

A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 6 February 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 5 February 2024 how they intend to access the meeting.

In the event of connectivity issues, Members are asked to use the *join by phone* number in the Webex invitation and as noted above.

Please note that this meeting will be live-streamed via YouTube with the exception of any business which is treated as exempt in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

Further information relating to the recording and live-streaming of meetings can be found at the end of this notice.

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

BUSINESS

**** Copy to follow**

1. Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	Page
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	
2. 2023/24 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 30 November 2023 Report by Chief Financial Officer, Chief Executive, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	p
3. Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2023/26 Capital Programme Report by Chief Financial Officer	p
4. Finance Services Update Report by Chief Financial Officer	p
5. Corporate Policy and Performance Update: November 2023 – February 2024 Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	p
6. Workforce Information and Activity Report (WIAR) 2022/23 Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
NEW BUSINESS	
7. Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy Report by Chief Financial Officer	p

8.	Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy Report by Chief Financial Officer		p
9.	Proposal – Reduction in the Standard Working Week Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications		p
10.	Bereavement Charter Mark Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development		p
11.	Corporate Health and Safety Report and Plan Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development		p
12.	Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to appoint SOLACE to assist with Chief Officer recruitment Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development		p
13.	Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to vote on member for Cooperative Councils Innovation Network - Values & Principles Board Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services		p
REMITTS FROM COMMITTEES			
14.	Corporate Risk Register – Remit from Audit Committee Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services		p
ROUTINE DECISIONS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING			
15.	Fire Risk Assessment, Fire Safety Policy Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development		p
The documentation relative to the following items has been treated as exempt information in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, the nature of the exempt information being that set out in the paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act whose numbers are set out opposite the heading to each item.			
NEW BUSINESS			
16.	Tender for the Provision of a School Aged Counselling Service Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership seeking approval for a School Aged Couseeling Service in Inverclyde.	Paras 6, 8 & 9	p
17.	Contract Authorisation Report – External Care at Home Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership seeking approval to conclude a tender and award of contract for the External Care at Home Services.	Paras 6, 8 & 9	p
18.	Contract Authorisation Report – Carers Contract Report by Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership seeking approval to conclude the tender and award the contract for the provision of a Carers Information Advice Service in Inverclyde.	Paras 6, 8 & 9	p

The reports are available publicly on the Council's website and the minute of the meeting will be submitted to the next standing meeting of the Inverclyde Council. The agenda for the meeting of the Inverclyde Council will be available publicly on the Council's website.

Please note: this meeting may be recorded or live-streamed via YouTube and the Council's internet site, where it will be capable of repeated viewing. At the start of the meeting the Provost/Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded or live-streamed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during any recording or live-streaming will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy, including, but not limited to, for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available via the Council's internet site or YouTube.

If you are participating in the meeting, you acknowledge that you may be filmed and that any information pertaining to you contained in the recording or live-stream of the meeting will be used for webcasting or training purposes and for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available to the public. In making this use of your information the Council is processing data which is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. If you are asked to speak at the meeting then your submission to the committee will be captured as part of the recording or live-stream.

If you have any queries regarding this and, in particular, if you believe that use and/or storage of any particular information would cause, or be likely to cause, substantial damage or distress to any individual, please contact the Information Governance team at dataprotection@inverclyde.gov.uk

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

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	Report No:	FIN/05/24/AP/AB
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712090
Subject:	2023/24 Policy & Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 30 November 2023		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise of the Committee's 2023/24 Revenue Budget position at 30 November 2023 and to highlight a projected underspend of £379,000. 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 The revised 2023/24 Revenue Budget for the Policy and Resources Committee is £23,228,000, which excludes Earmarked Reserves. The latest projection is an underspend of £379,000 (1.60%), a decrease in costs of £181,000 since last Committee. This is mainly due an increase in employee turnover due to additional vacancies and difficulty in recruitment of certain posts. More details are provided in section 3.3 and the appendices.

1.4 The latest projection for the General Fund Budget is an overspend of £140,000. This overspend includes a £250,000 cost to the Council for the unfunded element of the 2023/24 Pay Award, included within appendix 6. Based on these figures the Council's unallocated Reserves are currently projected to be £3.96million more than the minimum recommended level of £4.0million by 31 March 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 Note the current projected Committee underspend for 2023/24 of £379,000 at 30 November 2023.

2.2 Note the projected overspend of £140,000 for the General Fund and the projected surplus reserves of £3.96million at 30 November 2023.

2.3 Note the projected 2023/24 surplus of £4,830 for the Common Good Budget set out in Appendix 6.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The revised 2023/24 Revenue Budget for the Policy & Resources Committee is £23,228,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. This is an increase of £99,000 from the approved budget largely due to allocations from the inflation contingency and additional SNCT 2023/24 pay award funding from the Scottish Government yet to be fully allocated. Appendix 1 gives more details of this budget movement.

3.2 The main variances contributing to the net underspend of £379,000 are as follows -

- (a) Overall Committee Employee Costs are projected to overspend by £31,000 due to an under achievement of turnover savings to date. Decrease in costs of £95,000 since last Committee.
- (b) £30,000 underspend projected for bad debt provision reduction within Housing Benefits.
- (c) Statutory Additions £29,000 under-recovery in line with last year.
- (d) One-off £20,000 overspend for unfunded associated benefit costs. This has been identified as a 2024/25 Budget pressure.
- (e) Projected over-recovery of £34,000 within Income for ICT service recharges for internal maintenance recharges for computer equipment purchased outside of the refresh programme.
- (f) External Licences fee income is currently projecting an over recovery of £5,000; £25,000 over-recovery on the 2023/24 introduction of fees on short term lets and £20,000 under recovery for taxi operators. No change in projection since last Committee.
- (g) £400,000 underspend within the non-pay inflation contingency budget due to a projected reduced call on this budget as at P8, no change from last Committee.

3.3 Earmarked Reserves

Appendix 4 gives an update on the operational Earmarked Reserves, i.e. excluding strategic funding models. Spend to 30 November 2023 on these operational Earmarked Reserves is £518,000 (7.25% of projected spend). Appendix 7 gives the overall earmarked reserve position which shows 6.96% slippage against phased budget largely within the Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

3.4 General Fund Budget & Reserves Position

Appendix 6 shows that as at 30 November 2023 the General Fund is projecting a £140,000 overspend (excluding Social Work) which represents 0.1% of the net Revenue Budget. Policy & Resources Committee are projecting £379,000 underspend which is offset by £177,000 overspend within Environment & Regeneration, an overspend within the Education & Communities Directorate of £92,000. Both committees are looking at ways to bring their budgets back on track.

3.5 An allowance of £250,000 for the unfunded element of the 2023/24 Pay Award has been included within appendix 6.

3.6 Appendix 8 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 31 March, 2024 is £7.960 million which is £3.960 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 and the final audited accounts position.

3.7 Common Good Fund

The Common Good Fund is projecting a surplus fund balance of £4,830 as shown in Appendix 5 and which results in projected surplus fund balance of £128,398 at 31 March 2024. This position reflects the virement approved at the last meeting.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 There are no proposals within this report.

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

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications 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 Consultation with relevant officers has taken place.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 There are no background papers for this report.

Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2023/24**Period 8: 1 April 2023 - 30 November 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	9	(15)			5,624
Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services	5,389	8	(3)			5,394
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,219	33				2,252
Chief Exec	377		(28)			349
Miscellaneous	9,514	(2,050)		2,238	(93)	9,609
Totals	23,129	(2,000)	(46)	2,238	(93)	23,228

Supplementary Budget Detail

£000

Inflation

Revenue & Benefits - various non pay inflationary uplifts

9

HR - Occupational Health contract increase

33

ICT - Inflationary Uplift 23/24

8

Miscellaneous - Pay Inflation Adjustments

2

Miscellaneous - Various Non Pay Inflation Adjustments

(2,052)

(2,000)

Virements

Legal - Budget transfer to Property Services for Energy Team

(50)

ICT - Budget Transfer from Physical Assets for New Ways of Working Project

40

Registrars - Budget Transfer from Revenue & Benefits

7

Revenue & Benefits - Budget Transfer to Registrars

(7)

Revenue & Benefits - Budget transfer to Property Services for Energy Team

(8)

Chief Executive - Management restructure within E&R Directorate

(28)

(46)

Supplementary Budgets

SNCT 2023/24 Pay Award 2023/24

2,238

2,238

Total Inflation & Virements**192**

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORTCURRENT POSITION

Period 8: 1 April 2023 - 30 November 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	8,834	8,865	31	0.4%
623	Property Costs	734	734	734	0	-
892	Supplies & Services	900	918	943	25	2.7%
2	Transport & Plant	5	5	5	0	-
1,248	Administration Costs	1,306	1,316	1,203	(113)	(8.6%)
37,596	Payments to Other Bodies	41,530	41,792	41,391	(401)	(1.0%)
(26,954)	Income	(30,210)	(30,278)	(30,199)	79	(0.3%)
22,866	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	23,129	23,321	22,942	(379)	(1.6%)
	Earmarked reserves		(93)	(93)	0	
22,866	Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves	23,129	23,228	22,849	(379)	

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	5,624	5,609	(15)	(0.3%)
5,234	Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Serv	5,389	5,394	5,351	(43)	(0.8%)
17,993	Total Net Expenditure Environment, Regeneration & Resources	11,019	11,018	10,960	(58)	(0.5%)
2,279	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,219	2,252	2,319	67	3.0%
2,279	Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities & Organisational Development	2,219	2,252	2,319	67	3.0%
360	Chief Executive	377	349	361	12	3.4%
2,234	Miscellaneous	9,514	9,702	9,302	(400)	(4.1%)
22,866	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	23,129	23,321	22,942	(379)	(1.6%)
	Earmarked reserves		(93)	(93)		
22,866	Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves	23,129	23,228	22,849	(379)	

POLICY RESOURCES

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)

Appendix 3

Period 8: 1 April 2023 - 30 November 2023

Outturn 2022/23 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2023/24 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 30/11/23 £000	Projection 2023/24 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000	Percentage Variance %
	<u>Finance Services</u>						
26	R&B Bad Debt Provison	0	0	(11)	(30)	(30)	
(270)	R&B Stat Adds	(294)	(159)	(129)	(265)	29	(9.9%)
23,709	R&B Benefits & Allowances	28,058	19,205	16,497	28,078	20	0.1%
	<u>Organisational Development, Policy & Communications</u>						
1,903	Employee Costs	1,880	865	1,187	1,917	37	2.0%
	<u>Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services</u>						
(55)	ICT Income Recharges (5 Year Computer Refresh)	(25)	(17)	(17)	(59)	(34)	136.0%
298	ICT - Admin - Mobile Phone Recharges	333	222	224	299	(34)	(10.2%)
(298)	ICT - Income - Mobile Phone Recharges	(333)	(222)	(224)	(299)	34	(10.2%)
(14)	Legal - Income Licences - Other - Short Term Lets	(16)	(11)	(39)	(41)	(25)	156.3%
(106)	Legal -Income Licenses - Stat Charges - Liquor	(122)	(81)	(65)	(102)	20	(16.4%)
	<u>Miscellaneous Services</u>						
1,750	Non Pay Inflation Contingency	3,562	1,471	1,471	3,162	(400)	(11.2%)
26,943	TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES	33,043	21,274	18,894	32,660	(383)	

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P8	P8 Spend	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2024/25 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24		
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
B	Early Retirement/Voluntary Severance Reserve	Alan Puckrin	1,995	0	63	500	1,495	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	182	2	208	1,060	Schools Cashless Catering System replacement, CRM Replacement systems indicative timeline and WorkPro, Talentlink (HR Contracts) and a Grade 7, two year temporary post estimated start date now March 2024
C	Welfare Reform - Operational	Alan Puckrin	52	0	0	0	52	No spend projected in 2023/24 however expected to be required in future years due to on going employee savings in 2024/25
C	Anti-Poverty Fund	Ruth Binks	2,095	197	168	1,194	901	Detailed report went to November Policy & Resources Committee.
B	Loan Charge Funding Model	Alan Puckrin	1,645	0	0	1,048	597	December Finance Strategy allocated a further £3.0million over 2023/27 to the EMR to deliver a recurring saving from 2025/26.
C	GDPR	Iain Strachan	19	4	1	19	0	Information governance system contract (Workpro) awarded (2yr+1yr+1yr). Spend committed -now £12k 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	35	40	54	16	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	29	18	35	9	To fund Grade 6 Corp Policy Post until 31st March 2024. Post was vacant from 18 July 2023 but has now been filled and start date confirmed as 26 September 2023, £35k now required. £9k to be written back
C	New Ways of Working	Stuart Jamieson	267	15	9	267	0	Project moving to asset based phase and use of EMR being reviewed.
C	HR Resources	Morna Rae	92	61	47	66	26	This is Monies to fund the 2 HR employees for 2023/24 Grade 5 & Grade 7/8. Grade 7/8 employee no longer in EMR post from 18th September, wanting to fund J Kelly additional hours costing £3.8k to 12th Jan 2024. Remainder £25.7k to be written back.

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget P8	P8 Spend	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2024/25 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
C	Project Resource	Louise Long	135	0	30	40	95	Projects approved to date. HR review (£25k), Co-operative Councils membership, Task Force support and Solace support for difficulty to fill senior Regen posts.
C	Covid Recovery - Marketing Post & Support for Discover Inverclyde	Morna Rae	67	17	16	67	0	£27K Employee Grade 6 Communications Officer (tourism) post until November 2023. £40K Historic Links to Slavery; heritage trail, blue plaques and possibly reinterpreting of key signage - spend expected early 2024.
C	Scottish Welfare Fund	Alan Puckrin	77	77	77	77	0	All spent in 23/24. Any underspend in 2023/24 will be added to this reserve at 31.3.24
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	Budget Delivery Reserve	Alan Puckrin	3,000	0	0	250	2,750	Allowance to address inflation volatility and other Budget delivery pressures over the 2024/26 period. Bulk required in 2024/25
C	Student Training Fees	Morna Rae	100	0	19	34	66	Payment of training fees to aid staff recruitment and retention. Services have confirmed cost for courses overall as £34k, with projected spend in 23/24 £24k, £10k in future years. Actual spend to date split £18k HR and £1k Finance. More information to be provided for remainder £66k.
Total Category B			12,640	0	63	4,798	7,842	
Total Category C to E			5,016	645	455	2,343	2,673	

COMMON GOOD FUND**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24****PERIOD 8 : 1st April 2023 to 30th November 2023**

	Final Outturn 2022/23	Approved Budget 2023/24	Budget to Date 2023/24	Actual to Date 2023/24	Projected Outturn 2023/24
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>PROPERTY COSTS</u>	42,400	56,700	42,500	33,860	66,370
Repairs & Maintenance	17,200	11,000	7,300	10,350	18,700
Rates 1	21,160	21,200	21,200	23,170	23,170
Property Insurance	4,040	3,500	0	0	3,500
Property Costs	0	21,000	14,000	340	21,000
<u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u>	7,930	7,700	1,000	0	7,700
Sundries	1,730	1,500	1,000	0	1,500
Commercial Rent Management Recharge	2,200	2,200	0	0	2,200
Recharge for Accountancy	4,000	4,000	0	0	4,000
<u>OTHER EXPENDITURE</u>	59,300	109,500	108,200	93,570	109,500
Christmas Lights Switch On	10,500	10,500	10,500	0	10,500
Christmas Decorations	0	44,000	44,000	43,620	44,000
Gourock Highland Games	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Armistice Service	8,850	8,300	8,300	7,250	8,300
Comet Festival	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300
Events	0	4,000	2,700	0	4,000
Bad Debt Provision	(2,750)	0	0	0	0
<u>INCOME</u>	(127,520)	(177,900)	(118,200)	(138,570)	(188,400)
Property Rental	(159,000)	(228,200)	(152,100)	(152,100)	(228,200)
Void Rents 2	34,980	50,800	33,900	13,530	43,300
Internal Resources Interest	(3,500)	(500)	0	0	(3,500)
<u>NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE</u>	(17,890)	(4,000)	33,500	(11,140)	(4,830)
<u>EARMARKED FUNDS</u>	0	0	0	0	0
<u>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</u>	(17,890)	(4,000)	33,500	(11,140)	(4,830)

Fund Balance as at 31st March 2023 **123,568**

Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2024

128,398**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:

12 Bay St
6 John Wood Street
10 John Wood Street
16 John Wood Street
17 John Wood Street

Vacant since:
April 2015, currently being marketed
January 2019, currently being marketed
August 2018
November 2023
June 2023

Policy & Resources CommitteeRevenue Budget Monitoring ReportPosition as at 30th November 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	23,228	22,849	(379)	(1.63%)
Environment & Regeneration	22,505	23,300	23,477	177	0.76%
Education & Communities	100,759	102,797	102,889	92	0.09%
Social Work & Social Care	68,156	68,796	69,247	451	0.66%
2023/24 Pay Award Impact (Note 1)	0	0	250	250	
Committee Sub-Total	214,549	218,121	218,712	591	0.27%
Loan Charges	16,902	16,902	16,902	0	0.00%
Saving Approved yet to be Allocated (Note 2)	(100)	(100)	(100)	0	0.00%
Additional Turnover Savings unallocated (Note 3)	0	(133)	(133)	0	0.00%
Service Concession Flexibility	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)	0	0.00%
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	493	493	0	0.00%
Total Expenditure	229,701	233,633	234,224	591	0.25%
Financed By:					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates	(190,719)	(192,651)	(192,651)	0	0.00%
General Revenue Grant - Teachers Hold Back (Note 4)	(655)	(655)	(655)	0	0.00%
Contribution from General Reserves (Note 5)	(3,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	0	100.00%
Council Tax	(35,327)	(35,327)	(35,327)	0	0.00%
Integration Joint Board - Contribution from Reserves	0	0	(451)	(451)	100.00%
Net Expenditure	0	0	140	140	

Note 1 - Unfunded impact of 2023/24 Pay Award

Note 2 - Approved savings yet to be allocated

Note 3 - Additional Turnover Savings unallocated

Note 4 - General Revenue Grant - Teachers Hold Back funding to be received after criteria met

Note 5 - General Revenue Grant - £2m funded from Capital Grant

Earmarked Reserves

DMR	300
Anti-Poverty	93
Turnover Savings	100
Contribution to General Earmarked Reserves	493

Redeterminations

Probationer Teachers	(842) ECOD
Teachers Pay	(2,238) Misc
Psychologist Probationer	(17) ECOD
Employability Funding	(195) ERR

Earmarked Reserves Position Statement

Summary

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Total Funding 2023/24</u>	<u>Phased Budget to P8</u>	<u>Actual Spend To 30 November 2023</u>	<u>Variance Actual to Phased Budget</u>	<u>Projected Spend 2023/24</u>	<u>Earmarked 2024/25 & Beyond</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Education & Communities	1,095	474	498	24	831	264
Social Work & Social Care	6,730	1,259	550	(709)	2,990	3,740
Regeneration & Environment	9,473	395	1,014	619	4,287	5,186
Policy & Resources	17,656	645	518	(127)	7,141	10,515
	34,954	2,773	2,580	(193)	15,249	19,705

<u>2023/24 %age Spend Against Projected</u>	<u>2023/24 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget</u>
59.93%	5.06%
18.40%	(56.31%)
23.65%	156.71%
7.25%	(19.69%)
16.92%	(6.96%)

Actual Spend v Phased Budget Behind of Phasing = (£193k) (6.96%)

Last Update (Period6) Ahead Phasing = £189k

Movement in slippage v Phasing (£382k)

Appendix 8

GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION
Position as at 30/11/23

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Usable Balance 31/3/23 - Post Audit of Accounts		7700
<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/> (140)	
		(140)
<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)
<u>Write Backs</u>		
IL Smoothing Reserve - P&R November		400
Projected Reserve Balance		<hr/> 7960 <hr/>

Minimum Reserve required is £4 million

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/06/24/MT/GS
Contact Officer:	Matt Thomson	Contact No:	01475 712256
Subject:	Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2023/26 Capital Programme		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the 2023/26 Capital Programme as well as reflecting the impact of the draft 2024/25 Capital Grant settlement announced by the Scottish Government.
- 1.3 The Policy & Resources Capital Programme has a capital budget over 2023/26 of £4.489m with total projected spend on budget. The Committee is projecting to spend £0.604m in 2023/24 which is the same as the approved budget.
- 1.4 The overall 2023/26 Capital Programme budget is £66.394m with projects totalling £70.089m. This represents a £3.695m (5.57%) over allocation. This exceeds the agreed 5% tolerance and requires to be addressed as part of the forthcoming Budget. In the current year net slippage of £1.798m, 9.43% is being reported, an increase of £0.292 million since the last report. Expenditure at 30 November was £7.906m (45.76% of projected spend).
- 1.5 The future years Capital Grant as per the draft Scottish Government Settlement shows a like for like cash reduction of just over £0.3 million compared to 2023/24 and this is the main reason why the programme now exceeds the overcommitment threshold of 5%.
- 1.6 Additionally, Committee is reminded that each year the recurring investment allocations for core infrastructure (schools, roads, other properties, ICT, Aids & Adaptations etc) is over £9.0 million and given that the Capital Grant is now under £6.0 million then there will need to either be significant reductions in investment or re-prioritisation of recurring spend/reserves towards capital in the medium term.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note 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 the 2023/26 programme overcommitment is now over the 5% tolerance and will need to be addressed through the budget process.

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.
- 3.2 The Committee have been advised on a regular basis of the pressures on the capital resources received by the Council, increased contract cost and increasing maintenance demands on the asset base. This requires to be addressed over the medium term as part of the 2024/28 Capital Programme.

2023/26 Policy & Resources Capital Position

- 3.3 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £4.489m. The current projection is £4.489m which means total projected spend is on budget.
- 3.4 The approved budget for 2023/24 is £0.604m and the Committee is projecting to spend £0.604m in 2023/24. The spend at 30 November is £0.426m (70.53%) of the approved budget.
- 3.5 PC Refresh Programme – The Phase 2 replacement programme to refresh 520 PCs across the school estate was completed over the summer break. The programme to refresh 118 PCs in School Management and Offices is now complete. This project was completed during term time with the cooperation of schools and Education HQ to allow the programme to be completed with minimal disruption. A final project to replace existing primary classroom desktop PCs with portable trolleys containing laptops is being scoped. This will provide a more flexible option for schools and will enable some existing dedicated computer suites to be repurposed for other functions.
- 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 was completed successfully in September 2023. This allows the refresh of all current systems to the latest version and will provide the foundation of any migrations to cloud based services in the future. Upgrade of core servers for a range of Council applications has now concluded. No further spend is anticipated from this budget in 2023/24.
- 3.7 As part of the 2023/26 budget setting process £4m was added to a small existing contingency to meet potential cost increases, fund unforeseen projects and to protect core service delivery from unexpected fluctuations in costs. This budget will be allocated by this Committee following the receipt of relevant reports. To date £2,050,000 has been allocated by Committee leaving an unallocated balance of £2.081million.

Overall 2023/26 Capital Programme

- 3.8 The overall 2023/26 Capital Programme reflects the 2023/24 capital grant. The total grant for 2023/24 of £10.559m is significantly higher than previously estimated £6.0m. This includes the second year of the additional funding package for the Local Authority pay award (£1.872m), an increase in the grant for Coastal Protection (£0.150m), an increase in funding for Play Parks (£0.126m), an increase in funding for the community business fund (£0.025m), an increase for Nature Restoration (£0.306m) as well as the £2.0m Revenue/Capital Grant swap, leaving a core grant of £6.079m.

3.9 The Capital Programme reflects both the previously confirmed 2023/24 capital grant as well as the recently announced 2024/25 capital grant. The 2024/25 allocation is £5.935m, however this includes £0.150m allocation for Coastal Change Adaptions which is passported to the Property Assets budget. Therefore, core funding is £5.785m or around £0.3million less in cash terms than 2023/24.

The reduction in capital grant has increased the 3 year over commitment to £3.695m/5.57%, which is above the overcommitment threshold of 5%. This will require to be addressed through the budget process.

3.10 In terms of the overall Capital Programme, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that at 30 November 2023 expenditure in 2023/24 was 45.76% 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 slippage of £1.798m, (9.43%) is currently being reported, an increase of £0.292m in comparison to the previous reporting period. This is due to slippage within Health and Social Care (£1.741m), Environment & Regeneration Committee (£0.069m) and advancement within the Education and Communities Committee (£0.012m).

3.12 The position in respect of individual Committees for 2023/24 is as follows:

Policy & Resources

Expenditure as at 30 November 2023 is £0.426m against an approved budget of £0.604m. There is no net slippage within this committee to date.

Environment & Regeneration

Expenditure at 30 November 2023 is £5.158m against an approved budget of £13.091m. Net slippage of £0.069m (0.52%) and is mainly due to slippage in Coastal Change Adaptions (£0.150m) and Place Based Funding (£0.400m) offset with advancements within New Ways of working (£0.020m), Whinhill Golf club External Fabric works (£0.058m) Town & Village Centre projects (£0.051m) and the RAMP (£0.224m) and play Area Strategy (£0.126m) as well as other minor movements across the program.

Education & Communities

Expenditure at 30 November 2023 is £2.176m against an approved budget of £2.487m. Net advancement of £0.012m (0.48%) mainly due to slippage within the Port Glasgow New Community hub project (£0.277m) offset with advancements within Free School meals (0.080m), Projects complete on site (£0.072m), CO2 Monitors in schools (£0.027m) and the Waterfront Leisure Centre training pool moveable floor (£0.060m) as well as other minor advancements within the committee.

Health & Social Care

Expenditure at 30 November 2023 is £0.146m against an approved budget of £2.601m. Net slippage of £1.741m (66.94%), due to slippage within the New Learning Disability Facility project (£1.641m) caused by delays in receiving the full market testing information from contractors which has required a further period of due diligence and the Swift Upgrade (£0.100m).

3.13 2023/24 continues to be another challenging year for delivery of the capital program, officers will endeavour to advance projects when possible, in an attempt to keep slippage within the 10% threshold.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The continued annual shortfall between the Councils core asset investment requirement and the level of Capital Grant continues to put pressure on the wider finances of the Council and this matter is being considered within the MBWG and will form part of the overall Budget proposals to be approved by the Council within the next month.

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 matter highlighted in 4.1 above will have financial implications for the Council.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

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
<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Est Total Cost</u>	<u>Actual to 31/3/23</u>	<u>Approved Budget 2023/24</u>	<u>Revised Est 2023/24</u>	<u>Actual to 30/11/2023</u>	<u>Est 2024/25</u>	<u>Est 2025/26</u>	<u>Future Years</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<u>Environment, Regeneration & Resources</u>								
<u>ICT</u>								
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	46	23	2	23	10	0	0	0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	812	418	24	394	269	0	0	0
Meeting Room, Videoconferencing & Hybrid Working Equipment	18	9	51	9	3	0	0	0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	356	178	17	178	144	0	0	0
Home Working Allocation	15	15	10	0	0	0	0	0
Annual Allocation	1,161	-	500	0	0	576	585	0
<u>ICT Total</u>	2,408	643	604	604	426	576	585	0
<u>Finance</u>								
Medium Term Capital Program Support	2,081	-	0	0	0	131	1,950	0
<u>Finance Total</u>	2,081	0	0	0	0	131	1,950	0
TOTAL	4,489	643	604	604	426	707	2,535	0

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	10,154	5,935	5,750	-	21,839
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	279	315	315	-	909
Capital Grants (Note 2)	4,558	-	-	-	4,558
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	3,544	10,765	2,748	125	17,182
Balance B/F From 21/22	12,687	-	-	-	12,687
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	(19)	6,269	3,094	-	9,344
	<u>31,203</u>	<u>23,284</u>	<u>11,907</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>66,519</u>

Overall Position 2023/26

Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-C)	<u>£000</u>
	66,394
Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-D)	70,089
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources	<u>(3,695)</u>
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %	<u>(5.57)%</u>

Notes to Appendix 2aNote 1 (Capital Receipts)

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	214	315	315	-	844
Contributions/Recoveries	65	-	-	-	65
	279	315	315	-	909

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	41	333	-	-	374
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	-	98	110	125	333
Clune Park Regeneration	(638)	750	-	-	112
New Learning Disability Facility	760	6,134	174	-	7,068
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
	3,544	10,765	2,748	125	17,182

Capital Programme - 2023/24 - 2025/26Agreed Projects

Committee	A Prior Years £000	B 2023/24 £000	C 2024/25 £000	D 2025/26 £000	E Future £000	F Total £000	G Approved Budget £000	H (Under)/ Over £000	I 2023/24 Spend To 30/11/2023 £000
Policy & Resources	643	604	707	2,535	-	4,489	4,489	-	426
Environment & Regeneration	10,219	13,087	22,134	9,446	125	55,011	55,011	-	5,158
School Estate	300	1,549	3,655	5,001	-	10,505	10,505	-	1,300
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	509	1,176	770	50	501	3,006	3,006	-	876
HSCP	332	860	8,341	174	-	9,707	9,707	-	146
Total	12,003	17,276	35,607	17,206	626	82,718	82,718	-	7,906

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/03/24/AP/LA
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712090
Subject:	Finance Services Update		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on a number of matters pertaining to the Finance Service and to highlight relevant matters.

1.3 The areas covered within this update are:

- Council tax collection
- Migration to Universal Credit
- Treasury activity

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the update.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Each reporting cycle the Committee receives an update on relevant service delivery matters relating to the Finance Service that are not covered in reports elsewhere on the agenda. Given the focus on the Budget which has been extensively reported elsewhere and the two other Revenues Policy reports elsewhere on the report, this cycle's update is shorter than usual.

3.2 Council Tax Collection

Council Tax collection levels continue to be lower than recent years with collection at 31 December being 0.9% lower than at the same point in 2019/20, the comparator year. The projected in year collection of between 94% and 94.5% is up to 1.9% lower than 2022/23 when 95.9% was collected, the highest ever collection rate when many council taxpayers were assisted by £5m in covid and cost of living one off grants.

3.3 Analysis indicates that whilst Direct Debit payments are largely being maintained, it is within those who pay by cash, which tends to include those on lower incomes, where collection levels have reduced. The service continues to focus on ensuring council taxpayers are billed correctly and on time and to signpost those with debt to Advice Services

3.4 Benefits

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced the 2024/25 programme to manage the migration of legacy benefit claimants onto Universal Credit. People in scope will be contacted starting from April 2024 in cohorts according to the type of benefit they claim notifying them of the need to claim Universal Credit. Employment and Support Allowance claimants who do not get tax credits will not be required to claim UC until 2028. The latest published information shows the caseload rollout is 75% complete with 8,557 households (9,771 individuals) in Inverclyde in receipt of UC and a further 2,814 households estimated to still on legacy benefits and tax credits. The service expects to be contacted by DWP imminently with more detail on the national roll out and what this means locally.

3.5 Pension Credit Uptake

Officers were asked to report back to Committee on measures taken to identify people who are eligible and owed Pension Credit. The timing of the request interposed by the festive break has not permitted a complete review of activity so the update report to the next Committee will provide this information

3.6 Treasury

The Council's cashflow continues to tighten with the Council's final fixed term deposit repaid on 10 January and a £7.5m PWLB loan repaid on 22 January. Officers are monitoring the cashflow position daily and, given the medium term projected reduction in interest rates, are only taking out shorter term loans when the need to borrow arises. A full update on the Council's Treasury Strategy is due to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

3.7 As part of the Finance Strategy in December the Council approved a £500,000 recurring saving in loans charges from 2025/26 on the basis of a one-off transfer of £3.0million to the loans charge earmarked reserve from projected excess internal resources income. This has been factored into the 2024/26 Revenue Budget.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 There are no specific proposals arising from this update.

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 Chief Financial Officer will assess the level of Council Tax collection to be factored into the 2024/26 Budget after considering the latest collection information. This will be factored into the final Budget report. Each 0.1% reduction in the ultimate collection rate reduces income by around £35,000.

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/risk matters arising from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR matters arising from this report

5.5 **Strategic**

There are no strategic matters arising.

6.0 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 No consultation was required.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/01/24/MR/KB
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712065
Subject:	Corporate Policy and Performance Update: November 2023 - February 2024		

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:

- Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF);
- Equalities;
- Best Value; and
- Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2022/23 update.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance.

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 21 November 2023.

3.2 PSIF Framework

3.3 The PSIF is a framework developed and managed by the Improvement Service to drive quality and excellence in the public sector. Inverclyde Council adopted the framework in 2008 to support improvement at a service level. A three-year cyclical programme of PSIF assessments is in place, involving a team from each service assessing how well the service is performing and identify areas for improvement.

3.4 A refreshed PSIF was launched on 22nd November 2023. The framework is reviewed every three years to ensure that it remains up to date and relevant. A number of new statements have been added to ensure a stronger focus on Climate Change, Equalities, the financial climate and employee wellbeing.

