Inverclyde
council

Municipal Buildings, Greenock PA15 1LY

Ref: CMD

Date: 24 January 2025

A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 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 3 February 2025 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.

LYNSEY BROWN
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

BUSINESS

** Copy to follow

1.	**Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**	**Page**
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT		
2.	**2024/25 Policy & Resources and General Fund Revenue Budget** Report by Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	**p**
3.	**Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2024/28 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 2024-February 2025** Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	**p**
6.	**Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 – Mid-year progress report 2024/25** Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	**p**
NEW BUSINESS		
7.	**Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantries** Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	**p**

8.	**2025 Greenock West and Cardwell Bay Community Council Interim Election** Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	**p**
REMITS FROM COMMITTEES		
9.	**Corporate Risk Register – Remit from Audit Committee** Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	**p**
ROUTINE DECISIONS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING		
10.	**OD, Policy and Communications Policy Updates** Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	**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

Inverclyde council

Report To:	**Policy & Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive**	**Report No:**	**FIN/04/25/AP/AB**
Contact Officer:	**Alan Puckrin**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712090**
Subject:	**2024/25 Policy & Resources and General Fund Revenue Budget**		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☐For Decision   ☒For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the proposed position of the 2024/25 Policy & Resources Revenue. The report also highlights a projected overspend in the overall General Fund Revenue Budget and the impact this will have on the General Fund Reserve.

1.3 The revised 2024/25 Revenue Budget for the Policy and Resources Committee is £26,264,000, which excludes Earmarked Reserves. The latest projection is an overspend of £220,000 (0.83%), mainly due to a £250,000 shortfall within the Pay Inflation Contingency. Overall, this is a reduction in overspend of £84,000 since last reported. 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 £530,000, a reduction in costs of £482,000 since last reported, this is mainly due to a reduction within teachers employee costs due to a number of vacant posts from August 2024. Based on these figures the Council's unallocated Reserves are currently projected to be £0.060million less than the minimum recommended level of £4.0million by 31 March 2025.

1.5 This report also includes updates in respect of earmarked reserves spend, Workstream Savings and the Common Good Revenue budget.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 Note the current projected overspend in the Committee's Revenue Budget for 2024/25 of £220,000, a reduction of £84,000 since the last report.

2.2 Note the projected overspend of £530,000 for the General Fund and the projected reserve balance of £3.940 million as at 31 March 2025.

2.3 Note the projected 2024/25 surplus of £10,800 for the Common Good Budget set out in Appendix 5.

2.4 Note the update in relation to the Savings Workstream programme set out in Appendix 9.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
 Education, Communities & ODHR

Louise Long
Chief Executive

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the current position of the 2024/25 Revenue Budget and to highlight the main variances contributing to the projected overspend of £220,000 for 2024/25.

3.2 The revised 2024/25 Revenue Budget for the Policy & Resources Committee is £26,264,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. This is an increase of £1,066,000 from the approved budget largely due to additional Scottish Government funding received. Appendix 1 gives more details of this budget movement.

3.3 <u>2024/25 Projected Outturn - £220,000 overspend 0.83 %</u>

The main projected variances contributing to the net overspend are listed below –

(a) Overall committee Employee Costs are projected to underspend by £100,000 due to an over achievement of turnover savings to date. This is an increase in turnover of £52,000 since the last report.

(b) The Revenues & Benefits section are reporting a £21,000 overspend within postages, this is due to a £12,000 one-off charge for re-billing of the 2024/25 Council Tax notices and additional postages charges relating to an increase in the volume of reminder notices. No change from last committee.

(c) Statutory Additions Income is projected to be £54,000 under-recovered in line with last year.

(d) Over-recovery of income within Revenues & Benefits of £57,000, this is mainly due to one-off SWF administration income from the Government with no off-setting costs..

(e) Over-recovery of £37,000 projected within Council Tax Prior Years based on collection rates and previous years outturn.

(f) Projecting an overall combined overspend of £57,000 within ICT computer software and hardware. Officers from Finance & ICT Services are currently reviewing in detail whether this pressure is time-limited or recurring and a report is scheduled to be submitted to CMT.

(g) Projected over-recovery of £32,000 for ICT service recharges for internal maintenance recharges for computer equipment purchased outside of the refresh programme.

(h) External Licences are currently projecting at an under recovery of £36,000 for liquor and taxi operators. These projections are in line with previous outturns.

(i) £250,000 overspend within the pay inflation contingency based on the accepted 2024/25 pay award. This is outwith an additional £77 million funding from the Scottish Government. The agreed pay award will be vired from the Pay Contingency to all Services for next Committee.

3.4 <u>General Fund Budget & Reserves Position</u>

Appendix 6 shows that the General Fund is projecting a £530,000 overspend (excluding Health & Social Care) which represents 0.21% of the net Revenue Budget. All committees are reporting an overspend; Policy & Resources Committee £220,000, Environment & Regeneration of £197,000 and the Education & Communities £39,000.

3.5 Reserves

Appendix 4 gives an update on the Committee's operational Earmarked Reserves, i.e. excluding strategic funding models. Spend to 31 November 2024 on these operational Earmarked Reserves is £539,000 (6.91% of projected spend), the majority of the earmarked reserve budgets within the Policy & Resources reserves occur at the end of the year. Appendix 7 gives the overall earmarked reserve position which shows £237,000 (8.93%) slippage against phased budget.

Appendix 8 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 31 March, 2025 is £3.940 million which is £0.060 million below the minimum recommended balance of £4.0 million. A review of reserves has been undertaken by the CMT and reported to the 23 January Council. The balance of £3.94m excludes decisions taken at Committee on 23 January 2025.

3.6 Workstream Savings

Appendix 9 provides the latest update on the Workstream savings. It can be seen that there remains a projected shortfall of £74,000 against the 2024/25 target . Since report to the last Committee, the Asset Management saving has been rephased over 2026/28. In addition the energy workstream target has been increased by £100,000.

3.7 Virements

None.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Committee's own revenue budget is showing a £220,000 overspend. The 3 service budgets are showing a projected underspend of £30,000 an improvement of £84,000 since the last 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**

The Financial Regulations state the responsibility for ensuring Revenue Budgets are not exceeded lies with the Committee and budget holding Chief Officers.

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 The paper has been jointly prepared by the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director Education, Communities, and Organisational Development and the Chief Executive.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 There are no background papers for this report.

Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2024/25

Service	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Movements Inflation £000	Virement £000	Supplementary Budgets £000	Transferred to EMR £000	Revised Budget 2024/25 £000
Finance	5,634	33	7	426		6,100
Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services	5,279	0	107	0		5,386
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,301	0	(47)	0		2,254
Chief Exec	336	0	0	0		336
Miscellaneous	11,648	(1,333)	191	1,682		12,188
Totals	25,198	(1,300)	258	2,108	0	26,264

Supplementary Budget Detail

	£000

Inflation

Miscellaneous - Pay Inflation	(1,180)
Miscellaneous - Non Pay Inflation	(153)
Accountancy - Comp Soft Maint (CIVICA PAY)	6
Revs & Bens - DHP	19
R&B - Postages (Critiqom)	8
	(1,300)

Virements

Legal - Information Goverance Monies from Social Work	131
Legal - Members Superann reduction returned to Contingency Fund	(57)
Reg - Monies to Finance Creditors Post	(7)
ICT - NWOW Monies from Property Services	40
HR - Employee budget reduction from budget upload error returned to Contingency Fund	(47)
Miscellaneous - HR employee budget returned to Contingency Fund	47
Miscellaneous - Election Superann returned to Contingency Fund	57
Miscellanous virements	87
Fin- Monies to Finance for Creditors Post	7
Child Redress Scheme- insuramnce fund contribution	
	258

