
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	17 September 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development (OD)	Report No:	PR/29/24/RB/KB
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	07385434459
Subject:	Corporate Policy and Performance Update: July-September 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:

- Programme for Government/Verity House Agreement;
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Excellence Awards 2024;
- Equalities, and
- Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance and agrees to receive a further annual report on the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network in 2025.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director - Education, Communities and OD

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 4 June 2024.

3.2 PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT/VERITY HOUSE AGREEMENT

3.3 In September 2023 the Policy and Resources Committee considered a report on the Verity House Agreement and the Scottish Government Programme for Government. It was proposed that future updates would be provided to Committee.

3.4 There is ongoing discussion at COSLA on dispute resolution in relation to the Verity House Agreement and updates will be brought to Committee when available.

3.5 A new Programme for Government was published on 4 September 2024 and is available via this link <https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2024-25-serving-scotland/> A report will be presented to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee with more detail on the plans and their implications for Inverclyde Council.

3.6 COSLA EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024

3.7 National awards for local government include those co-ordinated by COSLA. Gaining external recognition for Council initiatives helps to increase the profile of the Local Authority, benchmark best practice and boost staff morale.

3.8 At the COSLA Excellence Awards 2024, the Council has been named as a finalist in the *Just transition to a net zero* economy category for our work on improving Inverclyde's environment through peatland restoration and tree planting. The restoration of the Coves Local Nature Reserve saw the enhancement of a beauty spot with the creation of new paths, improved access and habitats through the thinning of overgrown areas and the planting of over 10,000 natural species trees. Duchal Moor peatland restoration is a three-year project which has significant impacts in reducing carbon dioxide emissions, attenuating water flow thus helping to prevent flooding, and enhancing wildlife habitats which improves biodiversity. Finalists were invited to present to a judging panel on 15 August 2024. The winners will be announced on 19 September 2024 at COSLA's Annual Conference and Exhibition 2024.

3.9 EQUALITIES

3.10 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

3.11 As Members will be aware, the following Policies were approved by the Committee at its meeting on 4 June 2024:

- Code of Conduct (Employees)
- Grievance, Dignity and Respect at Work Policy (Reviewed/Revised)
- Violence, Managing Aggression and Lone Working in the Workplace Policy (Reviewed/Revised)
- Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting)
- Implementation of the Equally Safe at Work accreditation programme and associated Violence Against Women Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy, and Equality and Diversity Policy.

3.12 The EIAs relating to the above Polices have been published on the Council's website and are available to view here <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2024>.

3.13 CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS' INNOVATION NETWORK

3.14 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), for an initial period of 3 years. This application was approved in October, and all councillors advised on 2 November. The Committee's approval of Network membership in September 2022 required officers to bring back annual reports highlighting the benefits which have arisen during the period of membership.

3.15 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 Cooperative Alliance. In particular, the Network promotes the transformation of communities through community action, community engagement and civic empowerment.

3.16 More information on the Network can be found on its website: <https://www.councils.coop/about-us>

3.17 In addition, at its meeting on 1 December 2022, the Council approved Cllr Cassidy's appointment to the Network's Executive Oversight Committee.

3.18 All members of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network benefit from the following:

- Access for Elected Members and officers to a wide network of local authorities who share a common purpose;
- Access to the Network's on-line resources, including case studies, <https://www.councils.coop/case-studies/>
- The potential to bid for funding to work on a case study, alone or in conjunction with other members;
- Access to conferences and training events to meet peers from other members;
- The ability to access a framework of specialist suppliers established by the Network for its members; and
- The opportunity to raise the Council's profile nationally across the UK.

3.19 The Council has taken advantage of these benefits in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Officer attendance at the virtual officers meeting;
- Cllr Cassidy's involvement in the Network's Executive Oversight Committee, and attendance at the Network's annual conference in 2023, there being no fee for this given the Council's membership;
- Sharing of local best practice through the inclusion of an Inverclyde Council case study in the national publication CCIN Case Studies Pack – 2024 <https://www.councils.coop/case-studies/download-2024-case-studies-pack/> This outlined the Inverclyde Culture Collective, which created a context for artists to experiment with alternate modes of sharing practice, developing partnerships and engaging with communities;
- Receiving information on initiatives underway in other local authorities. While we are yet to realise the full potential of this external learning officers will continue to look for opportunities, and
- A successful application by the Council to be a "Policy Prototype", receiving £2,000 funding from the Network, along with advice and experience from other areas. This has enabled development of graphically designed versions of the Council Plan and Partnership Plan, to make these documents more accessible and to stimulate engagement. Examples are

available at Appendix 1. These have been used at a variety of events including Clyde Conversations and employee workshops. The equipment purchased will also support future graphic design work within the Council.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the latest updates relating to the area of Corporate Policy and Performance and that the Committee will receive a further annual report on the Network in 2025.

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

5.2 Finance

Annual membership of the CCIN within 2023/24 was £5,400 with further proposed spend of £6,000 until September 2025, allowing for a small inflationary increase. In September 2023, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to meet the initial three-year cost through the Project Capacity Earmarked reserve

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Earmarked reserves	Projects – Officer Capacity	2023/25	£6k	EMR Budget	

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

This report supports the delivery of the following outcomes within the Council Plan 2023-2028:

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

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

our vision

committed

getting it right

nurturing

reliable

happening

positive

for everyone

dynamic

PLAN

getting it right

for everyone

dynamic

PLAN

getting it right

for everyone

dynamic

PLAN

getting it right

for everyone

dynamic

PLAN

THEME 3

PERFORMANCE

innovative

quality

value for money

supported

WE ARE HIRING

growing

thriving

sustainable

developed

robust housing

community

libraries

environmental

recycling

Healthcare

cafe

garden

ARCHITECT

Healthcare

Healthcare

Healthcare

THEME 2

PLACE

thriving

sustainable

developed

robust housing

community

libraries

environmental

recycling

Healthcare

Healthcare

THEME 1

PEOPLE

employed

healthy

supported

the best start for young people

reduced poverty

Safe

Safe

Safe

Safe

Meet the INVERSTARS

They will introduce you to the Alliance Partnership Plan.....

THEME 2 Working people

TEAM!

businesses reduce their carbon footprint

fair pay

growing businesses

skills for learning, life and work

THEME 3 Healthy people and places

our natural capital is looked after

healthier lifestyles

clean spaces

people live longer

THEME 1 Empowered people

recycling

voices heard about services that affect them

climate change

ECO

food pantry

housing

education

reduced poverty

Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023-33

getting it right for every child, citizen and community

THEME 4 A supportive place

Hello Salut Привет 你好 Ciao

address inequalities

support recovery

live safely and independently

improved community safety

protected and supported

THEME 5 A thriving place

safe places

ECO

energy efficient

future planning

encouraging people to stay

attractive area

strong community

sustainable transport