3.5 One of the key benefits of the PSIF is that it is mapped to other key frameworks including Best Value: Revised Statutory Guidance 2020; Education Scotland - A Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations and the Customer Service Excellence Standard, which helps to provide a measure of performance against these other national standards.

3.6 Equalities

3.7 As Members will be aware, budget saving proposals are currently being considered as part of the Council's Budget-setting process 2024/26. A number of these proposals have related Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). These documents, together with a Fairer Scotland Duty Statement on the Council's Revenue Budget 2024/26, an Equalities Statement, and a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, will available to view on this page of the Council's website in due course:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments>

3.8 On 21 December 2023, an Elected Members' Briefing took place on the subject of EIAs, with a specific focus of the Council's Budget-setting process. The session covered the background to the requirement to assess proposals, what information should be included in EIAs and an explanation of how EIAs should be considered. A range of case studies was also explored.

3.9 Best Value

3.10 As the Committee is aware, the Accounts Commission's new approach to Best Value includes the introduction of Controller of Audit Best Value Reports, which summarise the main findings on how effectively a Council is delivering Best Value, as set out in the Annual Audit Report. A Controller of Audit Report will be published for eight Councils each year over a four-year period.

3.11 The first of these reports were published at the end of 2023 on South Ayrshire Council and Dundee City Council and can be viewed on the Audit Scotland website:

<https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/search>

Reports on the remaining Councils in year one, i.e. West Dunbartonshire, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Orkney Island and Moray Council, are due to be published over the period January 2024 – August 2024.

3.12 Provisional details of the second tranche of Controller of Audit Reports (October 2024 - August 2025) have been released. Subject to final confirmation, Edinburgh; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Scottish Borders; Highlands; East Lothian; Fife; Argyll and Bute and East Renfrewshire Councils will be the focus of the next phase.

3.13 LGBF 2022/23 update

3.14 The Improvement Service has published further LGBF data 2022/23 on its interactive dashboard, including data relating to:

- All LGBF cost measures
- Financial Sustainability measures
- Adult Social Care measures
- Senior Phase Educational Attainment (average tariff score)
- Scottish Welfare Fund & Discretionary Housing Payments

3.15 A further data release is due in January 2024 and will include data on Primary Attainment, Pupil Attendance, Public Satisfaction as well as new Corporate Climate Emissions measures, which consist of three new indicators on emissions from (i) Transport per Capita; (ii) Electricity per Capita and (iii) Natural Gas per Capita.

3.16 A report on the Council's LGBF performance 2022/23 for all the above measures will be brought to the next meeting of this Committee. The LGBF interactive dashboard is available here:

<https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/explore-the-data>

4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the latest updates relating to the area of Corporate Policy and Performance.

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.

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 direct legal implications arising from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct 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.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Report No:	PR/03/24/RB/MR
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	07385434459
Subject:	Workforce Information and Activity Report (WIAR) 2022/2023		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Policy and Resources Committee of key workforce information and activity for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. This annual report has been provided to the Corporate Management Team in recent years to support workforce planning and has been submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee the past three years to provide members with a useful overview of workforce activity and analysis.
- 1.3 The Workforce Information and Activity Report is designed to be informative and to encourage participation in organisational development and workforce planning activity. The content includes key information on attendance, performance and workforce demographics.
- 1.4 The latest yearly Workforce Information and Activity Report is attached as Appendix 1, which includes a comparison with the previous two years in key areas.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee notes the content of the Workforce Information and Activity Report for 2022/2023 outlined in Appendix 1.

Morna Rae
Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Workforce Information and Activity Reports (WIAR) were first produced in 2013 to help inform workforce planning decisions by the Extended Corporate Management Team and also to inform management of key performance information in relation to the workforce. The content of the reports has been expanded in recent years to encourage organisational development and workforce planning activity across a range of workforce analytics. It is recognised that the continued success of Organisational Development (OD) across the Council very much depends on good workforce data which helps to identify needs in key areas.
- 3.2 Workforce Information and Activity Reports have been developed quarterly for the full Council and by Directorate. A yearly WIAR (full Council) is also produced at the end of each financial year which includes comparisons with other years in the interests of showing trends and other developments. Reports are distributed across services, through Service Managers and Team Leaders. The Health and Social Care Partnership quarterly WIAR also includes NHS information and is presented to the Staff Partnership Forum.
- 3.3 The report content includes attendance, performance and workforce demographics which assist in focussing on and analysing trends across the workforce. The content of the WIAR is considered by the Workforce Development Group to help inform key workforce planning action and HR policy decisions. The content of these reports is also shared and discussed with the trade unions at regular liaison meetings.
- 3.4 It should be noted that for the year of 2022/2023, due to the requirements to reprioritise work within the HR/OD service the WIAR quarterly reports were not issued. However the format has been refined and this has recommenced with the Q2 2023/24 reports being shared with Services in December 2023 and the annual report has now been produced. The 2022-23 report is available in Appendix 1.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.5 There has been an increase in absence levels reported for 2022/23, with 11.19 workdays lost per employee compared to 8.29 days in 2021/22, 6.92 days in 2020/21 and 9.18 in 2019/20. The increase can be partly attributed to Covid-19 sickness absence no longer being a separate special reported category and is included within the sickness absence recording. It should also be appreciated that the increase seen in Inverclyde is common across Scotland. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) includes comparative statistics for sickness absence days per employee. It notes that across the country staff absence levels are at the highest ever reported, citing workforce pressures exacerbated by recruitment issues, NHS backlogs and treatment delays alongside increasing mental health issues.
- 3.6 The LGBF data shows:

Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher) 2022-23

- Inverclyde figure of 11.3 days
- Scotland figure of 13.2 days
- Inverclyde ranks 6 out of 32 local authority areas
- Lowest figure in our "family group"

Sickness absence days per teacher 2022-23

- Inverclyde figure of 6.8 days
- Scotland figure of 6.8 days
- Inverclyde ranks 16 out of 32 local authority areas
- Mid ranking in our "family group"

- 3.7 Effective absence management is a priority for the Corporate Management Team and alongside wider work to support employee health and wellbeing the following actions have been agreed:
- Increased uptake of attendance management training;
 - Roll out of self-referrals to Occupational Health;
 - Update of Supporting Employee Attendance policy and procedure, and
 - Improvements to the system for notification, recording and monitoring of absences.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

- 3.8 For the year 2022/23 the statutory reported Joint Staffing Watch figures have been used to provide this information to ensure consistency across Council reporting. Key insights are:

- Number of employees has decreased in the past year from 4294 in 2021/22 to 4155 in 2022/23; and, the full time equivalent (FTE) employees has decreased from 3570.76 FTE in 2021/22 to 3446.1 FTE in 2022/23.
- 54% of employees are full time and 46% are part time. This is a change from last year where 52% were full time and 48% were part time.
- For the second year in a row, 78% of employees are permanent with 22% having a temporary employee status for 2022/23.
- Employee turnover has increased in 2022/23 to 11.57%, from 10.09% for 2021/22.
- 28% of our employees are aged over 56 years old compared to 6% aged under 25 years old. This is typical of the sector and remains unchanged from 2021/22.
- 75% of our employees are female and 25% are male, this is a 1% change in last year where 76% were female and 24% were male.

- 3.9 Additional analysis has been undertaken to better understand the reduction in the number of employees. There appears to be an increased number of vacancies along with an increase in turnover. Vacancies primarily appear to be across Education and HSCP, in designations such as Pupil Support Assistant, Early Years Education and Childcare Officer and Support Workers.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee notes the context of the Workforce Information and Activity Report for 2022/2023 outlined in Appendix 1.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		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

N/A.

5.4 Human Resources

The content of the Workforce Information and Activity Report informs organisational development actions and HR Policy.

5.5 Strategic

The WIAR analysis supports the delivery of the Council Plan outcomes:

- More people will be in employment with fair pay and conditions;
- Our economy and skills base are developed;
- Our employees are supported and developed.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.



Inverclyde Council

Workforce Information Activity Report

2022-23

Contents

- 1. Attendance and Performance Appraisal Information 1**
 - a. Absence Chart & Breakdown 1
 - b. Absence Rates by Directorate Breakdown 1
 - c. Absence Rate Breakdown by Reason for Absence..... 2
 - d. Employees Days Absence..... 2
 - e. Performance Appraisals 2
- 2. Employee Demographics..... 3**
 - a. Employee Numbers & Variances..... 3
 - b. Part Time v Full Time Employees 3
 - c. Perm v Temp Employees 3
 - d. Modern Apprentice Breakdown 4
 - e. Reason for Leaving – Turnover 5
 - f. Annual Leave Payment to Leavers..... 6
 - g. Age Profile..... 7
 - h. Gender Breakdown 8
 - i. Employees in Pension Scheme..... 8
 - j. Salary Protection/Responsibility Allowance 8
 - k. Contractual Overtime..... 9
 - l. Night Work (Atypical Night Payments) 9
 - m. Sleepover Payments 10
 - n. Contractual Atypical Allowances 10
- 3. Sessional Worker Activity – Workforce Planning..... 11**
- 4. Human Resources Support Activity 11**
 - a. Overtime Hours Worked 11
 - b. Employee Relations Activity..... 12
 - c. New Start and Leavers Survey..... 13
- 5. Organisational Development Support Activity 14**
 - a. Training Activity 14
 - b. Training Matrix for Senior Managers Activity..... 14
 - c. Employee Participation & Job Evaluation Activity 15
- 6. Health and Safety Activity..... 16**
 - a. Causes of Accidents 16
 - b. RIDDOR 2013..... 17
 - c. Cost of Incidents 18

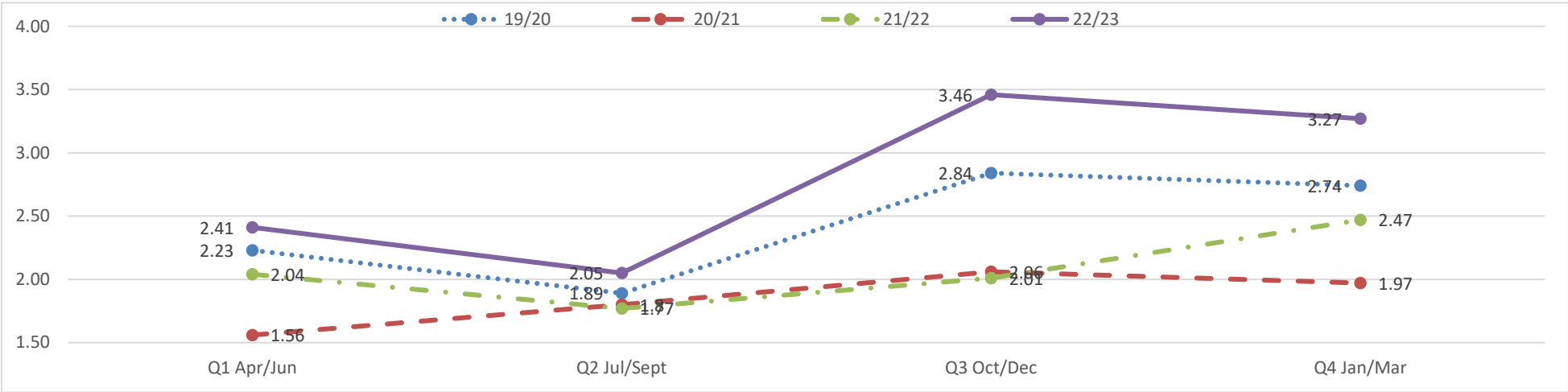
1. Attendance and Performance Appraisal Information

Please note that the Directorate structure is prior to the changes implemented in April 2023.

a. Absence Chart & Breakdown

This shows the 4 quarters in 19/20, 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 for comparison.

Please note that the absence statistics provided for 22/23 below include Covid-19 related absences, unlike previous years being compared.



	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20
Work Days Lost per FTE Employee (Inverclyde Council target: 9 days)	11.19	8.29	6.92	9.18

b. Absence Rates by Directorate Breakdown

Directorate	Workdays lost per FTE employees in 22/23*	Workdays lost per FTE employee in 21/22	Workdays lost per FTE employee in 20/21	Workdays lost per FTE employee in 19/20
HSCP	12.98	11.05	10.93	12.96
ECOD	10.22	7.15	5.59	7.69
ERR	11.97	8.32	5.59	8.70
CE	3.75	0.91	0.51	0.59
Full Council	11.19	8.29	6.92	9.18

*These figures include new sickness absences codes of Covid 19 Sickness (inc isolation) and Respiratory Infection for 2022/23.

c. Absence Rate Breakdown by Reason for Absence

Reason for Absence	% of Workdays lost per FTE employee in 22/23	% of Workdays lost per FTE employee in 21/22	% of Workdays lost per FTE employee in 20/21	% of Workdays lost per FTE employee in 19/20
Accidents	0.94	0.53	0.41	0.89
Major Medical/Surgery	14.8	14.47	15.54	15.98
Maternity Related Illness	0.94	1.06	1.37	1.56
Mental Health	30.29	33.76	37.38	31.66
Musculoskeletal	17.98	21.88	24.58	20.34
Virus/Short Term*	34.95*	28.30	20.72	29.57

*This figure includes new sickness absences codes of Covid 19 Sickness (inc isolation) and Respiratory Infection for 2022/23.

d. Employees Days Absence

Number of days off sick	Number of Employees 22/23	Number of Employees 21/22	Number of Employees 20/21	Number of Employees 19/20
9 days or less	1428 (34%)	1029 (24%)	870 (20%)	1371 (33%)
10 days or more	1077 (26%)	392 (9.1%)	728 (17%)	898 (21.5%)
Zero Days absence	1650 (40%)	2873 (66.9%)	2694 (63%)	1876 (45.5%)

e. Performance Appraisals

The target for 22/23 was 90%; the final overall position for 22/23 was 92%. Please note, due to the Covid-19 pandemic PA return stats were not reported on for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Directorate	% Received 22/23	% Received 21/22	% Received 19/20	% Received 18/19
HSCP	86%	87%	52%	98%
ECOD	97%	93%	8%	97%
ERR	100%	97%	71%	97%
CE	100%	100%	0	100%
Total	94%	92%	35%	97%

2. Employee Demographics

Please note that the Directorate structure is prior to the changes implemented in April 2023.

*All as at date 11 March 2023 is due to using JSW figures for 2022/23.

a. Employee Numbers & Variances

Table includes actual number of employees (full time, part time, temporary & permanent).

Directorate	11 Mar 2023 - No. of employees*	Mar 2022 - No. of employees	Mar 2021 - No. of employees	Mar 2020 - No. of employees	Full Time Equivalent (FTE*) 2023	Full Time Equivalent (FTE*) 2022	Full Time Equivalent (FTE*) 2021	Full Time Equivalent (FTE*) 2020
HSCP	1074	1,113	1,103	1101	857.5	889.83	874.41	877.95
ECOD	2454	2,559	2,509	2350	2315.3	2,086.21	2003.72	1864.50
ERR	618	613	634	651	592.5	585.91	603.26	618.74
CE	9	9	8	7	8.8	8.81	7.81	6.8
TOTAL	4155	4294	4254	4109	3446.1	3,570.76	3,489.20	3367.99

b. Part Time v Full Time Employees

	11 March 2023*	% of total workforce 2023	March 2022	% of total workforce 2022	March 2021	% of total workforce 2021	March 2020	% of total workforce 2020
Part Time Employees	1909	46	2079	48	2152	51	2037	50
Full time Employees	2246	54	2215	52	2102	49	2072	50

c. Perm v Temp Employees

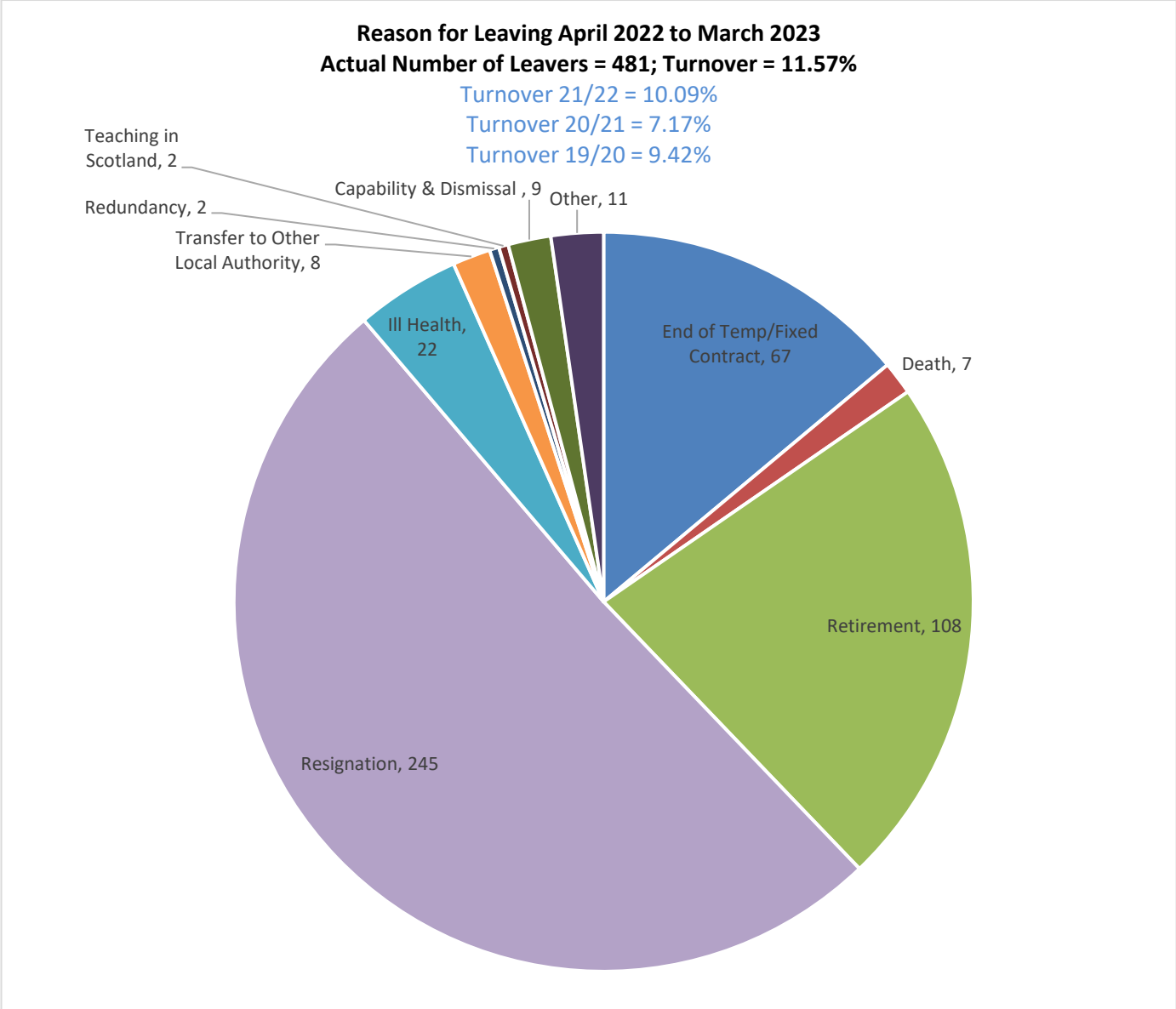
	11 March 2023*	% of total workforce 2023	March 2022	% of total workforce 2022	March 2021	% of total workforce 2021	March 2020	% of total workforce 2020
Permanent Employees (includes Temp Occupied by Perm)	3246	78	3345	78	3392	80	3347	81
Temporary Employees	909	22	949	22	862	20	762	19

d. Modern Apprentice Breakdown

Directorate	No. of Modern Apprentices 22/23	No. of Modern Apprentices 21/22	No. of Modern Apprentices 20/21	No. of Modern Apprentices 19/20
HSCP	4	5	3	3
ECOD	35	26	26	24
ERR	34	19	9	9
CE	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	73	50	38	36

e. Reason for Leaving – Turnover

The pie chart below displays the number of leavers for 22/23 and reasons for leaving.



Reason for Leaving	No. of Employees
Capability – Ill Health	22
Capability - Performance	5
Dismissal	4

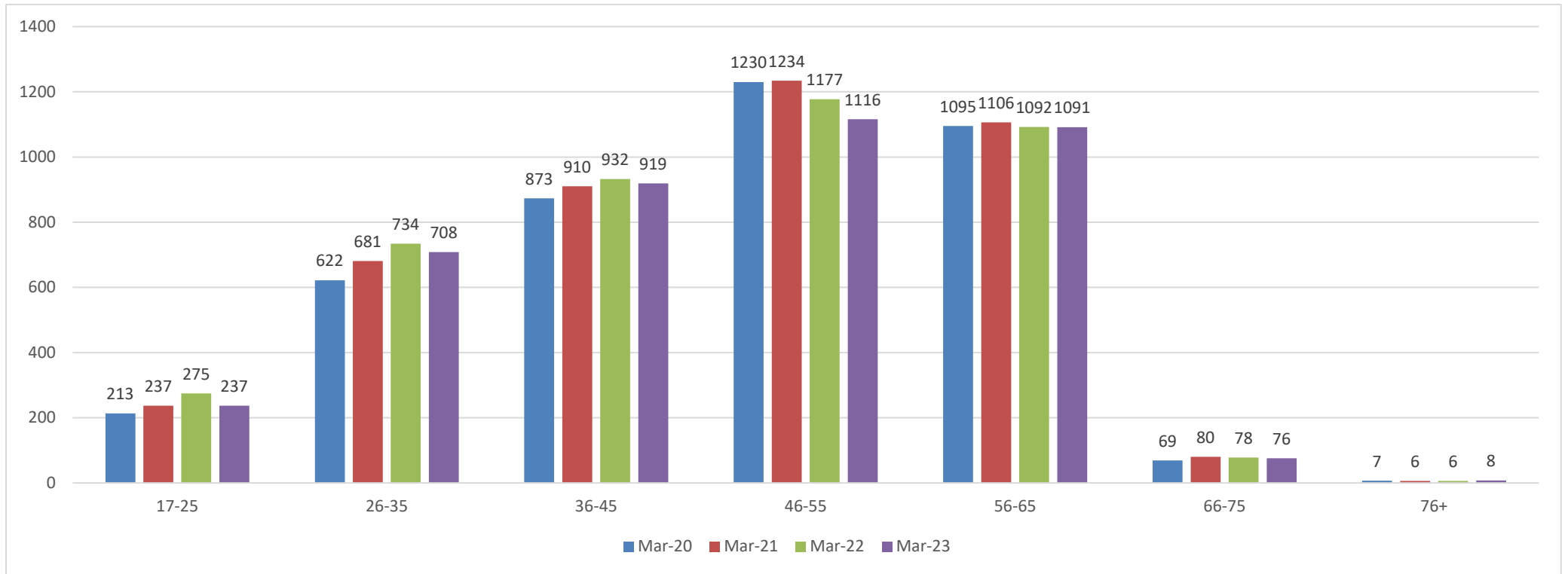
End of Temp/Fixed Contract	67
Redundancy (Voluntary Severance)	2
Resignation – Terms & Conditions	33
Resignation – Personal	107
Resignation – Career Progression	96
Resignation – Work Related	9
Retirement – Ill Health (pension)	14
Retirement – Age (no pension)	4
Retirement – Age (pension)	71
Retirement – Severance	7
Retirement – Efficiency of Service	12
Transfer to other Local Authority	8
Teaching in Scotland	2
Death	7
Other	11
Total	481

f. Annual Leave Payment to Leavers

Directorate	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21	
	Number of Employees	Amount Paid £	Number of Employees	Amount Paid £	Number of Employees	Amount Paid £
HSCP	39	48137.96	28	27,965.35	29	30,792.65
ECOD	78	54905.21	101	69,461.40	56	40,943.11
ERR	3	4744.70	7	7,761.62	8	14,461.17
CE	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	120	107787.87	136	105,188.37	93	86,196.93

Where possible, the goal is to limit as majority of leavers should take unused annual leave before leaving. There has been an increase in the payment of annual leave during the Covid pandemic due to employees being unable to take their balance of leave prior to departure.

g. Age Profile



	% 16-25	% 26-35	% 36-45	% 46-55	% 56-65	% 66-75	% 76+
March 2023	6	17	22	27	26	1.8	0.2
March 2022	6	17	22	27	26	1.81	0.19
March 2021	6	16	21	29	26	1.80	0.20
March 2020	5	15	21	30	26.90	1.90	0.20

h. Gender Breakdown

Gender	No. Of Employees 11 March 23*	No. Of Employees March 22	No. Of Employees March 21	No. Of Employees March 20	% of Workforce March 23	% of Workforce March 22	% of Workforce March 21	% of Workforce March 20
Female	3134	3270	3259	3110	75.43	76.15	76.61	75.69
Male	1021	1024	995	999	24.57	23.85	23.39	24.31

i. Employees in Pension Scheme

Directorate	Number of Employees 22/23	% of Total Employees in Directorate 22/23	Number of Employees 21/22	% of Total Employees in Directorate 21/22	Number of Employees 20/21	% of Total Employees in Directorate 20/21	Number of Employees 19/20	% of Total Employees in Directorate 19/20
HSCP	1038	97	1024	92	996	90	966	88
ECOD	2400	98	2372	93	2278	91	2146	90
ERR	592	96	576	94	586	91	588	93
CE	8	89	9	100	7	100	7	100
TOTAL	4038	97	3981	93	3867	91	3707	89

j. Salary Protection/Responsibility Allowance

Within 22/23 there was **1** employee paid responsibility allowances, **0** employees paid conserved salaries and **13** employees were paid salary protection. Please note that the figures in brackets are those that are still live and ongoing.

Directorate	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21			2019/20		
	Resp Allowance	Conservation (teachers only)	Salary Protection (SJC only)	Resp Allowance	Conservation (teachers only)	Salary Protection (SJC only)	Resp Allowance	Conservation (teachers only)	Salary Protection (SJC only)	Resp Allowance	Conservation (teachers only)	Salary Protection (SJC only)
HSCP	1	0	5 (2)	0	0	3 (2)	3	0	1 (1)	0	0	1
ECOD	0	0	8 (3)	0	3 (2)	8 (6)	2	3 (1)	8 (3)	0	2	7 (3)
ERR	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 (2)	0	1	0	0	4

CE	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	1	0	13	2	3	11	7	3	10	1	2	12

k. Contractual Overtime

Over 22/23 there were 17 paid contractual overtime. Please note that the figures in brackets are those that are still live and ongoing.

Directorate	No. of Employees 22/23	No. of Employees 21/22	No. of Employees 20/21	No. of Employees 19/20
HSCP	0	0	0	0
ECOD	3 (3)	8	9 (9)	10 (10)
ERR	14 (14)	15 (13)	12 (12)	14 (14)
CE	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	17	23	21	24

I. Night Work (Atypical Night Payments)

Please note that the figures in brackets are those that are still live and ongoing.

Directorate	Paid in 22/23		Paid in 21/22		Paid in 20/21		Paid in 19/20	
	No. of employees occasionally undertaking night	No. of employees working nights as normal work pattern	No. of employees occasionally undertaking night	No. of employees working nights as normal work pattern	No. of employees working nights as normal work pattern	No. of employees occasionally undertaking night	No. of employees working nights as normal work pattern	No. of employees occasionally undertaking night
HSCP	26 (11)	35 (32)	34 (32)	16 (9)	32 (31)	14 (9)	28 (28)	18 (12)
ECOD	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
ERR	0	3 (3)	3 (3)	0	4 (4)	13	0	18 (4)
CE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	26	38	38	16	36	27	28	37

m. Sleepover Payments

Sleepover payments changed in September 2018 and are now paid as an hourly rate. Tables below illustrates the allowance paid up to August 2018, and the other table details the hours paid since September 2018.

Directorate	Paid in 22/23		Paid in 21/22		Paid in 20/21		Paid in 19/20		Paid in 18/19 (from Sept 18 to March 19)*	
	No. of Hours Submitted	Amount £	No. of Hours Submitted	Amount £	No. of Hours Submitted	Amount £	No. of Hours Submitted	Amount £	No. of Hours Submitted	Amount £
HSCP	7,421	75,682.04	6,739	61,823.5	7,284	66,065.89	3032	3032	3032	25,802.32
ECOD	2,706	26,750.08	243	2,280.69	108	979	479	479	479	4,076.29
ERR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	10,127	102,432.12	6,982	64104.19	7,392	67,044.89	3511	3511	3511	29,878.61

n. Contractual Atypical Allowances

Contractual Allowance – not paid by timesheet.

Directorate	Number of Employees 22/23	Amount Paid 22/23 £	Number of Employees 21/22	Amount Paid 21/22 £	Number of Employees 20/21	Amount Paid 20/21 £	Number of Employees 19/20	Amount Paid 19/20 £
HSCP	625	348,087.47	545	263,641.44	483	272,029.96	417	227,564.99
ECOD	57	7,260.37	19	7,466.17	17	6,678.09	14	5,073.92
ERR	82	39,265.25	34	33,786.86	35	42,674.63	39	39,774.99
CE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	764	394,613.09	598	304,894.47	535	321,382.68	470	272,413.90

3. Sessional Worker Activity – Workforce Planning

Please note that the Directorate structure is prior to the changes implemented in April 2023.

Directorate	No of Sessional Workers March 23	No of Sessional Workers March 22	No of Sessional Workers March 21	No of Sessional Workers March 20
HSCP	232	175	137	99
ECOD	408	455	385	347
<i>(Supply Teachers)</i>	<i>349</i>	<i>291</i>	<i>262</i>	<i>212</i>
ERR	3	4	4	2
TOTAL	992	925	788	660

Quarterly reports are sent out to all services on sessional usage and supply stats are done at the end of every term

4. Human Resources Support Activity

Please note that the Directorate structure is prior to the changes implemented in April 2023.

a. Overtime Hours Worked

Directorate	Additional Basic At Plain Time		Overtime At 1.5		OT Pub Hols At 2.0		Grand Total 22/23	
	£	Hours	£	Hours	£	Hours	£	Hours
HSCP	512,951.71	42,467.77	355,196.3	16,146.80	20,558.48	750.14	888,706.49	59,364.71
ECOD	377,140.72	33,231.75	181,024.98	20,368.25	50.23	2	558,215.93	53,602
ERR	31,228.77	2,715.55	448,202.24	22,606.78	7,905.94	296.82	487,336.95	25,619.15
CE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	921,321.20	78,415.07	984,423.52	49,212.83	28,514.74	1,048.96	1,934,259.34	138,585.86

Directorate	Grand Total 21/22		Grand Total 20/21		Grand Total 19/20	
	£	Hours	£	Hours	£	Hours
HSCP	847,537.44	60,974.72	887,227.28	63,432.47	1,044,988.91	76,499.8
ECOD	563,626.44	47,958.01	540,475.30	44,822.22	516,243.93	49,044.59
ERR	483,505.08	25,982.70	581,685.78	32,535.83	603,864.17	35,503.66
CE	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1,894,668.96	134,915.43	2,009,388.36	140,790.52	2,165,097.01	161,048.05

b. Employee Relations Activity

	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Investigations (relating to Disc, Grievance & D&R)	40		31		21		57	
Disciplinary	52		37		26		51	
Grievance & Dignity and Respect Submissions	17		9		20		33	
Absence Cases Supported	220		271		242		281	
Letters of Concern Issued	108		81		40		119	
Union Members (figures collected from check off only) (excluding EIS members)*	1500 (36%)		1454 (34%)		1505 (35%)		1581 (38.48%)	
Trade Union Activity (hours)	6,007.81		4,907.88		3,909.20		4,221.98	
Work Life Balance Request	Received	126	Received	107	Received	61	Received	95
	Approved	120	Approved	89	Approved	55	Approved	91
Male/Female Split (Approved)	18	102						
	1-6	65	1-6	53	1-6	27	(1-6 (A-G))	59

Grades of those approved for Work Life Balance	7 & Above/Teacher	55	7 & Above/Teacher	36	7 & Above/Teacher	28	7 (H) & Above/Teacher	32
TOIL Request for Approval	108		48		62		114	
TOIL Taken (days)	63		36		29		71	

Note: The trade union membership will be an underestimate as not all members pay fees via payroll deduction. In addition EIS numbers not available as not paid by payroll deduction, also some members moved to check off.

c. New Start and Leavers Survey

Number of New Starts Surveys sent and completed

Directorate	New Employee Survey 22/23		New Employee Survey 21/22		New Employee Survey 20/21		New Employee Survey 19/20	
	Sent	Completed	Sent	Completed	Sent	Completed	Sent	Completed
CE	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
HSCP	125	19	138	36	131	44	75	21
ECOD	220	37	252	50	230	50	156	51
ERR	46	15	53	14	52	10	42	6
Not Known	0	2	0	7	0	16	0	5
Total	392	74	443	107	413	120	273	83

Number of Leavers Surveys sent and completed

Directorate	Leaver Survey 22/23		Leaver Survey 21/22		Leaver Survey 20/21		Leaver Survey 19/20	
	Sent	Completed	Sent	Completed	Sent	Completed	Sent	Completed
CE	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
HSCP	115	17	116	40	91	25	70	23
ECOD	218	41	221	63	133	40	134	39
ERR	40	7	58	14	22	10	37	15
Not Known	0	1	0	11	0	31	0	26
Total	373	66	396	128	247	106	241	103

New Start and Leaver Job Satisfaction Responses

Overall, how would you rate your employment experience to date?

