centre Levelling Up

Following a successful bid for Levelling Up funding, the project has continued to progress with regular meetings between the Council, partners and stakeholders. The appointment for project management has been made as discussions with the contractor are well advanced. Monitoring returns and engagement with UK Government officials are also taking place on a cyclical basis.

Procurement

The Council also uses its procurement activity to stimulate local economic activity. Local and SME suppliers are supported in a variety of ways including paying local suppliers early where this is requested; selecting at least 50% of suppliers from the local area to bid for quotations; local and national Meet the Buyer events and taking local suppliers and SMEs into account when creating tender strategies.

An Annual Procurement Report 2022/23 has been published providing an update in respect of local spend, small to medium enterprise spend, commitment to Fair Work First and community benefits secured. Further engagement is planned with the Supplier Development Programme to provide training and support for tendering in 2023/24 to support further increases in local spend.

Multiply Project

As part of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Initiative, Inverclyde Council has received funding for a 'Multiply' project which seeks to improve the numeracy skills of adults through the delivery of bespoke adult numeracy programmes. The programme runs until March 2025 and targets adults 19+ who have not previously attained a Level 2/SCQF Level 5 or higher maths qualification.

Three members of staff have been recruited to develop, deliver and encourage meaningful participation in a range of community-based learning programmes that will boost people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work.



Outcome: We have a sufficient supply of business premises

How are we ensuring a sufficient supply of businesses?

Inverclyde Task Force Business 'Asks'

Improving business opportunities is a key area of focus of the Inverclyde Task Force and projects that would support both business premises and businesses were amongst the key asks made to the Scottish Government in August. The projects were as follows:

Business Premises

Project 1 - Kelburn Industrial Estate is an industrial/commercial development in the east of the Local Authority area which is adjacent to the A8. Originally developed by urban regeneration company Riverside Inverclyde, we are seeking to expand these facilities as the current provision is full. RI can borrow £5 million, however require a further £3 million additional funding to deliver a 55,000ft² solution.

Project 2 - Port Glasgow Industrial Estate suffers from legacy buildings from the 1960–70s era. Their redundant nature makes them attractive for anti-social uses. We are seeking to demolish the central core of the area and provide alternative modern purpose facilities to make Port Glasgow an attractive proposition. We are seeking investment to the value of £22 million.

Business

Project 1 - To ensure that the east/west displacement is not further exacerbated. Providing fiscal policy to afford Inverclyde business rate tax reduction in line with the GCR Investment Zone applicable to our industrial estates.

Project 2 - To expedite efficient traffic movement within the Inverclyde area we would seek to support Transport Scotland in the installation of a MOVA type traffic light solution for the main A8 trunk road, the cost of this is estimated at £500,000-£750,000.

Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy

With effect from 1 April 2023 local authorities will be required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs of unoccupied properties. As a result, Councils are required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs available for unoccupied or empty properties.

Inverclyde Council's own Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (NDR EPR) Policy was agreed on the basis that relief mirrors 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. As at August 2023, 17 premises across Inverclyde were eligible for 100% Empty Listed Property Relief.

To inform this, the NDR EPR Policy Consultation 2023 was launched on 21 September 2023 running until 31 October 2023. The results of the consultation will be analysed and a report incorporating the proposed EPR Policy and financial implications will be submitted to the 6 February 2024 meeting of the Committee.



Outcome: Our natural environment is protected

How are we protecting our natural environment?

Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan

Inverclyde Council's Net Zero Strategy sets out a route map to achieving net zero direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, including an interim 2031 target. The primary focus is reducing emissions from the Council's buildings, transport, street lighting, water, and waste, before considering options for offsetting emissions that cannot be eliminated. The Net Zero Action Plan 2022/27 sets out the carbon reduction actions that will be targeted over the five years of the plan. A full Annual Report on the progress of the Net Zero Action Plan 2022/23 was produced in June 2023.

