

---

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 September 2024</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities and OD</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/31/24/RB/TM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tony McEwan</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712828</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Inverclyde Anti-Poverty Initiatives September 2024</b>		

---

## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with proposals for the Anti-Poverty Initiatives funded by the Inverclyde Council Anti-Poverty recurring budget for the period to March 2027.
- 1.3 Inverclyde Council and the HSCP allocated a total budget of £1.08 million per year for financial year 2021/22 and 2022/23 to fund a range of time-limited local initiatives to mitigate poverty and deprivation. The recurring budget of £472,000 is now fully allocated whilst an earmarked reserve is used to fund pilots/time limited initiatives.
- 1.4 Projects funded through the anti-poverty fund are subject to monitoring and review by the anti-poverty project group. Continued review of the IRISE project in particular has concluded that although some aspects of the project have had positive impacts, the project has been unable to achieve its original outcomes. Given the significant funding allocated to this project, and the spending profile to date this report recommends the early termination of the project in its current format as of 31 December 2024, with the remaining funding being returned to the Anti-poverty ear-marked reserve.
- 1.5 The report recommends the Committee also notes the progress and information in relation to other Anti-Poverty Initiatives including the Scottish Government Grant to extend the Early Adopter Community for Affordable All Age Childcare, the Child Poverty Accelerator Funding and a bid to the Scottish government for pathfinder funding.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- Notes the content of this report;
  - Approves the proposals for both the Warm Hand of Friendship and Duke of Edinburgh until March 2027;
  - Agrees to the early termination of the IRISE project with remaining Council funding being returned to the Anti-Poverty ear-marked reserve; and
  - Notes the update on projects funded by the Scottish Government grants.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 In 2021 Inverclyde Council and HSCP agreed to create a £1.08 million budget to fund a range of local initiatives to mitigate the impact of poverty and deprivation levels that were reported in the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020.
- 3.2 These initiatives are targeted towards communities and people most likely to be affected by deprivation, poverty, and inequalities, including males affected by drug and alcohol use, early intervention for families living in poverty and encouraging new businesses to start up in areas with the greatest deprivation levels.
- 3.3 The Full Council in December 2022 agreed a £600k saving from the Council's portion of the recurring anti-poverty budget of £830k, leaving £230k. It also agreed to add in existing Education funding for various education initiatives relating to anti-poverty, totalling £259k. Following reviews of the annual recurring funding as part of budget exercises, the total recurring anti-poverty budget available for 2024/25 is £472k.
- 3.4 In addition to the recurring budget there is an earmarked reserve made up of the carry forward from previous years' anti-poverty funding of £1,748,000 together with £500,000 additional funding from reserves, agreed by Members as part of the 2024/25 budget process to fund the continuation of current projects. There is currently £774,000 unallocated and is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.5 The Policy and Resources Committee has been keen that officers continue to review existing projects and also to bring forward new proposals for the unallocated anti-poverty budget. These proposals are detailed in section 4 below.

### **4.0 Anti-Poverty Project Proposals to March 2027**

- 4.1 In June 2024, Committee approved the budgets and progress made against the current anti-poverty initiatives. The Anti-Poverty Implementation Group were tasked with providing Committee with a report recommending, the allocation of the remaining funding to establish to impact and improve outcomes for local communities facing the greatest inequalities until March 2027.
- 4.2 **Duke of Edinburgh Scheme £120,000 (in total)**

The young people in Inverclyde who participate in Duke of Edinburgh participants gain valuable skills including teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and perseverance. These skills are crucial for success in education and future employment. The Duke of Edinburgh programme can break the poverty cycle by offering participants opportunities for personal development, leadership skills, and qualifications. These skills can improve job prospects in the long run, helping young people out of poverty. DofE also provides opportunities, new experiences, like expeditions or volunteering, which may not be readily available due to financial limitations for many young people in Inverclyde. These experiences can broaden horizons for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds helping them to connect with peers from different backgrounds.

Funding from the Anti-Poverty budget would support a continued strategy to implement a targeted approach by identifying opportunities to increase engagement and participation for young female's and for young people living the areas with the highest deprivation and poverty or facing inequalities. This will prevent low-income families from being excluded on the grounds of cost.