Answer Choices	Responses 22/23		Responses 21/22		Responses 20/21		Responses 19/20	
	Leavers	New Starts	Leavers	New Starts	Leavers	New Starts	Leavers	New Starts
Excellent	12	29	42	60	27	67	22	43
Good	38	33	65	39	60	37	65	30
Average	10	10	15	5	14	3	11	1
Poor	6	2	6	1	5	2	5	6
Not Answered	0	0	0	2	0	11	0	3
Total	66	74	128	107	106	120	103	83

5. Organisational Development Support Activity

Please note that the Directorate structure is prior to the changes implemented in April 2023.

a. Training Activity

	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20
Port Glasgow Training Suite Open (Days)	256	255	256	255
Computer Room Booked (Days)	4	61	43	213
Room 1 Booked (Days)	172	52	57	215
Room 2 Booked (Days)	0	38	89	195

Corporate Training Course Attended	435	211	110	499
E-Learning Courses Completed	5354	7746	9693	7181

b. Training Matrix for Senior Managers Activity

(Grade 10 and above)

Directorate	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
	No. Mandatory Course	No. of courses completed	No. Mandatory Course	No. of courses completed	No. Mandatory Course	No. of courses completed	No. Mandatory Course	No. of courses completed
HSCP	453	17	462	33	339	21	445	177
ECOD	223	31	224	20	158	12	223	110
ERR	393	22	378	27	370	8	408	245
CE	35	7	35	5	24	0	24	11
Total	1104	77	1099	85	891	41	1100	543

No. of mandatory courses is the total number of courses for every manager, as per the training matrix (including those required to be completed yearly, 3 yearly, 5 yearly and one off courses).

c. Employee Participation & Job Evaluation Activity

Employees Registered as First Aiders	2023	105	2022	91	2021	109
--------------------------------------	------	-----	------	----	------	-----

Employees in Buy & Bank Leave Scheme 2023	386	Amount:	£207,020.88
Employees in Buy & Bank Leave Scheme 2022	309	Amount:	£155,591.80
Employees in Buy & Bank Leave Scheme 2021	99	Amount:	£48,702.63
Employees in Buy & Bank Leave Scheme 2020	224	Amount:	£106,308.43

Employees in Cycle to Work Scheme	22/23	26	21/22	51	20/21	47	19/20	64
Employees in Childcare Voucher Scheme	22/23	25	21/22	32	20/21	38	19/20	87

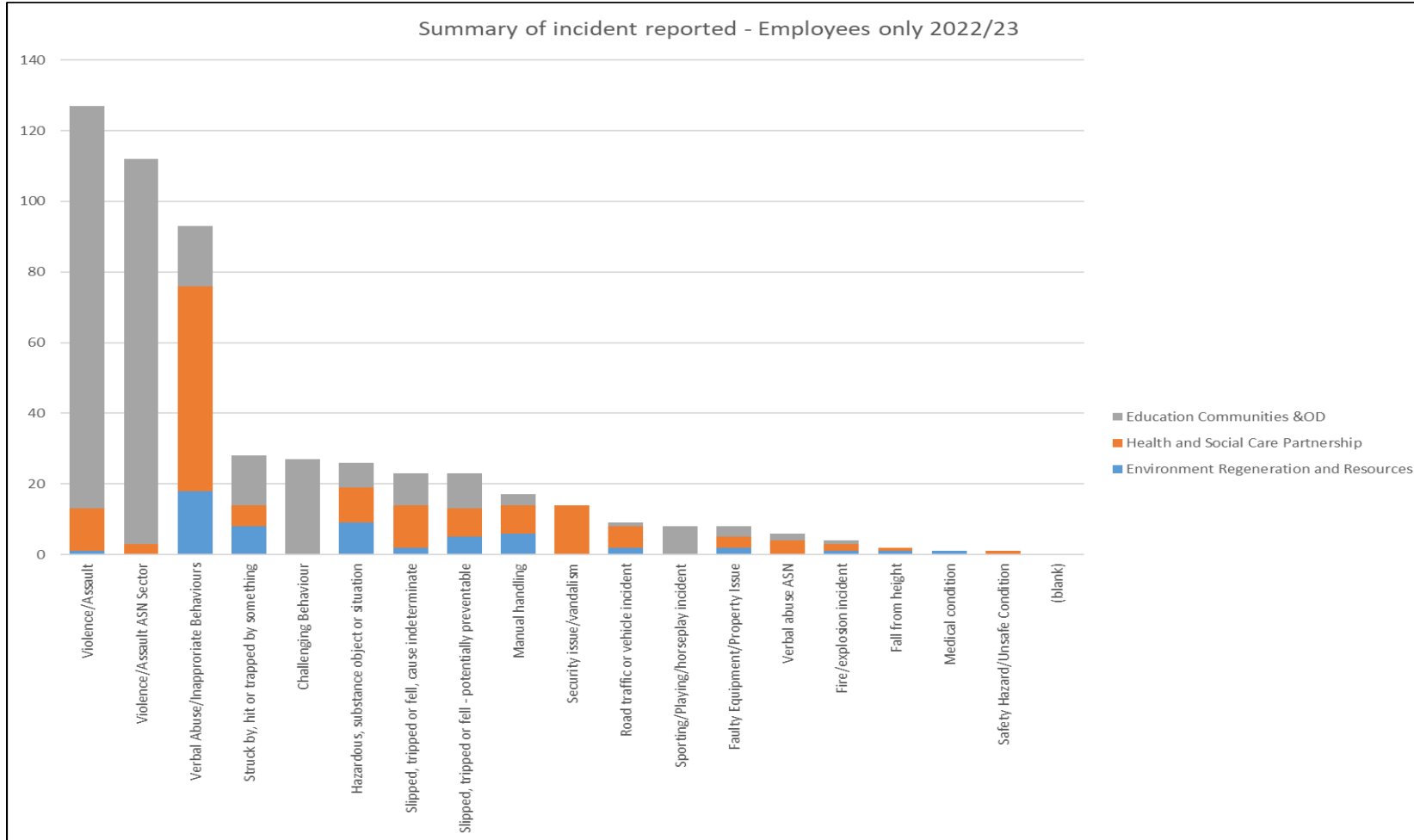
Job Evaluation Requests Received	22/23	52	21/22	87	20/21	57	19/20	60
Job Evaluation Appeals Received	22/23	0	21/22	0	20/21	0	19/20	0

6. Health and Safety Activity

Please note that the Directorate structure is prior to the changes implemented in April 2023.

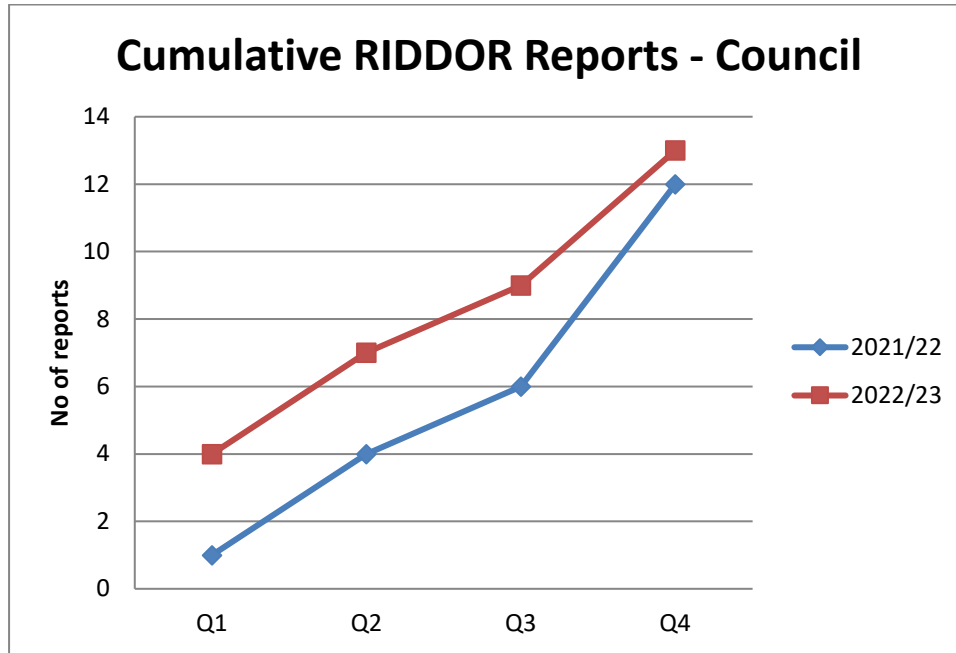
a. Causes of Accidents

The graph below shows the causes of accidents to employees by directorate.



b RIDDOR 2013

The Graph shows the cumulative number of incidents which have been reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.



The table below shows the cumulative number of RIDDOR incidents reported by directorate.

Directorate	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
HSCP	0	1	7	9
ECOD	6	2	17	2
ERR	7	9	4	11
TOTAL	13	12	28	22

c Cost of Incidents

Incidents can result in employees being absent from work during the quarter being reported on, the table below shows the number of workdays lost for each category of incident reported and the cost of time lost based on salary. These figures may rise where time lost spans more than one quarter.

	ECOD		ERR		HSCP		All	
Incident/Directorate	Hours Lost	Cost	Hours Lost	Cost	Hours Lost	Cost	Total Hours Lost	Total Cost
Slipped, tripped or fell – potentially preventable	728.00	£30,120.37	502.00	£6,245.72	251.80	£3,016.96	1481.80	£39,383.05
Moving and handling	1561.40	£26,059.77	156.00	£2,009.41	17.00	£205.87	1734.40	£28,275.05
Faulty Equipment/Property Issue	1516.30	£16,800.60	0.00	£0.00	58.00	£642.64	1574.30	£17,443.24
Violence/Assault	159.80	£4,113.25	0.00	£0.00	835.00	£12,825.60	994.80	£16,938.85
Hazardous substance, object or situation	14.00	£215.04	873.40	£11,746.60	0.00	£0.00	887.40	£11,961.64
Slipped, tripped or fell, cause indeterminate	628.27	£8,018.96	0.00	£0.00	80.00	£902.88	708.27	£8,921.84
Violence/Assault ASN Sector	294.10	£7,493.44	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	294.10	£7,493.44
Road Traffic or Vehicle Incident	0.00	£0.00	539.00	£7,141.75	0.00	£0.00	539.00	£7,141.75
Struck by, hit or trapped by something	12.60	£350.38	0.00	£0.00	2.50	£30.28	15.10	£380.65
Grand Total	4914.47	£93,171.81	2070.40	£27,143.48	1244.30	£17,624.22	8229.17	£137,939.50

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/07/24/AP/LA
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712090
Subject:	Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Committee with the outcome of the results from the public consultation on proposed amendments to the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (NDR EPR) Policy including views on economic development support to encourage businesses to occupy empty premises.
- 1.3 The results of the consultation were inconclusive but did recognise the need for change. The draft revised Policy seeks to balance the desire to reduce the time buildings are empty with the need where appropriate to provide support to businesses to occupy empty properties.
- 1.4 The report indicates the estimated financial implications of amending the Policy and seeks a decision from the Committee on the proposals with a planned implementation date of 1 October 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee note the results of the public consultation on proposed amendments to the NDR EPR Policy detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 It is recommended that Committee note the potential estimated financial implications of the proposed amendments to the updated Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (NDR EPR) Policy and that the intention that the EPR Budget is ringfenced to smooth out demand and provide support for empty properties to be occupied.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee note that the Director of Environment & Regeneration will present a report to the Environment & Regeneration Committee on the type of support to be provided to bring empty properties back into use.
- 2.4 It is recommended that the Committee thereafter approve the amended Policy attached at Appendix 2.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 With effect from 1st April 2023, the determination and administration of NDR Empty Property Relief (EPR) was devolved to local authorities in Scotland. The Council is therefore required to set its own Policy for the rating and Reliefs available for unoccupied or empty properties.
- 3.2 At the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 31st January 2023, the Council's NDR EPR Policy was approved with an implementation date of 1st April 2023, reflecting the conditions and criteria of the Scottish Government legislation it replaced. Further, it was remitted to Officers to develop proposals for an amended NDR EPR Policy as part of the development of the Budget 2024/25.
- 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 EPR 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 £338,000 and to 2023/24 accounts is £270,000. The number of empty properties receiving relief in 2022/23 is 215 and in 2023/24 is 186.
- 3.4 The Policy allows relief to be backdated to the start of the financial year in which the application is made, subject to satisfying the requirements at the time. Applications for the previous year can be considered provided sufficient evidence is submitted in support of the application. Consideration may also be given where an organisation has been rated retrospectively either through the actions of the Council or the Assessor. The estimated cost of the policy, especially current year expenditure is expected to increase as NDR ratepayers engage with the service to apply for the relief.
- 3.5 Reviewing the NDR 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.
- 3.6 The development of a local NDR EPR Policy, with an implementation date of 1 October 2024, is a key action in the Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement 2023/26 which was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2023.
- 3.7 The NDR EPR Policy Consultation 2023 was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 19th September 2023. The survey ran from 20th September 2023 until 31st October 2023. Responses were analysed by officers independent of the Finance Service and Regeneration Service. The results are summarised at section 4 with more detail provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The consultation results were largely inconclusive. While some questions returned strong views, there was generally no consensus. Overall, there is a desire to reduce the number of unoccupied premises and there is agreement over the provision of incentives and support to encourage occupation of empty premises. Rates relief for Empty Listed Buildings was viewed as being needed for a limited period rather than indefinitely. The results of the survey do not however provide an agreed position on an appropriate duration or level of relief.
- 3.9 There was a favourable response to the proposal to equalise NDR EPR for empty industrial premises with the current level of relief for empty non-industrial premises. Empty industrial premises currently receive full Relief (100%) for six months, followed by 10% until the premises are occupied. Empty non-industrial premises receive 50% for three months, followed by 10% thereafter until the premises are occupied.

3.10 A consideration when reviewing the responses is that while the highest proportion came from members of the business community, letting or owning premises, the largest single group who responded to the survey was interested members of the public.

4.0 MINIMISING TAX EVASION

4.1 The Non-Domestic Rates (Miscellaneous Anti-Avoidance Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 introduces a new measure to minimise tax evasion through contrivance. Where NDR EPR has ceased to be available, any subsequent application for relief by the same owner or tenant must demonstrate to the council that making the application is not part of an artificial non-domestic rates avoidance arrangement. An intention of the regulations is to prevent the provision of relief where premises are occupied to a limited extent for a recurring period so that further reductions can be considered when they again become empty. In such circumstances, if the occupant was a previous tenant or has a direct relationship with the owner/landlord then no further exempt reduction would be awarded when the premises become occupied.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Officers are recommending changes to EPR for Listed Buildings and the equalisation of reliefs for Industrial and non-Industrial properties. In addition, it is proposed that the implementation date for the changes be set as 1 October 2024 to give adequate notice to any parties impacted. The key elements to be considered in agreeing amendments to the policy are to support owners to bring property back into use; contain costs within the agreed budget; simplicity for taxpayers; ease of administration; and minimise tax evasion.

5.2 The main proposed amendments contained within the draft Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy found at Appendix 2. The potential estimated financial implications of the proposed amendments to the policy are detailed in Appendix 3.

5.3 In addition, it is proposed that funds raised from changes to the NDR Empty Property Relief policy are retained to smooth the variable demand and reinvested to support local businesses to occupy commercial properties which have been vacant for a period for example, grants, business support. The Regeneration Service will consider the comments made within consultation responses, as well as drawing from local knowledge and engagement with businesses, and present the proposed use of the funds to a future Environment and Regeneration Committee.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 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

6.2 Finance

On the basis that it is agreed that any unspent budget is carried forward to smooth variations in annual demand and provide support to businesses to occupy vacant properties there will be no net financial implications.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
NDR	EPR	1.4.24	£500k		Annual budget

6.3 Legal/Risk

Legal Services assisted with the development of the proposed changes to the Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy.

As the devolution of this power to councils is for an initial 3 year period there is the risk that this Policy could revert to a Scotland wide basis inn the medium term and as such further savings from this budget are not recommended at this time.

6.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

6.5 Strategic

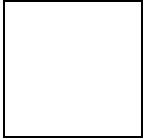
The proposed changes to the Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy will positively impact upon the priority to develop the local economy.

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 – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required in relation to the proposed change to the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy.
---	---



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. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA is not necessary/screening statement.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The NDR EPR Policy Consultation 2023 ran from 21st September 2023 until 31st October 2023. The main method by which people were invited to respond was via an on-line survey. A total of 2,800 Non-Domestic Ratepayers in the area were contacted by post, inviting them to complete the on-line survey. A paper questionnaire was also made available which, following completion, could be returned to the Council in a reply-paid envelope. A number of stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the process including Inverclyde residents; Council employees; the local business community; and the Council's Citizens' Panel. A total of 153 people responded.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Equality Impact Assessments - Inverclyde Council

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments>

Results of the Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy Consultation 2023

Consultation Period: 20th September 2023 until 31st October 2023

1.0 Consultation Methodology

1.1 A total of 2,800 Non-Domestic Ratepayers in the area were contacted by post, inviting them to complete an on-line survey. A paper questionnaire was provided for those who chose not to go online. Stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the process including Inverclyde residents; the local business community; the Council's Citizens' Panel; and Council employees.

1.2 A total of 153 people responded to the survey, 52 via the on-line survey and 101 via the paper questionnaire. Over and above this number, 26 respondents who completed the Consultation 2023 via a paper survey opted not to answer the mandatory profile question. In those cases, the respondents' answers to the remainder of the survey were therefore discounted.

1.3 For most of the Consultation questions, respondents were invited to provide a reason(s) for their answers which are summarised in section (2), Consultation Results.

1.4 Respondents were asked to indicate from a list in what capacity they were responding to the Consultation (Table 1). All options required respondents to have a connection to Inverclyde and can be defined as 31% being an interested member of the public, 27% being an owner of occupied business premises, 26% being a member of the business community letting premises, 6% being the owner of an empty business premises with a further 6% of responses received on behalf of a community organisation, 3% were owners of empty premises in Inverclyde with a rateable value of less than £1,700. No responses were received from respondents declaring to be owners of Listed building business premises in Inverclyde or from those who have tried to let premises in Inverclyde but do not at present.

1.5 The range of consultation responses and the associated degree of awareness of respondents give some confidence that the views reflected have a reasonable degree of validity and are appropriate for consideration in informing the review. All sample surveys are however subject to a degree of random error. Based on the return rate, the margin of error is +/- 7-10%.

1.6 **Question 1. Respondent Profile**

Total No. of Responses – 153

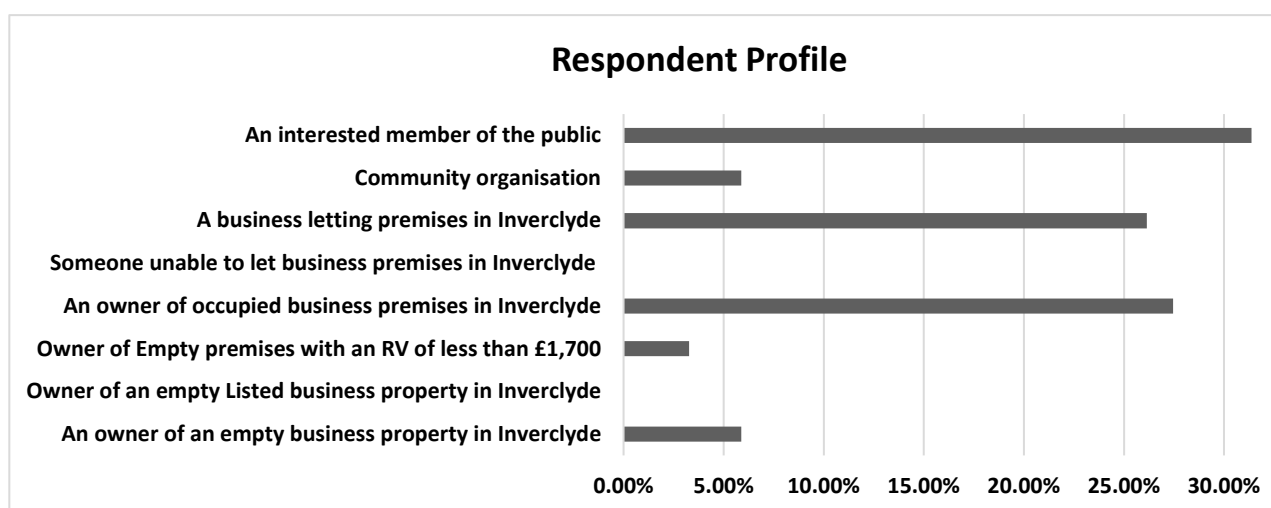


Table 1

2.0 Consultation Results

2.1 The survey began by stating that, as at July 2023, there were 17 local Listed buildings receiving Empty Property Rates Relief at a cost to the Council of £147,100 and that the period of time those buildings have been empty and in receipt of Relief varied between five months and 29 years. In respect of views on the level of relief provided for Empty Listed Buildings, responses were 55% of the 151 who responded agreeing or strongly agreeing with the current level of relief being provided, with 35% disagreeing and 10% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Table 2).

2.2 **Question 2. Do you agree with the current level of relief provided for empty Listed Buildings?**

Total No. of Responses – 151

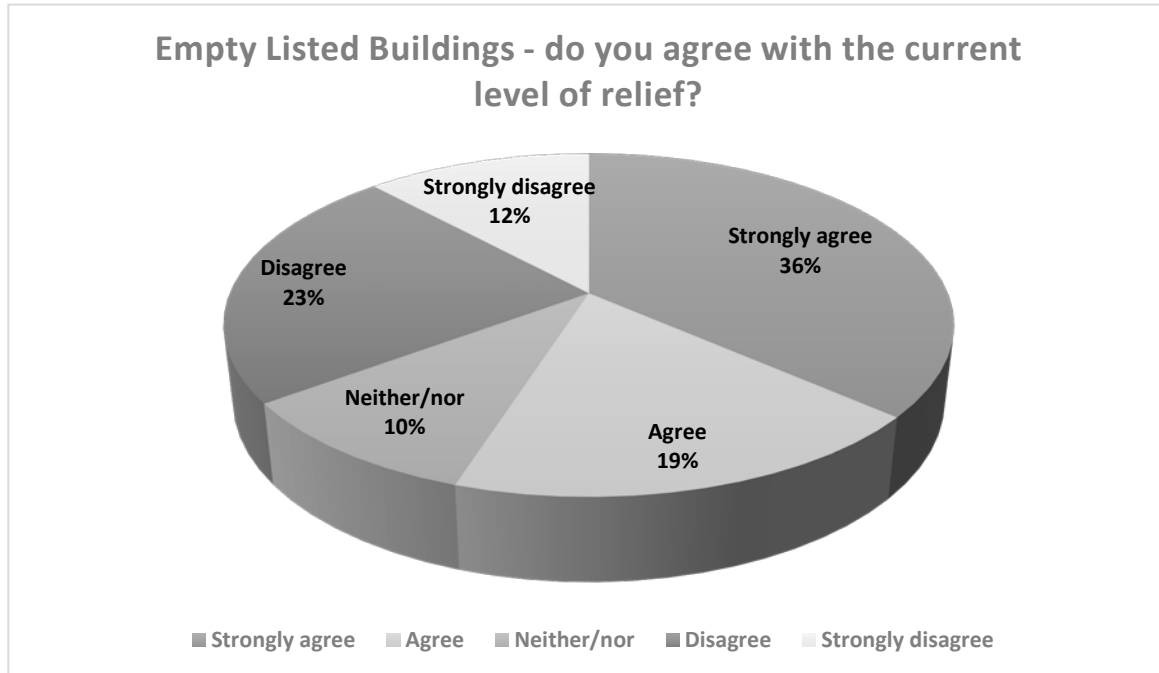


Table 2

2.3 Respondents in support of the current relief provision refer to the importance of retaining the heritage of important structures, the cultural significance and protection of historical features; planning restrictions and higher costs associated with occupying listed buildings making them less attractive to potential businesses was cited. A higher chance of buildings falling into disrepair if relief is withdrawn was also mentioned. Some who support the current relief also indicate that it should be time limited and/ or the level of relief should be less than 100%. Conversely, reasons unsupportive of the current provision included the need for every property owner to pay Rates. Others said that the current level of relief provides no incentive for owners of Listed buildings to maintain them, referring to the level of disrepair of some. A number of respondents said that by removing or reducing relief will not only reduce the cost to the Council but may also encourage owners to find tenants or to sell the properties.

2.5 **Question 3. If you disagree and the Council were to restrict the level of Rates Relief for unoccupied Listed Building, how much Relief should be provided?**

Total No. of Responses – 87

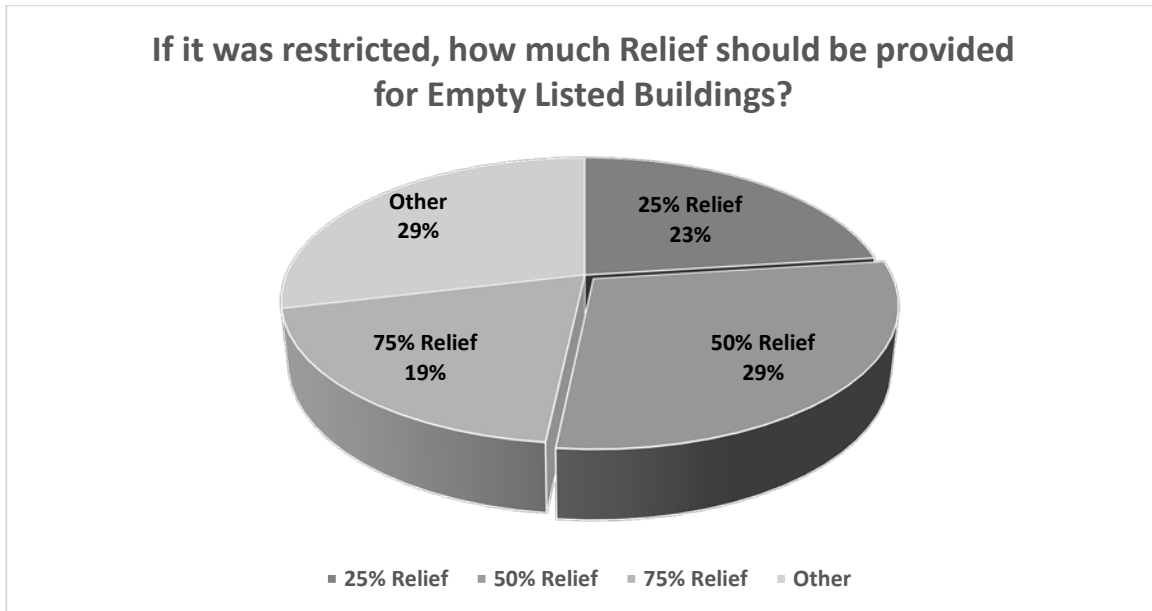


Table 3

2.6 Respondents who disagreed with the current relief provided to unoccupied Listed buildings were asked about restrictions. Firstly, they were asked if the Council were to restrict the level of relief, how much should instead be provided. Options of 25%, 50% 75% relief or “other” were provided however responses in order of the options offered were inconclusive: 23%, 29%, 19% and 29%. (Table 3)

2.7 **Question 4. In the event Relief was not provided indefinitely for unoccupied Listed buildings, what amount of time from the date a property was last occupied would instead be appropriate?**

Total No. of Responses – 88

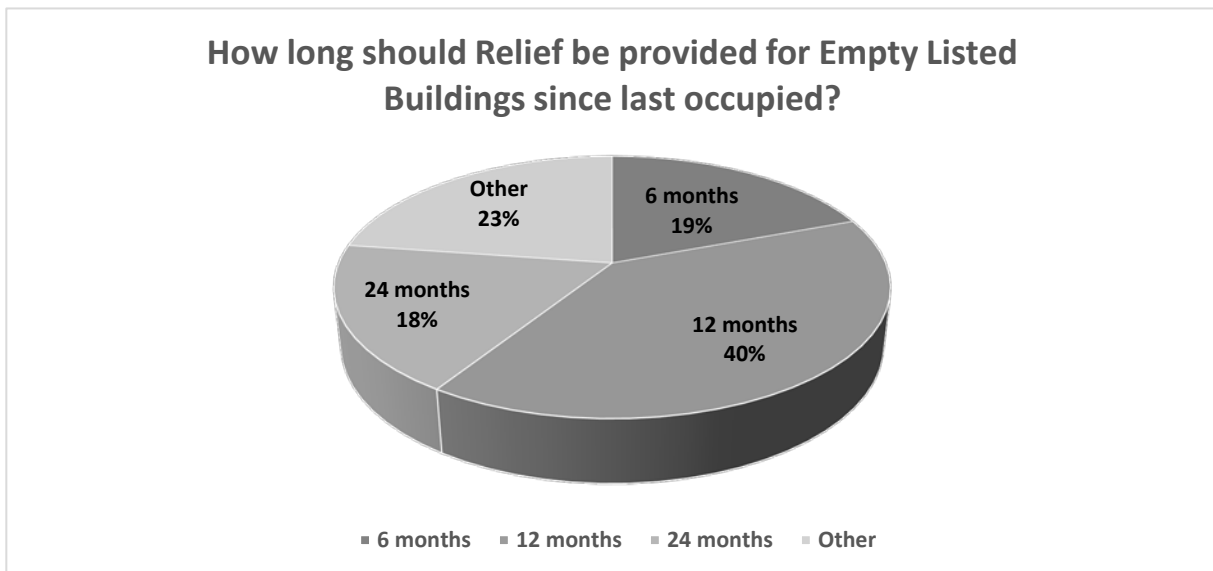


Table 4

There was an indication of agreement about the duration of NDR EPR for unoccupied Listed buildings being limited to no more than 12 months, with 19% supporting 6 months and 40% supporting 12 months. 18% agreed with 24 months and the remaining 23% in favour of another duration. (Table 4)

2.8 **Question 5. Should an identical level of rates Relief for both empty commercial and empty industrial premises apply (50% for three months, followed by 10% until the premises are occupied)?**

Total No. of Responses – 152

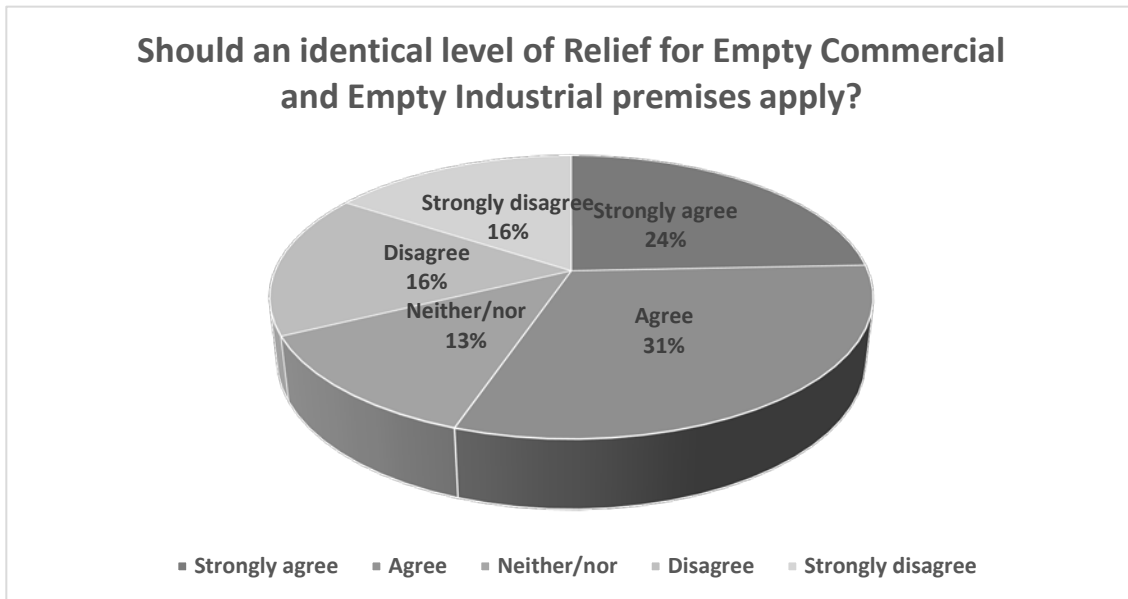


Table 5

2.9 The NDR EPR Policy provides empty industrial premises full Relief (100%) for six months, followed by 10% until the premises are occupied. Relief provided for empty commercial premises, such as shops, offices and salons is at a rate of 50% for three months, followed by 10% thereafter until the premises are occupied. When asked about equalising the provision for empty industrial premises with empty commercial premises, 55% of 152 respondents agreed. (Table 5). The main views supporting the proposal included fairness and incentivising owners to secure tenants or to sell. Comments from the 32% who disagreed, expressed general difficulties in the non-domestic property market, arguing that while markets can change, securing new tenants for shops and offices is more challenging at this time compared with Industrial premises in Inverclyde. The number of commercial premises with EPR in December 2023 was 83 compared with 12 industrial premises.