Supplementary Budgets

Scottish Welfare Fund	
SNCT Pay Offer	426
Teacher Pensions	415
	1,267
	2,108

Total Inflation & Virements	**1,066**

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

2023/24 Actual £000	SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Revised Budget 2024/25 £000	Projected Out-turn 2024/25 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
10,153	Employee Costs	8,639	8,735	8,635	(100)	(1.1%)
739	Property Costs	744	744	744	0	-
895	Supplies & Services	915	969	1,044	75	7.7%
2	Transport & Plant	5	5	5	0	-
1,279	Administration Costs	1,331	1,339	1,290	(49)	(3.7%)
28,636	Payments to Other Bodies	38,954	44,658	44,916	258	0.6%
(28,404)	Income	(25,390)	(30,186)	(30,150)	36	(0.1%)
13,300	**TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE**	**25,198**	**26,264**	**26,484**	**220**	0.8%
	Earmarked reserves			0	0	
13,300	**Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves**	**25,198**	**26,264**	**26,484**	**220**	

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

2023/24 Actual £000	OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Revised Budget 2024/25 £000	Projected Out-turn 2024/25 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
5,793	Finance	5,634	6,100	6,087	(13)	(0.2%)
5,571	Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services	5,279	5,386	5,344	(42)	(0.8%)
2,431	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,301	2,254	2,263	9	0.4%
2,431	**Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities & Organisational Development**	**13,214**	**13,740**	**13,694**	**(46)**	(0.3%)
380	Chief Executive	336	336	352	16	4.8%
(875)	Miscellaneous	11,648	12,188	12,438	250	2.1%
1,936	**TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE**	**25,198**	**26,264**	**26,484**	**220**	**0**
	Earmarked reserves		0	0		
1,936	**Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves**	**25,198**	**26,264**	**26,484**	**220**	

POLICY RESOURCES

REVENUE BUGET MONITORING REPORT

MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)   Appendix 3

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

MATERIAL VARIANCES

Outturn 2023/24 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2024/25 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 2024/25 £000	Projection 2024/25 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000	Percentage Variance %
	Finance Services						
1,630	Accountancy - Employee Cost	1,482	920	890	1,497	15	1.0%
1,406	R&B - Employee Cost	1,227	766	752	1,242	15	1.2%
61	R&B - Postages	56	36	43	77	21	37.5%
(250)	R&B - Statutory Additions	(294)	(159)	(121)	(240)	54	(18.4%)
(64)	R&B - Income	(31)	(24)	(39)	(88)	(57)	183.9%
	R&B Ctax Prior Years	(330)			(367)	(37)	11.2%
	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications						
2,023	ODHR - Employee Cost	1,887	1,137	1,098	1,867	(20)	(1.1%)
	Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services						
4739	Employee Costs	3,838	2,313	2,220	3,712	(126)	(3.3%)
587	ICT - Supplies - Software Maintenance	661	639	721	711	50	7.6%
(299)	ICT - Admin Costs - Telephone Recharges - offset in Income	333	222	219	302	(31)	(9.3%)
(60)	ICT - Income Costs - Telephone Recharges - offset in Admin	(333)	(222)	(216)	(302)	31	(9.3%)
(49)	ICT - Income - Recharges (5 Year Computer Refresh)	(30)	(20)	(62)	(62)	(32)	106.7%
(310)	Legal - Income Licenses	(327)	(218)	(202)	(291)	36	(11.0%)
	Miscellaneous Services						
	Pay Inflation Contingency	8,038	0	0	8,288	250	3.1%
9,414	**TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES**	16,177	5,390	5,303	16,346	169	

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

Category	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding 2024/25 £000	Phased Budget 2024/25 2024/25 £000	2024/25 Spend 2024/25 £000	Projected Spend 2024/25 £000	Amount to be Earmarked for 2025/26 & Beyond £000	Lead Officer Update
B	Early Retiral/Voluntary Severance Reserve	Alan Puckrin	3,127	0	0	700	2,427	Projection for 24/25 based on offers expected to be issued linked to 25/26 savings & workstreams.
C	Equal Pay	Morna Rae	100	0	0	0	100	Balance for equal pay legal fees which is under review on an annual basis
C	Digital Strategy	Louise Long	1,149	141	173	344	805	2024/25 Committed project costs to date; purchases of Schools Cashless Catering System replacement £39K and CRM Replacement systems inidicative timeline £16K, Revenue and Benefits Victoria Forms system (est cost £37K), Project Officer Post £39k (29/05/24 for 2 years), ICHRIS upgrade (£105k) with temp Service Improvement Lead from 01/07/24, CLD Digital Outcome Solution £19k, Civica Pay Upgrade £66k & Engage subscription (1 year) £22k.
C	Welfare Reform - Operational	Alan Puckrin	52	0	0	10	42	Employee Costs £10k in 24/25, £42k uncommitted.
C	Anti-Poverty Fund	Ruth Binks	2,248	64	56	368	1,880	Proposals to utilise £480k of the unallocated balance of £774k agreed at P&R 17 September 2024. Also proposal to terminate the IRISE project early with the balance of funding remaining within the Anti Poverty EMR. The projected spend, and phasing has been adjusted on this basis. The balance currently unallocated is £270k after the P&R Committee on 19 November agreed to utilise up to £600k of this to create a Fuel Poverty Fund.
B	Loan Charge Funding Model	Alan Puckrin	3,621	0	0	1,113	2,508	Based on Dec Finance Strategy including a further £2.8million over 2024/27 to the EMR to deliver a recurring saving from 2025/26.
B	2023/26 Budget Funding Reserve	Alan Puckrin	9,000	0	0	2,628	6,372	Per approved 2024/26 Budget.
C	ICT Technicians To Support Digital School Inclusion/Covid Recovery	Lynsey Brown	14	14	13	13	1	Completed. Monthly Employee Costs. 1 x Service Desk Operator (until 01/09/24).
C	New Ways of Working	Stuart Jamieson	258	50	0	188	70	Work on-going on James Watt building for transfer of HSCP staff from HMH.

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

Category	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding 2024/25 £000	Phased Budget 2024/25 2024/25 £000	2024/25 Spend 2024/25 £000	Projected Spend 2024/25 £000	Amount to be Earmarked for 2025/26 & Beyond £000	Lead Officer Update
C	Project Resource	Louise Long	83	0	0	63	20	Budget set aside to aide the process of difficult to fill posts and certain council memberships/reviews. Projects approved to date; Co-operative Councils membership £5k, Solace assistance to fill CFO post (£20k est) & (£25k est) for Solace Leadership Management programme. Unallocated balance as at P6 of £33k with £20k to be written back.
C	Scottish Welfare Fund	Alan Puckrin	129	0	0	0	129	To Pay for the balance of Scottih Welfare Fund Crisis Grants expenditure as funded by Scottish Government. To be carried forward to 25/26
C	Smoothing Reserve (Service Consession)	Alan Puckrin	490	0	0	201	289	Phasing over 2023/28, per Feb 2023 report.
B	Budget Delivery Reserve	Alan Puckrin	2,671	30	237	1,546	1,125	Allocated costs to date: ASN transport (£800k), HR Review (£120k), Utility Costs (£1m), IL Smoothing Reserve (£200k), Winter Gritting (£300k), Finance Officer (£90k), SWAN contract (£370k) & Catering Review (£30k).
C	Student Training Fees	Morna Rae	80	0	3	13	67	The funding is to support professional qualifications and the consequent retention and development of employees. Spend for 24/25 is £13k across Revenues & Benefits, Environmental & Legal . Remainder £67k uncommitted.
C	IRI Smoothing Reserve	Alan Puckrin	946	0	0	0	946	Linked to Dec Finance Strategy, where it was agreed that a further £300k to be added to support model.
C	Empty Property Relief	Alan Puckrin	80	0	6	6	75	£94k for E&R Business Support transferred to E&R , £5.5k cost EPR software for upcoming EPR changes. Remainder £75k balance to be carried forward to cover any retrospective applications for Empty Property Relief.
C	Elections 2024/27	Lynsey Brown	300	80	43	60	240	Budget approved at 2024/25 budget process for local election costs.
C	Allocation towards Historic Child Abuse settlements	Alan Puckrin	500	0	0	500	0	Add to the Insurance Fund during 24/25. HSCP contribution of £500k due 2025/26.
	Total Category A		0	0	0	0	0	
	Total Category B		18,419	30	237	5,987	12,432	
	Total Category C to E		6,473	357	302	1,810	4,664	