#### **4.3 Warm Hands of Friendship - Extend to March 2027 £120,000 per year for 3 years**

Inverclyde Council has provided financial support for the Warm Hand of Friendship initiative for the past two winter periods successfully supporting 58 local community organisations to deliver essential community services during the winter period. These services ranged from safe warm spaces and clothing distribution to meals provision, and community activities. Over 9,000 individuals benefitted, from the Warm Hand of Friendship initiative, there was a focus on prioritising vulnerable groups including lone parent families, families with multiple children, and older adults. Data collection revealed that the initiative helped address the difficult choice between food and heating, fostered social connections, and even led to the formation of lasting friendships and establishing support networks within the community.

It is recommended that the Anti-Poverty Funding continues to support the development and implementation of this initiative across Inverclyde until March 2027.

#### **4.4 IRISE**

Progress in relation to this project is regularly reported to this Committee and while the work which takes place with the client group has had some positive impact, the project has been unable to achieve the aims first set out. Due to the very complex nature of the needs of the client group, this pilot has established that until the very basic needs of clients have been met for a sustained period of time, meaningful employment may be some years off, if indeed possible at all. While there have been some successes with offering advice and accessing housing and other benefits, the anti-poverty steering group feel that these services are already offered elsewhere. Given the significant resourcing of this project and its inability to achieve its original outcomes, it is recommended that due to limited impact the project comes to an end on 31 December 2024. Any unallocated Council funding will be returned to the Anti Poverty reserve.

4.5 Subject to the above being agreed then there will be £294,000 unallocated plus the unused balance for the IRISE project. Officers would recommend retaining a balance at this time which will allow funding for future initiatives over the remaining life of this Council.

### **5.0 Other Projects/Updates**

#### **5.1 Credit Union Movement – Update**

The two credit unions have remained engaged with the Financial Inclusion partnership along with the Chief Executive Officer of Right Way Credit Union. Both Port Glasgow (1st July) and Tail o' the Bank (1st April) have now legally transferred to Right Way Credit Union. Both will operate with their own identity and from their own premises at least for the medium term. This move greatly strengthens the presence and resilience of Credit Unions within the Inverclyde area, with the safeguarding of savings and compliance and regulatory responsibilities now lying with RWCU. The Chief Executive of RWCU will continue to be part of the FIP and contribute to the updated FIP Strategy.

#### **5.2 External Anti-Poverty Grants**

In addition to the Inverclyde Council funded initiatives from the Anti-Poverty Funding, Inverclyde has also been successful in receiving additional Scottish Government grants to develop a whole systems approach to affordable childcare and supporting families who have high levels of anxiety and low mood and who has a child under the age of 5 years. This report provides progress on these externally funded initiatives and case studies are attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

### **5.3 Early Adopter Community for All Age Childcare £1,199,300 to from 1 Sept 2024 until 31 March 2026**

On July 4th, 2024, Inverclyde Council secured additional funding to extend the program until March 2026. This grant will allow for significant expansion to serve three localities with the highest inequalities by March 2026. This includes two locations in Port Glasgow, as well as establishing services in Greenock East Central and Southwest Inverclyde. From January 2025, families will be expected to pay for the childcare service, however, information, advice and capacity will be given to families to help them to apply for relevant social security or tax relief childcare funding. The Early Adopter Community will work alongside childcare providers to ensure the cost of the provision is kept affordable and flexible to meet the needs of the parents.

Not only will the expansion service three localities it will also be scaled to support and deliver to families with children 0-5years with childcare support, integrating with existing early years services. and will include local playgroups, family groups, and toddlers to expand childcare options within the community.

Since its launch, the program has successfully served over 40 children from 33 families. Currently, it offers after-school childcare and holiday childcare services, primarily supporting lone-parent households, the project supports Breakfast Clubs for 5 days per week in the Port Glasgow primary schools, providing a subsidised costs to those who meet the criteria. Support is also offered to the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) to recruit and upskill local childminders and to pay the cost of the childcare provision for the families who meet the criteria.

Key to the success of the early adopter community is the whole family approach ensuring families receive the services they need at the earliest intervention, that the services are place based and person centred. This includes childcare providers, welfare and advice services, employability services, early years programs, colleges, and family support services. Additionally, a co-design approach will continue to be developed, involving children, families, and childcare providers. This collaborative effort aims to identify successful methods in building an accessible, affordable childcare system with broader family support.