2.10 **Question 6. Should changes to the NDR Empty Property Relief Policy be introduced from 1st April 2024?**

Total No. of Responses – 143

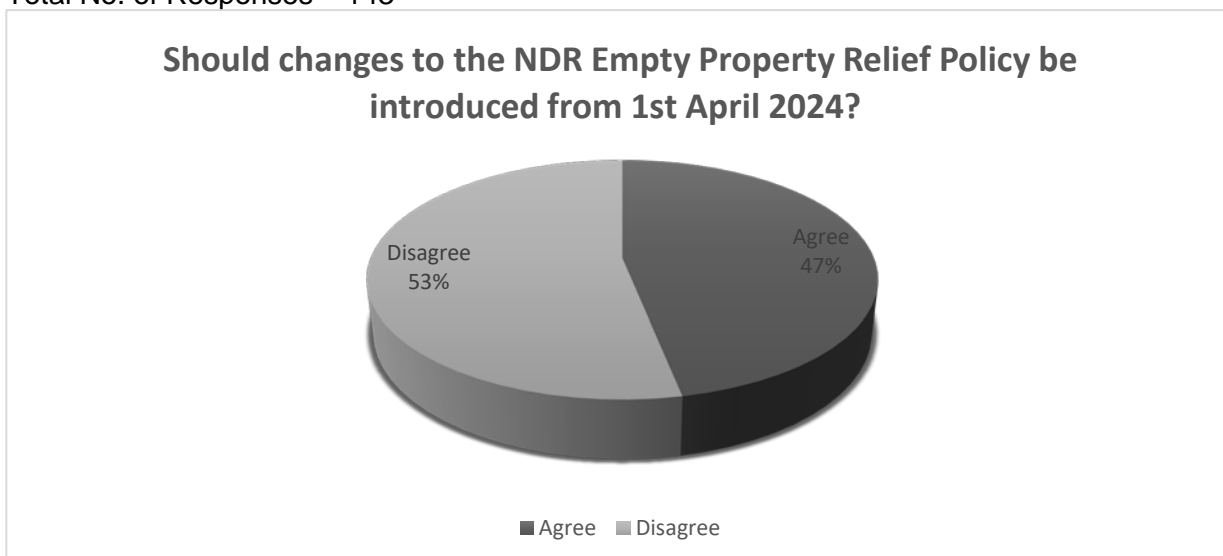


Table 6

2.11 Respondents were asked about the timing of potential changes to the Policy and for their view of these being introduced from 1st April 2024. Just under half (47%) of the 143 who responded indicated they agreed with this timescale. (Table 6).

2.12 **Question 7. If the changes to the policy were to be introduced from a date after 1st April 2024, when should they be applied?**

Total No. of Responses – 95

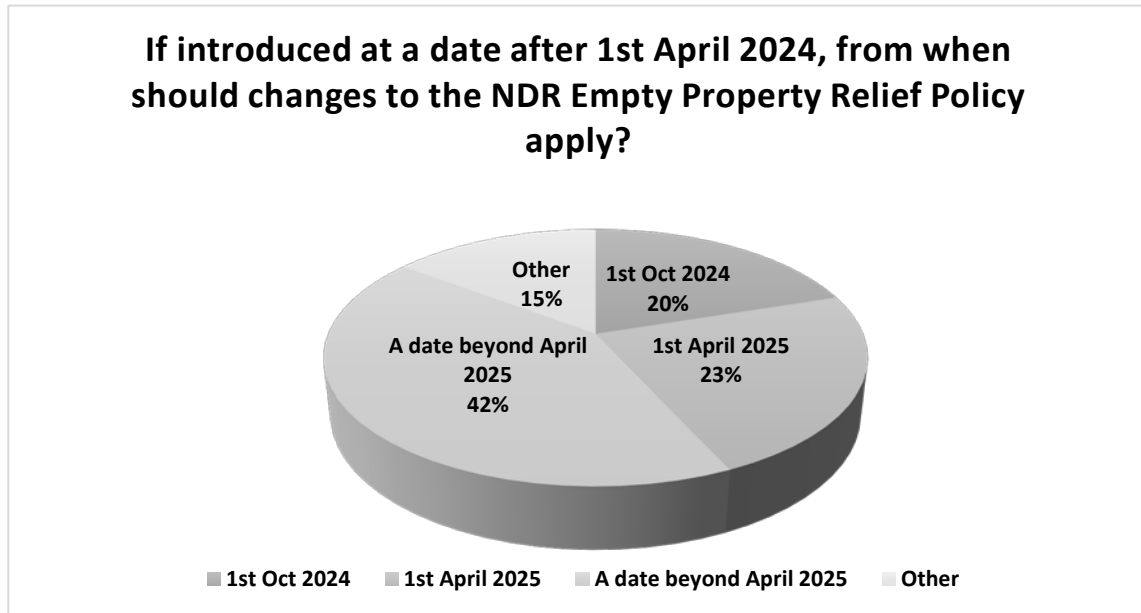


Table 7

2.13 Respondents who had indicated that changes should be introduced from a date later than 1st April 2024 (95 responses) were invited to choose from alternative timescales with 20% agreeing with 1st October 2024, 23% from 1st April 2025, 42% from a date beyond April 2025 and the remainder making various comments ranging from implementing change as soon as practical and allowing sufficient time for businesses to adjust (Table 7).

2.14 **Question 8. Do you agree that financial incentives or support measures would encourage businesses to occupy empty premises in the local area?**

Total No. of Responses – 151

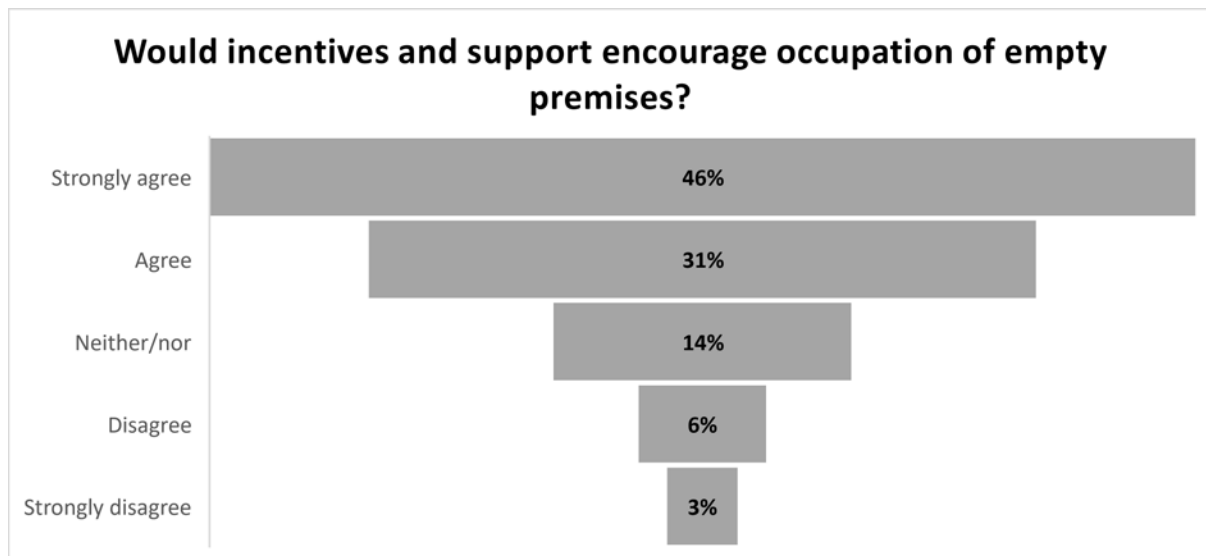


Table 8

- 2.15 The final question asked respondents if they agreed that financial incentives or support measures would encourage businesses to occupy empty premises in the local area. Of the 151 responses to this question, 77% agreed with less than 10% disagreeing and the remainder indicating neither. (Table 8). Many of the comments stated that rent free periods, reduced rent or rate relief periods are good incentives. The purpose of the consultation was on rate relief periods therefore covered in other areas of the report. With regards to rent free or reduced rent, this is within the gift of the landlord and in most cases, this is not the Council. Other comments stated grant support or other business support measures would be a useful incentive to occupy an empty property. Some comments have cited examples in other countries or other parts of Scotland which helpful. In addition, there were also comments which stated that marketing of the area e.g. television adverts and partnership work e.g. Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, would support occupation of empty properties, as well as more information on what properties are available. Comments are also state that better transport links e.g. would make Inverclyde a better place to work meaning that properties would be more attractive.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO NON-DOMESTIC RATES EMPTY PROPERTY RELIEF POLICY – FEBRUARY 2024

PAGE	TITLE	SECTION	PROPOSED CHANGE
2	Document Control Page	N/A	New Document Control Section
3	Table of Contents	N/A	New section 7.0 Minimising Tax Evasion. Minor amendment to page numbers.
4	Background	2.1	Minor amendment of text from future tense to past tense.
4	Background	2.4/ 2.5	Introduces amendments to the policy taking effect from 1 October 2024.
4/5	Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief	3.2.1/3.2.2	Unoccupied industrial property relief from 1 October 2024: 50% relief for the first three months of unoccupation followed by 10% until occupied. Property unoccupied prior to 1 October 2024: 100% relief for the first six months of unoccupation followed by 10% until occupied.
5	Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief	3.2.3	Inclusion of text tapering off the provision of relief over a period of 24 months for unoccupied listed buildings, including transitional arrangements for property unoccupied at 1 October 2024.
5	Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief	3.2.4	Deletion of listed building from the list of unoccupied properties eligible for indefinite 100% relief
5	Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief	3.2.5	Previously section 3.2.4
6	Subsidy Control	4.0	New text clarifying the Council's responsibility for subsidy control.
6	Application Process	5.1/5.7	Minor amendment of text, improving phrasing.
7	Minimising Tax Evasion	7.0/7.2	New section inserting new measures to minimise tax evasion through contrivance.
8	Review Process	8.0	Previously section 7.0. Minor amendment to text.
8	Amendments to Policy	9.0	Previously section 8.0

**Inverclyde Council - Finance
Revenues and Benefits**

Non Domestic Rates

Empty Property Relief Policy

Version 2.0

February 2024

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

Document Control

Prepared by:
Approved by:

Tracy Bunton
Policy & Resources Committee

February 2024

Change Control Table

Version	Version Date	Revised By	Reason for Change
1.0	January 2023	T.Bunton	New Policy
2.0	February 2024	T. Bunton	Unoccupied industrial property relief: 50% relief for the first three months of unoccupation followed by 10% until occupied. Policy amendments from 1 October 2024. Unoccupied listed building relief tapered from 100% to 0% over 24 months. Policy amendments from 1 October 2024.
			Minimising tax evasion through contrivance.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

Table of Contents	Page(s)
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Background	4
3.0 Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief	4
4.0 Subsidy Control	6
5.0 Application Process	6
6.0 Backdating	7
7.0 Minimising Tax Evasion	7
8.0 Review Process	8
9.0 Amendments to Policy	8

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document details Inverclyde Council's policy on non-domestic rates reliefs on empty property.

2.0 Background

2.1 With effect from 1 April 2023 local authorities were required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs of unoccupied properties. Empty property rating and relief is no longer a mandatory relief of rates as existing regulations do not apply from that date.

2.2 Section 19 of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020 repealed Section 24 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1966 . The default position with effect from 1st April 2023 is that non-domestic rates are now payable in respect of unoccupied lands and heritages.

2.3 Section 140 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 added Section 3A to the Local Government (Financial Provisions etc.) (Scotland) Act 1962, permitting local authorities to introduce a scheme to reduce or remit any rate leviable by it.

2.4 Council policy replicates the previous legislative arrangements from 1st April 2023. Amendments to this Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (NDR EPR) Policy shall take effect from 1st October 2024.

2.5 Amendments to this policy will be subject to review should funding arrangements change or if other local arrangements require to be taken into account.

3.0 Empty Property Relief Eligibility and Rates of Relief

3.1 Councils can provide relief of up to 100% of the rates due.

3.2 Under this policy the Empty Property Reliefs applied by Inverclyde Council are:

3.2.1 Unoccupied property is eligible for 50% relief while so unoccupied for the first three months of such unoccupation reducing to 10% relief thereafter for the period that the property remains empty. Where such a three month period of unoccupancy commenced prior to the coming into force of this policy (the policy date) then relief under this paragraph 3.2.1 will only apply for the balance of that three month period that is on or after the policy date, unless earlier brought to an end by the property ceasing to be unoccupied.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

3.2.2 Unoccupied industrial property is eligible for 100% relief while so unoccupied for] the first six months of such unoccupation where such a period of unoccupancy commenced prior to 1st October 2024, relief under this paragraph 3.2.2 will only apply for the balance of that six month period that is on or after the coming into force of this policy (the policy date) or the policy amendment date, unless earlier brought to an end by the property ceasing to be unoccupied, and 10% relief thereafter, until occupied.

3.2.3 Unoccupied listed building property is eligible for 100% relief while so unoccupied for] the first twelve months of such unoccupation, 50% relief for a further twelve months after which the level of relief reduces to 0%. Where a period of unoccupancy commenced prior to the coming into force of this policy amendment then 100% relief under this paragraph 3.2.3 will apply until 30th September 2025, followed by 50% for a further twelve months after which the level of relief reduces to 0%, unless earlier brought to an end by the property ceasing to be unoccupied.

3.2.4 100% relief is awarded indefinitely for unoccupied properties where the property is empty and:

- subject of a building preservation order; or
- the rateable value is under £1,700; or
- where the person entitled to possession of the property is so entitled by virtue only of being:
 - the Trustee under a Trust Deed for creditors or under an award of Sequestration; or
 - the Executor of a Deceased person; or
 - a liquidator by virtue of an order made under section 112 or section 145 of the 1986 Act;
- kept vacant by reason of action taken by or on behalf of the Crown or any local or public authority with a view to prohibiting the occupation of the lands and heritages or to acquiring them; or
- the owner of the property is prohibited by law from occupying them or allowing them to be occupied; or
- has no buildings (i.e. ground or land that contain no buildings); or
- the owner is a company or limited liability partnership, which on or after 1st April 2008 (i) remains subject to an administration order made under Part II of the 1986 Act, or (ii) is in administration within the meaning of paragraph 1 of schedule B1 of that Act; or the owner is a company or limited liability partnership which is subject to a winding-up order made under the 1986 Act or which is being wound up voluntarily under that Act.

3.2.5 In this policy, and with particular reference to paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.5:

- “1986 Act” means the Insolvency Act 1986;

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

- “building preservation order” means a building preservation notice within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997;
- “industrial property” means lands and heritages (other than retail property) comprising one or more buildings which is, or all of which are—
 - (a) constructed or adapted for use in the course of a trade or business; and
 - (b) constructed or adapted for use for one or more of the following purposes, or one or more such purposes and one or more purposes ancillary thereto:—
 - (i) the manufacture, repair or adaptation of goods or materials;
 - (ii) the subjecting of goods or materials to any process;
 - (iii) storage (including the storage or handling of goods in the course of their distribution);
 - (iv) the working or processing of minerals;
 - (v) the generation of electricity;
- “listed building” means lands and heritages included in a list compiled under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997;
- “retail property” means any lands and heritages where any building or part of a building comprised in them is constructed or adapted for the purpose of the retail provision of—
 - (a) goods; or
 - (b) services (other than storage for distribution services) on or from the lands and heritages.

4.0 Subsidy Control

4.1 The Council must consider and comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the “Act”) in relation to the local reliefs and reductions it provides under this policy. Where a recipient or as the case may be prospective recipient (referred to in either case here as the “Applicant”) of empty property rates relief is involved in commercial activity, the Council will have to consider whether an award of relief would result in the level of financial assistance received by that Applicant in the applicable period as set out in Section 36 of the Act exceeding the permitted level of minimal financial assistance (“MFA”) as set out in the Act, and may reduce the amount of relief awarded in terms of this policy if the MFA limit would be exceeded. The Council’s use of application forms to request information from Applicants shall assist the Council in determining the subsidy position.

5.0 Application Process

5.1 Applications for Empty Property Relief are made by completing the relevant application form accompanied by relevant supporting evidence. Application forms are available on the Council’s website: [Reductions on your Rates bill - Inverclyde Council](#).

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

5.2 Eligibility for Empty Property Relief shall be determined in accordance with this policy.

5.3 A decision will be made on whether the property is eligible following receipt of an Applicant's application form.

5.4 Any additional information or evidence required will be requested from the owner.

5.5 Visiting officers may also be utilised to follow up on individual properties.

5.6 Officers will carry out checks to verify applications and any decision made is final subject to review.

5.7 Once the application form has been processed the owner will be notified in writing of the decision and their right to request a review of any decision and also of their responsibility to advise of any change in circumstances or of any erroneous assumptions made by the Council.

6.0 Backdating

6.1 An application for relief can be backdated to the start of the financial year in which the application is made provided the organisation satisfied the requirements at that time. Any applications for the previous financial year can be considered provided sufficient evidence is submitted in support of the application. Consideration may also be given where an organisation has been rated retrospectively either through the actions of the Council or the Assessor

7.0 Minimising Tax Evasion

7.1 The Non-Domestic Rates (Miscellaneous Anti-Avoidance Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 introduces new measures to minimise tax evasion through contrivance. Where Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property relief has ceased to be available in respect of any lands and heritages, any subsequent application for relief by the same owner, or a person or body that has entered into a tenancy arrangement with that owner in relation to those lands and heritages, must demonstrate to the local authority that the making of the application is not part of an artificial non-domestic rates avoidance arrangement within the meaning of sections 39 and 40 of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020.

7.2 Where the person or body fails to demonstrate the matters described in paragraph 7.1 to the satisfaction of the local authority, no relief shall be awarded.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

8.0 Review Process

8.1 The ratepayer will be notified of the decision in writing. As this is a discretionary power there is no formal appeal process against the Council's decision. However the decision can be reconsidered in light of any additional points the ratepayer wishes to make.

8.2 Applicants who disagree with a decision in relation to the Empty Property Relief policy have a right to request a review. The review will be carried out by the Director of Environment and Regeneration whose decision will be final.

9.0 Amendments to Policy

9.1 The policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 3 years.

9.2 Ratepayers will be given at least 3 months notice of any change to the policy affecting their entitlement to rates relief or rates liability.

DRAFT

The Non-Domestic Rates - Empty Property Relief Policy estimated cost of the proposals 2024-25.

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

Empty industrial premises with 100% rates relief on 30th September 2024 will continue to receive 100% relief for the balance of the 6-month period since becoming unoccupied before moving to 10% relief.

Empty listed property is eligible for 100% relief for 12 months, followed by 12 months at 50%, then 0% relief when the premises have been unoccupied for a continuous period of 24 months.

Empty listed building with 100% rates relief on 30th September 2024 will continue to receive 100% relief for 12 months, followed by 12 months at 50%, then 0% relief when the premises have been unoccupied for a continuous period of 24 months.

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

- 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 2024-25

Relief Category	Value of Relief	Number of Properties
100% relief for empty industrial (balance of 6 months)	£18,044	12
50% relief for empty Industrial and Other (non-Industrial)	£28,025	93
10% long term empty Industrial and Other (non-Industrial)	£45,734	
Listed Exempt Relief (100%)	£164,072	19
Listed Exempt Relief (50%)	Nil	
RV less than £1700 empty (100%) – includes land/ground empty/exempt	£11,608	58
Insolvency empty (100%)	£4,470	2
Other 100% exempt categories	£2,261	2
Total	£274,214	186

Compares with the budget of £500,00 at section 3.3 of the report.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/02/24 /AP/TB
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712090
Subject:	Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Committee with the outcome of the results from the public consultation on proposed amendments to the Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy and to seek approval for a new Policy to come into effect from 1 April 2024.
- 1.3 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 allows councils in Scotland to apply a council tax premium of up to 100%, or double the normal rate of council tax, on second homes from 1st April 2024. Further, the legislation introduces a restriction on the power to vary council tax on unoccupied dwellings undergoing repairs or renovations, where certain conditions are met.
- 1.4 The report indicates the estimated financial implications of amending the Policy and seeks a decision from the Committee on the proposals.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee note the results of the public consultation on council tax on second homes, summarised in section 4 of the report and detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 It is recommended that Committee note the potential estimated additional income to be raised from the proposed amendments to the updated Policy and that, if approved, the extra income will be factored into the 2024/26 Budget.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee approve the amended Policy attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.4 It is recommended that the Committee note the amendment to the Policy regarding the restriction on the power to vary council tax on unoccupied dwellings undergoing repairs or renovations, where certain conditions are met.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council responded to the joint Scottish Government and COSLA Consultation supporting proposed amendments to non-domestic rates/ council tax on second and empty homes. The consultation sought views on greater fiscal empowerment for councils in council tax whilst creating the incentives to increase the availability of housing within council areas. The consultation also sought views on potential changes to non-domestic rates thresholds for self-catering accommodation.
- 3.2 The premise of the consultation was that second and empty homes can impact on the availability of housing stock and result in increased house prices and rents in the private rented sector. Increased premiums on council tax would aim to contribute to a fairer housing and taxation system, and to encourage more residential accommodation to be in occupation and used for permanent domestic occupation.
- 3.3 The definition of a second home for council tax purposes is 'a dwelling which is no one's sole or main residence and that is lived in for at least 25 days during the 12-month period of the council tax charge'.
- 3.4 Councils in Scotland currently have flexibility to set a council tax discount level of between 0% and 50% for second homes. The second home discount level set by Inverclyde Council from 1 April 2017 is 0% which means council tax on second homes is charged at the same level as homes occupied as someone's sole or main residence. Prior to 1 April 2017 second homes were eligible for a discount of 10%.
- 3.5 There are 101 second homes in Inverclyde, with there being minimal movement in this number since the second homes council tax discount was removed in 2017. Appendix 3 shows the distribution of second homes by postcode.
- 3.6 The Scottish Government published the results of the consultation and has since laid the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 which allows councils to apply a council tax premium of up to 100%, or double the normal rate of council tax, on second homes from 1st April 2024. There are no legislative changes relating to non-domestic rates thresholds for self-catering accommodation at this point.
- 3.7 The legislative amendment introduces the same council tax flexibility for second homes as the council tax on properties which have been unoccupied for 1 year or more, known as the long-term empty property levy. Introducing a council tax premium on second homes aligned with the council tax long term empty property levy removes any financial incentive to switch between the two categories. Inverclyde Council's Council Tax Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes policy currently applies the maximum 100% council tax premium to unoccupied property unless exemption criteria covered by the policy is met. The premium does not apply to water and sewerage charges.
- 3.8 The additional income from increasing the council tax premium on second homes would be available to Councils, to use at their discretion. Estimated additional income of approximately £120,000 could be generated from the introduction of a 100% premium. The estimate is based on 2023/24 council tax charges and allowing for an element of attrition, in line with the main policy aim. The level of income could vary as the amended policy takes effect.
- 3.9 A public consultation on proposed amendments to the Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy ran for a period of 2 weeks to 15th December 2023. The results are summarised at section 4 with more detail provided in Appendix 1.

3.10 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 also introduce a six-month grace period, or such longer period as may be agreed by the Council, from the Council Tax Long Term Empty Property levy for new owners of properties that have previously been empty for more than twelve months. New owners will be protected from paying double the full council tax rate, subject to evidence being produced that renovations or repairs are being undertaken by the owner that contribute to the improvement of the property with a view to the building being brought back into use. The current policy allows for such discretion however, setting within legislation formalises the provision.

4.0 CONSULTATION RESULTS

4.1 The consultation results were largely inconclusive with a balanced view on the proposal to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes. Of those that agreed a premium should be charged the majority chose the maximum 100% premium of the options offered. The majority agreed that the premium should be applied from the date a second homeowner becomes liable for council tax for their second home. Options were provided to those who felt the premium should be delayed for a period, from 3 months to twelve months however results were inconclusive. All respondents were asked about the timing of potential changes to the policy, ranging from 1st April 2024 until 1st April 2025, again there was not a clear preference. Appendix 1 provides the results and analysis.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 The main proposed amendments contained within the draft Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy found at Appendix 2 are:

5.1.1 Introduce a Council Tax Second Homes Premium of 100% from 1st April 2024.

5.1.2 Apply the Council Tax Second Homes Premium of 100% to all second home owners from 1st April 2024 or from the date a second homeowner becomes liable for council tax for their second home whichever is later.

5.1.3 Exempt from the Long-Term Empty Property Council Tax Levy, dwellings purchased by the council tax payer less than 6 months ago or up to 12 months, undergoing repairs or renovations that contribute to the improvement of the property, subject to evidence being produced.

5.2 A summary of the changes from the current Policy is attached as a front piece to Appendix 2.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 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
-----------------	--	---

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
Council Tax	Income	2024-25	(120,000)		Estimated impact of introducing a 100% second homes premium from 1.4.24

6.3 Legal/Risk

Legal Services assisted with the development of the proposed changes to the Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy.

6.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

6.5 Strategic

Officers believe that the proposed changes to the Policy will positively impact upon the availability of permanently occupied domestic properties in Inverclyde whilst providing a modicum of extra income.

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	<p>YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required in relation to the proposed change to the Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy. Assessment will be made available through the Inverclyde Council Website:</p> <p>https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments</p>
	<p>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</p>



as not relevant and no EqlA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA is not necessary/screening statement.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Council Tax on Second Homes Consultation 2023 ran from 4 December 2023 until 15 December 2023. People were invited to respond via an on-line survey. A total of 133 people responded.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

Results of the Council Tax Premium on Second Homes Consultation 2023

Consultation Period: 4th December 2023 until 15th December 2023

1.0 Consultation Methodology

- 1.1 The method by which people were invited to make their views heard on the Consultation question set was via an on-line survey, hosted on the council’s website, promoted via social media and with council employees on Icon.
- 1.2 A total of 133 people responded to the survey which ran from 4th December until 15th December 2023.
- 1.3 Respondents were asked to indicate from a list in what capacity they were responding to the Consultation (Table 1). All options required respondents to have a connection to Inverclyde and can be defined as 86% being an interested member of the public, 12% being an owner of a second home, 2% being an owner of an empty property in Inverclyde, Table 1.
- 1.4 The range of consultation responses and the associated degree of awareness of respondents give some confidence that the views reflected have a reasonable degree of validity and are appropriate for consideration in informing the review. All sample surveys are however subject to a degree of random error. Based on the return rate, the margin of error is +/- 8-10%.

1.5 **Question 1. Respondent Profile**

Total No. of Responses – 133

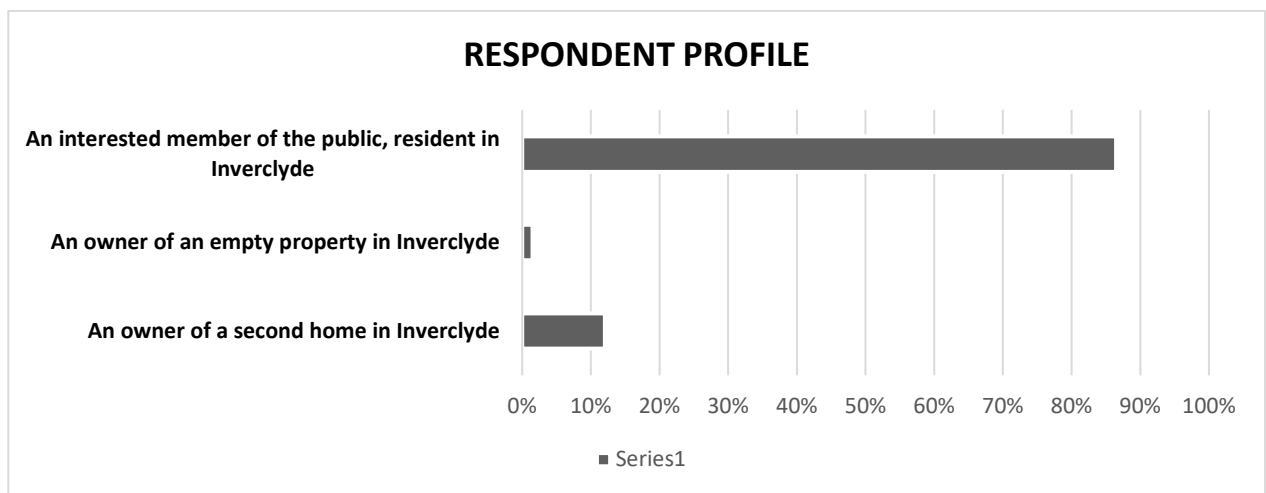


Table 1

2.0 Consultation Results

- 2.1 The survey began by stating that Inverclyde Council applies a 100% council tax premium to Empty Homes unless they meet an exemption covered by the Council Tax Long Term Empty Property and Second Homes Policy.

2.2 **Question 2. Should a council tax premium be applied to second homes?**

Total No. of Responses – 133

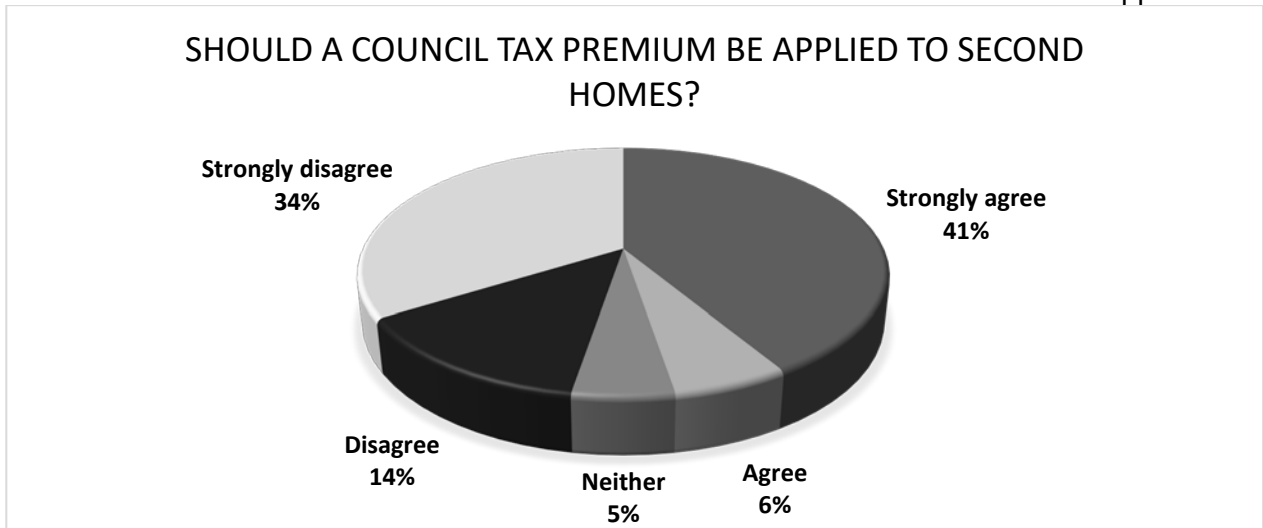


Chart 1

2.5 When asked if a council tax premium should be applied to second homes, responses were evenly balanced with 47% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing while 48% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining 5% neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.