In support of the action plan, approval has been given to continue the phasing out of petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles within the Council fleet as part of ULEV strategy and in line with Scottish Government targets.

Biodiversity and Carbon Sequestration

In April 2023, Inverclyde Council became a signatory to the Clyde Climate Forest Concordat. Specific objectives for the Clyde Climate Forest are based on three 'C's':

- Canopy: to increase average urban tree canopy cover to 20%;
- Connectivity: to increase the average woodland habitat network area by 20%;
- Carbon: to increase forest and woodland land cover in the Region to 20%.

In Inverclyde, 854 trees have been planted since the beginning of the year, 131 of which have been planted since April 2023.

Projects to maximise carbon storage potential of land through peatland restoration and conservation have been progressed with approval given to deliver Peatland projects at Hardridge and Dowries farms. The Council has been awarded £768,705 to carry out peatland restoration at Hardridge Farm from the NatureScots Peatland Action Fund, which will be delivered over 3 seasons/years. A grant offer for Dowries, which is a one season /year project, is awaited.

Inverclyde Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) are at the heart of a place based, tailored approach to support the transition to climate-friendly, more energy efficient homes and non-domestic buildings. These local Strategies will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving their energy efficiency across an entire local authority area.

The Council appointed Turner and Townsend in August 2023 to complete the LHEES strategy and delivery plan with the first draft due by the end of December 2023. Following this, and subject to the approval of the Environment and Regeneration Committee, it is planned to progress the draft to public consultation before the final strategy and action plan is completed.

THEME 2: PLACE

The number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population in Inverclyde between January - March 2023 was **8.0** compared to a Family Group average of 4.8.

23 Community Benefits were secured for delivery in 2022/23.

The three-year business survival rate (2018 to 2021) in Inverclyde was **59%** compared to a Glasgow City Region average of 57%.

242 clients gained a full or partial qualification, supported by the Employability Service between April – September 2023.

CO₂ emissions within the scope of influence of the local authority was **4 tonnes per capita** in 2021 compared to an LGBF Family Group average of 4.36 tonnes per capita.

185 clients progressed into employment from Council funded / operated employability programmes between April – September 2023.

131 trees were planted in Inverclyde between April - Sept '23.

13,131 tonnes of waste were sent to landfill between April - Sept 2023.

Theme 3 PERFORMANCE



We are an ambitious Council, always striving to improve and develop.



Outcome: High quality and innovative services are provided giving value for money

How are we delivering high quality, innovative and value for money services?

Awards

National recognition of the high standard of service provided by Inverclyde Council was received during the year with Inverclyde Council reaching the finals in both the Local Government Chronicle Council of the Year 2023 and Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) Council of the Year 2023 Awards.

At the APSE Awards in September 2023, Inverclyde Council won the *Best Workforce Initiative* category for the delivery of the Workforce Refresh Programme. This was followed by success at the COSLA Awards 2023, also held in September, when Inverclyde Council was announced as the winner in the *Strengthening communities and local democracy* category for work carried out in examining historic links to slavery.

Digital Modernisation and ICT

As part of the March 2023 Budget, the Council allocated a further £1 million to support Digital Modernisation, creating a £1.25 million fund which is being managed by the Digital Modernisation Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive. Three projects have been approved by the Board: Verint CMS Upgrade; WorkPro Complaints Handling System and Schools Catering Contract Refresh. At its meeting on 15th August 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the upgrade of the Verint customer service system, using funding from the Digital Modernisation Earmarked Reserve for the delivery of this. Procurement activity is now underway.

A development session, attended by front-line managers was held in partnership with the Improvement Service at the end of August 2023, with a view to identifying new areas for digital improvement. As a result, several proposals have been developed which will be considered by the Digital Modernisation Programme Board.

In a separate but related workstream, good progress continued to be made in delivering the 4 workstreams within the Council's ICT Strategy with progress reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in relation to Asset Management Programme & Cloud Migration Strategy; Service Provision; Information Security and Procurement Strategy.