### **5.4 Child Poverty Accelerator Funded (CPAF) Project (£83000 in total) November 2023 - March 2025**

The Scottish Government's Child Poverty Accelerator Fund (CPAF) is supporting a collaborative project in Inverclyde aimed at developing a comprehensive theory of change for early intervention in tackling child poverty. This initiative leverages local and national expertise to engage families in a holistic support program. The project, led by Inverclyde Council in partnership with Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and delivered by a Home Start Inverclyde, adopts a person-centred, whole-systems approach.

Since its launch in November 2023, the Home Start intervention component has successfully engaged with 45 families. Notably, 58% of participating families have children under the age of one, highlighting the project's focus on early intervention. Additionally, 51% of families have at least one member with a disability, and 42% are lone-parent households, demonstrating the project's commitment to supporting vulnerable populations. The 45 families are participating in programmes designed to enhance self-esteem, confidence, and parenting skills facilitated by Home Start Inverclyde. Families are given to connect and build relationships with each other, fostering a supportive network and a comprehensive financial wellbeing assessment has been conducted to identify areas of need for income from social security and/or income from employment. The creation of this pathway passed on relationships between the parents and the collaborative services will empowering families towards greater financial security.

Initial findings from the Urban Foresight Evaluation highlight system-level change have fostered new, relationship-based pathways between Homestart Inverclyde and HSCP Welfare and Advice Services. This collaboration allows families to discuss financial concerns and access support to maximise their social security benefits. Additionally, they receive guidance on the impact of employment income on their overall financial well-being. Building on these successes, a further funding request was submitted during the recently closed Child Poverty Accelerator Fund Round 2. This underscores the commitment to continue learning from this innovative approach and ensure the sustainability of these valuable services.

### 5.5 Port Glasgow Pathfinder Project to March 2026

Inverclyde was successful in its bid to the Scottish Government to become a child poverty pathfinder, this is in line with other Early Adopter Communities in Scotland such as Dundee and Glasgow. The project will be delivered under the name “Fairer Futures Partnerships”. The Port Glasgow Pathfinder proposes a significant shift in public service delivery, moving towards a user-centric “no wrong door” approach. This ecosystem model will prioritise collaboration with service users to identify their needs and tailor support accordingly. This will involve piloting new service models, including streamlined initial contact with comprehensive assessments and “soft handovers” between services. Furthermore, co-locating relevant services will create a central hub fostering closer relationships between individuals, local services, and community organisations. This collaborative environment aims to empower people living in poverty by building trust, fostering self-reliance, and offering them greater choice and opportunity. The success of this pathfinder will inform the expansion of similar services to address deprivation and inequality throughout Inverclyde.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

### 6.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti-Poverty EMR		2024/25-2027/28	£480k		Based on proposals in 4.2 & 4.3 funded from unallocated balance
	I:Rise	2024/25	(£TBC)		Returned unallocated funding

--	--	--	--	--	--

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

#### 6.4 Human Resources

There are staffing implications in relation to any decision in respect of the IRISE project. The HSPC is working with HR in relation to this.

#### 6.5 Strategic

Tackling the causes of poverty and deprivation to reduce inequalities in Inverclyde is a key priority for Inverclyde Council and HSCP. This report provides recommendations which are in line with this priority.

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

N/A

##### (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.
	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

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.
	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?

X

YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.

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

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The CMT is supportive of the proposals in this report.

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.



**Anti Poverty Earmarked Reserve**

EMR Budget 2024/25 £1,748,000

Additional Funding from reserves (agreed 29 February 2024) £500,000

**Available Funding 2024/25** **£2,248,000**Commitments:

	Budget Allocation	Projection 24/25	Spend to 31/08/24
Employment IRISE (agreed P&R 25 May 2021)	£641,000	£321,000	£28,652
Additional Food Insecurity Funding (agreed P&R 21 November 2023)	£37,000	£37,000	£7,500
Dedicated Team Leader Funding (agreed P&R 23 May 2023)	£13,000	£13,000	£4,546
Scottish Welfare Fund (agreed P&R 21 November 2023)	£125,000	£50,000	£0
3 Year Clothing Grant (agreed Full Council 29 February 2024)	£300,000	£0	£0
3 Year Clothing Grant Primary (agreed Full Council 29 February 2024)	£126,000	£0	£0
4 Year Free School Meals (agreed Full Council 29 February 2024)	£232,000	£43,000	£0

Total Commitments **£1,474,000** **£464,000** **£40,698****EMR Balance Unallocated****£774,000**Proposals per Section 4:

Duke of Edinburgh Proposal	£120,000	£40,000	£0
Warm Hands of Friendship Proposal	£360,000	£120,000	£0

**Total Commitments including new proposals** **£1,954,000** **£624,000** **£40,698****EMR Balance Unallocated****£294,000****£2,248,000**

## Appendix 2 – Case Studies

### Early Adopter Community for Affordable Childcare:

The Early Adopter Community for Affordable Childcare has proven to be a pivotal initiative in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by families in our community. By providing accessible and affordable childcare, this program has empowered parents to pursue education, employment, and improved financial stability.