COMMON GOOD FUND

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024/25

		Final Outturn 2023/24	Approved Budget 2024/25	Budget to Date 2024/25	Actual to Date 2024/25	Projected Outturn 2024/25
		£	£	£	£	£
PROPERTY COSTS		**47,219**	**65,200**	**32,700**	**14,760**	**58,700**
Repairs & Maintenance		19,144	17,500	8,800	10,730	17,500
Rates	1	23,171	23,200	11,600	0	23,200
Property Insurance		4,034	8,000	4,000	4,030	8,000
Property Costs		870	16,500	8,300	0	10,000
ADMINISTRATION COSTS		**6,200**	**7,700**	**800**	**0**	**7,700**
Sundries		0	1,500	800	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
OTHER EXPENDITURE		**114,192**	**109,500**	**46,400**	**44,400**	**109,500**
Christmas Lights Switch On		10,500	10,500	0	0	10,500
Christmas Decorations		38,885	44,000	1,440	1,440	44,000
Gourock Highland Games		29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Armistice Service		9,527	8,300	260	260	8,300
Comet Festival		13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300
Events		4,000	4,000	2,000	0	4,000
Bad Debt Provision		8,580	0	0	0	0
INCOME		**(202,080)**	**(183,700)**	**(90,100)**	**(91,210)**	**(186,700)**
Property Rental		(228,200)	(234,200)	(117,100)	(117,100)	(234,200)
Void Rents	2	33,164	54,000	27,000	25,890	54,000
Internal Resources Interest		(7,044)	(3,500)	0	0	(6,500)
NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE		**(34,469)**	**(1,300)**	**(10,200)**	**(32,050)**	**(10,800)**
EARMARKED FUNDS		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE		**(34,469)**	**(1,300)**	**(10,200)**	**(32,050)**	**(10,800)**

	£
Fund Balance as at 31st March 2024	**158,037**
Projected Outturn 2024/25	**10,800**
Expenditure on Port Glasgow Burgh 250th Anniversary approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 13th August 2024	**(40,000)**
Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2025	**128,837**

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:

	Vacant since:
12 Bay St	April 2015, currently being marketed
10 John Wood Street	August 2018
17 John Wood Street	June 2023

Policy & Resources Committee

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25

Committee	Approved Budget 2024/2025	Revised Budget 2024/2025	Projected Out-turn 2024/2025	Projected Over/(Under) Spend	**Percentage Variance**
	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	
Policy & Resources	25,198	26,264	26,484	220	**0.84%**
Environment & Regeneration	21,394	21,519	21,716	197	**0.92%**
Education & Communities	116,384	118,425	118,464	39	**0.03%**
Health & Social Care	73,714	73,988	74,563	575	**0.78%**
Committee Sub-Total	**236,690**	**240,196**	**241,227**	**1,031**	**0.43%**
Loan Charges	16,590	16,590	16,590	0	**0.00%**
Saving Approved yet to be Allocated **(Note 1)**	(100)	(100)	(100)	0	**0.00%**
Workstream Savings Approved **(Note 2)**	(364)	(419)	(345)	74	**0.00%**
Service Concession Flexibility	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)	0	**0.00%**
Contribution from Other Funds **(Note 3)**	0	(87)	(87)	0	**0.00%**
Earmarked Reserves	0	300	300	0	**0.00%**
Total Expenditure	**251,166**	**254,830**	**255,935**	**1,105**	**0.43%**
Financed By:					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates **(Note 4)**	(210,221)	(212,088)	(212,088)	0	**0.00%**
Contribution from General Reserves **(Note 5)**	(2,628)	(4,425)	(4,425)	0	**100.00%**
Council Tax	(38,317)	(38,317)	(38,317)	0	**0.00%**
Integration Joint Board - Contribution to Reserves	0	0	(575)	(575)	**100.00%**
Net Expenditure	**0**	**0**	**530**	**530**	

Note 1 - Approved savings yet to be allocated

Note 2 - Workstream Savings Approved yet to be vired

Note 3 - Contribution from Insurance Fund for redress scheme

Note 4 - General Revenue Grant - Includes Teachers Hold Back fundin

Note 5 - General Revenue Grant - £1.797m funded from Capital Grant

Earmarked Reserves Position Statement   **Appendix 7**

Summary

Committee	Total Funding 2024/25	Phased Budget	Spend 2024/25	Variance Actual to Phased Budget	Projected Spend 2024/25	Earmarked 2025/26 & Beyond	2024/25 %age Spend Against Projected	2024/25 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		
Education & Communities	435	101	98	(3)	175	260	56.00%	(2.97%)
Health & Social Care	5,975	1,275	567	(708)	1,946	4,029	29.14%	(55.53%)
Regeneration & Environment	6,827	894	1,216	322	2,543	4,284	47.82%	36.04%
Policy & Resources	24,892	387	539	152	7,797	17,096	6.91%	39.15%
	38,129	2,657	2,420	(237)	12,461	25,669	19.42%	(8.93%)

Actual Spend v Phased Budget   **Behind Phasing =**   **(£237k)**   **(8.93%)**

Last Update (Period P6)   **Behind of Phasing =**   **(£64k)**

Increase in slippage   **(£174k)**

GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION
2024/25

	£000	£000
Usable Balance 31/3/24		4470
Available Funding:		
Actuarial Pension Review (2024/26)	9000	
Additional IRI 2023/27	3500	
Reduced Use of Reserves Budget 2024/26	384	
IRI shortfall 2023/26 (£3.5m less £3.144m Actual 2023/24)	356	
Earmarked Reserve required for 2024/25	160	
		13400
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) 2024/25	(530)	
		(530)
Use of Balances Approved February 2024:		
Additional IRI to Loans Charges	(3000)	
Increased support to the Revenue Budget over 2024/28	(6000)	
Increased support to the 2024/28 Capital Programme	(4400)	
		(13400)
Projected Reserve Balance		**3940**