2.6 **Question 3. If the Council were to add a council tax premium to second homes, how much should be applied?**

Total No. of Responses – 83

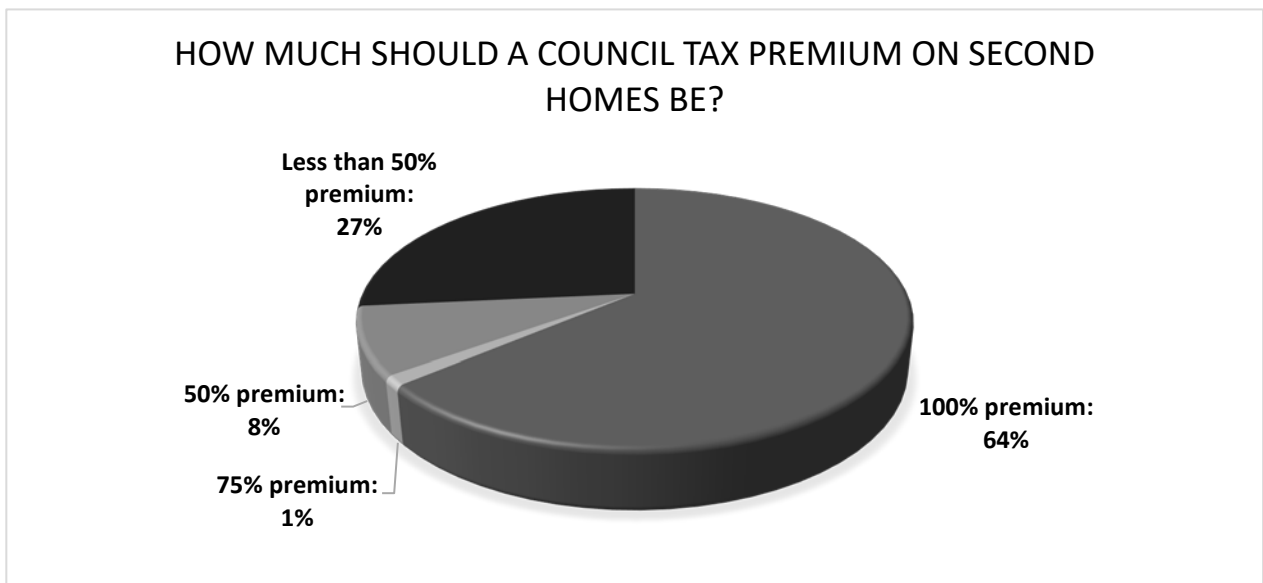


Chart 2

2.7 Respondents who agree with a Council Tax Premium on second homes were asked about the level at which a premium should be set. Options of 100%, 75%, 50% and less than 50% were provided. A premium of 100% was the preferred option with 64% of respondents agreeing with that level.

2.8 **Question 4. Should the Council Tax premium on second homes be applied from the date the second home owner becomes liable for Council Tax for their second home?**

Total No. of Responses – 85

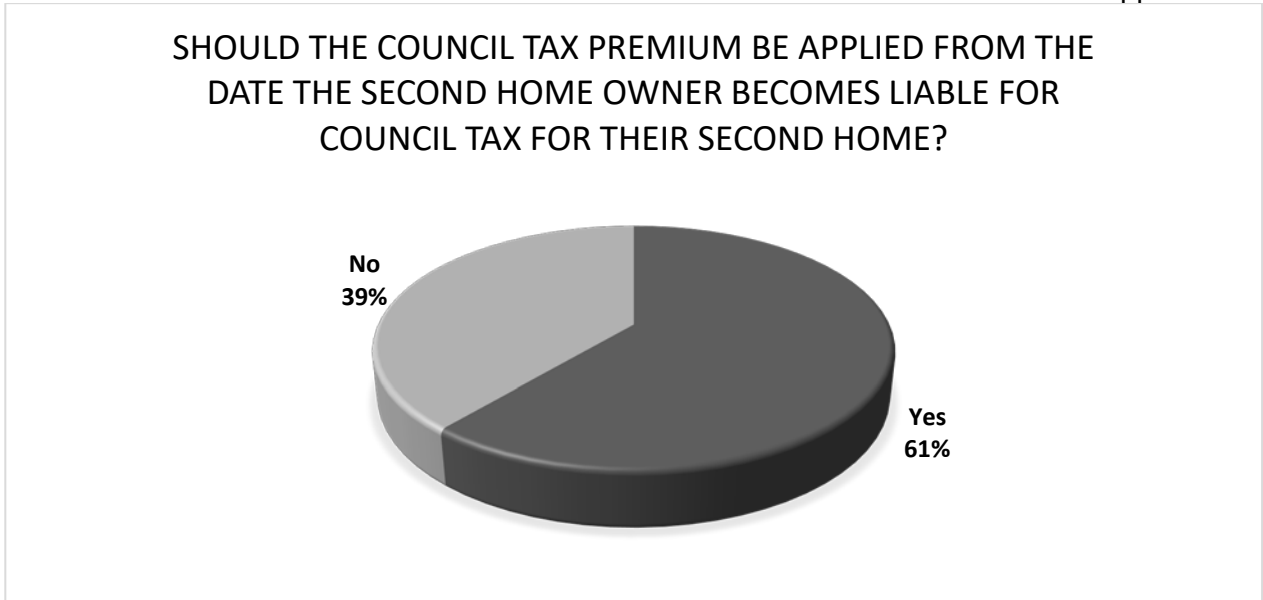


Chart 3

2.9 Of those who agree with a Council Tax premium on second homes, 61% agree that it should be applied from the date the second home owner becomes liable for Council Tax on their second home

2.10 **Question 5. The Council Tax premium on second homes should be delayed from the date the second home owner becomes liable for council tax for a period of:**

Total No. of Responses – 42

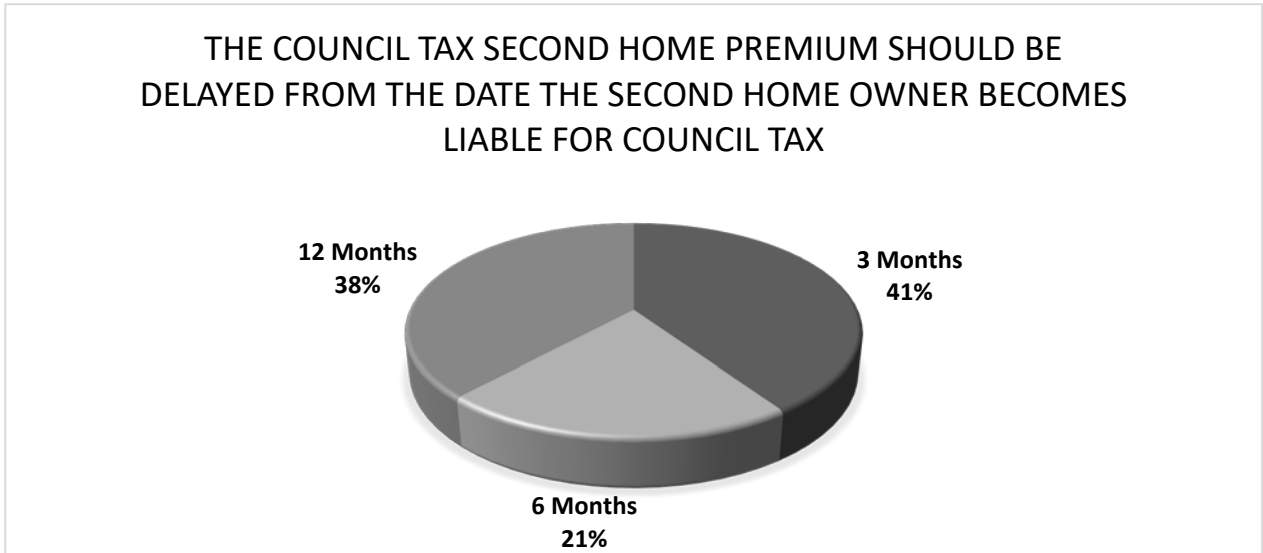


Chart 4

2.11 Those who felt that the implementation of a premium should be delayed for a period after the second home owner becomes liable for council tax on their second home were given options of 3 months, 6 months and 12 months. Responses in the order of the options offered indicate a preference for a short delay: 41%, 21% and 38%.

2.12 **Question 6. Changes to the Policy can be phased to allow second home owners time to adjust. When do you think changes to the Policy should be introduced?**

Total No. of Responses – 117

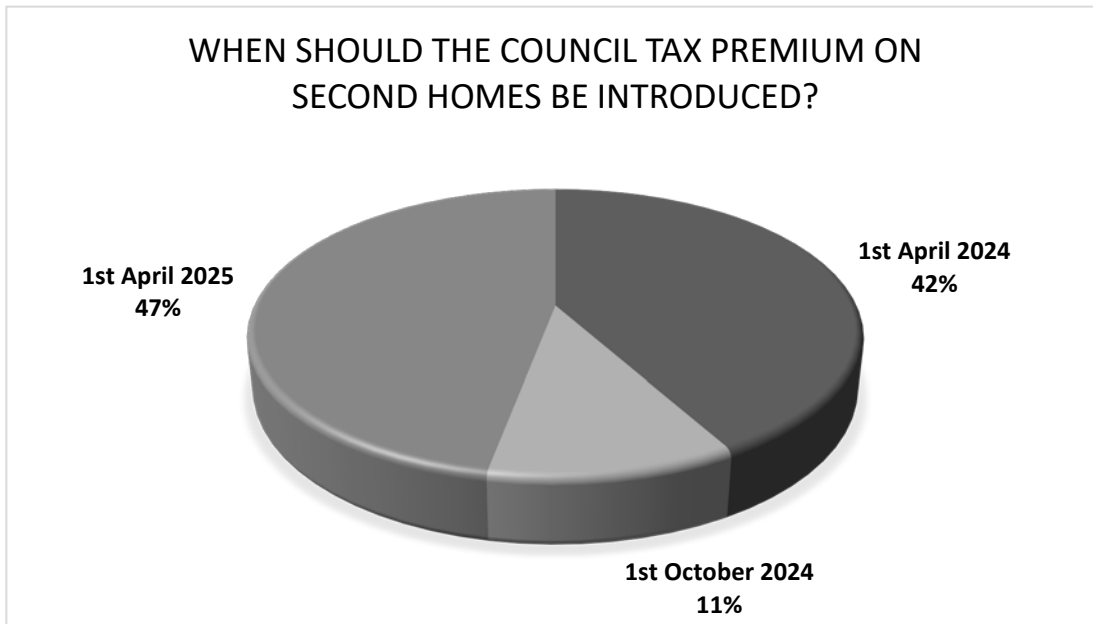


Chart 5

2.13 Options for the preferred policy implementation start date were offered with 42% preferring 1st April 2024, 11% from 1st October 2024 and 47% from 1st April 2025.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO COUNCIL TAX LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY AND SECOND HOMES POLICY –
FEBRUARY 2024

PAGE	TITLE	SECTION	PROPOSED CHANGE
2/3	Document Control Page	N/A	New Document Control Section
4	Table of Contents	N/A	Minor amendment to page numbers
5	Introduction	1.0	Minor amendment to include reference to second homes
5	Background	2.2	Inclusion of legislation enabling an increase of up to 100% council tax on second homes from 1 st April 2024.
5	Background	2.3/ 2.4	Minor amendment to reflect the inclusion of second homes.
6	Background	2.6	Inclusion of legislation providing a six month grace period from the long term empty property levy (LTE) for new owners of property undergoing repairs or renovation
6	Second Homes	4.1	Inclusion of text enabling an increase of up to 100% council tax on second homes from 1 st April 2024. Inclusion of text explaining the definition of a second home.
6	Second Homes	4.2	Inclusion of text explaining a council tax increase on second homes has no impact on water and sewerage charges
6	Second Homes	4.3	Removed text stating councils are not able to charge a council tax increase on second homes.
6	Second Homes	4.4	Minor amendment referring to retrospective second home discount application requirements.
8	Property undergoing repairs or renovations	5.3	New section explaining a six month grace period from the LTE for new owners.
8	Additional flexibility to vary discount/ increase	5.4	Previously section 5.3
12	Council Tax Levy Policy	7.13	New section inserting mandatory exemptions from the LTE
12	Council Tax Levy Policy	7.14	Amendment, consolidating discretionary exemptions into a single table
14	Second Homes Policy	8.1	Inclusion of text stating increase of 100% council tax on second homes from 1 st April 2024.
14	Second Homes Policy	8.2	Previously section 8.1. Amendment to text, inserting an end date of 31 st March 2024 for 0% second homes discount.

14	Second Homes Policy	8.3	Text inserted explaining how the second home status of property will be verified. Removal of text used to substantiate the award of a second home council tax discount.
14	Second Homes Policy	8.5	Minor amendment, clarifying retrospective second home discount application procedure
14	Second Homes Policy	8.6	Inclusion of new text explaining circumstances which end the second homes increase.
14	Second Homes Policy	8.7 – 8.10	Deletion of obsolete sections referring to second homes discount application procedures
14-15	Appeals	9.2	Minor amendment for change of appeal body.

**Inverclyde Council - Finance
Revenues and Benefits**

Council Tax

**Long Term Empty Property &
Second Homes Policy**

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

Document Control

Prepared by:
Approved by:

Liz Brown
Policy & Resources Committee

August 2015
September 2015

Change Control Table

Version	Version Date	Revised By	Reason for Change
2.0	March 2018	L Brown	Levy increased to 50% from 1 st April 2018
3.0	December 2018	L Brown	Levy increased to 100% from 1 st April 2019
			Additional discretionary exemption categories introduced
			Second Homes Policy added to document
4.0	February 2019	L Brown	Policy updated to include exemption agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 5 th February 2019
5.0	February 2022	T Bunton	(7.3) Removal of the Levy from property located in the Clune Park Estate not owned by the Council
			(7.12) Property awaiting demolition – clarification
6.0	February 2024	T Bunton	Second Homes 100% increase introduced from 1 st April 2024

**Inverclyde Council - Finance
Revenues and Benefits**

			(5.3) Additional exclusion from the long term empty Levy – property undergoing repairs or renovations
--	--	--	--

DRAFT

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

Table of Contents	Page(s)
1.0 Introduction	5
2.0 Background	5
3.0 Unoccupied Dwellings	6
4.0 Second Homes	6
5.0 Exclusions from Increase	7
6.0 Information Requests	9
7.0 Council Tax Levy Policy	9
8.0 Second Homes Policy	12
9.0 Appeals	15

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

1.0 Introduction

This document details Inverclyde Council's Policy on a Council Tax Increase (Levy) on Long Term Empty (LTE) properties and Second Homes.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 provides local authorities with a discretionary power to remove the empty property discount or set a council tax increase of up to 100% on certain properties which have been empty for 1 year or more. Previously, local authorities were only able to vary the level of discounts, with a minimum discount of 10% for empty homes.

2.2 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 allows councils in Scotland to set a council tax increase of up to 100% on second homes from 1st April 2024. Previously, flexibility was limited to setting a council tax discount level of between 0% and 50%. The legislation equalises the treatment of second homes with empty property, allowing councils to remove any financial incentive to switch between status.

2.3 This greater flexibility is intended as an additional tool to help local authorities encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use, both to increase the supply of housing for those who need homes and in the case of empty property, to reduce the blight on communities caused by houses being left unoccupied and allowed to fall into disrepair. The council tax increase could be used as part of a wider approach to tackle long-term empty homes including support and guidance to owners and provision of loans or grants if available.

2.4 For eligible unoccupied properties and second homes, local authorities can set a discount of between 0% and 50% or an increase of up to 100%. The provision also gives local authorities discretion to vary the council tax charged for different circumstances, and to apply discounts or increases in all or part of their areas. This can be done by using postcode boundaries, council wards or data zones. This could include charging different rates for a variety of different reasons as a local authority considers appropriate, and is intended to recognise that different pressures and factors will affect different areas.

2.5 Guidance has been issued by the Scottish Government in relation to the allowable flexibility available to ensure that authorities do not unfairly penalise owners who are justified in leaving their dwelling unoccupied or where there are reasons why the dwelling could not be lived in, sold or let.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

2.6 The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 provides a six-month grace period or such longer period as may be agreed by the council from the Council Tax Long Term Empty Property levy for new owners of properties that have previously been empty for more than twelve months. New owners will be protected from paying double the full council tax rate, subject to evidence being produced that renovations or repairs are being undertaken by the owner that contribute to the improvement of the property with a view to the building being brought back into use.

3.0 Unoccupied Dwellings

3.1 The council tax increase can be applied to homes which have been unoccupied for 1 year or more. An unoccupied dwelling is any dwelling which is not someone's sole or main residence, but does not fall within the definition of a second home. An unoccupied dwelling may be either furnished or unfurnished but is either not lived in at all or is lived in for less than 25 days in any twelve month period.

3.2 The council tax increase does not apply to water and sewerage charges.

4.0 Second Homes

4.1 The council tax increase can be applied to second-homes from 1st April 2024. A second home is defined as being furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in any twelve month period, but not as someone's sole or main residence.

4.2 The second home council tax increase does not apply to water and sewerage charges.

4.3 Previously, councils flexibility was restricted to setting a discount level of between 0% and 50%. The second home discount level set by Inverclyde Council from 1st April 2017 was 0%, prior to 1st April 2017 the level was set at 10%.

4.4 It will be for owners to prove that their property is a genuine second home and to provide evidence to substantiate a retrospective application for council tax discount. Evidence provided may be in the form of utility bills, TV license and anything else deemed appropriate. Visiting officers may be utilised to follow up on individual properties.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

5.0 Exclusions from the Increase

5.1 Existing Mandatory Discounts and Exemptions

The new flexibility does not affect an owner's eligibility to claim council tax exemptions under the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (Scotland) Order 1997.

As long as an owner is eligible for an exemption, they would not be charged any council tax, regardless of how long the dwelling has been unoccupied. However, where a dwelling becomes no longer eligible for the exemption, but remains unoccupied, it will become eligible for the council tax increase after the property has been empty for 1 year.

Properties classed as purpose built holiday homes or occupied as job related dwellings will continue to receive 50% discount.

The legislation defines a purpose built holiday home as a dwelling which is used for holiday purposes and is either, in accordance with any license or planning permission regulating the use of the site, or for any other reason, not allowed to be used for human habitation throughout the whole year or, by reason of its construction or facilities which it does, or does not, provide, is unfit so to be used.

5.2 Homes actively being marketed for sale or let

Homes being marketed for sale or let will be exempt from the council tax increase until they have been unoccupied for 2 years, these homes will continue to attract a discount of 10%. New build properties can also qualify for this exemption from the increase. This exemption is conditional on the home being genuinely marketed for sale or let at a realistic market price. In considering whether a home is genuinely being marketed for sale or let, the council can have regard to any unduly restrictive conditions being attached to the sale or let as well as the sales price/ rent level. In coming to their decision on whether or not the property is being genuinely marketed for sale or let, the council can request and take into account evidence including:

- Home Report - If the property is being marketed for sale, does it have a valid home report? Most houses for sale in Scotland require a home report which also includes a valuation of the property. If the home report valuation is significantly below the advertised price, it may be that the owner is not making a genuine attempt to sell their property.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

- Marketing - Is the owner's marketing efforts providing adequate exposure to the market? Is the property being actively marketed by an agent and/or property sale/letting website?

5.3. Property undergoing repairs or renovations

Homes purchased by the Council Tax payer less than six months ago or such longer period as may be agreed by the Council where, subject to evidence being produced to establish they are undergoing repairs or renovations that contribute to the improvement of the property, will be exempt from the council tax increase.

5.4 Additional flexibility to vary discount/increase

Regulation 4 of the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 includes provision for local authorities to apply additional exemption from the increase, or to charge a reduced level of increase. This could include charging different rates according to, for example, the area the dwelling is in; the length of time that the dwelling has been unoccupied and other circumstances as a local authority considers appropriate.

This additional flexibility is included so that local authorities can modify provision by

- not charging a council tax increase,
- charging a reduced level of increase,
- offering a higher level of discount.

The legislation provides adequate flexibility to ensure that individual owners are not unfairly penalised. The circumstances of individual owners should be taken into account when applying the increase. This allows a local authority to avoid charging a council tax increase, or to charge a lower level of council tax than for other unoccupied dwellings, where it considers there are reasons why the owner is justified in leaving the dwelling unoccupied and/or reasons why the dwelling could not be lived in, sold or let.

Scottish Government guidance states that the following circumstances would merit flexibility in terms of not charging the council tax increase where the property has been empty for over a year and:

- The owner is finishing renovations prior to moving in/selling/letting and can demonstrate that these works are progressing.
- A long-term second home where the owner was unable to meet the 25 day occupancy criteria in the previous 12 months due to personal circumstances but where a history of 25 day occupancy can be shown in previous years.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

- A property that is taking a long time to sell/let in a stagnant market despite being priced appropriately.
- Any other circumstances where the owner has agreed with an Empty Homes Officer to take positive steps to re-occupy their property and it is in the view of the Empty Homes Officer that a time-limited council tax increase “holiday” would encourage the property to be brought back into use sooner.

For all cases, the maximum discount of 50% and a maximum increase of 100% as set in the legislation must not be exceeded. Under the legislation, local authorities are prevented from using their discretion to vary council tax charges in a way that gives more favourable treatment to unoccupied social rented dwellings just because they are owned by a social landlord.

It is important that all owners take steps to bring unoccupied homes back into use as soon as possible, rather than leaving them empty.

6.0 Information Requests

6.1 The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2012 require the council to take reasonable steps to ascertain whether a taxpayer is entitled to a discount or liable to an increased amount before calculating the council tax liability, with the default position being that there is no variation unless a reason for variation is identified. The council is also required to ensure that the taxpayer is notified of assumptions made and of their responsibilities to advise of changes in their circumstances or of an erroneous assumption.

6.2 The regulations also place an obligation on specific persons to provide information which is sought by the council for the purposes of ascertaining whether a discount or increase in council tax liability applies as a result of non-occupation of the dwelling.

7.0 Council Tax Levy Policy

7.1 Under this policy the council tax increase to be applied by Inverclyde Council is:

- From 1st April 2016 the increase is set at 30% of the annual council tax charge for the property.
- From 1st April 2018 the increase is set at 50% of the annual council tax charge for the property.

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

- From 1st April 2019 the increase is set at 100% of the annual council tax charge for the property.

7.2 There is no council tax increase on the water and sewerage charge.

7.3 The Council Tax levy does not apply to the property located in the Clune Park Estate that is not owned by Inverclyde Council. The increase applies to all other parts of the Council area.

7.4 In order to ascertain whether a vacant property is eligible for the council tax increase, a review form will be issued once a property has been unoccupied for 12 months.

7.5 Once the review form is returned a decision will be made on whether the property is entitled to a discount or should be subject to an increased amount.

7.6 Any additional information or evidence required will be requested from the owner.

7.7 Visiting officers may also be utilised to follow up on individual properties.

7.8 Officers will carry out checks to verify claims and any decision made is final subject to appeal.

7.9 Once the review form has been processed the owner will be notified in writing of the decision.

7.10 Owners will be advised of the mandatory and discretionary exemptions that can be applied for, their right to appeal any decision and also of their responsibility to advise of any change in circumstances or of any erroneous assumptions by the council.

7.11 An application for a mandatory or discretionary exemption from the council tax increase must be made in writing by completion of an application form.

7.12 Exclusion from the full implementation of LTE Council Tax levy would be considered for a defined housing area provided an intervention plan led by an RSL has been agreed with the Council. The Plan's delivery must be resourced and be time limited to a reasonable period which reflects the level of intervention required. The exemption will be for 12 months initially. Intervention plans lasting longer than 12 months will require further application(s) for additional exemption. These further applications will be considered favourably if the interventions are making adequate progress against the agreed plan. Other owners within the defined area will also be eligible for exemption subject to an agreed intervention plan. For clarification, dwellings owned by the Council

**Inverclyde Council - Finance
Revenues and Benefits**

or an RSL and kept unoccupied following a formal documented decision by the Council or RSL to demolish the property are likely to qualify for exemption. Exemption from Council Tax and the LTE Council Tax levy on this basis will be terminated for every dwelling within a block if one or more dwellings subject to the exemption within the same block are let to tenants for occupation subsequent to the exemptions being granted and the preceding exemption period will also be reviewed.

DRAFT

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

7.13 Mandatory exemptions from the Council Tax Long Term Empty Property Levy that can be applied for under this policy:

Mandatory Exemptions

Mandatory Category	Criteria and Purpose	Maximum Exemption Period	Effective date
New Owner or Tenant	Property is undergoing major repair to make it habitable, the liable person can demonstrate work is progressing.	6 months (or such a longer period as may be agreed by the service)	1 st April 2024
Homes actively being marketed for sale or let (including new homes)	To provide owners a reasonable period to sell or let their property. Evidence of the property being actively marketed at a realistic price is required.	12 months	Pre April 2019

7.14 The following discretionary exemptions from the Council Tax Long Term Empty Property Levy that can be applied for under this policy:

Discretionary Exemptions

Discretionary Category	Criteria and Purpose	Maximum Exemption Period	Effective date
New Owner or Tenant	The new owner or tenant requires a short period of time to make the property fit for occupation or to move in.	3 Months	1 st April 2019

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

Owner is working with Empty Homes Officer	Owner has agreed with the Empty Homes Officer to take positive steps to re-occupy their property and it is the view of the Empty Homes Officer that a time-limited council tax increase “holiday” would encourage the property to be brought back into use sooner.	6 Months	1 st April 2019
Property undergoing repair/renovation	Property is undergoing major repair to make it habitable, the liable person can demonstrate work is progressing (excludes those new tenants or owners eligible for mandatory exemption).	12 Months	1 st April 2019
Exceptional Circumstances	The owner considers that their property is empty due to exceptional circumstances not covered by the discretionary exemption categories	6 Months	Pre 1 st April 2019

Inverclyde Council - Finance Revenues and Benefits

8.0 Second Homes Policy

8.1 Under this policy the council tax increase to be applied on second homes by Inverclyde Council is:

- From 1st April 2024 the increase is set at 100% of the annual council tax charge for the property.

8.2 Under this policy the council tax discount on second homes to be applied by Inverclyde Council is:

- From 1st April 2017 until 31st March 2024 the discount is set at 0% of the annual council tax charge for the property.
- Prior to 1st April 2017 the discount was set at 10% of the annual council tax charge for the property.

8.3 A second home is defined as being furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in any twelve month period, but not as someone's sole or main residence. In order to ascertain whether a property is eligible for the council tax increase, a review form will be issued to the council tax payer to confirm its status.

8.4 Under this policy properties that are undergoing renovation or repair will not be considered as second homes.

8.5 It will be for the owners of a second home who apply retrospectively for a council tax discount to prove that their property was a genuine second home by providing evidence to substantiate their application. Evidence may be in the form of photographs of the interior of the property, utility bills, TV license, second home insurance schedule and anything else deemed appropriate. In addition proof of travel to the property such as train or airline tickets may be requested.

8.6 The Second Homes increase will terminate on the date the property is determined to be occupied as the liable person's main residence.

9.0 Appeals

9.1 Appeals can be made in writing to the Revenues and Benefits Manager; the appellant will be notified of the outcome of their appeal within 2 months.

9.2 If, following the appeal to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, the customer remains dissatisfied with the decision they have a further right of appeal to the Local

**Inverclyde Council - Finance
Revenues and Benefits**

Taxation Chamber. Any appeals to the Local Taxation Chamber must be within four months of the date of their original appeal.

DRAFT

SECOND HOME LOCATIONS BY TOWN/ VILLAGE AND POSTCODE

Town	Number
Gourock	34
Greenock	33
Inverkip	15
Kilmacolm	5
Port Glasgow	4
Quarriers Village	2
Wemyss Bay	8
Total	101

Postcode	Number
PA11 3	2
PA13 4	5
PA14 5	2
PA14 6	2
PA15 1	2
PA15 2	2
PA15 3	1
PA15 4	7
PA16 0	16
PA16 7	10
PA16 8	7
PA16 9	3
PA18 6	8
PA19 1	34
Total	101

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	Report No:	PR/10/24/RB/MR
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	07385434459
Subject:	Proposal – Reduction in the Standard Working Week		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update in relation to the proposal of a reduction in the standard working week with no detriment to pay.

1.3 There has been significant work undertaken to understand what implementation might mean across the Council workforce. This has included the finance and service delivery impacts, as well as the positives in terms of improved employee wellbeing and being a more attractive employer for prospective new employees.

1.4 There are a number of common anticipated impacts across services such as some tasks being stopped or reduced, and the reduction in availability or opening periods. It has also been identified that implementation of a reduction in the working week from 37 to 35 hours would have a significant negative impact on service delivery in some areas. Due to this, and the requirement in the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in particular to deliver regulated or statutory services, there are a number of areas in which the backfill of posts would be needed. These employee related costs, along with a loss in income generation and overtime costs, would total £932k.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee
- note the employee, finance and service impacts;
 - note the anticipated costs of implementation; and
 - agree that in the context of current financial pressures these costs cannot be resourced and therefore the reduction in the standard working week with no detriment to pay cannot be progressed at this time.

Morna Rae
Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 As part of the 2021/22 national pay agreement for local government employees it was agreed that national working parties would investigate and prepare reports surrounding the implications of a no detriment reduction in working hours. The pay claim for 2023/24 repeated this ask. The nationally and internationally reported benefits of a reduction in working hours include:
- Improved employee wellbeing with reduced fatigue and stress levels, and consequent reduced absences;
 - A more engaged workforce, with increased productivity;
 - Reduced costs for employees for childcare and greater flexibility for parents and carers;
 - Increased job satisfaction levels and improved employee retention;
 - Improved worklife balance, and
 - Being a more attractive employer for prospective new employees.
- 3.2 Specific to our own Council, an initial high-level scoping exercise was undertaken in January 2023 and the Corporate Management Team took the view it would be beneficial to explore this initiative further. The ongoing work and the intention to bring together a short-life working group was outlined within the report 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention Initiatives' considered by the May 2023 Policy & Resources Committee. It also highlighted the intention to bring a detailed report back to Committee clarifying any operational and financial implications.
- 3.3 A working group was then convened with cross service representation. Members were tasked with completion of a template in consultation with appropriate post-holders. This included consideration of the service implications of a reduction in working hours, including related costs. There was engagement with Directorate Management Teams and the Corporate Management Team. The collated analysis of this service feedback has informed this report.

FINDINGS

- 3.4 A reduction in the standard working week with no detriment to pay would have a range of implications across teams. Some general themes are listed below.

<u>Impacts</u>	<u>Potential Risks or Concerns</u>
Tasks would require to be stopped or reduced.	Thorough assessment would be required to ensure no or minimal impact on service delivery. Needs to ensure employees are not expected to do same volume of tasks in the same way or without any adjustments in a shorter period.
The streamlining of processes would require to be explored	Available time and resources to undertake the activity. Potential costs for software.
Reduction in availability or opening/closing periods.	Impact on availability of services to customers. Reputational risk with the community.
Adjustment to the start and finish time of shift patterns.	UNISON and the CMT have indicated they would not support an extended lunch break period.
Caseload/tasks would require to be spread over a longer period of time	Impacting on delivery, waiting, assessment and response times. Invoice processing timescales could be affected. Responses to statutory tasks.
There would be a requirement to back-fill lost hours in some areas. During peak	See Appendix

periods, additional hours/overtime/toil will be required.	
Project timescales adjusted to account for the loss in productivity hours.	Longer timescales. Implications if grant funded or specific targets set by external organisation, e.g. Scottish Government
Changes would need to account for internal and external partner needs. Contract arrangements with external bodies/statutory requirements will need to be looked at/ revised.	Potential financial, national targets or KPI implications.
Reduction in the preparation time currently allocated to employees which may adversely affect quality of programme delivery.	Risk to the outcomes of external assessment bodies.

3.5 In addition to the general implications outlined at para 3.4 team or service specific service delivery implications were considered. For corporate services these commonly involve some reduction in service productivity and tasks being undertaken less frequently or less time allocated to tasks. This would lead to longer response times for queries or tasks, and less detailed outputs may be provided. For public facing services the impacts include longer waiting times and reduced service access.

3.6 Following assessment on the anticipated service impacts some teams identified the need for additional resource as listed below. This is because there would be a significant negative impact on service delivery. It should be noted that the HSCP have highlighted that due to requirements to deliver regulated or statutory services there are a number of areas in which they would require to backfill posts.

- Care at Home and Out of Hours

The reduction in hours is equivalent to 13.77 FTE Home Support Workers. There would be a reduction in the capacity of Care at Home services and additional pressures on waiting times. For these reasons funding of £354k is sought to cover backfill costs.

- Supported Living Service

This team includes 21 staff who cover 24/7 shift rotas at supported living services, so if their standard working week was reduced from 37 to 35, that means the service would be short by 40 hours per week. These hours are required to ensure adequate coverage to provide effective services. Due to these reasons funding of £42k to cover backfill costs has been identified as a requirement.

- Learning Disabilities

This includes Learning Disabilities day operations staff, Learning Disability Care and Support at Home & Learning Disability Management and Assessment. These are all statutory services for the HSCP and service user focused. There would be a significant impact on the service if the same number of hours were not provided. Because of these factors funding of £153k is sought to cover backfill costs.

- Criminal Justice

The Criminal Justice budget is set each year by the Scottish Government. Any increase in the costs would not be covered by the Scottish Government and would need to be funded from budget elsewhere in the HSCP. For these reasons funding of £96k is sought to cover backfill costs and maintain service provision.

- Children and Families Social Work Services

Currently employees struggle at times to deliver their core business within the existing 37 hours, resulting in overtime or TOIL. This is because of the need to respond to crisis, short notice court reports and the level of complexity and risk associated with the service user groups. The move from 37 to 35 hours per week is equivalent to 4 FTE Social Worker posts and so £220k backfill costs are sought to ensure that current provision can be continued.