To date, 33 families, comprising 43 children, have benefited from the program, receiving comprehensive support ranging from childcare provision to financial advice. The program has specifically targeted families experiencing significant barriers, with six families including a disabled adult or child, 25 lone-parent households, eight families with three or more children, and three kinship care families.

Family Category	No. of Families supported*
Families with a disabled adult or child	6
Families where the mother is aged under 25	-
Families with a lone parent	25
Families with a baby aged under 1	-
Families with three or more children	8
Families where English is a second language	-
Families of kinship care/care experience	<5

A dedicated project team has been instrumental in building trust and relationships with families, facilitating open conversations about financial circumstances and accessing support services. This engagement has evidenced and reporting a 100% increase in parents' ability to work or study due to the childcare provision. 88% of families have increased their working hours, and 44% have sought financial advice, highlighting the program's effectiveness in addressing economic inequalities.

Two parents have returned to education, an ambition they attribute directly to the availability of affordable childcare. Additionally, the high prevalence of children with additional support needs among program participants has necessitated enhanced training for staff, demonstrating the program's adaptability to diverse family circumstances. 3 families advise that they face financial insecurity and have received guidance to maximise their income, 2 families have received redundancy and requested welfare advice and support, families have advised that they have benefited from advice because they have been off work due to mental health circumstances and their wages have been reduced. Families have also asked for housing allocation support and financial advice when English is a second language.

One parent stated “***I gave up a part-time job to finally follow my dreams of going back to education, I’ve always worked part-time around the children and when this opportunity presented, I knew it was time and applied for university and was accepted. This wouldn’t have been possible otherwise***”.

A key learning from the service delivery is to acknowledge the high number of children who have a diagnosis of having additional support needs (24%). The children attend mainstream school however, the staff providing the out of school children care have received enhanced training. One carer advised ***“The after-school care allows the children to learn in a way they didn’t get to as smaller children, they get to build meaningful trusting relationships with staff, and I cannot thank you enough for this, I don’t know what I would do without the support”***.

Overall, the Early Adopter Community for Affordable Childcare has demonstrated its efficacy in improving family well-being, increasing employment opportunities, and addressing financial challenges. By providing targeted support and building strong relationships with families, the program has emerged as a vital resource for the community.

### **Inverclyde Whole Family Wellbeing Model/ Inverclyde Child Poverty Accelerator Fund**

Inverclyde Council and HSCP is implementing a Whole Family Wellbeing model through the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund (CPAF) project in partnership with Home Start Inverclyde. This initiative is grounded in the belief that by adopting a holistic, person-centred approach, we can empower parents experiencing poverty to make informed decisions and improve their circumstances.

The Home Start component of the project focuses on 45 families in Greenock East/Central, with a particular emphasis on parents with mental health concerns or anxiety and children under five years. This targeted approach involves one-to-one support and group activities to foster peer connections and resilience. By creating a safe and supportive environment, parents are encouraged to share experiences and learn from each other. Moreover, wellbeing discussions are integral to understanding and addressing the unique needs of these families. A significant proportion of these families include children under one year old and/or have a family member with a disability.

The CPAF funding has enabled Inverclyde Council to establish new pathways to support, strengthen relationships with families, and enhance the services provided by the Advice and Welfare team. This approach fosters trust and open dialogue, encouraging parents to discuss financial challenges and explore employment opportunities. By prioritising relationship building, we aim to create an environment where parents feel comfortable sharing sensitive information about debt and financial insecurity.

A notable success story involves a young couple supported by Home Start. Both of the individuals have care experience, they faced challenges in parenting and building trust with external agencies. The intensive support provided by a Home Start Family Support Worker was instrumental in rebuilding their confidence and accessing essential services. This holistic approach, encompassing emotional support, practical guidance, and financial advice, has empowered the couple to overcome adversity.