Minimum Reserve recommended is £4 million

Policy & Resources Committee

Workstreams Saving Monitoring at December 2024

Saving Title	CMT Lead Officer	Chief Officer Update	Approved Saving 2024/25 £000's	Achieved to Date 2024/25 £000's	Projected Saving 2024/25 £000's	Over achievement/ (Shortfall) 2024/25 £000's	Approved Saving 2025/26 £000's	Achieved to Date 2025/26 £000's	Projected Saving 2025/26 £000's	Total Projected Saving 2024/26 £000's	Over achievement/ (Shortfall) 2024/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	Est FTE Impact
Income Generation **Original Target £700k**	A Puckrin	5% increases in fees/charges for both 2024/25 and 2025/26 agreed as part of the 2024/26 Budget. Balance anticipated to come from Inchgreen JV no later than 2025/26. No Change.	250	245	245	(5)	450	256	455	700	0	0	0	0.0
Procurement **Original target £600k, then £750k , then £805k (to fund Procurement post) now £945k over 24/27 after £140k New target added. Note 2**	S Jamieson	£671k achieved in 2024/25 from the new Residual Waste contract with £80k achieved from the new SWAN contract. This has been phased 50% 24/25 and 50% 25/26 and requires £350k investment from the Budget Delivery emr. CMT have increased the target by £55k in order to help increase capacity within the Procurement Team. Proposal to increase target further developed as part of August 2024 savings exercise by £140k including purchase cards.	710	711	711	1	165	40	164	875	0	70	0	(2.0)
Energy **Original Target £500k , now £950k**	A Puckrin	£800k reduction in gas/electricity budgets over 2023/26 approved as part of the 2024/26 Budgets. The 2025/26 position will continue to be monitored given the global issues that could impact. A £50k reduction in fuel costs was applied from 2024/25 based on 2023/24 out-turn.2025/26 saving under review following receipt of October update. An increase in target of £100k aprpoved P&R January 2025.	250	250	250	0	700	600	700	950	0	0	0	0.0
Asset Management **Original Target £400k**	S Jamieson	Initial saving will arise from the demolition of Hector McNeil House as part of the Levelling Up Fund project later in 2024. Officers developing a process for the consideration by members of other proposals which was presented in October.

2025/28 phasing reviewed. | 50 | 0 | 0 | (50) | 50 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 200 | 100 | 3.8 |
Management Restructure Ph3 **Original Target £200k**	L Long	Update presented to 14.11.24 Programme Board and 19.11.24 P&R Committee agreed to use £104k from the contingency to meet the 31.3.26 projected shortfall. Shortfall updated in line with latest saving proposal, now utilising £65k from contingency balance.	0	0	0	0	200	0	135	135	(65)	12	0	2.5
Digital & Customer Services **Original Target £100k**	L Long	A number of projects delivering service improvements progressing . Updated via regular reports to Policy & Resources Committee. Update to 14.11.24 Programme Board and 19.11.24 P&R Committee agreed to use £35k from the contingency to meet the 31.3.26 projected shortfall. In line with latest saving proposal, shortfall increased to £41k funded from contingency.	20	0	0	(20)	80	0	59	59	(41)	17	0	2.0
Community Learning & Development- Delivering Differently Review **Original Target £180k**	R Binks	Working Group set up now CLD inspection is concluded. Report due late 2024. Initial £40k delivered this year through vacancy management. Final report to 21.01.25 E&C Committee.	40	40	40	0	140	0	140	180	0	0	0	4.3
Schools Catering Review **Original Target £120k**	R Binks	3.8FTE vacant posts delivering an £80k saving in 25/26 have already been identified and APSE are undertaking a review with the service to identify potential areas for efficencies. This review takes place in the first months of 2025.	0	0	0	0	100	0	100	100	0	20	0	3.8
Teachers **Original Target £520k**	R Binks	Saving sheet prepared on basis of 8 FTE reduction and on the assumption that mitigations will be accepted by the Scottish Government. Proposed to take full saving in 2025/26 on basis that posts are already vacant. Saving proposal now subsitiued by other teacher funding.	0	0	0	0	325	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Over achievement Contingecy **Currently £300k**	A Puckrin	This reflects the fact that targets exceed the overall allowance in the 2024/26 Budget. Policy & Resources Committee approved the use of £139k on 19.11.24. Phasing updated, £106k required from contingency.	0	0	0	0	(300)	0	(194)	(194)	106	0	0	0.0
Totals			**1,320**	**1,246**	**1,246**	**(74)**	**1,910**	**896**	**1659**	**2905**	**0**	**319**	**100**	**14.4**

Report To:	**Policy & Resources Committee**	Date:	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Chief Financial Officer**	Report No:	**FIN/05/25/AP/MT**
Contact Officer:	**Matt Thomson**	Contact No:	**01475 712256**
Subject:	**Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2024/28 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 2024/28 Capital Programme.

1.3 The Policy & Resources Capital Programme has a capital budget over 2024/28 of £7.337m with total projected spend on budget. The Committee is projecting to spend £0.668m in 2024/25 which is the same as the approved budget.

1.4 The overall 2024/28 Capital Programme budget is £79.625m with projects totalling £82.189m. This represents a £2.564m (3.22%) over allocation. This is within the agreed 5% tolerance. In the current year net slippage of £0.159m, (0.83%) is being reported. The slippage has occurred in the programme within the individual Committees as follows; Health & Social Care (£2.347m) offset with in advancement within Environment & Regeneration (£0.654m advancement) and Education & Communities (£1.534m advancement). A further breakdown of this movement can be seen within the individual breakdown per Committee in paragraph 3.13. Expenditure at 30 November was £11.080m.

1.5 The draft Capital Settlement for 2025/26 has been issues by the Scottish Government and has resulted in an increase for the General Capital Grant in comparison to what was initially estimated by officers. The overall impact on the Capital Programme is a £0.630m decrease in the deficit. The 2025/28 Capital Programme will be approved as part of the overall Budget at a special Council meeting scheduled for 6 March.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the current position of the 2024/28 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and the current position of the 2024/28 Capital Programme.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee note the impact of the draft Settlement from the Scottish Government on the Capital Programme and that the Council will approve the 2025/28 Capital Programme at a Council meeting on 6 March 2025.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0   BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1   On 29 February 2024 the Council approved the 2024/28 Capital Programme as part of the overall Budget approval. This report shows the current position of the approved Policy & Resources Capital Programme as well as the position of the overall 2024/28 Capital Programme.

2024/28 Policy & Resources Capital Position

3.2   The Policy & Resources capital budget is £7.337m. The current projection is £7.337m which means total projected spend is on budget.

3.3   The approved budget for 2024/25 is £0.668m and the Committee is projecting to spend £0.668m in 2024/25. The spend at 30 November is £0.354m (52.99%) of the approved budget.

3.4   PC Refresh Programme – The 2024/25 Refresh programme is now nearing conclusion in the corporate environment. A programme replacing the first phase of laptops procured following the pandemic and shortly after are being replaced. In tranche one 420 devices have been deployed. Tranche two saw an order for a further 240 devices and the programme is well underway with planned completion by the end of February 2025. A final "clear up" tranche is planned for early 2025. A number of devices have been redeployed in the school's estate as a result of the refresh

3.5   Server and Switch Replacement – Several servers are being upgraded in response to security and performance requirements, in response, a range of network and server replacement programmes are being developed. Several device replacements across the network estate to improve service and support the implementation of SWAN2 are now under way. Options for improvements to back-up systems are being developed and the replacement of the file storage system in the school estate is being considered.

3.6   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 £2.771m has been allocated by Committee leaving an unallocated balance of £1.329m.

3.7   As part of the 2024/28 Capital Programme approval in February, £3.75million generated from reprofiling loans charges repayments was allocated towards the refreshed asset management strategies. These are due to be completed by March 2026 and this expenditure is phased accordingly.

2024/28 Capital Programme

3.8   The overall 2024/28 Capital Programme reflects the confirmed 2024/25 capital grant. The 2024/25 allocation is £9.022m, however this includes £0.052m allocation for Coastal Change Adaptions which is passported to the Property Assets budget, £0.188m for Play Parks strategy which is passported to the Environmental budget and £3m which must be used for the Pay Award. Therefore, available core funding is £5.782m.

3.9   The draft 2025/26 Capital Grant has now been issued by the Scottish Government and is, £6.851m. The Capital Programme has been updated to reflect the draft Grant with corresponding expenditure added where appropriate. This has resulted in a decrease in the deficit of £0.630m. An estimate of the 2025/28 programme, reflecting this settlement and increased estimated Grants in 2026/27 and 2027/28, together with recommendations regarding the use of any available resources will be progressed through the 2025/26 Budget setting process.