- **Mental Health Services**

Additional resource would be required to maintain this statutory service, including Mental Health Officer and Social Worker hours. The backfill costs would be £53k per year.

- **Educational Resources – School Crossing Patrollers and Letting Officers**

School crossing patrollers have a fixed shift pattern which reflects the beginning and end of the school day. Letting officers are employed to be present at the entire time of a let. Backfill of the reduction in hours would be required to maintain this level of coverage. £13k funding has been identified to fulfil this.

3.7 Appendix 1 covers the anticipated revenue financial costs:

- Loss in income generation £85k
- Overtime costs £60k
- Backfill requirements £932k (of which £919k HSCP)

3.8 In terms of the timing of any changes significant lead in time would be required, i.e. a January 2025 implementation date. Sufficient time would be required for services to develop new approaches, processes and working patterns. There would also be significant work required in relation to the contractual changes. Local government employees who are contracted term time have their hours allocated to meet the requirements of the new academic year. All Pupil Support Assistants would need to be retimetabled and reallocated in January.

3.9 There has been trade union engagement on the proposals, including at Trade Union Liaison and Joint Budget Group meetings. There has been recent focused discussion between UNISON and the HSCP, with agreement that the backfill costs for Learning Disabilities employees could be reduced. However this would mean reduced service provision which would require a process of user consultation.

CONCLUSION

3.10 These service impacts will also require to be considered in tandem with the 2024-26 budget savings proposals in terms of impacts on service delivery and the FTE hours available.

3.11 There has been significant work undertaken in relation to the employee, service and financial implications of a reduction in the working week with no detriment to pay. It is recognised that there are positives for employees in terms of reduced working hours, and for making Inverclyde Council a more attractive employer. These positives require to be assessed against the service and financial implications. As the Committee will be aware from recent reports from the Chief Financial Officer there are significant financial pressures on the Council with no identified budget to support the total costs of £932k.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 That the Committee

- note the employee, finance and service impacts;
- note the anticipated costs of implementation; and

- agree that in the context of current financial pressures these costs cannot be resourced and therefore the reduction in the standard working week with no detriment to pay cannot be progressed at this time.

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

£200k has been approved in principle by the Policy and Resources Committee to meet the non-HSCP costs. These costs below total £158k.

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 £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
E&R Directorate	Employee Costs	Jan 2025	£60	N/A	Anticipated funding from Pressure contingency.
Various	Income		Up to £85		Allocate to procuring service for loss of income or increased costs
HSCP	Employee Costs		£919		HSCP estimate of increased costs
ECOD Directorate	Employee Costs		£13		ECOD estimate of increased costs

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications identified at this stage.

5.4 Human Resources

All Human Resources issues are included in the report.

5.5 Strategic

The report helps deliver the Council Plan outcomes:

- People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing
- More people will be in employment with fair pay and conditions
- Our employees are supported and developed.

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. An initial EqIA has been undertaken. Please note that further work will be required to develop the EqIA in line with service delivery changes as a result of the proposal should it be agreed. https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments
	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.

5.7 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.

5.8 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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 A short-life working group was developed to assess human resources, financial and service delivery implications should the proposal be agreed. Representation covered all areas of the Council and HSCP and engagement has taken place with our trade union colleagues.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1 - Financial Implications

Service	Income Generation (£s)	Overtime (£s)	Backfill requirements (£s)	Details from services
Culture Communities & Educational Resources			13	Backfill required for School Crossing Patrollers 19hrs (T/T) £9,700 and Letting Officers 5.5hrs (T/T) £3,196
Education	23			Wrap income reduced if operating at full capacity: 14 establishments x 8 top and tail of (15 minutes cost of £4.50 per hour, 15 minutes £1.12) x 190 days available = 21,280 x £1.12 = £23,833 potential loss of income
HSCP - Care at Home and Out of Hours			354	Backfill for Home Support Workers for 13.77 FTE
HSCP – Supported Living Service			42	Backfill for 1 FTE Grade 5 employee to maintain 24/7 rota coverage
HSCP – Learning Disabilities			153	Reduction in statutory capacity by 5%, related backfill costs across posts.
HSCP – Criminal Justice			96	Related backfill costs across posts
HSCP – Mental Health Services			54	Backfill for Mental Health Officer Team – 14 hours per week, £22k, Adult Community MH Team – 12 hours per week, £17k per year, Older Peoples Community MH Team – 10 hours per week, £15k
HSCP - Children and Families Social Work Services			220	Reduction in statutory social work capacity in the service by 5%. This is equivalent to 4 FTE Social Worker posts.
Regeneration & Planning (Fleet Waste and Grounds)		42		5.7%/£20,790 increase in overtime across the Service representing similar overtime hours worked but at higher rate. £21,500 increase in drivers overtime, mix of contractual and ad-hoc. This cost arises due to the timing of some of the drivers runs a later start/earlier finish would impact on service delivery and require additional overtime
Physical Assets (Roads)	24	18		£8,640 Roads Out of Hours/Winter £9,220 RAMP resurfacing Income pressure (Roads Ops) £49,000 of which £24,000 will be a revenue pressure within Roads Client and the balance contained within Capital

Physical Assets (Building Services Unit)	38			BSU £80,000 of which £37,500 will be a revenue pressure (increase CRA) with the balance being contained within Capital
TOTAL	£85	£60	£932	

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/04/24/RB/MR
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712065
Subject:	Bereavement Charter Mark		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 This report provides the Committee with information on the development of a Bereavement Charter for Inverclyde Council to improve the experience that staff have when they are affected by bereavement. It links to the National Bereavement Charter for Scotland and proposes a Bereavement Policy and related training.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees to support the Bereavement Charter work for Inverclyde Council.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Over two years ago, a range of professionals and individuals came together to reflect on the nature of bereavement support in Scotland. The result of their work was the production of a National Bereavement Charter for Scotland. More detail can be obtained on the website:

<https://scottishcare.org/bereavement/>

3.2 The Charter provides a set of statements which describe how in Scotland we can support a person or a group of people experiencing bereavement. The charter is underpinned by a desire to make sure that in Scotland we do all that we can to support people who might be experiencing difficulties following the death of someone they know or somebody in their community.

3.3 Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde HSCP recognises that it is the responsibility of everyone within our organisation to ensure that this is achieved and have been working closely with Compassionate Inverclyde/Inverclyde Cares to use the Bereavement Charter for Scotland as the vision which will support all work across Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde HSCP. A Working Group has developed a Bereavement Charter which reflects what we currently do and what we aim to do to improve the experience that staff have when they are affected by bereavement/loss.

3.4 As part of the development of the Charter awareness raising sessions were undertaken to tie in with Demystifying Death Week 2023. Events took place across Scotland, including a local event on Wednesday 3rd May at the Beacon Arts Centre. There was also promotion of the Charter animated video across staff groups and Bereavement Training for first line managers provided on 4 and 5 May 2023.

3.5 To qualify to display the Charter Mark, an employer must first agree to meet at least three out of five criteria. The following are proposed for Inverclyde Council.

1. *All staff are informed that their organisation is endorsing the Bereavement Charter and given an opportunity to watch the Charter animation: <https://vimeo.com/592277288>* Promotional work on this was undertaken in May 2023, and will be periodically reinforced.
2. *Senior Management has developed/adopted a Bereavement Policy for the organisation.* Once we receive the Charter Mark the developmental work on the policy will be undertaken. This can be based on the ACAS Bereavement Policy template and will align with current provisions for bereavement leave etc. This policy will be brought for Committee approval in due course.
3. *The organisation will develop and display a workplace bereavement charter.* The charter has been developed by the Working Group and is available at Appendix 1.

3.6 On receiving the Charter Mark, we will:

- Endorse and display the Bereavement Charter for Scotland;
- Promote our own unique Bereavement Charter for the organisation;
- Support conversations about bereavement and how it affects our employees, and
- Facilitate staff to attend bereavement training (training is provided free of charge via Child Bereavement UK).

3.7 Adoption of these measures will support the health and wellbeing of Inverclyde Council employees through better supporting those who are experiencing bereavement.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee agrees to support the Bereavement Charter work for Inverclyde Council.

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 and Children/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.

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/risk implications arising from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

Adoption of the Bereavement Charter will support the health and wellbeing of employees.

5.5 Strategic

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

Theme 3: Performance

- Our employees are supported and developed.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The TU Liaison Group have been consulted and are fully supportive of applying for the charter. Membership of the Working Group is made up of staff across both the Council and HSCP, including Libraries, Homecare, Education, Facilities Management, Clinical and Care Governance, Information Governance, Legal, Health Visiting Team, School Nurse, Health Improvement, Welfare Rights – MacMillan, Corporate Policy, Assessment & Care Management, Education Psychology and Finance. There was also a focus group held at Pottery Street.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Inverclyde Council
Bereavement Charter

The Bereavement Charter for Scotland provides a set of statements which describe how people and communities who are bereaved can be supported. It aims to provide support for people who are bereaved, facing bereavement or have experienced a bereavement in their community.

Inverclyde Council strives to be a compassionate, bereavement-friendly employer. We therefore endorse the Bereavement Charter for Scotland and additionally have created an Inverclyde Council Bereavement Charter.

Dignity and respect are at the heart of our Bereavement Charter.

What we do

- We have procedures in place to compassionately support employees who have recently been bereaved or suffered a loss
- We have guidance for managers who provide support to employees during the grieving process
- We respect our staff's right to confidentiality during the grieving process
- We have a flexible approach to time off and returning to work following a bereavement or loss, tailored to individual needs
- We have a flexible approach to staying in touch following a bereavement or loss
- We signpost employees to relevant sources of information, resources and support
- We will ask the employee, in preparation for their return to work, how they would like to manage difficult moments in the workplace, for example, via a safe space or time out
- We will manage sensitive work tasks in an empathetic way
- Prior to an employee's return to work, and in consultation with the member of staff, we will consider flexible working arrangements, where service requirements allow
- We will explore ways to provide additional support for staff who require it including, for example, counselling or participation in relevant support groups

What we aim to do

- We will devise and implement a Communication Plan to raise awareness of our Bereavement Charter amongst our employees and Elected Members
- We will offer bereavement training to managers to enable them to continue to adopt a caring approach to staff
- We will recruit, train and support Bereavement Ambassadors who will assist with the implementation of our Bereavement Charter across the Council
- We will devise a Bereavement Policy which will complement our Bereavement Charter
- We will review our approach to bereavement support, taking feedback from staff who have been affected by bereavement
- We will support local and national remembrance events
- We will review our Bereavement Policy

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/06/24/RB/BM
Contact Officer:	Barbara McQuarrie	Contact No:	01475 714723
Subject:	Corporate Health and Safety Report and Plan		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the Corporate Health and Safety report for 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and the Corporate Health and Safety Plan for 2024/2027 (Appendix 2).

1.3 Reporting and planning for Health and Safety performance is a key aspect of ensuring that Health and Safety is correctly managed within an organisation.

1.4 The Corporate Health and Safety Report summarises the Council's performance data, including the numbers and types of accidents and incidences of work related ill health. It also outlines enforcement action and commentary on health and safety during the year.

1.5 The Corporate Health and Safety Plan lays out the overall direction for development and consolidation of health and safety management systems within the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the Corporate Health and Safety report for 2022/23 and the Corporate Health and Safety Plan for 2024/2027.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde Council is required to ensure that health and safety risks to employees are managed and assessed in line with its legal duties as defined by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999, Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and other statutory requirements.
- 3.2 Monitoring of performance in relation to compliance with this legislation is a key part of the Council's management arrangements. The Corporate Health and Safety report provides information to those with overall responsibility for health and safety management on the Council's performance in this area.
- 3.3 The Health and Safety Report consists of the following main sections:
- Health and Safety Policy
 - Health and Safety Organisation
 - Planning and Implementation
 - Advice and Support
 - Health and Safety Training
 - Consulting and Communication
 - Enforcement Action
 - Occupational Health
 - Performance
- 3.4 The Health and Safety Plan sets a clear direction for the Council to follow; it will contribute to all aspects of business performance as part of a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement. It will demonstrate a shared common understanding of the Council's vision, values and beliefs. A positive Health and Safety culture is fostered by the visible and active leadership of senior managers. This is reflected within the plan.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the Corporate Health and Safety report for 2022/23 and the Corporate Health and Safety Plan for 2024/2027.

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	
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

Inverclyde Council is required to ensure that health and safety risks to employees are managed and assessed in line with its legal duties as defined by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999, Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and other statutory requirements.

5.4 Human Resources

Staff will require appropriate training for their roles and responsibilities, and this may require to form part of job descriptions and person specifications.

5.5 Strategic

This report helps deliver Council Plan outcome:

- Our employees are supported and developed.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

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

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

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

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

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

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, and Trades Union colleagues.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

Health and Safety Report

2022 – 2023

Prepared by: Pauline Ramsay (H&S Team Leader)
Approved By: Corporate Health and Safety Committee
Issue Status: Submitted for Approval

Contents:

Contents:	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Health and Safety Policy	4
3. Organisation.....	4
4. Planning and implementation	5
5. Advice and Support.....	5
6. Health and Safety Training	6
7. Consulting and Communication	7
8. Enforcement Action	7
9. Occupational Health	8
10. Performance	9
10.1 Incident summary	9
10.2 Employee incident data over a 6- year reporting period	11
10.3 Employee incident data 2022/2023 (breakdown of reports)	12
RIDDOR reports	12
All incidents 2022/2023	12
11. Corporate 'Health Check' indicator.....	16
Appendix 1	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix 2	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Introduction

A high standard of health and safety performance is one of the Council's primary objectives and is recognised as an integral part of service delivery. This means having in place effective management arrangements that ensure the wellbeing of Council employees. It is employees who deliver the Council's goals and it is vital to attach importance to ensuring the continued health, safety, welfare and development of the workforce and to minimise the distress and disruption caused by any injuries or work related illnesses which may occur. It requires that the Council search out, adopt and update best practice relevant to and proportionate to the risks it and its employees face, and that guidance and procedures for relevant activities are generated and implemented.

The following Council's Health and Safety performance report covers the period from April 2022 to March 2023. It summarises the Council's performance data, including the numbers and types of accidents and incidences of work related ill health. It also outlines enforcement action and commentary on health and safety during the year and is drawn from the quarterly reports submitted to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

2. Health and Safety Policy

- 2.1 The Council is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of its employees and all other persons likely to be affected by the work of the Council. We accept the aims and provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and other relevant statutory obligations. Our H&S Policy and associated arrangements and guidance documents represents a continuing commitment to improving our standard of Health, Safety and Welfare.
- 2.2 The following policies, arrangements and guidance documents were developed, issued or reviewed during 2022/23.

Policies and Arrangements

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

ASN Transport Procedure

Establishment Lead Officer Guidelines (In development)

Management of Asbestos (Under Review)

Water Quality (In development)

Violence and Aggression Policy (Under Review)

Fire Risk Assessment, Fire Safety Policy (Under Review)

Information sheets

IS 83 - Homeworking

IS 38 - Stress Guidance for Managers and Team Leaders

IS 03 - Risk Assessment

IS 92 – Industrial Action – Control of Waste

IS 33 – Norovirus

IS 93 - Ventilation and Temperature – Education

Safety Alerts Issued

SA No 59 – Pencil Sharpeners

SA No 58 – Checking Donated Equipment

SA No 61 - Magnet Safety

SA No 62 – Fire Door Safety

3. Organisation

- 3.1 Inverclyde Council Corporate Management Team (CMT) leads on improving health and safety and monitors progress regularly.

This is achieved through:

- Advice from the Corporate Health and Safety Committee (CHSC) on the overall direction of health and safety performance within the Council.
- Consultation with Trade Union safety representatives at CHSC.

- Competent advice from the Health and Safety Team Leader.
- Line Managers fulfilling their roles and responsibilities for health and safety
- The Organisational Development, Policy and Communication service who organise corporate health and safety training and manage the occupational health contract.

3.2 The Corporate Health and Safety Committee lead on improving health and safety and monitors' progress. The Chief Executive chairs the meetings, and the Committee consists of a representative from each Directorate preferably at Head of Service level, and representation from each Trades Union. Quarterly meetings are scheduled where health and safety issues such as new policies and procedures, audits, insurance claims, incident/accident statistics and enforcement activity are discussed and approved.

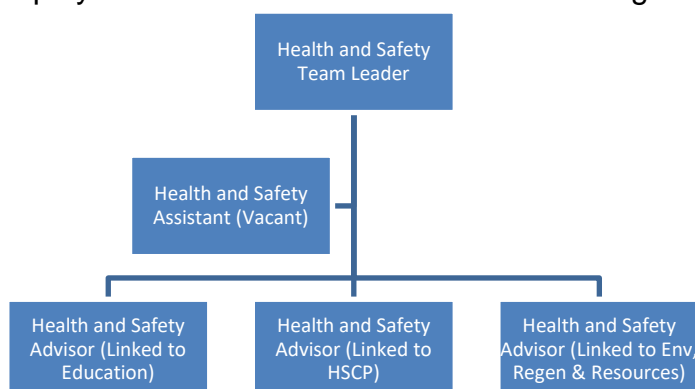
4. Planning and implementation

4.1 The health and safety plan is linked to the Corporate Directorate Improvement Plan. Our improvement actions are linked to the wellbeing outcomes of safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Our risk-based health and safety objectives are confirmed by the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

4.2 The CHSC receives quarterly reports and monitors delivery of the health and safety objectives. Health and safety incident statistics are also included in the WIAR reports issued by OD, Policy and Communications on a quarterly basis. Copies of reports and minutes are available on Icon.

5. Advice and Support

5.1 The primary health and safety advice is provided by the Corporate Health and Safety Section, who provide support on all aspects of health and safety at work for Inverclyde Council employees. The section is centralised and organised as follows:



6. Health and Safety Training

- 6.1 Health and safety training is organised either by OD, Policy and Comms, or via the employing service. A health and safety training programme is in place which consists of a modular approach loosely based around the format of the IOSH Managing Safely Course. This comprises of a certain number of core modules for managers, and hazard specific training for managers and operatives which can be selected appropriate to the Service area. It is intended that each module last for no more than half a day. Where a training needs analysis identifies that managers/team leaders would benefit from the full 4 day IOSH Managing Safely course this will be sourced. Elearning training is available via the elearning platform Inverclyde Learns.
- 6.2 During 2020 and 2021 training significantly reduced as access to face to face training was more difficult due to social distancing and restrictions of gathering in larger groups. The focus on reintroduction of face to face training has been on those training courses which benefit from being carried out in person. During 2021/22 the focus was on moving and handling training and during 2022/23 this shifted to fire safety related training and personal safety (managing aggression) training. Overall 357 employees received face to face training during 2022/23.

6.3 E-Learning

There are a number of e-learning courses available which include:

- Health and Safety Induction (mandatory)
- Fire Safety Awareness (mandatory)
- Stress/Mental Health courses
- Asbestos awareness refresher (mandatory for employees whose work may bring them into contact with asbestos containing materials)
- Dangerous Substances
- Display Screen Equipment (mandatory for DSE users)
- Driving at Work
- Electricity
- First Aid
- Food Hygiene
- Health and Safety Management
- Managing Conflict
- Protecting the Environment
- Manual Handling (Recommended for employees who may carry out low risk manual handling, i.e. office staff)
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Managing HAVS (mandatory for managers of employees who use hand held vibratory equipment)
- Winter Maintenance

1662 Courses have been completed.

Random checks were also carried out where there would appear to be a high proportion of employees who had failed a course or had not completed it. In a significant number of these instances the employees who had failed to complete the course were not required to do it as part of their job role.

7. Consulting and Communication

- 7.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Committee is the principal consultation forum on health and safety within the Council. The committee meets four times per year and is chaired by the Chief Executive. The Committee consists of a representative from each Directorate, normally at Head of Service or Senior Management level, and representation from each Trades Union. The CHSC leads on improving health and safety and monitors progress regularly.
- 7.2 Any changes to policies, objectives, or health and safety guidance are discussed, circulated to a wider audience for consultation (if applicable), and agreed by the committee prior to agreement of minor changes under the scheme of delegation, or submission to the CMT after a more in-depth review.
- 7.3 New policies or reports are distributed to the CHSC for consultation and agreement prior to being submitted to the CMT and then the Council P&R Committee for final approval and issue.
- 7.4 Key areas reported to the committee as standing items:
- Health Surveillance
 - Incident Reporting
 - Insurance claims
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Training
 - Fire Safety
 - Enforcement Action

8. Enforcement Action

- 8.1 Visits or enquiries which were carried out by the HSE over 2022/23:
- The HSE are carrying out an investigation into an incident which occurred at the end of 2022/23 where a contractor fell through a sea wall railing on Albert Road Gourrock and sustained serious injuries. The Investigation is ongoing.
 - As part of the HSE's Inspections into the management of asbestos in schools 2022/23. Lady Alice Primary School received an inspection, overall they were satisfied that the limited asbestos still present in the school was being adequately managed though they had concerns regarding the documentation and the heavy reliance on one person to manage this. With a question regarding contingency arrangements in the event of illness or retirement of the single person dependency.

8.2 The fire service carried out six audits on council properties and while there was no enforcement action taken there were some common areas of concern highlighted:

- Storage of combustible items
- Maintenance of fire resistant doors
- Wedging open of fire doors
- Relevant paperwork not available on site
- Integrity of walls and ceilings

Two of the properties audited had no areas of concern identified.

9. Occupational Health

9.1 Where employees are exposed to certain physical and chemical hazards it is a legal requirement to undertake an annual programme of health surveillance to monitor employee health. Health surveillance is required as follows:

Legislation	Employee Group
Control of Vibration at Work	Road Workers Grounds Maintenance Technical Technicians – Schools
Control of Noise at Work	Road Workers Grounds Maintenance Technical Technicians – Schools Refuse Collectors Technical Teachers Music Teachers and Instructors
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (Spirometry, Skin)	Road Workers Grounds Maintenance Technical Technicians – Schools Refuse Collectors Technical Teachers Science Technicians Cleaners Catering staff Homecare staff

Other employee groups who receive medical checks, though not health surveillance include School crossing patrollers, drivers of council vehicles and night workers.

9.2 In 2022 the Council moved to a new occupational health provider, Health and Safety are working with the new provider to ensure health surveillance is carried out as appropriate. Appointments arranged and carried out by the new provider during 2022-23

Health Surveillance Type	Total
Audio + Tier 2 OHN	10
Audio Screening HS	42
Audio, Skin, Respiratory & HAVS Tier2	24
F2FCheck	1
HAVS Tier 3 OHN	

HAVS Tier 4 OHP	3
Lung Function - Spirometry HS	39
School Crossing Patrollers Medicals	7
Skin Assessments F2F	1
Grand Total	127

10. Performance

10.1 Incident summary

Inverclyde Council employs approximately 4,200 employees in varied roles and exposed to similarly varied risks. The Council's activities are wide ranging and include risks from hazards associated with building maintenance, machinery, electricity, moving and handling people, asbestos, violence and aggression, and premises used by the public.

Accidents/incidents within the Council are reported by employees and recorded onto an Accident Database. The council records both incidents to employees and to non-employees, i.e. pupils. During 2022/2023 946 incidents were reported.

Status	Count of Incident
Employee and Others	6
Non-Employee	416
Person working for the Council	485
Property Damage	34
Security Issue	5
Grand Total	946

Of the 491 incidents reported as occurring to employees 187 had no reported injury, all other incidents resulted in some form of injury to an employee. 34 of the incidents resulted in the employee having to take time off from work.

- In terms of more serious injuries there were 4 fractures.
- The fractures included:
 - An employee slipping on a floor which had been recently washed
 - An employee slipping and falling on stairs
 - An employee twisting their ankle when trying to put down a wriggling child
 - An employee stepped off a pallet and slipped on shingle.

There were 14 RIDDOR reportable incidents, three were major incidents and mentioned above, all others were over 7-day absences.

Directorate and Type of Incident	Employee off work for over seven days	Major Injury
Environment Regeneration and Resources	8	
Contact with a sharp object	2	
Contact with moving material or material being machined	1	
Manual handling injury due to handling, lifting or carrying	2	
Slipped, tripped or fell (over extraneous item)	1	
Slipped, tripped or fell (uneven surface)	2	
Education Communities &OD	3	3
Building/Masonry Fault	1	
Slipped, tripped or fell (no obvious cause)	1	1
Slipped, tripped or fell (on stairs)		1
Slipped, tripped or fell (wet floor)		1
Violence/assaulted by service user/pupil	1	
Grand Total	11	3

The lagging indicators present a picture of our reported incidents. Performance in this category may be influenced by a strengthening culture of internal reporting procedures rather than an arbitrary indication of success or failure to manage risk effectively.

The majority of employee incidents identified by reactive monitoring are:

- violence 48%
- verbal abuse 18%
- slip, trip or falls 9%
- manual handling 3%.

The following incident data is broken down into two main categories, incidents over a 6 year reporting period and then a more detailed look at the data gathered during 2022/2023.

10.2 Employee incident data over a 6- year reporting period

Table 1 – 6-year employee incident data

The table below does not include incidents involving property damage, only incidents to employees.

All Reports	Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/2019	2017/2018
	RIDDOR - Fatality		0	0	0	0	0
RIDDOR – major injury		3	0	2	5	4	3
RIDDOR – Over 7 days		11	10	13	19	21	18
RIDDOR – Reportable Disease		0	0	0	0	1	0
All other incidents		477	326	406	442	377	371
Total incident reports		491	336	297	466	403	389
Incident rate per 1,000 employees		103	63.2	58.7	102	87	78

Overall, we have seen an increase in the total number of reports since 2017/2018, though there was a significant drop off in reports in 2020 and 2021 due to the two periods of lockdown. The number of major injuries has remained relatively low, it is therefore likely that where there has been an increase in the total number of incidents reported this is indicative of improved reporting. Most incidents reported remain in the violence and verbal abuse category.

Table 2 – 6-year employee “violence & verbal abuse” incident data

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Incidents Reported	332	206	145	316	241	206

There were 93 incidents of verbal abuse and 239 cases of physical violence reported during 2022/2023.

10.3 Employee incident data 2022/2023 (breakdown of reports)

RIDDOR reports

Table 3 – RIDDOR (breakdown by Directorate and Reason)

Directorate/Reason	Employee off work for over seven days	Major Injury
Environment Regeneration and Resources	8	
Contact with a sharp object	2	
Contact with moving material or material being machined	1	
Manual handling injury due to handling, lifting or carrying	2	
Slipped, tripped or fell (over extraneous item)	1	
Slipped, tripped or fell (uneven surface)	2	
Education Communities & OD	3	3
Building/Masonry Fault	1	
Slipped, tripped or fell (no obvious cause)	1	1
Slipped, tripped or fell (on stairs)		1
Slipped, tripped or fell (wet floor)		1
Violence/assaulted by service user/pupil	1	
Grand Total	11	3

All incidents 2022/2023

Table 4 – Employee All incidents (breakdown by Directorate)

Employee - All incidents reported	Directorate	2022/2023
	Education, Communities & Organisational Development	310
Environment, Regeneration & Resources	54	
HSCP	127	
Total	491	

Table 5 – All Employee Incidents (breakdown by type)

Summary	Number of Incidents
Violence/Assault	126
Violence/Assault ASN Sector	112
Verbal Abuse/Inappropriate Behaviours	90
Struck by, hit or trapped by something	26
Hazardous, substance object or situation	25
Slipped, tripped or fell, cause indeterminate	23
Slipped, tripped or fell - potentially preventable	23
Manual handling	17
Challenging Behaviour	16
Sporting/Playing/horseplay incident	8

Faulty Equipment/Property Issue	7
Road traffic or vehicle incident	7
Verbal abuse ASN	6
Fall from height	2
Medical condition	1
Safety Hazard/Unsafe Condition	1
Security issue/vandalism	1
Grand Total	491

Table 6 – Employee “verbal abuse & violence” incidents (breakdown by Directorate)

Employee – verbal abuse/violence incidents reported	Directorate	2022/2023
	Education, Communities & Organisational Development	242
	Environment, Regeneration & Resources	19
	HSCP	71
	Total	332

242 of the verbal abuse and violence incidents involved a service user/pupil or member of the public with “additional support needs”. Within the education and social care sector, care must be taken when interpreting these statistics. The use of the terms violence and abuse in relation to incidents is often emotive and must be placed in context; there is a significant difference between violence instigated by someone with deliberate intent and that by a service user who, due to communication difficulties, medication changes etc, lacks awareness or control of their actions. The majority of the reported incidents lie within the area of pupils or service users with additional support needs and are, in general, related to a small number of pupils or service users with very complex support needs. However, the effects on staff through injury and stress will be the same regardless of the reason behind the incident.

Table 7 – Employee “slips, trips and falls” incidents (breakdown by Directorate)

Employee – slip, trip or fall incidents reported	Directorate	2022/2023
	Education, Communities & Organisational Development	19
	Environment, Regeneration & Resources	7
	HSCP	20
	Total	46

The following types of slips, trips and falls were reported during 2022/2023:

Table 8 – Slip, trip or fall reason

Cause	Number of Incidents
Slipped, tripped or fell (other/no obvious cause)	13
Slipped, tripped or fell (on stairs)	10
Slipped, tripped or fell (wet floor)	8
Slipped, tripped or fell (over extraneous item)	7
Slipped, tripped or fell (uneven surface)	4
Slipped, tripped or fell (on ice/snow)	3

Slipped, tripped or fell (damaged surface)	1
Grand Total	46

Table 9 – Employee “manual handling” incidents (breakdown by Directorate)

Employee – manual handling incidents reported	Directorate	2022/2023
	Education, Communities & Organisational Development	3
	Environment, Regeneration & Resources	6
	HSCP	7
	Total	16

Table 10 – Employee “days lost” from incidents (breakdown by Directorate)

Employee – hours lost/cost	Directorate	Hours Lost	Cost
	Education, Communities & Organisational Development	4914.17	£93,171.81
	Environment, Regeneration & Resources	2070.4	£27,143.48
	HSCP	1244.3	£17624.22
	Total	8229.17	£137,939.5

Table 11 –top four reasons for “days lost” per incident type

Employee – days lost /cost	Incident description	Hours Lost	Cost
	Slip trip or fall	2190	£48,304.89
	Manual handling	1734.4	£28,275
	Faulty Equipment/Property Issue	1574.3	£17,443.24
	Violence/Assault	1288.9	£24,432.29

10.4 Audit/Inspection Summary

The following audits and inspections were carried out.

Polling Places

Inspections of all polling places were carried out by health and safety officers with findings and recommendations passed back to Legal and Democratic Services.

School Security

A school security audit was undertaken with results issued as an interim report to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and the Service. Key concerns identified were:

- school gates not closed or locked to secure the grounds from unwanted persons or to assist in reducing the risk/chance of a child/pupil removing themselves from the school grounds.
- School car parks which are accessible from the school playgrounds
- Visitor/public pathways which can encroach into the security of the rest of the building.
- Lack of standardised documented procedures for dealing with intruders.
- Lack of checking procedures for security doors
- Pre 5 establishments generally have secure grounds, however two had low fences where someone could reach over and potentially pick up a child, or a larger child could potentially climb over.

Meetings were arranged with Physical Assets, Education and Health and Safety.

HSCP – Inspections

Building on from work undertaken with Trades Union colleagues during Covid a series of inspections of HSCP properties was undertaken in conjunction with TU representatives. No major issues were noted and any minor concerns were dealt with at a local level.

Hand Arm Vibration Audit

An audit of council compliance with the Vibration at work regulations commenced in 2022/23, with the final report being issued 2023/24.

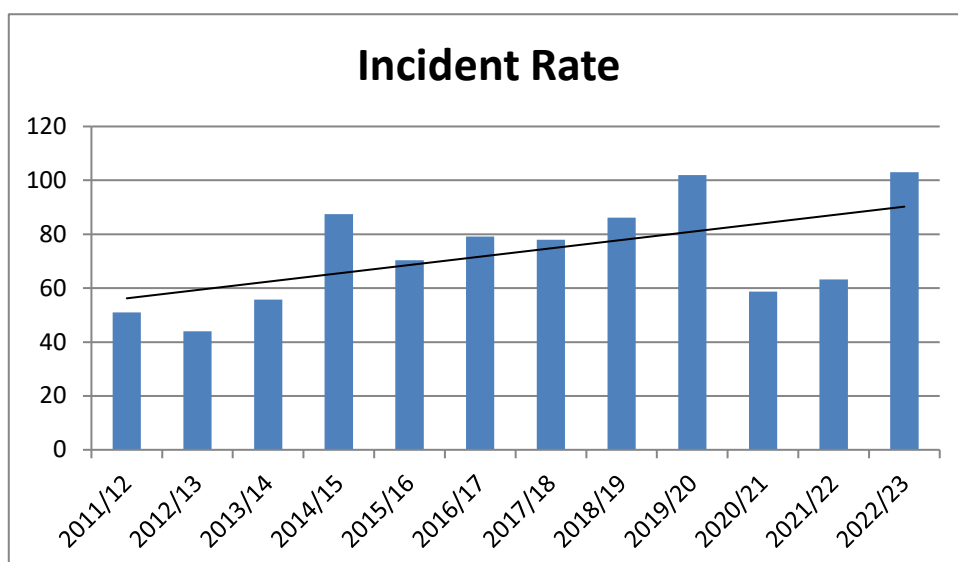
10.5 Audit/Inspection Development

Development work was undertaken on a self-audit proforma and programme for Education, this will commence during 2023/24.