A refresh of both the Council's ICT and Digital Strategy is planned, with an overall timescale for completion by the end of October 2024.

Financial Strategy

An updated Financial Strategy 2023/33 was approved by Inverclyde Council in June 2023. The Strategy is updated every six months to ensure that it reflects changes in the national and local financial landscape, as well as clearly setting out the considerable financial challenges facing the Council in the short, medium and longer term. The strategy also provides the platform for the development of the Revenue and Capital Budgets to be approved in March 2024.

Procurement and Contract and Supplier Management

Scotland Excel's Procurement & Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) is designed to support and encourage the continuous improvement of procurement and commercial practices. Inverclyde Council has signed up to the PCIP pilot working group and has agreed to participate in a pilot Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) assessment, planned for 21st November 2023. This will support improvement in the Council's own procurement practice to ensure that value for money continues to be achieved.

Review of Human Resources and Organisational Development

An external review of the Human Resources and Organisational Development Service was carried out to provide a high level 'health check' of the service and to ensure that there is the required capacity and resilience to meet future demands.

The review highlighted a positive, collaborative culture within Inverclyde as well as areas for improvement to ensure that the service can meet the demands placed on it now and in the future. These areas for improvement have been developed into an improvement plan and incorporated into the Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan where progress will be reported as part of the wider performance scrutiny that takes place at Committee.



Outcome: Our employees are supported and developed

How are we supporting and developing our employees?

Positive Conversations

A new appraisal process, 'Positive Conversations' was introduced in September 2023 to replace the previous performance appraisal policy. Rather than the formal appraisal, which previously took place once a year, 'Positive Conversations' focuses on managers and their employees having regular discussions on work related goals, performance, feedback, wellbeing., and development needs. The purpose of the conversations is to enable meaningful conversations which support motivation, engagement, and value for employees, with an aim to build relationships and continuous improvement.

There are three defined stages of conversation, an individual mandatory conversation (mandatory); regular 1-2-1 check-in, and a team check in.

The ethos of the new programme is to facilitate relationship development, build motivation and engagement and create value for employees.

Equally Safe at Work Accreditation

Equally Safe at Work is an innovative employer accreditation programme developed to support the local implementation of Scotland's Equally Safe Strategy. The aim of the programme is to support employers to understand how gender inequality and violence against women (VAW) affects women in the workforce, and to provide a framework to generate change.

In a bid to achieve accreditation, Inverclyde Council put significant effort into collecting and analysing data, reviewing and updating policies, practices and resources. All information relating to the accreditation bid was submitted in advance of the deadline of 31 July 2023, and the Council is currently awaiting the outcome of its application.

People and Organisational Development Strategy

The People & Organisational Development (POD) Strategy 2020-2023 was formally approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 4th February 2020. The Strategy was designed to support the range of planned transformation and change management projects and to ensure the required skills are in place to deliver these and any required savings.

As the Strategy is approaching the end of its lifespan, work on a new POD began over the summer and in consultation with key stakeholders, new initiatives for 2024/26 have been identified and developed. A consultation period is planned to take place towards the end of the year.

THEME 3: PERFORMANCE

An average of **2.5 days** were lost due to sickness absence per employee (FTE) from April – September 2023.

5.22% was the employee turnover between July – September 2023.

97.1% of invoices were paid within the target of 30 days between April – September 2023.

53.3% of Council Tax owed to the Council was collected by the end of September 2023.

96% of street lighting repairs were carried out within 7 days between April – September 2023.

100% of category 1 potholes repairs were made safe within 24 hours of identification between April – September 2023.

Inverclyde Council's website accessibility score, as awarded by SOCITM, in September 2023 was **95 (excellent)**

81% of customer interactions with the Council were self-service, utilising the app for general enquiries or service requests.

1.85 complaints per 1,000 population were received between April - September 2023.

2.8 days was the average time taken to process changes in circumstances to Housing Benefit.