3.10   An over provision of projects against estimated resources of up to 5% is considered acceptable to allow for increased resources and/or cost reductions. Currently the Capital Programme is reporting an over provision of £2.564m which represents 3.22% of the 2024/28 estimated resources.

3.11   In terms of the overall Capital Programme, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that at 30 November 2024 expenditure in 2024/25 is currently 57.1% 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 3.13 of this report. Overall Committees are projecting to outturn on budget.

3.12   In the current year net slippage of £0.159m, (0.83%) is currently being reported. This is due to slippage within Health & Social Care (£2.347) largely offset by advancement within Education and Communities Committee (£1.534m) and Environment & Regeneration Committee (£0.962m).

3.13   The position in respect of individual Committees for 2024/25 is as follows:

Policy & Resources
Expenditure as at 30 November 2024 is £0.354m against an approved budget of £0.668m.

Environment & Regeneration
Expenditure at 30 November 2024 is £8.198m against an approved budget of £13.022m. Net advancement of £0.654m (4.95%) and is mainly due to advancement in West Blackhall Street (£1.009m) offset by slippage in various projects such as Place Based Funding (£0.170m), Port Glasgow Town Centre Regeneration (£0.100m) & Coastal Change Adaptations (£0.090m) alongside other minor movements across the committee.

Education & Communities
Expenditure at 30 November 2024 is £2.514m against an approved budget of £1.907m. Net advancement of £1.534m (79.52%) mainly due to advancement within Parklea Branching Out (£0.200m), the New Community Hub at the King George VI Building (£0.302m), complete on site projects (£0.035m) and the Education Lifecycle Fund (£1.019m).

Health & Social Care
Expenditure at 30 November 2024 is £0.014m against an approved budget of £3.447m. There has been slippage in this Committee of £2.347m (68.09%). All the slippage is due to the delayed start of the New Community Hub Project.

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, however, the 2024/28 Capital Programme remains affordable based on current estimates.

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

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 issues to raise as part of this report.

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.

COMMITTEE: POLICY & RESOURCES

Appendix 1

Project Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Est Total Cost	Actual to 31/3/24	Approved Budget 2024/25	Revised Est 2024/25	Actual to 30/11/2024	Est 2025/26	Est 2026/27	Est 2027/28	Future Years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy & Resources									
ICT									
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	8	-	0	8	7	0	0	0	0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	295	-	0	295	293	0	0	0	0
Meeting Room, Videoconferencing & Hybrid Working Equipment	2	-	48	2	0	0	0	0	0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	55	-	0	55	54	0	0	0	0
Home Working Allocation	15	15	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Annual Allocation	1,883	-	532	230	0	585	534	534	0
ICT Total	**2,258**	**15**	**590**	**590**	**354**	**585**	**534**	**534**	**0**
Miscellaneous									
Capital Programme Contingency	1,329	-	78	78	0	890	361	0	0
Asset Management Strategy	3,750	-	0	0	0	0	1,750	2,000	0
Miscellaneous Total	**5,079**	**0**	**78**	**78**	**0**	**890**	**2,111**	**2,000**	**0**
TOTAL	**7,337**	**15**	**668**	**668**	**354**	**1,475**	**2,645**	**2,534**	**0**

Capital Programme - 2024/25 - 2027/28

Available Resources

	A	B	C	D	E	G
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Capital Support	9,022	6,851	5,750	5,750	-	27,373
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	434	315	315	315	-	1,379
Capital Grants (Note 2)	5,534	341	-	-	-	5,875
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	3,245	7,796	4,174	2,714	125	18,054
Balance B/F From 23/24	12,513	-	-	-	-	12,513
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	603	4,531	4,864	4,433	-	14,431
	31,351	19,834	15,103	13,212	125	79,625

Overall Position 2024/28

	£000
Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-E)	79,625
Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-F)	82,189
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources	(2,564)
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %	(3.22)%

Note 1 (Capital Receipts)

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	369	315	315	315	-	1,314
Contributions/Recoveries	65	-	-	-	-	65
	434	315	315	315	-	1,379

Note 2 (Capital Grants)

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000			£000
Government Grant - Place Based Funding	170	-				170
Free School Meals	621	-	-			621
Watt Institute LED Lighting	41	-	-			41
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	538	341	-			879
SPT	29	-	-			29
Boglestone Community Centre	500					500
Peatland Action Trust	769	-	-			769
Sustrans	2,866	-	-			2,866
	5,534	341	-	-	-	5,875

Note 3 (Prudentially Funded Projects)

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Vehicle Replacement Programme	511	1,265	1,214	1,214	-	4,204
Borrowing in lieu of VRP Reduction	-	636	-			636
Asset Management Plan - Depots	128	50	160			338
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	6	-	200	-	125	331
New Community Hub	1,100	4,345	1,100			6,545
Additional Prudential Borrowing to Fund Capital Programme	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500		6,000
	3,245	7,796	4,174	2,714	125	18,054

Appendix 2b

Capital Programme - 2024/25 - 2027/28

Agreed Projects

Committee	A Prior Years	B 2024/25	C 2025/26	D 2026/27	E 2027/28	F Future	G Total	H Approved Budget	I (Under)/ Over	J 2024/25 Spend To 30/11/2024
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy & Resources	15	668	1,475	2,645	2,534	-	7,337	7,337	-	354
Environment & Regeneration	8,738	13,876	12,343	15,275	7,840	125	58,197	58,197	-	8,198
School Estate	279	2,035	2,200	4,667	5,000	-	14,181	14,181	-	1,777
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	1,333	1,428	305	401	120	-	3,587	3,587	-	737
HSCP	655	1,100	6,452	1,700	-	-	9,907	9,907	-	14
Total	11,020	19,107	22,775	24,688	15,494	125	93,209	93,209	-	11,080

Inverclyde council

AGENDA ITEM NO: 4

Report To:	**Policy & Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Chief Financial Officer**	**Report No:**	**FIN/06/25/AP**
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 provide an update to Committee on several matters relating to the Finance Service and to seek specific approval for a time limited proposed change to Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grant payments policy.

1.3 This update to Committee provides updates in terms of the following:
- Non-Domestic Rate- Empty Property Relief
- Pensions Winter Heating Payment
- E-billing/e forms
- Scottish Welfare Fund - Increased funding
- Internal Audit Shared Services

1.4 Specific approval for the proposals relating to Crisis Grant payments are sought at an estimated cost of £130,000 to 31 March 2026.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the various updates from the Finance Service.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee approve the proposal to pay £100 to eligible crisis grant applicants who require assistance with heating costs and that this policy change will be reviewed later in 2025/26.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The Finance Service covers a wide range of functions ranging from Accountancy, Payables, Treasury/Insurance to Revenues, Benefits Discretionary Payments and from 1 January, Internal Audit. The following update largely focuses on matters relating to Revenues, Benefits and Discretionary Payments.

3.2 **Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief**
The Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (NDR EPR) policy was agreed by committee in January 2023 with a budget of £500,000. Amendments to the Policy were agreed in February 2024 when it was decided that any sums remaining at 31 March each year be retained to smooth the variable demand or reinvested to provide support local businesses to occupy vacant properties. Expenditure for 2023/24 was £308,500, with relief being provided in respect of 240 accounts with £94,000 being allocated for business investment and the balance allocated to a smoothing reserve.

3.3 Expenditure for 2023/24 was £308,500, with relief being provided in respect of 240 accounts with £94,000 being allocated for business investment and the balance allocated to a smoothing reserve. Expenditure in 2024/25 at the point of the report being written is £480,500 in respect of 187 accounts. The increased expenditure is principally an allocation of £192,000 for the premises formerly occupied by Amazon which received 100% rates relief until 1st August 2024 followed by relief for the remainder of the year at 10%. Committee is asked to note that there will be no residual balance from the NDR EPR budget in 2024/25 to support business investment in 2025/26. Should this business premises remain empty for the whole of 2025/26, the cost will be £53,960 meaning less pressure on the budget and improving the prospect of funding being available for investment in 2026/27.