A building risk assessment and inspection proforma has been developed and will be rolled out over 2023/24, starting with Education and progressing to other service areas.

11. Corporate ‘Health Check’ indicator

Indicator:	Incident Rates (per 1000 employees)
Relevance:	This indicator demonstrates the number of incidents per 1000 employees. Examples of types of incidents the indicator covers include animal exposure, violence, manual handling and slip, trip or fall.
Current Performance level (2022/23):	103 incidents per 1000 employees
Target Performance level:	85 incidents per 1000 employees
Analysis of Performance and commentary:	<p>The overall trend over the last 6 years has been a gradual increase in incident rate.</p> <p>The online incident reporting platform provides significant statistical data which has helped the Council to target issues such as violence to staff, manual handling and slip risks. The target performance level has been re-evaluated taking into account improved accident reporting and has been set to 5% below the average accident rate for the three years prior to 2020.</p>
Trend:	Decreasing long term.



Appendix 2

Inverclyde Council

Corporate Health and Safety Plan

2024 – 2027



Introduction

A high standard of health and safety performance is one of the Council's primary objectives and is recognised as an integral part of service delivery. This means having in place effective management arrangements that ensure the wellbeing of our employees and minimise the losses (financial and to our reputation) to our business from ill health and injury. It requires that we search out, adopt and update best practice relevant to and proportionate to the risks we and our employees face, and that we generate guidance and procedures for relevant activities.

The Council will follow the principles of health and safety management as laid out in the HSE Publication - HSG 65 Managing for Health and Safety. Health and safety is not a "bolt-on" to our activities but is an integral part of everything we do.

This health and safety strategy sets out the key objectives and priorities for Inverclyde Council during the period 2024 - 2027. All Managers and Team Leaders should read this plan and consider how they can contribute to delivering the plan's outcomes.

The plan sets out three key themes that the Council aims to develop in the period up to 2027; these were agreed by the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, the CMT and ratified by the Policy and Resources Committee.

These themes are:

- Leadership and Competency
- Workplace Safety
- Legal Compliance

Louise Long

Chief Executive

THEMES

Theme 1 – Leadership and Competency

This theme links with the section 3 of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Organisation and Responsibilities. Managers at all levels are core to demonstrating effective leadership, and every individual in the Council has a role to play in driving the health and safety vision and principals by being visible in the workplace, demonstrating good safety behaviours and clearly communicating the expectations of the Council in regard to safety behaviours.

We will do this by:

- Making sure our Corporate Management Team provide effective leadership and direction in implementing the Council's Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures. Each directorate will appoint Officers at senior management level with responsibility for implementing and coordinating the health and safety specific to their Directorate.
- Making sure that line management roles and responsibilities are clearly defined within our health and safety documents, management systems and training courses.
- Making sure that, when making management decisions at committee, strategic and operational level, health and safety considerations are also included.
- Ensuring that, as per the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Service Action Plans are developed targeting the key actions identified in this Corporate Health and Safety Plan.
- Developing line managers to make sure they have the level of competence required to perform their roles and that they are highly visible within the workplace to encourage two-way communications and staff engagement.
- Encouraging regular communication around health and safety performance issues and making sure that health and safety is meaningfully covered in meetings and plans.
- Expecting line managers to be actively involved in scheduled workplace premise inspections and first line investigations of all accidents, incidents and instances of ill health.
- Making sure that our line managers and supervisors understand their responsibilities by attending appropriate health and safety training courses based against their training needs. No member of staff should carry out work activities for which they are not suitably trained.
- Continuing to support the health and safety advisors in driving ownership and accountability, acting as key influencers for change and driving a positive health and safety culture.
- Service managers are responsible for ensuring that each job role has in place a training matrix which identifies the training requirements for the role and the frequency it should be carried out. This will include both job specific training and health and safety training.

To support this a suite of health and safety training courses are available, these are aimed at line managers and employees to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge to manage health and safety within their area of responsibility Appendix 1. A health and safety training summary which identifies key job roles and training which is recommended for those roles is available Appendix 2. Line managers implement a system to ensure that staff receive appropriate training at required intervals as identified through risk assessment. Generally, refresher training should take place every three years unless advised otherwise by the training provider. A sample training matrix and recording spreadsheet is available on Icon <http://icon/health-and-safety/hs-training/>.

Theme 2 – Workplace Safety

Linking with Section 4 of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and by having suitable arrangements in place to manage health and safety we aim to provide a safe and secure environment for our employees, stakeholders and members of the public who access our services. The health and safety of our staff is vital, and no task is so important that it cannot be carried out safely. Managers will engage with staff on workplace health and safety issues and encourage staff to speak freely when they recognise hazardous situations. Ultimately no matter how effective our health and safety management system is, it is how all employees of the Council think and behave that will enable effective safety management, all staff should take personal responsibility to identify and manage health and safety risks effectively.

We will do this by:

- Making sure that line managers responsible for buildings and worksites, proactively conduct or arrange scheduled inspections to identify and eliminate hazardous situations.
- Making sure that all buildings have a designated lead officer who will be responsible for co-ordinating all building related health and safety requirements.
- Training managers to enable them to be confident in conducting regular and specific risk assessments for their work locations and work activities. Service management will establish generic Risk Assessment Working Groups to identify risk and control measures for common work locations and activities.
- Ensuring fire risk assessment action plans are implemented and that appropriate local management systems are in place to monitor and ensure fire safety and fire evacuation management systems are in place.
- Making sure that safety is considered at all times when procuring goods, services or works on behalf of the council.
- Making sure that scheduled programmes of health and safety audits and inspections are conducted across all services.
- Making sure that premises managers are suitably trained in respect of the duties they are required to undertake. They will maintain a premises register to assist in managing their facilities in respect of scheduled mandatory checks for example electricity, water management and fire, and fire safety
- Making sure that all staff actively report and accidents, incidents or near misses to their line managers, through the Council's Figtree System.
- Making sure that all our staff follow relevant safe systems of work and any verbal work instructions given by their line manager or supervisor.

Theme 3 – Legal Compliance

Linking with section 4 of the Health and Safety Policy, health and safety legislation sets out the statutory requirements which must be adhered to, our health and safety policy and procedures provide a clear direction for all Council Services to follow. Legislation will continually evolve therefore our health and safety management systems must remain dynamic to ensure compliance.

We will do this by:

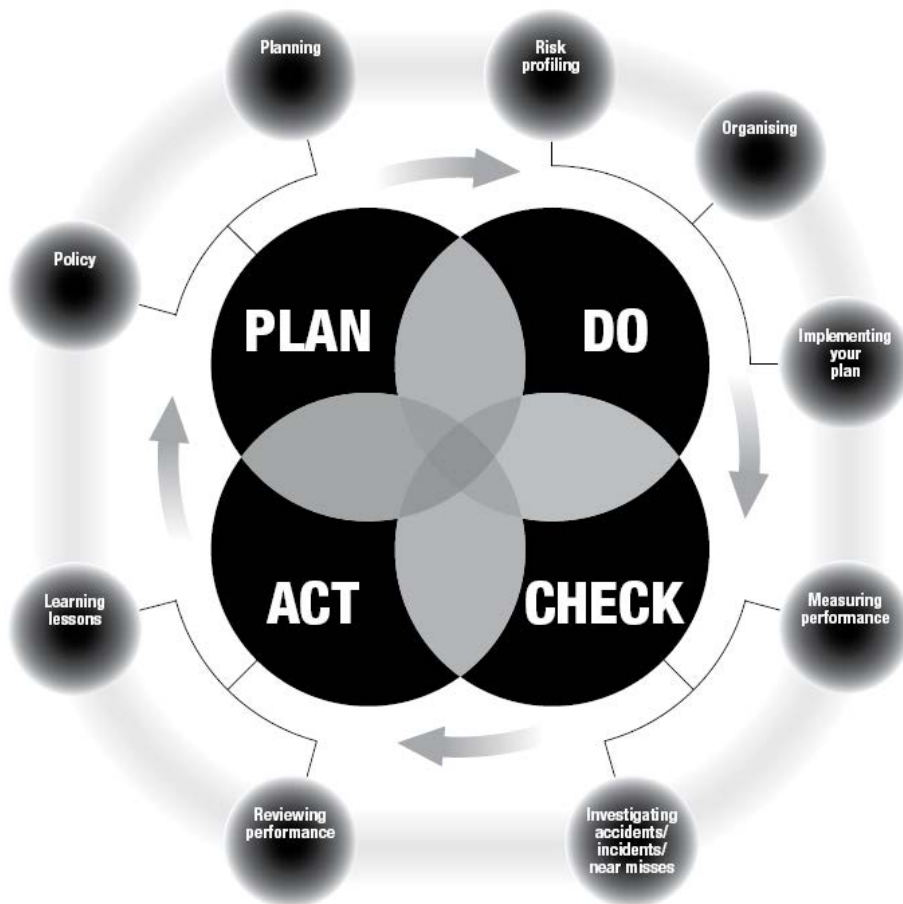
- Making sure our health and safety policies procedures and all other required safety documentation is clear, concise and readily accessible for all staff and regularly reviewed.
- Services carry out a risk profiling exercise to ensure that risks are identified allowing resources to be targeted efficiently and effectively.
- Making sure processes and systems are in place to identify, manage and reduce our key risks.
- Regularly evaluating risk control measures using benchmarking techniques to make sure there is continual improvement.
- Making sure that all Services set up and lead risk assessment working groups to consider common activities, identification of general hazards and risk controls specific to their work area.
- Making sure that where expert advice cannot be sourced from within the Council we will procure the services of competent contractors where required, for example Occupational Health, training provision and Independent consultants.
- Continue to effectively liaise with enforcement authorities such as the Health and Safety Executive and Scottish Fire and Rescue service to develop cross partnership working and continuous improvement.
- Ensure staff receive the necessary training to carry out their designated roles. This can be achieved through building a training matrix for staffing groups which identifies core training for that post which links back to Theme 1.

Health and Safety Governance

An effective governance structure requires responsibilities and accountabilities to be clearly identified. This provides a mechanism to develop and implement a plan/do/check/act approach in accordance with HSG65. The Council's health and safety policies, procedures, management systems and this plan have been developed to reflect the key principals of HSC 65 and, in the event of any investigation or audit by enforcement agencies, will demonstrate commitment to the development of an effective health and safety management system.

HSG 65

HSG 65 – Managing for Health and Safety is the Health and Safety Executives guide on how to manage health and safety within an organisation. It recommends following the Plan, Do, Check, Act management system and aims to achieve a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management. It also treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system.



A summary of the actions involved in delivering effective arrangements and how they are frequently described is given in Table 1, under the headings of Plan, Do, Check, Act.

This process is a continuous cycle and we may have to go round it more than once, particularly when:

- Developing a new process, or service,
- Purchasing new equipment

- Implementing any change

Table 1

Plan, Do, Check, Act	Conventional health and safety management
Plan	Determine your policy. Plan for implementation
Do	Profile risks Organise for health and safety/Implement your plan
Check	Measure performance (monitor before events, investigate after events)
Act	Review performance Act on lessons learned

Plan

As part of our planning process it is important to recognise where we are now and where we need to be.

The planning process will help the Council to identify:

- what we want to achieve,
- who will be responsible for what,
- how they will achieve these aims,
- how success be measured.

Much of this is already contained within current policies and procedures however, where new policies are introduced Services must identify how they will put these into practice and plan how they will implement the systems.

When planning it is important that the Council consider fire and other emergencies, co-operates with anyone who shares Council premises and co-ordinates plans with them. The Council must ensure that it plans for changes and identifies any specific Health and Safety legal requirements that apply and builds Health and Safety into any changes being considered.

Concerns

Overall the planning process is not as robust as would be desired, resource considerations have resulted in policies not always being developed and reviewed quickly enough. To mitigate this guidance, procedures and information sheets are produced to cover any policy gaps. A list of Council Policies and guidance together with review dates is available at Appendix 3

Do

There are three key stages to be implemented

- I. **Identify the risk profile.**
 - a. Assess the risks, identify what could cause harm in the workplace, who it could harm and how, and what will be done to manage the risk.
 - b. Decide what the priorities are and identify the biggest risks.
- II. **Organise the activities to deliver the plan** - In particular, aim to:
 - a. Involve employees and communicate, so that everyone is clear on what is needed and can discuss issues – develop positive attitudes and behaviours.
 - b. Provide adequate resources, including competent advice where needed.
- III. **Implement your plan**
 - a. Decide on the preventive and protective measures needed and put them in place.
 - b. Provide the right tools and equipment to do the job and keep them maintained.
 - c. Train and instruct, to ensure everyone is competent to carry out their work.
 - d. Supervise to make sure that arrangements are followed.

Concerns

This area is generally stronger with significant involvement by the Health and Safety team on a reactive and practical level by assisting services with the implementation of health and safety at grass roots level. This involves carrying out risk assessments and provision of advice and guidance on a day to day level. However, this has resulted in services becoming overly dependent on input from the health and safety team on a day to day management level restricting the team's ability to carry out more proactive development and review of the council's health and safety management systems.

Identification of improvement actions within the Service action plans will ensure services have a clear implementation plan for health and safety in their areas based on local priorities.

A service action plan template has been developed (Appendix 4), this has two sections:

Section one consists of corporate actions which will apply across the Council. Two actions have been identified from each theme. Services should identify how well they comply with each of action points and where there are weaknesses or concerns identify improvement actions and responsible persons for each point.

Section 2 is for each service to develop service specific actions in regard to weaknesses identified in compliance with health and safety legislation.

Each Service should complete the template and report back on progress against the action plan to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee. Pentana will be utilised as the format for reporting back on progress.

Check

What gets checked gets done. – It is important to make sure that the plan had been implemented and while paperwork plays a part in this on its own it is not a good performance measure.

- I. **Measure your performance**
 - a. Assess how well the risks are being controlled and if we are achieving our aims.
 - b. This can include formal audits.

When considering how the Council will measure performance we need to look beyond just accident figures and look for active and reactive monitoring and measuring. Currently the Monitoring systems in the Council rely more on reactive systems than active systems for monitoring and measuring performance.

- II. **Active methods** monitor the design, development, installation and operation of management arrangements. These tend to be preventive in nature, for example:
 - routine inspections of premises, plant and equipment by staff;
 - health surveillance to prevent harm to health;
 - planned function check regimes for key pieces of plant.
 - Audits of processes and procedures.
- III. **Reactive methods** monitor evidence of poor health and safety practice but can also identify better practices that may be transferred to other parts of a business, for example:
 - investigating accidents and incidents or near misses.
 - monitoring cases of ill health and sickness absence records.

Concerns

Resource issues within services and the Health and Safety Team have, with some exceptions, resulted in a heavy reliance on reactive measures to monitor health and safety performance.

At a local level regular inspections and checks by services such as housekeeping checks, equipment checks and compliance with procedures are limited. Where these are carried out there can be a failure to record that the inspection has been undertaken and any follow through actions completed. This is variable across the council with some areas showing strong performance.

Health surveillance is generally strong though more ownership of health surveillance is needed at a local level. Especially where there are new starts who require health surveillance.

Auditing is the weakest areas in this section, where carried out these have been restricted to issue specific audits, i.e. violence to staff in schools and moving and handling. Audits of overall management compliance with the Council's Health and Safety management system would be beneficial.

A review of current inspection and auditing systems will be carried out with a simplified self-auditing system developed.

Act

- I. Review our performance
 - a. Learn from accidents and incidents, ill-health data, errors and relevant experience, including from other organisations.
 - b. Revisit plans, policy documents and risk assessments to see if they need updating.
- II. Take action on lessons learned, including from audit and inspection reports.

Monitor and Review

This plan will be reviewed annually by the Corporate H&S Committee for relevance and, where necessary, priorities will be updated in line with changing legislative requirements, enforcement agency priorities, statistical analysis or other relevant factors.

Services will report quarterly to the Corporate H&S Committee on progress against their key health and safety priorities as identified by themselves in their service health and safety service action plans.

Actions will be placed on Pentana for ongoing monitoring.

Managing Health and Safety

Five key priorities have been identified for the Health and Safety team development within this plan

- Training – a review of training in the Council to ensure that all services have a clearly identified training needs analysis in place and that employees receive appropriate health and safety training.
- A review of management arrangements and implementation of processes aimed at controlling risks associated with violence and aggression at work and lone working, the main focus will be on Education as this is the area with the highest number of reported incidents.
- A review of the arrangements for infection control and associated guidance to ensure it is still fit for purpose in light of lessons learned from the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic.
- Updating of policies and procedures on a planned basis with priority being given to statutory property related legislation. (List of Policies and Guidance attached at appendix 3)
- Consider succession planning and development of the Health and Safety Team considering the significant changes which have taken place.

It should be recognised that while these are key priorities for further development, work continues to be ongoing in other areas.

Corporately the key priorities identified for development within this plan are:

- Training – Services to have in place a training needs analysis which will clearly identify the health and safety training requirements for employees within their service areas. This should include a system for monitoring that staff have received the appropriate training as required. A generic guidance is available which identifies likely training requirements for specific job groupings.
- Service specific action plans - Development of service specific action plans based on key priorities for each service area.
- Develop an audit/inspection plan based on a combination of self-audits by services and targeted audits/inspections by Health and Safety.
- Develop a policy/procedure review plan to ensure that all Health and Safety policies/procedures are reviewed on a regular basis.

Action Plans

While the action plans identify key areas for development it is recognised that there is a need to have flexibility in order to react to external factors which may impact upon health and safety requirements and change priorities for example:

- Serious incidents with wider implications – i.e. the Glasgow Bin Lorry Incident, the wall collapse in an Edinburgh school. Rosepark Care Home Fire.
- Public health issues – Covid 19 or other serious public health concerns
- Legal rulings – i.e. the Cordia appeal hearing in relation to home care.
- HSE themed or sector specific inspections, i.e. Waste industry inspections, construction inspections, asbestos inspections. Where the HSE announce such inspections then resources would be diverted to ensure that the Council is prepared prior to any visit.
- Fire Service Audits – where the Fire Service announces a planned series of audits then resources will be diverted to ensure that Services are suitably prepared.
- Issues highlighted by other local authorities.

The management of Health, Safety & Wellbeing in Inverclyde Council is the responsibility of all managers and therefore forms an integral part of managing resources and providing services. The aim is to ensure the work of the Council is carried out in such a way that any risk to the Health, Safety & Wellbeing of employees,

service users, visitors and others are avoided or reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. Employees also form an essential part of this as they have the responsibility to implement the safe systems of work and control measures introduced to protect them while at work.

The content of the action plans to be developed by services should relate closely to the themes identified in the Introduction.

The Council's Health and Safety Plan follows the principles of good health and safety management as represented in the HSE Document HSG65 – Managing for Health and Safety.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/07/24/RB/MR
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712042
Subject:	Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to Appoint SOLACE to assist with a Chief Officer recruitment		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to note the use of emergency powers in December 2023 for the Council to appoint to appoint SOLACE to assist in the recruitment of a new Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services.

1.3 Following the recent resignation of the current Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services there is a need to commence the recruitment for a replacement. It is understood that there are currently challenges in recruiting to senior specialist posts such as this. As such, it was recommended that the Council appoint SOLACE to assist in this recruitment exercise

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note that the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to appoint SOLACE to assist in the recruitment of a new Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The current Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services recently handed in their resignation, to join another local authority. This post encompasses the role as the Council's Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Licensing Board, statutory posts that all local authorities must have. There is a need to commence this recruitment process promptly. In addition, it is understood that there are currently challenges in recruiting to senior specialist local authority posts such as this. The Council has itself experienced such issues recently. Given this, it is recommended that the Council appoint SOLACE to assist in the recruitment exercise for this post. Members will be aware that SOLACE were recently successfully used to support the appointment of the new Head of Regeneration, Planning & Public Protection.
- 3.2 The use of these Emergency Powers was authorised by the Chief Executive following consultation with Councillor McCabe, Councillor McCluskey and Councillor Robertson, as the Convenor, Vice-Convenor and Leader of the largest non-administration party on the Policy & Resources Committee respectively.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee note that the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to appoint SOLACE to assist in the recruitment of a new Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services.

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
Reserves			£10 000		

Annually Recurring Costs/Savings

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a Monitoring Officer and a Clerk to the Licensing Board. The recruitment of a new Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services would enable the Council to fulfil these requirements.

5.4 Human Resources

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

5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/003/24
Contact Officer:	Iain Strachan	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Use of Powers Delegated to the Chief Executive to vote on Member for the Values & Principles Board of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The main purpose of this report is to note the use of Emergency Powers in January 2024 to enable the Council to cast its vote to elect one new member to the Values & Principles Board of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (the Network).
- 1.3 The use of these powers enabled the Council, as a member of the Network, to cast its vote to elect one new member to the Values & Principles Board. In accordance with the Network's constitution, the vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe. Each member council had the right to exercise a vote for one candidate.
- 1.4 In the period since the Council joined the Network there has now been a need for Emergency Powers to be used three times, in order for the Council to exercise its vote as a member of the Network. To avoid the need for this going forward, this report also proposes that the Committee grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to cast votes in respect of the future appointments of members to the Committees and Boards of the Network.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note that the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to agree that the Council cast its vote to elect one new member to the Values & Principles Board of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network, which vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe, in terms of the Network's constitution.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to cast votes in respect of the future appointment of members to the Committees and Boards of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network, which vote was to be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe, in terms of the Network's constitution.

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

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 At the 20 September 2022 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee it was agreed that the Council should apply to become a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (the Network). This application was approved in October, and all councillors advised on 2 November. <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2487>.
- 3.2 The Network, established in 2012, describes itself as “the fastest-growing network in local government”, having over 100 councils, organisations and supporters from across the UK. The Network states that member councils are committed to reforming the way they work by building an equal partnership with local people based on the values and principles of the International Co-operative Alliance. In particular, the Network promotes the transformation of communities through community action, community engagement and civic empowerment.
- 3.3 More information on the Network can be found on its website: <https://www.councils.coop/about-us/>.
- 3.4 The most senior tier of the Network’s governance structure is its Executive Oversight Committee. The Values & Principles Board reports into the Executive Oversight Committee, with the Values & Principles Board being responsible for ensuring that the Network maintains its co-operative values and principles. More information on Values & Principles Board, comprising elected members from different local authority members, can be found on its website, including its terms of reference.
- 3.5 Last month the Network announced one vacancy on its Values & Principles Board. In respect of this there were 3 candidates, none of whom were members of a Scottish local authority. Each member council had the right to exercise a vote for one candidate. The vote had to be exercised by Midday on Thursday 1st February.
- 3.6 In December 2022 a similar use of delegated powers was exercised to enable the Council to exercise its vote, again through Cllr McCabe, to elect a Chair of the Network. This was reported to the January 2023 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee. A similar exercise was also undertaken in September 2023, to elect two members to the Executive Oversight Committee. <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2525>
<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2608>

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 As a member of the Network, it was considered important that the Council exercised its right to vote on the election of a new member to the Values & Principles Board of the Network. As such, and in light of the timescales associated with that election, on 24 January 2024, the Chief Executive used their powers under the Scheme of Delegation (Officers) to agree that the Council cast its vote to elect one new member to the Values & Principles Board of the Network. It is a requirement of the constitution of the Network that such a vote is cast by the Leader of member local authorities. <https://www.councils.coop/about-us/governance/our-constitution/>
- 4.2 Since the Council joined the Network there has now been a need for Emergency Powers to be used three times, in order for the Council to exercise its vote as a member of the Network. To avoid the need for this going forward, it is recommended that the Committee agrees to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to cast votes in respect of the future appointments of members to the Committees and Boards of the Network, which vote would be cast by the Leader of the Council, Cllr McCabe, in terms of the Network’s constitution. The members of the Committee would be advised where this delegated authority had been used. For the avoidance

of doubt, if the Council was wishing to nominate one of its own Elected Members to such a position, then the approval of Full Council would be required, in the usual way.

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 directly from this report.

5.3 Legal/Risk

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

5.4 Human Resources

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

5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/001/24
Contact Officer:	Colin MacDonald	Contact No:	01475 712113
Subject:	Corporate Risk Register – Remit from Audit Committee		

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 Audit Committee relative to the Corporate Risk Register.

1.3 The Audit Committee at its meeting of 9 January 2024 considered a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services.

1.4 A copy of the report to the Audit Committee is attached as Appendix 1 (excluding the Corporate Risk Register as presented on 9 January 2024). The revised Corporate Risk Register is attached to this report as Appendix 2, with the updates being shown in tracking.

1.5 The Audit Committee decided:

that (a) the Committee having considered the Corporate Risk Register note the position on the most significant corporate risks facing the Council and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them, all as detailed in appendix 1 to the report; (b) that it be noted that training will shortly be arranged for Elected Members on risk management, together with a risk management workshop with the Corporate Management Team; and (c) that it be noted that the Corporate Risk Register will be reported to the February 2024 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

1.6 Following the Audit Committee, officers have updated the Corporate Risk Register to include further detail on the methodology used to compile the Register, taken from the Council's Risk Management Strategy, and some updates to the current and additional controls following the January meeting of the cross-service Corporate Risk Management Group.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the remit from the Audit Committee, and in particular to consider, provide feedback on and note the position on the most significant corporate risks facing the Council and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them, all as detailed in Appendix 2.

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

Report To:	Audit Committee	Date:	9 January 2024
Report By:	Iain Strachan Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/171/23
Contact Officer:	Iain Strachan	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Corporate Risk Register		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Risk Register to the Audit Committee for its consideration. The Corporate Risk Register highlights the most significant corporate risks facing the Council, and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them. Following the Committee's consideration the Corporate Risk Register will then be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, so that it can also consider it.
- 1.3 The Audit Committee, on 24 October 2023, and Policy & Resources Committee, on 21 November 2023, considered and then approved the Council's updated Risk Management Strategy. The Risk Management Strategy created a Corporate Risk Management Group to oversee the development, monitoring and reporting of the Corporate Risk Register. A link to the Policy & Resources Committee report is included here:-
<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2608>
- 1.4 The Corporate Risk Management Group met on 27 November 2023 to review directorate risk registers. The review has identified a number of key risks which sit above the Council's risk appetite line (scores of 10 and above). These risks have been aggregated as far as possible into thematic areas of risk and are incorporated within the Corporate Risk Register which is attached in Appendix 1. The Corporate Risk Register includes 2 additional risks, but these sit below the risk appetite line, and are not included in Appendix 1, so that the Committee can concentrate its consideration on those higher rated risks.
- 1.5 There are currently 9 key corporate risks which have been identified which sit above the risk appetite line for consideration by the Committee. As noted above, there are a further 2 lower rated risks which are also included in the Corporate Risk Register.
- 1.6 Mitigations are in place for each risk which will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Corporate Risk Management Group and responsible officer(s). In order to regain momentum on risk monitoring and reporting of key corporate risks a process for the review and reporting of service and corporate risks is summarised in paragraph 3.4 of this report, and more fully in the Council's Risk Management Strategy.
- 1.7 It is also important to consider the process for Elected Members' engagement in risk management and setting the risk appetite for the organisation. Risk Management training for Elected Members will shortly be arranged.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Audit Committee:

- (i) consider, provide feedback on and note the position on the most significant corporate risks facing the Council, and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them, all as- included in the Corporate Risk Register in Appendix 1 to this report.
- (ii) note that training will shortly be arranged for Elected Members on risk management, together with a risk management workshop with the Corporate Management Team.
- (iii) note that the Corporate Risk Register will be reported to the February 2024 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

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

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 There is an identified need for public sector bodies to adopt a formalised approach to risk management. The annual external audit by KPMG identified risk management as an area of development for the Council. Risk management is also a key part of the overall Corporate Governance Framework of the Council.
- 3.2 The Council has developed an updated Risk Management Strategy approved at the Policy & Resources Committee on 21 November 2023. The aim of the Strategy is to deliver a consistent, effective framework and approach for managing risks across the organisational at all levels and support the delivery of the Council Plan 2023-2028.
- 3.3 Strategic risks in relation to the implementation of the Council Plan are monitored by the Corporate Risk Management Group and the Corporate Management Team. The Risk Management Strategy also established that the Corporate Risk Register would be reported twice a year to the Audit Committee and once a year to the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 3.4 Risk registers have been developed at committee, directorate, service and project level. To enable a complete assessment of the overall risks across the Council, these risks have been reviewed by the Corporate Risk Management Group and a fresh Corporate Risk Register developed. The purpose of the Corporate Risk Register is to highlight the most significant corporate risks facing the Council, and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them. For the purposes of this initial review a baseline risk appetite score of 10 has been applied to all identified risks, i.e. the Council will not accept a risk being scored at 10 and above. In the Risk Management Strategy the High Risks are those scored at 10-15, with Very High Risks being those scored at 16 and above. Whilst there will be further work on risk appetite, to develop a more bespoke approach which recognises that the risk appetite will likely vary according to the risk in question, this review has identified a number of key risks which sit above this baseline risk appetite score of 10.
- 3.5 The factors driving the current risk ratings and actions being taken are not an exhaustive list of issues affecting, or which could affect, the Council. Those factors are often referenced and considered by other Committees as part of normal business.
- 3.6 It is proposed that, in accordance with the updated Risk Management Strategy, the Corporate Risk Register should also be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee next month, to ensure that Members have sufficient oversight on the Council's current key strategic risks. The annual governance statement presented to Audit Committee will also contain the Corporate Risk Register. There is also a need for the Risk Management Strategy and associated training to be rolled out across managers to support implementation.
- 3.7 As set out in the Risk Management Strategy this report and the Corporate Risk Register do not include IHSCP risks, with the IHSCP having its own approach and risk register.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Audit Committee is asked to consider and provide feedback on the Corporate Risk Register, noting that the Corporate Risk Register will then be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee next month.
- 4.2 To develop understanding of Elected Members' risk appetite, and their knowledge of risk management more generally, training will be offered in the early part of 2024. Following the training and agreement of Elected Members of risk appetite for the Council, risk training will be developed and rolled out across all managers on risk management, including on the review and reporting of service risks.

- 4.3 A new Corporate Risk Adviser post has been advertised and recruitment for that post is ongoing. The new Corporate Risk Adviser will support the roll out of the risk management training.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

5.2 Finance

Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, there may be resource implications associated with managing individual risks. Effective management of risks is part of good financial management and failure to manage them appropriately may have a range of financial consequences.

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

Having an up-to-date Corporate Risk Register allows the overall management of risk to support the Council's delivery of the Council Plan. Alongside Committee Risk Registers, the Corporate Risk Register provides a clear understanding of the Council's risk profile and the work required across all service areas to ensure action is taken to mitigate the risk.

5.4 Human Resources

N/A.

5.5 Strategic

This report helps ensure strong governance to ensure the Council Plan 2023-28 is delivered and in particular outcome theme 3 – Performance, with the Council seeking to provide high quality and innovative services that deliver value for money.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Relevant officers have been consulted in the review, development and monitoring of the Corporate Risk Register.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.

