
Report To: Policy and Resources Committee **Date:** 4 February 2025
Report By: Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development **Report No:** PR/01/25/MR/KM
Contact Officer: Morna Rae **Contact No:** 01475 712146
Subject: Corporate Policy and Performance Update: November 2024-February 2025

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

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

- The Young Person's Guarantee;
- Best Value;
- Participatory Budgeting;
- PG250; and
- Public Service Awards, 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Approves the Council formally pledging its support for the 'Young Person's Guarantee'; and
- Notes the latest updates in relation to Best Value, Participatory Budgeting and PG250;
- Notes the recent success for the Council at the Public Service Awards 2024.

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 19th November 2024.

3.2 YOUNG PERSON'S GUARANTEE

3.3 The Young Person's Guarantee is a national commitment to connect every 16- to 24-year-old in Scotland to an opportunity e.g. a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering.

3.4 Currently, more than 1,000 organisations across Scotland are involved in the Young Person's Guarantee. The pledge of support is built around areas of support and creating opportunities for young people and could involve actions such as:

- Preparing young people for the world of work;
- Investing in a skilled workforce; and
- Creating an inclusive and fair workplace.

The Council is already carrying out these activities therefore no additional work is anticipated at this stage.

3.5 The potential benefits to the Council include:

- Raising awareness of the Council as an employer.
- Helping with recruitment, retention and succession planning.
- Developing existing staff.
- Gaining new ideas and insights from a generationally diverse team.

3.6 Subject to the approval of this Committee, once the Council pledges its support for the Young Person's Guarantee it will become part of a network of pledge employers and partners which will support the Council in planning and developing the ways in which we engage with young people, both now and in the future. The Council will also be able to obtain advice through the Developing the Young Workforce network.

3.7 UPDATE ON BEST VALUE DEVELOPMENTS

3.8 The integrated approach to the audit of Best Value in Councils is now in its third year. The key elements of the audit approach are (i) a Controller of Audit Report for every Council in Scotland, which is considered by the Accounts Commission on a phased basis and (ii) an annual thematic inspection report, on a different topic each year, which is published alongside the Annual Audit Report.

3.9 In year one (reporting from October 2023 to August 2024), Controller of Audit reports were published for South Ayrshire, Dundee City, Dumfries and Galloway, Orkney, Moray, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils. Since October 2024, two further Controller of Audit reports have been published: City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Borders Council. All reports are available on the Audit Scotland website: <https://audit.scot/publications/search>

3.10 Scottish Borders Council has received the most positive Controller of Audit report to date. The Council was found to have a clear vision for the future and is taking innovative approaches to

making savings and tackling recruitment challenges. It was also noted that the Council is reforming how it works in response to many of the challenges it faces.

3.11 The timetable for the year three Controller of Audit reports to the Accounts Commission, which will be published between October 2025 - August 2026, includes Inverclyde Council. The other Councils included in this reporting year are North Ayrshire, Aberdeenshire, North Lanarkshire, Shetland Islands, Glasgow City, Stirling and Angus Councils.

3.12 The next BV thematic inspection will focus on: 'Transformation – How Councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes'.

3.13 The CMT has been taking forward improvement activity in this area, with the Improvement Service due to deliver a session to the ECMT on 23rd January 2025. Proposals for leadership development sessions, which include a focus on transformation, are also being devised. Other development areas relating to this theme are also being considered.

3.14 **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**

3.15 Inverclyde Council is required to report annually to the Scottish Government on the amount of budget subject to participatory budgeting (PB). PB is about involving communities in decisions regarding existing resources, and there is a target of 1% of the Council's budget. The 2023/24 return noted that no budget was subject to PB within the reporting period.

3.16 Although our approach in Inverclyde has not resulted in any PB activities, we have made significant progress through various events aimed at supporting community empowerment without specifying a monetary amount. One of the main objectives was to restructure our approach to community engagement, creating a more diverse and inclusive approach, laying a strong foundation for future PB initiatives. Over the past year, a significant focus has been on strengthening the role of Community Councils. This effort led to a review of the scheme of establishment and Community Council elections, incorporating various methods of community engagement and gathering over 1,500 responses. Additionally, we have made substantial progress in developing six locality action plans, which will help shape opportunities for PB across the local authority. More than 450 community members contributed to shaping these plans.

3.17 We are launching a new community conversation approach to enhance engagement and empowerment, creating a foundation for future Participatory Budgeting (PB) activities. A central element of this approach will be the Consul platform, which will facilitate community conversations and provide an accessible and sustainable digital platform for community engagement and empowerment.

3.18 Communities have also been engaged in discussions about Council budget decisions to help shape the decision-making process.

3.19 **PG250**

3.20 This year, Port Glasgow celebrates its 250th anniversary. Inverclyde Council will be coordinating a range of projects to mark this - businesses, organisations and communities alike are also encouraged to get involved in commemorating this milestone with activities and events.

3.21 A public consultation has been launched to gain feedback from communities on proposed celebratory projects led by Inverclyde Council and to provide an opportunity for individuals to put forward any additional suggestions. The survey has been created on the new CONSUL platform and is being pushed out via Inverclyde Council social media channels to the end of January. The survey is available here: <https://inverclyde.communitychoices.scot/>

- 3.22 In addition, a new PG250 brand has been created. It is intended that the brand is open source, to allow partners, businesses, organisations and communities to utilise it in their own activity. A brand toolkit is in development which will be circulated. A communications plan is currently being drafted mapping out key milestones, announcements and launches.
- 3.23 The Council is also working with the Comet Festival Committee to consider ways of extending the duration and developing the existing Festival programme for 2025.
- 3.24 **SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS, 2024**
- 3.25 At the Public Service Awards held on 10th December 2024, Inverclyde Council was announced as the winner of the 'Sustainability Award' for its work in improving Inverclyde's environment through peatland restoration and tree planting. This is the second award for these projects, following success at the COSLA Excellence Awards 2024.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to approve that Inverclyde Council formally pledges its support for the Young Person's Guarantee.
- 4.2 The Committee is also asked to note the latest updates relating to the areas of Best Value, Participatory Budgeting, PG 250 and Corporate Awards.

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

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 3: Performance

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

Pledging to support the Young Person's Guarantee would assist the delivery of the following key themes in the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy (POD) 2024/27:

- Employee Skills Development, Leadership, Succession Planning (Employees are our most Valuable Resource)
- Employer of Choice (Continuous Improvement)

6.0 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 None.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.