3.4 **Anti-Poverty Fund – Pension Age Fuel Poverty Payments**
The Inverclyde Pension Age Fuel Poverty Payment of £200, approved by the committee in November 2024, was credited to the Council Tax accounts of more than 1,000 low-income pension age households identified from Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit records, who do not qualify for the Government Pension Age Winter Fuel Payment. Furthermore, applications were invited from 195 households exempt from paying Council tax due to all chargeable adults being classed as "Severe Mentally Impaired" (SMI) to assess their entitlement to the Council £200 payment.

3.5 Council tax notices showing the one-off payment were issued before Christmas to those entitled to the Council tax account credit. Notices showed in most cases, a credit balance or a reduction in customers' instalments for the remainder of the billing year, freeing up household income to meet fuel bills. Customers whose accounts were in credit and who do not owe Council tax in any prior year have received a refund where bank details are held by the service, or a letter to apply for a refund. The service is in the process of assessing completed applications from households exempt from paying Council tax and reminder letters were sent to the billing address or a point of contact address where provided, for those who did not respond. Customers have been informed completed applications will be accepted until 14th February 2025.

3.6 **Council Tax online services**
The Council tax online system for electronic bills (e.bills) and electronic forms (e.forms) is on target to change from February 2025. E.forms have been operating with customers who contact the customer service centre since early January and current users of the online services will receive an email informing them of the new service. The new e.billing system, planned to be promoted from early February 2025, is more user friendly than the system it replaces therefore improved customer satisfaction and increased uptake are expected. Electronic forms for non-

domestic rates customers will be provided for the first time and are scheduled to be launched by early spring.

3.6 **Scottish Welfare Fund**
Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) allocations have not kept pace with inflation. A recent survey showed councils being required to heavily supplement allocations with council resource, with most councils restricting the provision of SWF grants since 2018/19 to those applications which are determined High Priority. The most severe restriction, High Most Compelling (HMC) priority rating can be implemented if there is a risk of running out of funds before the end of the financial year. The Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO), the independent reviewer of the SWF, published a report on 19 November 2024 expressing concern about the increasing occurrence of Councils applying the HMC priority rating and the impact on applicants. Inverclyde Council has operated at High Priority since 2021 and has not been required to move to HMC.

3.7 The Scottish Government announced an additional £20 million non-recurring funding for SWF in December 2024 as part of a package of £41 million to support people with energy costs this winter. The council's share of the programme funding allocation is £373,000 and is to be treated as an in-year top-up, involving no additional conditionality for SWF assessments. Councils can carry forward underspends in any financial year to top up the programme fund in future years. The additional programme funding increases the 2024/25 SWF budget to £1.349 million, comprising core allocation, recurring/one-off anti-poverty funding, earmarked reserves plus the £373,000 one off increase in funding. Projected Scottish Welfare Fund expenditure at 31 December 2024 was £634,000, exceeding the core Scottish Government programme funding by 12%.

3.8 The SWF can help with fuel costs for those with pre-payment meters to ensure their energy supply continues. Those who pay by any other method are excluded from the fund because their supply will not be disconnected, even when accounts are in arrears. The majority of approved crisis grant applicants receive assistance with food and fuel costs with the amount of grant provided set at a level sufficient to meet basic needs until the date the applicant's next benefits payment or income is due.

3.9 The SWF is a suitable mechanism to deliver additional one-off support for fuel costs from the additional funding allocation to those in poverty who meet the SWF criteria but cannot access government fuel funds. The SPSO was approached and agrees with the rationale and that it is appropriate avenue for support within the scheme.

3.10 **Internal Audit- Potential wider shared service**
At the December meeting of the Council elected members supported a small expansion to the number of posts covered under the existing shared arrangement with West Dunbartonshire Council. Recruitment to these posts is progressing. The same report indicated that discussions with a third council were also progressing and that an update would be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee early 2025.

3.11 Officers can advise that following further detailed review by the third council they have decided not to progress any further with this option and as such officers will focus on ensuring the current two council arrangement works as effectively as possible.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed to provide a one-off payment of £100 to SWF crisis grant applicants where the applicant is approved for assistance with fuel costs, and they are not eligible for the government Pension Age Winter Fuel Payment or did not receive the Inverclyde Council Pension Age Fuel Poverty Payment. The one-off payment would be paid with the approved SWF award.

4.2 It is proposed to introduce the one-off payment to new SWF applicants from 5th February 2025 and if agreed would cost around £20,000 for the period until 31 March 2025 and a further £110,000 if continued throughout 2025/26. The allocation notified on 16 December 2024 provided limited time to introduce a revised policy therefore expenditure in 2024/25 will be low. It is proposed to review the provision later in 2025 in conjunction with the balance of the Anti-Poverty Heating Support fund approved at November 2024 Policy and Resources Committee

4.3 A proposed budget saving from April 2025 allows the current SWF policy which tops up grant awards by 20% above the minimum grant level to continue for an estimated three years, met by reserves. Any underspend from the top-up funding will secure a further extension to the policy.

4.4 It is proposed that the Committee note that the potential expansion of the two Council Internal Audit Shared Service is not proceeding at this point in time.

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
Scottish Welfare Fund	Crisis Grants	2024/25 2025/26	£20k est £110k est		Met from the extra £373k SWF grant in 2024/25. Unused balance added to the SWF EMR.

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 issues arising from this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no HR issues arising from this report.

5.5 **Strategic**

Supporting some of the most vulnerable via the proposed change to the SWF policy aligns with the Council's strategic priorities.

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 and will be completed prior to the Committee
	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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The employees and Trades Unions have been advised of the updated Internal Audit Shared Service position.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Inverclyde council

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.

Inverclyde council

Report To:	**Policy and Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Head of OD, Policy and Communications**	**Report No:**	**PR/02/25/KM**
Contact Officer:	**Rhoda Braddick**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712146**
Subject:	**Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 – Mid-Year Progress Report 2024/25**		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☐For Decision ☒For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with a mid-year progress report (2024/25) on the Council Plan 2023/28 and seek approval for its publication. The progress report covers the period 1st April – 30th September 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Considers the Council Plan mid-year progress report 2024/25; and
- Approve its publication on the Inverclyde Council website.

Morna Rae
Head, OD, Policy and Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 At its meeting on 20 April 2023, The Inverclyde Council approved the adoption and implementation of a new five-year Council Plan 2023/28. The new Council Plan also detailed the range of high-level plans and strategies being progressed across the Council, the successful delivery of which will support the achievement of the Council Plan outcomes.

3.2 The Plan sets out the Council's vision: The Inverclyde Commitment: Success for All – Getting it Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community. It also established high-level outcomes under the three strategic themes of People, Place and Performance.

3.3 The Inverclyde Council also approved the governance arrangements for the Council Plan, namely the presentation of an Annual Report and a mid-year progress report to the Policy and Resources Committee. The Annual Report 2023/24 was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 19th November 2024.

3.4 **COUNCIL PLAN MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25**

3.5 The Council Plan mid-year progress report 2024/25 is attached for the consideration of the Committee as appendix 1. In keeping with the style of the latest Annual Report, the report provides information on:

- The delivery of the Council's key strategic plans;
- The delivery of key projects and initiatives within the Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans 2023/26; and
- Partnership projects and initiatives that are being led by Inverclyde Council and delivered under the umbrella of the Inverclyde Alliance.

3.6 Performance data is also provided for the Council Plan KPIs where 2024/25 data is available. The performance data provided relates to performance between 1st April – 30th September 2024.