Corporate Risk Register
Version 2024-1 (January 2024)

Risk No.	Description of Risk Concern (x,y,z)	IMPACT Rating (A)	L'HOOD Rating (B)	Quartile	Risk Score (A*B)	Change in Score	Current Controls	Who is Responsible (name or title)	Additional controls / Mitigating Actions & Time Frames with End Dates
1.	<p>Financial Risk</p> <p>It is expected that the Council will continue to be faced with significant real term funding reductions from the Scottish Government in the medium term based on May 2022 Resource Spending Review and 2023 Autumn Statement. This coincides with a period where costs are continuing to rise due to inflation and demographic / legislative pressures are increasing. As over 80% of Council revenue funding comes from the Scottish Government the Council has limited options aside from service reductions.</p> <p>Capital Grant has been cut in recent years and is effectively frozen until 2026 at least at a time where a number of assets require significant investment and costs have increased considerably.</p> <p>The risk is that the Council will have insufficient financial resources to effectively deliver its services, key projects and ultimately achieve its strategic outcomes.</p>	4	4	1	16	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-year financial strategy in place reported 6 monthly to Full Council. Monitoring and reporting of Treasury / Capital Management Strategy. Sharing best practice via Directors of Finance and Cosla forums MBWG provide elected member direction/ support throughout the Budget process. JBG reviews potential employee impacts at an early stage to ensure savings, if agreed, are deliverable. Established Budget control processes. Rigorous debt collection processes. CMT review of key budgets every 2 months. Regular reporting on the Capital Programme supported by the officer Capital Programme Group. <u>Budget Workstreams for 24/26 agreed, with allocated savings and delivery being monitored.</u> 	Chief Finance Officer Members Budget Working Group Corporate Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed regular meetings with IJB officers to ensure strategies are aligned. (Ongoing) Annual refresh of savings options and workstreams. (August 2024) Savings delivery plans reviewed bi-monthly by CMT and monthly by Directorates. (Ongoing) Review of strategic priorities outlined in the committee plans supported by public consultation (Annually). Updated Corporate Asset Management Strategy (Oct 2024)

Risk No.	Description of Risk Concern (x,y,z)	IMPACT Rating (A)	L'HOOD Rating (B)	Quartile	Risk Score (A*B)	Change in Score	Current Controls	Who is Responsible (name or title)	Additional controls / Mitigating Actions & Time Frames with End Dates
1.	<p>Workforce</p> <p>The risk is that there is a failure to ensure there is an appropriate resourced and resilient workforce in place to meet future organisational needs to effectively execute the 23/28 Council Plan.</p>	3	4	2	12	Change down from 16 (Impact reduced from 4 to 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the Organisational Development Plan to the 23/28 Council Plan and processes. Incorporate succession planning into workforce planning framework. Identify training programmes to upskill staff including 'growing your own'. Flexible HR policies. Investment in employee wellbeing and engagement. Effective use of occupational health services. Robust positive conversations process in place for all employees. Effective leadership and management behaviour programmes in place. HR processes designed to meet the service's delivery needs. Flexible Working Policy. Annual WIAR (Workforce Information and Activity Report) reported to Committee. 	Head of OD, HR, Communications & Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A robust package of wellbeing resources continue to be available, absence levels are closely monitored. Development course for middle managers. Grow your own programme in place for all staff. Review of flexible working to increase flexibility. Absence Management Assessment of reduction in working week from 37 to 35 hours ongoing, to be finalised in Q1 2024 Mentoring Programme being launched in Q1 2024 Agreed management actions to be implemented following recent Internal Audit Report on Attendance Management
2.	<p>Maintaining Council Assets that are fit for purpose</p> <p>The risk is that the Council's assets and facilities do not fully meet the needs of its existing and future service users and employees which impacts on the delivery of services. Investment levels required to maintain assets outstrips current budget.</p>	3	4	2	12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Asset Management Strategy Regular reporting on condition and suitability via internal and external surveys including RAAC Capital budget fully utilised Rationalisation of assets being considered Regular reporting to committee on Learning Estate and Operational Estate Capital Programme Property and Land Disposal 	Director for Environment & Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible working gives opportunity to rationalise office footprint through Asset Rationalisation Programme Board. Regular capital project meetings being carried out. Future of Clune Park School/Church being assessed.
3.	<p>Ensuring the Council has the skills and capacity to keep abreast of developments in ICT infrastructure and innovative use of information technology</p> <p>The risk is that there is a failure to keep pace with changing technology and deliver new systems that support service delivery, with the result that the Council is unable to effectively deliver its services, key projects and ultimately achieve its strategic outcomes.</p>	3	4	2	12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT & Digital Strategies in place and regularly reported to Committee. Digital Modernisation Programme Board in place and regularly reported to Committee, with funding potentially available for services to develop and deliver new digital technologies that support Council's strategic objectives and digital modernisation. Microsoft 365 Development Group established to help Council optimise 	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT & Digital Strategies to be reviewed in 2024 Customer & Digital Modernisation Saving Workstream People & OD Strategy to be reviewed in 2024

Risk No.	Description of Risk Concern (x,y,z)	IMPACT Rating (A)	L'HOOD Rating (B)	Quartile	Risk Score (A*B)	Change in Score	Current Controls	Who is Responsible (name or title)	Additional controls / Mitigating Actions & Time Frames with End Dates
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adoption of potential benefits available from M365. Improvement Service workshop held in August 2023 to engage with staff on modernisation, and inform future ICT/Digital Strategies Regular reporting to Committees 		
4.	Net Zero The risk is that there is a failure to reduce the Council's carbon footprint in line with Council and national targets, with the consequence that the Council suffers damage to its reputation, breaches its legal/regulatory duties and incurs greater costs than it needs to in the operation of its estate and delivery of its services.	3	4	2	12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan Operational delivery of organisation resilience due to climate change Application for Grant Funding that supports Net Zero projects 	Director of Environment & Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood Plan High use of recycling Peatland restoration initiative to offset carbon Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan
5.	Partnership The risk of major partner or supplier failure. Requires financial support or the Council to step in to manage the services or project fails.	3	4	3	12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular financial governance review in place Revised approach to Governance of External Organisations (November P&R Committee) Robust tender processes with good financial management Relevant committees reported to regularly 	Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplier manager guidance is being piloted and rolls out in August 2024
6.	Information Governance There is a risk that the Council fails to meet its legal and regulatory duties around information governance matters, including Data Protection/GDPR, Freedom of Information and Records Management.	4	3	2	12	Increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Governance Group meets monthly to oversee information governance, including ongoing comms/training for staff Regular reporting to CMT and DMTs Annual reports to Committee on Freedom of Information/Data Protection performance Encrypted laptops Access controls to electronic information, including mandatory training for staff before network access given Suite of Information Governance related policies reviewed regularly, reported to Committee and cascaded to staff 	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Modernisation Programme anticipated to deliver new/improved systems that will result in a reduced need for paper processing and improved information governance compliance Staff training on information governance related matters in 2024
7.	People – Demographic changes Ageing population, increasing complex needs for young people – risks the Council do not have capacity / service provision to meet the needs of the population.	4	3	2	12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Plan – Organisational Development plan in place ASN Staffing review is taking placeReview of ASN provision and related staffing Regular reporting and monitoring for children with complex needs 	Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of local provision

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial

Risk No.	Description of Risk Concern (x,y,z)	IMPACT Rating (A)	L'HOOD Rating (B)	Quartile	Risk Score (A*B)	Change in Score	Current Controls	Who is Responsible (name or title)	Additional controls / Mitigating Actions & Time Frames with End Dates
84.	Threat of Cyber Attack Risk that the Council's ICT systems, and the data held on them, is subject of a successful security attack, with the data security being compromised and Council services unable to be delivered, with related reputational risk to the Council and associated legal/regulatory/financial risk.	4	3	2	12	Increased from 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSN Certification ICT Disaster Recovery Plan CMT approved approach to cyber security in tendering for new contracts Annual assurance framework, assurance around key supplier cyber security Standard Council Ts and Cs used Programme of internal ICT audits Multiple layer of cyber defence Work of Information Governance Steering Group and related controls around Information Governance 	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan to be worked through further to PSN/Cyber Essential accreditation Cyber Security Incident Workshop, overseen by CRMT Supplier Management guidance being piloted and rolls out in 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing need for all new staff to undertaken compulsory e-learning before given network access.

Key: see diagram

Requires active management

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

Very High (16-25)

Contingency plans

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

High (10-15)

Good Housekeeping

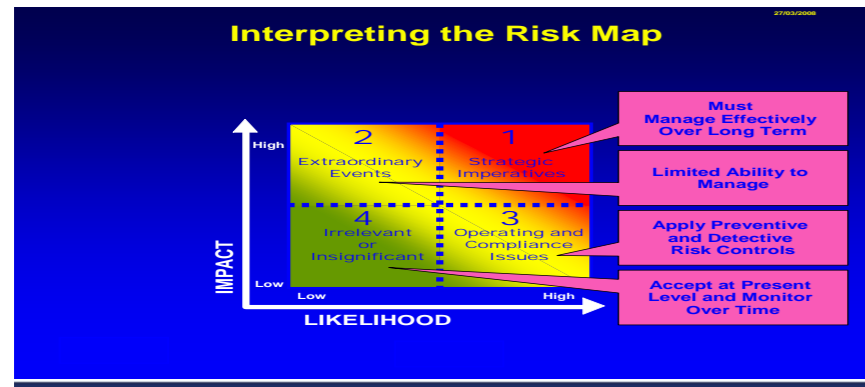
May require some risk mitigation to reduce likelihood if this can be done cost effectively, but good housekeeping to ensure the impact remains low should be adequate. Reassess frequently to ensure conditions remain the same.

Medium (5-9)

Review periodically

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

Low (1-4)

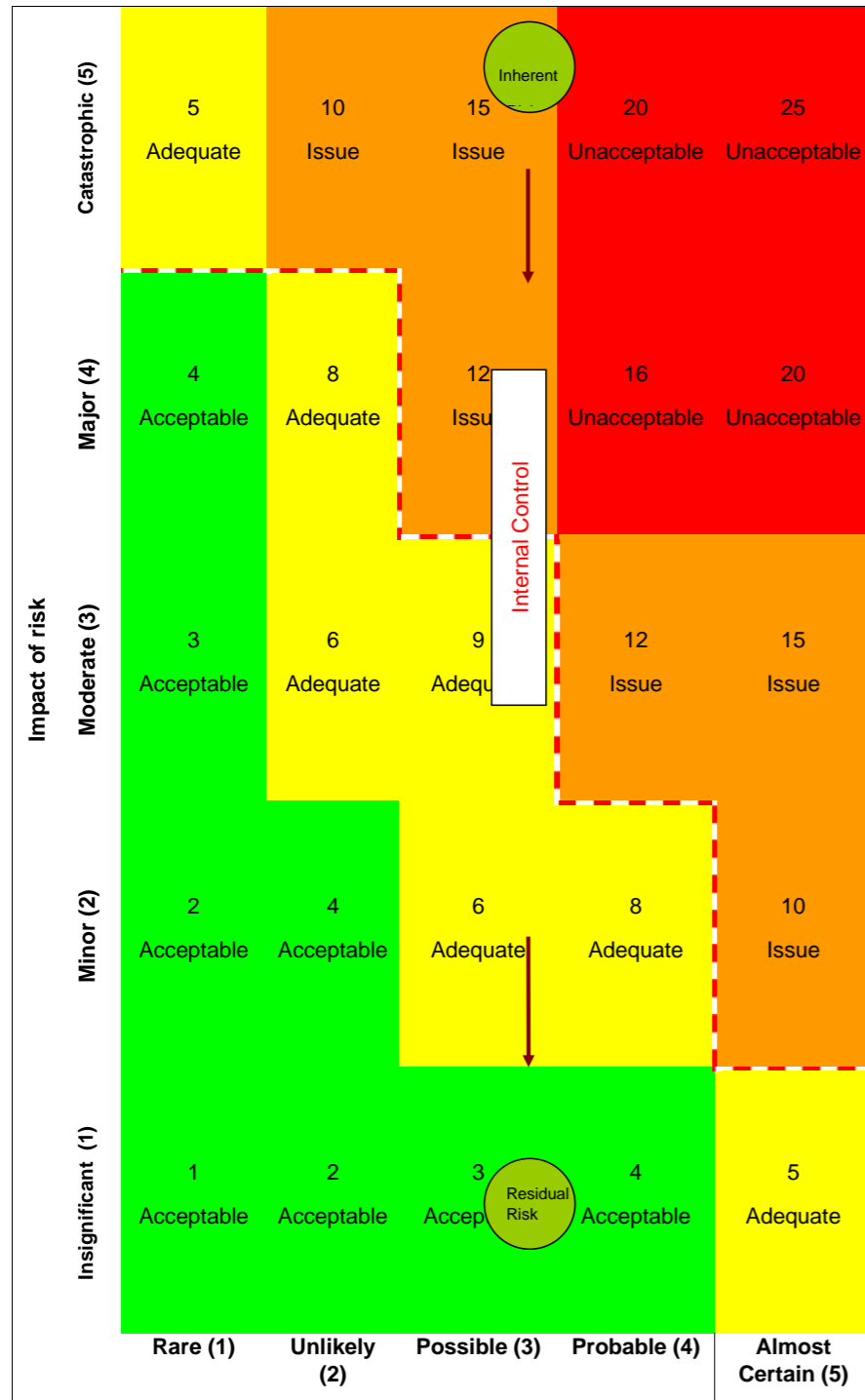


Risk Impact

	1 – Insignificant	2 – Minor	3 – Moderate	4 – Major	5 – Catastrophic
Financial	<£100k	£100k-£250k	£250k-£500k	£500k-£1,000k	£1,000K>
Reputation	Individual negative perception	Local negative perception	Intra industry or regional negative perception	National negative perception	Sustained national negative perception.
Legal and Regulatory	Minor regulatory or contractual breach resulting in no compensation or loss	Breach of legislation or code resulting in a compensation award	Regulatory censure or action, significant contractual breach	Breach of regulation or legislation with severe costs/fine	Public fines and censure, regulatory veto on projects / withdrawal of funding. Major adverse corporate litigation.
Operational / Continuity	An individual service or process failure	Minor problems In specific areas of service delivery	Impact on specific customer group or process	Widespread problems In business operation	Major service or process failure impacting majority or major customer groups.

Likelihood

	1 – Rare	2 – Unlikely	3 – Possible	4 – Probable	5 – Almost Certain
Definition	Not likely to happen in the next 3 years	Unlikely to happen in the next 3 years	Possible to occur in the next 3 years	Likely to occur in the next year	Very likely to occur in the next 6 months



----- Risk Appetite - The boundary between the acceptable risks and those which require managing

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	6 February 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/05/24/RB/BM
Contact Officer:	Barbara McQuarrie	Contact No:	01475 712845
Subject:	Fire Risk Assessment, Fire Safety Policy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the adoption of a reviewed Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Policy.
- 1.3 This reviewed policy details the position of Inverclyde Council with regards to compliance with statutory Scottish fire regulations and guidance.
- 1.4 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) policy for attendance to automated fire alarm activations and unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) has changed. As a result, council procedures for evacuation of premises in the event of a fire have been updated and the Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Policy has been updated to reflect those changes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the reviewed policy.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The Fire (Scotland) Act came into force in 2005 with the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations following in April 2006, their main thrust is to ensure the safety of employees and others in the workplace during a fire incident. For employers the regulations have formalised the following duties:

- Assess the risks, of and from, fire in the workplace
- Check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned.
- Check that people who may be in the building can get out safely
- Provide suitable fire fighting equipment
- Check that those in the building know what to do in the event of a fire
- Check and maintain the fire safety equipment.

3.2 From 1st July 2023 SFRS are no longer attending automatic fire alarm activations in commercial premises and workplaces, unless it is backed up by a call confirming there is a fire or there are signs of fire. Control Room Operators or Automated Response Centre Operators will ask whether there is an actual fire or signs of fire, before sending the nearest fire appliance. It is therefore incumbent on the Council to check for signs of a fire to ensure that the fire service will attend. There are exemptions to this; it will not apply to sleeping premises i.e. Inverclyde Centre, children's residential care premises or domestic premises. In these instances, a full emergency response will still be mobilised without a call challenge being made.

3.3 While there is no change to the current legislative requirements, this policy change by SFRS required the Council to update its current fire evacuation processes to ensure that on activation of a fire alarm a check is carried out for signs of a fire, and that appropriate processes are in place to answer a call challenge in relation to whether there is a fire or signs of a fire.

3.4 This Inverclyde Council Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Policy replaces the existing Policy dated September 2008.

The key changes are:

- Updated and clarified "duty holder" responsibilities in terms of evacuation procedures for Council establishments, and
- Removal of the arrangements section, which gave detailed operational guidance, to a new procedures and guidance document separate from the policy.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that the Policy & Resources Committee approves the reviewed policy.

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

This policy and related procedures supports Council compliance with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the associated Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

5.4 Human Resources

Changes to duty holder responsibilities were referred for job evaluation; it was determined there would be no impact in regard to pay and grading.

Additional training has been provided to all duty holders and fire evacuation teams which incorporates fire safety and how to check for signs of a fire. This training is now incorporated into the suite of training available for fire safety.

5.5 Strategic

This report helps deliver Council Plan outcome:

- Our employees are supported and developed.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

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

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

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

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

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

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

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, and Trades Union colleagues.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1

Version 1.2
Produced by:
Health & Safety,
OD, HR & Comms
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX

Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Policy



INVERCLYDE COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

THIS POLICY BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, ON AUDIOTAPE, OR CD.

Inverclyde Council

2023

CONTENTS

DOCUMENT CONTROL	4
1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 POLICY STATEMENT	5
3 AIMS	5
4 SCOPE	6
5 CONSULTATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT.....	6
6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	7
6.1 Chief Executive	7
6.2 Director Environment and Regeneration.....	7
6.3 Head of Physical Assets.....	7
6.4 Service Manager Assets.....	7
6.5 Property Management Team Leader.....	7
6.6 Property Officer (Statutory Compliance).....	7
6.7 Technical Services Manager	8
6.8 Lead officers/Heads of Establishment.....	8
6.9 Fire Coordinator	8
6.10 Fire Wardens	8
6.11 Fire Officers.....	9
6.12 Health and Safety Team Leader and advisors	9
6.13 Employees.....	9
7 KEY DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS	9
7.1 General Duties.....	9
7.2 Physical Assets.....	10
7.3 Council Establishments	11

8	TRAINING	12
8.1	Information	12
8.2	Training.....	12
8.3	Communication of the Policy	13
9	MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW	13

DRAFT

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Name	Title	Service
Pauline Ramsay	Health and Safety Team Leader	Organisational Development and Human Resources

Change History		
Version	Date	Comments
1.1	May 08	Policy updated to take account of legislative changes.
1.2	July 2023	Updated in light of changes to SFRS response to AFAs
1.3	July 2023	Arrangements section removed to a new document.

Distribution		
Name	Title	Location
CMT and Extended Management Team		
Trades Union Representatives		

Distribution may be made to others on request

Policy Review		
Review Date	Person Responsible	Service
July 2028	Health and Safety Team Leader	OD, Policy and Comms

Copyright

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise without the prior permission of Inverclyde Council.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Fire (Scotland) Act came into force in 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations came into force April 2006, their main thrust is to ensure the safety of employees and others in the workplace during a fire incident. For employers the regulations have formalised the following duties:

- Assess the risks, of and from, fire in the workplace
- Check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned.
- Check that people who may be in the building can get out safely
- Provide suitable fire fighting equipment
- Check that those in the building know what to do in the event of a fire
- Check and maintain the fire safety equipment.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council will ensure that all employees, service users, pupils, visiting members of the public, contractors and others affected by our buildings are protected from the risks from fire in line with its legal duties as defined by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, the Fire Safety Scotland Regulations 2006 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- 2.2 Inverclyde Council will undertake fire risk assessments as required under the relevant fire safety legislation, to this end the Council will ensure that there is a suitable system in place to undertake, monitor and implement assessments and their findings.
- 2.3 As a result of assessment, the Council will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to ensure that the fire safety action plan, as identified in the fire risk assessment, is implemented, within the shortest practicable timescale.
- 2.4 The Council shall ensure that appropriate evacuation procedures are developed and periodically tested and that all persons are provided with sufficient and appropriate fire awareness training and instruction.
- 2.5 The Fire Safety/Fire Risk Assessment guidance will offer a mechanism by which such assessments can be undertaken and provides guidance to assist in the assessment.
- 2.7 All Inverclyde Council premises shall comply with the relevant fire safety legislation and recognised good practice.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The Council's Health and Safety Policy requires to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the Council's employees, pupils, service users and visiting members of the public, including those contractors appointed to work within Council premises.

-
- 3.2 The Council is committed to providing and maintaining safe buildings and effective management of their occupation through competent persons. This is in accordance with the current standards of best practice and in full compliance with legislation. This includes effective fire safety.
- 3.3 In the context of fire prevention, this includes the provision of suitable instruction and training when employees start work, the conduct of regular practice fire drills, and the posting of fire action notices (including floor plans where necessary) showing the location of fire alarm points, fire extinguishers and fire exits.
- 3.4 In order to ensure compliance the policy requires that no change to any premise or arrangement of space shall take place without prior consultation and agreement with the Head of Physical Assets. All proposed changes to any premises must be approved by the Physical Assets Manager. Examples of changes would be the addition of fixed partitions to rooms, blocking of fire doors, breaching compartmentation through running cables through walls.
- 3.5 Whatever the number of employees, it is vital that responsibility for action in the event of fire is assigned to specific persons. Premises with a large number of occupants may have fire wardens who will oversee the immediate evacuation of any people from their area of responsibility. Each establishment will have procedures in place for notifying the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.6 Training should be given to all new employees and this induction training will be followed by regular re-training sessions.

4 SCOPE

- 4.1 This policy applies equally to all employees regardless of grade, experience or role within the organisation. The policy also applies to contracted staff as far as is reasonably practicable and to any external organisations, contractors or members of the public using Council premises.

5 CONSULTATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Inverclyde Council recognises the importance of employee consultation and is committed to involving all employees in the development of policies and procedures. The following groups are formally consulted:
- Trade Union Representatives through the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.
 - All Chief Officers.
 - Employees via the Council Intranet.
- 5.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out using the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment Template.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Designation	Role	Responsibilities
6.1 Chief Executive	Duty Holder	<p>Overall Duty Holder – The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 places duties on employers to ensure the so far as is reasonably practicable the safety of employees in respect of harm caused by fire in the workplace.</p> <p>So far as the Council has control to any extent of a premises ensure the safety of relevant persons in respect of harm caused by fire.</p>
6.2 Director Environment and Regeneration	Duty Holder The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006	Delegated by the Chief Executive as Duty Holder for “The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. To ensure the Council comply with the requirements of the relevant legislation relating to fire safety of premises.
6.3 Head of Physical Assets	Responsible Person	<p>Appointed as Responsible Person by the Duty Holder for The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006</p> <p>The Responsible Person is described as someone with responsibility for managing and controlling all identified risks from fire by having in place appropriate fire safety measures within Council premises relating to the design, build and maintenance of those premises.</p>
6.4 Service Manager Assets	Deputy Responsible Person	Delegated as the day to day responsible person by the Head of Physical Assets for managing and controlling all identified building risks from Fire by ensuring appropriate fire safety measures, systems and resource are in place.
6.5 Property Management Team Leader	Appointed Team	<p>Appointed Team within the Service by the Responsible Person(s)</p> <p>Ensuring the Appointed Person is meeting the requirements set out by the Duty Holder(s) and Responsible Person(s). and providing support to the appointed person where required.</p>
6.6 Property Officer (Statutory Compliance)	Appointed Person	Manages the day-to-day requirements relating to fire risk assessment. Control of record keeping and highlighting any issues arising which are a cause

Designation	Role	Responsibilities
6.7 Technical Services Manager	Responsible person for design and build	<p>concern.</p> <p>Delegated responsibility for ensuring that all new build design, and refurbishment works take into account the requirements of fire safety legislation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a Fire Safety Design Summary where required as required by The (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. • Completion of a fire safety design strategy and/or the appointment of a Fire Safety Engineer to assist with design matters as appropriate to the complexity of the project. • That documentation is available for inspection at the point of practical completion and that all physical infrastructure including passive and active fire protection measures are in place, including new or additional portable fire fighting equipment and fire safety signage and notices.
6.8 Lead officers/Heads of Establishment	Establishment dutyholder	Designated the responsible person in terms of the legislation to ensure the co-ordination and implementation of fire safety issues and corporate policy, this will be the Duty Holder for the premises. Generally this will be the most senior person in the building or location. The Duty Holder will have overall responsibility for the co-ordination of emergency arrangements including fire and first aid.
6.9 Fire Coordinator	Nominated person to co-ordinate fire evacuation	Working with the establishment duty holder they will liaise with the fire evacuation team and others to gather information on the location of the activation, of any signs of fire; persons still in the building; unaccounted persons; and disabled persons who may still be in the building. They will ensure that all persons are ushered to the recognised fire assembly points and, if called out and in conjunction with the Duty Holder will liaise with the emergency services on their arrival.
6.10 Fire Wardens	Nominated members of staff for designated areas of a building	They will assist in the initial evacuation of the building, marshalling personnel to the appropriate fire evacuation point.

Designation	Role	Responsibilities
		They will liaise with the Fire Co-ordinator and Duty-holder who will have overall control in an evacuation situation unless there are confirmed signs of fire in which case it will be SFRS.
6.11 Fire Officers	Assist duty holder and fire coordinator	Fire Officers will assist the Duty Holder and Fire Coordinator in carrying out their responsibilities, this may involve carrying out an investigation into the source of an activation following by the AFA protocol.
6.12 Health and Safety Team Leader and advisors	Competent advisor	Responsible for controlling, reviewing and updating the procedures and policies relating to the Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety in collaboration with the Duty Holder(s) and Responsible Persons(s). Monitoring compliance with these procedures and policies.
6.13 Employees	Compliance with this policy and procedure.	Comply with any processes or procedures laid down in this policy and to bring to the attention of the Dutyholders or Health and Safety any concerns regarding these procedures or Fire Safety measures..

7 KEY DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS

The following key duties and requirements under the legislation are expanded on in the guidance and arrangements document which accompanies this policy.

7.1 General Duties

- 7.1.1 This Policy is effectively implemented, with managers to whom specific responsibilities are allocated being aware of their responsibilities and appropriately trained to discharge their duties correctly.
- 7.1.2 Appropriate action is taken on matters pertaining corporately to fire safety which are brought to the attention of dutyholders or responsibly persons, and that the appropriate senior managers are made aware of those matters out with their control.
- 7.1.3 Corporate Fire Safety Standards are monitored to ensure that they are relevant and reflect industry best practice or statutory minimum standards where no such practice is recognised.
- 7.1.4 The corporate fire safety auditing system is effectively supported and an appropriate programme of functional audits are undertaken, to ensure reasonable feedback is provided to assess the management of fire safety within the Council.

-
- 7.1.5 Arrangements are made/maintained to provide for the effective discussion and consultation on fire safety matters and that appropriate facilities are made available to the recognised Trade Union Safety Representatives to allow them to carry out their prescribed function.
- 7.1.6 Managers at all levels will lead in the promotion of a positive fire safety culture by setting the standard and leading by example. They will each ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of their employees and all other persons who may be affected by the work of the Service from harm caused by fire in the workplace and take reasonably steps to ensure their safety.
- 7.1.7 All premises to meet the requirements of the relevant statutory provisions with regard, in particular, to emergency evacuation procedures and arrangements.
- 7.1.8 Fire risk assessments are carried out and that specific dutyholders are nominated to have fire safety responsibilities.
- 7.1.9 That fire risk assessments are reviewed before employing anyone under the age of 18.
- 7.1.10 That disabled persons are considered when undertaking the fire risk assessment in respect of their evacuation from the premises.
- 7.1.11 Those employees with responsibilities are made aware of their responsibilities and what is expected of them with due regard for the fire safety of themselves in following safe working practices as dictated by applicable Regulations, Approved Codes of Practice or Council Safety Standards.
- 7.1.12 Appropriate resources are allocated to permit the operation of a fire safe environment.
- 7.1.13 An appropriate course of action is taken when fire safety deficiencies are identified, and where such matters are cannot be resolved, ensure the issue is escalated to the appropriate senior management.
- 7.1.14 That appropriate arrangements exist and are implemented for the effective control of contractors working on the premises of the Council.

7.2 Physical Assets

- 7.2.1 The Physical Asset Service are responsible for:
- ensuring all properties owned and managed by Inverclyde Council have an appropriate fire risk assessment carried out to the extent to which the Council has responsibility for the property.
 - ensuring the Council attains legal compliance in all matters under their direct control relating to premises fire precautions through the integration of structural and fabric fire protection, and the inclusion of active systems for detection and control where appropriate;
 - ensuring fire precautions and safety systems are incorporated within new design works;
 - assessing, prioritising and seeking funding for improvements to fire precautions;
 - informing building occupiers and Lead Officers/Heads of Establishment of any changes to alarm systems;

- ensuring that testing and maintenance regimes, in respect of the Physical Assets Service areas of responsibility, are implemented, performed and recorded within the Fire Log Book;
- fire signage and maintenance of fire extinguishers;
- where appropriate ensuring fire alarm isolation procedures are communicated to those carrying out works in Council premises;
- ensuring fire risk assessments are carried out for each building or establishment under the Council's control.

7.3 Council Establishments

For each property/establishment under the control of the Council there will be the following in place as appropriate to the size and function of the property:

Written fire evacuation procedures and an Emergency Fire Action Plan which are brought to the attention of all employees with appropriate training being provided. In large premises (offices, schools, residential homes etc), particularly those occupying more than one floor, designated "fire wardens" should be appointed and trained in the primary role of assisting in the planned evacuation of the premises and the maintenance of fire precautions and procedures. A generic emergency evacuation procedure is available on the council intranet; Further information on the development of a this emergency evacuation procedure has been included in the guidance and procedures document.

At least two fire drills carried out a year, or at least one per term for Education properties. After each evacuation drill or actual fire situation a review should take place, and be recorded, in order that problems can be highlighted and any remedial action taken.

Fire procedure notices displayed, detailing the action to be taken in the event of fire. These must remain legible and up-to date and be replaced as required. This will ensure anyone else working on Council premises, for example, contractors and their employee(s) are notified of the procedures;

Through the risk assessment process and in conjunction with Physical Assets the property equipped to an appropriate level with means of escape, means of detecting fire and giving warning in the event of fire, means of fighting fires and arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire;

Through the risk assessment process and in conjunction with Physical Assets fire safety measures including all equipment will be kept in working order. This includes all fixtures and fittings such as fire doors, keeping staircases and corridors clear, fire detection and alarm systems, fire fighting equipment, notices and emergency lighting. Regular checks will be undertaken together with periodic testing, servicing and maintenance whatever the size of the premises. Further detail is provided in the guidance and procedures document. Any defects should be reported and corrected as quickly as possible.

Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) undertaken for all disabled employees and frequent users of Council premises, for example, pupils, clients of day care centers, residential homes. This will ensure suitable plans are in place for their emergency evacuation from the premises. Additionally Fire Co-ordinators, Fire Officers and Fire Wardens will be made aware of the outcome of any PEEP's undertaken within the premises.

Copies of the Emergency Egress Questionnaire and PEEP forms are available on the Council Intranet and in the guidance and procedures document.

Record the details of all fire drills, evacuations, staff training and instructions, together with routine testing and servicing carried out in a fire log book which shall be kept on the premises and be available for inspection by the enforcing authority.

Have contingency plans in place for when systems relating to fire are out of order, for example, alarm panels, smoke detectors;

Co-operate with anyone else who has fire safety responsibilities for the same premises (including sharing information about the activities/measures undertaken, where appropriate) and taking all reasonable steps to co-ordinate the fire safety measures regarding the premises

Ensuring all contractors are aware of the fire emergency procedures including the emergency evacuation arrangements determined from the completed fire risk assessment for the premises.

In the event of the Duty holders absence then a deputy must be nominated.

In the event of any emergency evacuation the duty holder will liaise with all appropriate persons to determine the overall response to the evacuation, including:

- Determination of whether there are signs of a fire
- Authorising further investigation of the alarm signal by following the AFA activation investigation protocol see guidance and procedures document.
- Evaluating all evidence presented and deciding whether to cancel the fire alarm and authorise re-entry to the building.
- Any positive signs of a fire will require an immediate call out to be made to 999 and fire service attendance requested.

Procedure for accompanying visitors including making them aware of the fire evacuation plan.

8 TRAINING

8.1 Information

Inverclyde Council recognises the need to provide staff with relevant information on Fire Safety. Employee awareness will help with the implementation of the policy and the fire prevention measures. Information on fire safety and fire prevention will be made available on the Council's Intranet System, via Line Managers and Trade Union Safety Representatives. The information will be updated on a regular basis.

8.2 Training

The Council recognises that training of managers and employees is important to ensure that all employees have the necessary skills to control the risks from fire within the workplace. The following training will be made available through the Corporate Training planner or if identified through the fire risk assessment process, other specialist training can be made available. All training provided will include information about this Council policy. Details of all Council training is available on the Council's Intranet.

-
- Fire Awareness Training
 - Fire Awareness Elearning Course
 - Fire Warden Training
 - Fire Risk Assessment Training
 - UFAS training

8.3 Communication of the Policy

The Council recognises the importance of communicating the policy to all employees. This policy will be communicated to staff via the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, any Service team briefing system and a copy will be placed on the Council's Intranet system.

9 MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy was ratified by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on <<>> and implemented immediately thereafter.
- 9.2 Regular monitoring and review are necessary to measure the effectiveness of the policy and to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of the Council. The Head of OD, Policy and Comms will have responsibility for the on-going monitoring and review of the policy, including taking action to amend the policy, where required, in consultation with staff.
- 9.3 The policy will be reviewed 12 months from implementation or major review and every five years thereafter unless there is significant change in legislative requirements; and/or incident investigation or fire risk assessment identifies a need for review. Measuring the effectiveness of the policy will include audits and inspections of fire safety and fire prevention, and investigation of fire incidents.