3.7 The Committee is asked to note that the report covers the reporting period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024 and as such, does not include new developments that have occurred after this period, for example:

- The approval given by this Committee at its meeting on 21st November 2024 to create a fuel poverty fund;
- The official opening of Parklea Branching Out Community Hub and Café; and
- Service recognition at national awards such as the Scottish Public Service Awards, 2024 for peatland restoration and tree planting.

Developments from 1st October 2024 onwards will be captured within the Council Plan Annual Report 2024/25.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the progress made in delivering the Council Plan in the first six months of 2024/25, and approve its publication on the Inverclyde Council website.

4.2 As the Council's strategic planning and performance management framework is dynamic, the Committee is asked to note that performance reporting on the Council Plan may evolve to ensure that performance reporting is as timely and accessible as possible.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

5.2 **Finance**

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 **Legal/Risk**

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a duty on Councils to publish a range of information as set out by the Accounts Commission's SPI Direction, the latest version of which is the "Publication of Information (Standards of Performance) Direction 2024 Statutory Performance Indicators". The publication of this progress report helps fulfil the Council's obligations under the Direction.

5.4 **Human Resources**

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

5.5 **Strategic**

This report provides information on progress in delivering the Council Plan 2023/28 over the period 1st April 2024- 30th September 2024 and as such, is relevant to the delivery of all Council Plan outcomes.

6.0   CONSULTATION

6.1   None

7.0   BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Council Plan 2023/28

Mid-year performance report 2024/25

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

Introduction: Our Council Plan 2023/28

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

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

PEOPLE

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

Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced.

People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing.

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

Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported.

PLACE

Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable.

Our strategic housing function is robust.

Our economy and skills base are developed.

We have a sufficient supply of business premises.

Our natural environment is protected.

PERFORMANCE

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

Our employees are supported and developed.

This progress report 2024/25 should be considered alongside the Council Plan Annual Performance Report 2023/24, which can be found here: https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/performance/council-plan.

Theme 1 **PEOPLE**

Why is this a priority?

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

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

Theme 1 PEOPLE

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

PROGRESS IN 2024/25

◆ Early Adopter Community for all age childcare

Since its launch, the Early Adopter project has successfully served over 40 children from 33 families. In July 2024 the Council secured additional funding to extend the program until March 2026, enabling significant expansion to the three localities with the highest inequalities. This includes two locations in Port Glasgow, as well as establishing services in Greenock East Central and Southwest Inverclyde.

The project will also be scaled to support and deliver to families with children 0-5 years 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.

◆ Fairer Futures Partnership

Inverclyde was successful in its bid to the Scottish Government to become a child poverty pathfinder, with the project delivered under the "Fairer Futures Partnerships" banner. The Port Glasgow Pathfinder proposes a significant shift in public service delivery, moving towards a "no wrong door" approach. The model will prioritise collaboration with service users to identify their needs and tailor support accordingly to build trust, foster self-reliance, and offer greater choice and opportunity. Its success will inform the expansion of similar services to address deprivation and inequality throughout Inverclyde.

◆ British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

The second British Sign Language Plan 2024/30 has been published to support and promote the rights of BSL users. The Action Plan, which was developed following extensive consultation, reflects the nine priority areas of the BSL National Plan 2023/29 and is available on the Council's website: Final British Sign Language Plan 2024/30 - Inverclyde Council

◆ Food for Life Award 2024

The 'Food for Life Served Here' Bronze Award has been attained for the sixth year. Around 5,000 nutritious, sustainable and locally sourced Food for Life meals are served every day in Inverclyde's 20 primary schools and 19 nurseries.

The Food for Life Award aims to make good food accessible for all, delivering a positive impact on health, the environment and the local economy.

◆ Anti-poverty initiatives

Funding to mitigate the impact of poverty locally has been allocated once again. Amongst the projects that will be delivered are:

- The Warm Hand of Friendship initiative which has supported over 9,000 residents over the previous two winters. Evaluation shows that the initiative helped to address the difficult choice between food and heating and fostered social connections and community support networks. Funding for this project will continue until March 2027.
- The continuation of a targeted approach for the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, to increase participation of young females and those living in areas with the highest deprivation and poverty to prevent low-income families from being excluded on the grounds of cost.

  Funding for the IRise Project will end from 31 December 2024. This follows an evaluation of the project outcomes achieved set against the original project aims.

Information on reducing child poverty will be presented in the Inverclyde Child Poverty Local Action Report 2024/25, which is due to be presented to the Education and Communities Committee in November 2024.

◆ **Inverclyde Libraries Dementia Services Pathfinder**

Building on existing partnership working with Alzheimer's Scotland, Inverclyde Libraries is actively supporting the 'Dementia Friendly Inverclyde' initiative led by Your Voice.

All branch libraries offer quality assured information around dementia and make available resources and/or signpost to services for those with dementia and their families and library staff have undergone Dementia Friendly training. Your Voice has audited all 6 branch libraries, making recommendations to ensure that the library service was providing a dementia friendly environment for its customers.

A series of Dementia Friendly Open sessions have been held in 3 library branches to date, showcasing the library service's dementia support to new and existing customers.

◆ **Battery Park Lighting Project**

Improved lighting has been installed in the Battery Park following a Public Space, Activity and Women's Safety Survey which highlighted safe walking spaces as a concern. A follow up consultation which ran during summer 2023 received over 500 responses, with 90% agreeing that lighting the park would increase their perception of safety and they would use the park more. The new lighting was switched on in September 2024.

◆ **Supporting care experienced children**

In June 2024, Care Experienced children and young people were supported to design and deliver a one-day conference at the Beacon Arts Centre, exploring care experience and how our workforce and communities can better support children, young people and their families to thrive. Over 100 people participated in the conference and workshops and the young people plan to take forward their plans including a 'Care Aware' Schools movement across Inverclyde.

The Mind of My Own app continued to be promoted to offer children and young people a digital platform to share their voice and views. This included training the Additional Support Needs team to ensure we hear from children and young people with disabilities and complex needs, as well as to the New to Scotland team.

Inverclyde was nominated as one of the Most Improved Organisations for Mind of My Own, reflecting its increased use by children and the workforce. In addition, the iPromise Lead won an award for going the extra mile in supporting the app.

The 'Practice Pad', the first project to be delivered as part of The Lens partnership working project, opened in summer 2024 with the aim of better preparing young people for their future aspirations of independent living, providing an opportunity to increase their skills and confidence in a supportive environment.

◆ **Working towards a 'Trauma Informed Council'**

In June 2023, the Council approved the adoption of the Leadership Pledge of Support to become a trauma informed organisation. To take this forward, in April 2024, an Elected Member briefing session was held with representatives from the Inverclyde Trauma Informed and Responsive Practice Strategic Group, including colleagues from the 3rd Sector, Council, HSCP and Police Scotland supporting the briefing. The session included an overview of trauma informed practice and the national and local context for this work, examples of trauma informed approaches in practice, and group discussions to reflect on the impact of trauma in our communities.

Leadership awareness and commitment is vital to creating the culture described in the pledge and this event was an important step towards meeting these aims.

◆ **Reshaping Homeless Services**

A collaborative project between Homeless Network Scotland and the HSCP involving people with lived experience of homelessness to shape and improve services was launched during the summer. Homeless Network Scotland is supporting the establishment of the group and providing essential training for an initial nine-month period, after which it is anticipated that the group will be equipped to work independently.

Theme 2 PLACE

Why is this a priority?

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

Theme 2 PLACE

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

PROGRESS IN 2024/25

Locality Planning

In its role as a key Community Planning Partner, the Council has led a new approach to community engagement within Inverclyde's six locality areas. Work has focused on the development of a new digital platform 'Inverclyde Community Choices' and the transition to a new 'community conversation week'.

The pilot initiative, which will take place once a year in each locality, will run from October to December 20224 in Port Glasgow, Greenock East and Central, and Greenock South and Southwest, followed by sessions in Greenock West and Gourock, Inverkip and Wemyss Bay, and Kilmacolm and Quarriers Village from January to March 2025.

Repopulation

Concerns in respect of local depopulation and challenges linked to repopulation have been raised at a national level by the Council over a prolonged period. Now, as part of the Scottish Government Addressing Depopulation Fund, Inverclyde has been offered part funding for the creation of a community settlement officer post, with the Council meeting the remainder of the cost.

Details of the post are being finalised, however, it is envisaged that the role will provide an opportunity for research into the local drivers of depopulation to ensure the best possible impact of future interventions. It will also provide tailored support to those currently living in, or are moving to the area, helping to develop bespoke projects to tackle the key challenges.

Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan 2024/27

A new three-year CLD Partnership Plan for Inverclyde 2024/27 has been developed, providing the framework for provision across the CLD Partnership in Inverclyde.

The Plan was developed collaboratively with the organisations that comprise Inverclyde's CLD Partnership, with three priorities identified:
- (i) Empowering individuals and growing a culture of participation;
- (ii) Building stronger, more resilient communities; and
- (iii) Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all.

Overall governance of the CLD Plan 2024/27 will be provided by the Inverclyde Alliance Board.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Good progress has been made in a range of projects funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, including the development of new Town Centre Action Plans for Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow in consultation with each of the Town Centre Regeneration Forums. Wider consultation was also carried out with drop-in events in each town centre and an online consultation held in summer 2024. The resultant plans are aspirational but pragmatic, with each setting out priority actions for each town, which could be progressed over a ten-year period, subject to future funding opportunities.

The Inverclyde Women in Business Network has continued to grow in strength. To date, eight events have taken place, with 187 attendees. Options for the continuation and development of the Network post March 2025 are being explored.

An underspend in relation to the Multiply Projects is anticipated, in part due to resourcing and capacity issues, the full details of which have been reported to the Environment and Regeneration Committee.

- **Greenock Town Fund**

The Greenock Town Board, which brings together local and national stakeholders to develop long term improvement plans for central Greenock, has now met four times.

The Board has focused on finalising a delivery programme for years one to three of the programme, utilising £20m from the UK Government's Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund. Recruitment for Town Fund support has also been progressed.

- **Greenock Town Centre Levelling Up**

The Greenock Town Centre Levelling Up project progressed with design work on the road alignment and public realm taken forward, as well as collaboration with the Oak Mall on the demolition of the retail units. Project management and quantity surveying support has also been secured. Work on the project is expected to begin in early 2025.

The funding agreement with the UK Government initially required project completion by March 2026, however an extension has been granted to ensure that the demolition and construction programme aligns with the governance requirements of the UK Government and the Council.

- **City Deal**

Following approval of the Outline Business Case for the Inverkip City Deal Project in November 2023, the Final Business Case, which sets out the infrastructure improvements on the A78 to facilitate the development of the former Inverkip Power Station, was approved by the Environment and Regeneration Committee in August 2024. The FBC has been submitted to the Project Management Office for approval.

- **Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/30**

A new Inverclyde SHIP 2025/30, which reflects the priorities of the Local Housing Strategy, has been developed in consultation with our RSL partners. It includes a full programme of affordable housing development proposals over its five-year period and will be submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2024.

- **Growth Programme for Independent Hospitality Businesses**

A new 'Growth Programme for Independent Hospitality Businesses' launched in September 2024, with the aim of helping local, independent hospitality businesses prosper via a platform for owners to connect and learn from each other.

Participants will receive expert help and advice in developing their business strategy, working towards net zero, improving customer service, help with HR and management, and sales generation techniques. A grant of up to £1,000 may also be available to assist with business growth aims.

- **Empty Property Assistance Grant**

Utilising funding generated from changes to the Empty Property Relief Policy, an Empty Property Assistance Grant was approved in August 20204 to support businesses taking on empty premises. Applicants can apply for a grant of up to £10,000 to support capital work improvements required to bring an empty property back into commercial use. This grant complements the suite of grant assistance and expert support available through Business Development/Business Gateway to support economic development.

- **Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan**

An Annual Report on the delivery of the workstreams within the Net Zero action plan was published in May 2024. By 2022/23, the Council had achieved a 51% reduction in its emissions, compared to the 2012/13 baseline.

The Net Zero action plan includes a commitment towards the decarbonisation of the Council's light commercial vehicle fleet. Investment of £129,000 has been made so far in 2024/25 with 14 vehicles been replaced in total, and four vehicles still to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

Theme 2 **PERFORMANCE**

Why is this a priority?

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

Theme 2 PERFORMANCE

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

PROGRESS IN 2024/25

- **Award Success**

In September 2024, Inverclyde Council was the overall winner in the 'Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy' category in the COSLA Excellence Awards 2024.

The Award was in recognition of the impact of the three-year Duchal Moor peatland restoration project and the planting of 10,600 tree at Coves Local Nature Reserve. The project, which is supported by the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network's Clyde Peatlands initiative, aims to increase the rate and scale of peatland restoration across the whole City Region.

- **Establishment of a Programme Board**

Achieving a balanced budget is one of the biggest challenges facing the Council. Approval was given to establish a Programme Board to consider the workstream savings identified through the 2024/26 budget process. This will help to ensure that Elected Members are actively involved and engaged in the actions to be taken to deliver the workstream savings and will enhance openness, transparency, inclusivity and representation.

- **Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2024/28**

The fourth edition of the Inverclyde Corporate Asset Management Strategy (CAMS) 2024/28 was approved in May 2024. The Strategy has evolved since 2009 with the focus of the CAMS 2024/28 predominantly on rationalising and reducing the number of operational assets that the Council holds.

Other key elements associated with this work that are planned include a review and refresh of the individual asset sub-groups to develop longer term costed asset plans, and a refresh of the five-yearly property asset condition surveys to support and inform this activity.

The Strategy can be found here: Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2024/28 - Inverclyde Council

- **Local Government Benchmarking Framework**

Following a refresh of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) dashboard in September 2024, performance information was available for 37 LGBF measures. Analysis of performance benchmarked to other authorities shows that Inverclyde Council continues to perform well, with 25 of the 37 measures having a ranking that places Inverclyde in the top half of all Scottish authorities.

- **Assessing Best Value Performance**

As part of Inverclyde Council's commitment to delivering continuous improvement, the Extended Corporate Management Team, Service Managers and Team Leaders carried out a robust self-evaluation of the Council's Best Value performance, focus on the seven Best Value themes, using a bespoke 'Checklist' developed by the Improvement Service.

The key improvement actions for the organisation have been developed into an action plan which can be found on the Council's website:
Inverclyde Council Best Value - Inverclyde Council

- **Disability Confident Status**

The Council successfully renewed its membership of the Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) until 2027. The DCS aims to challenge attitudes, remove barriers and improve opportunities for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. By maintaining its involvement with the DCS at 'Leader' level, the Council has been recognised for acting as a champion within the Inverclyde business and local communities. It also supports the delivery of a key theme in our People and Organisational Development Strategy 2024/27: Fairness and Equality (Promoting equality, dignity and respect).

□ **The Lens (Adult Services)**

Inverclyde HSCP Adult Services committed an investment fund of more than £55,000 to develop and test new and innovative ideas developed by employees through The Lens programme. The voice of lived experience and communities was central to the development of ideas.

Five innovative projects were successful in receiving funding:

- Community First: a series of pop-up events in the community to link various services together.

- Diabetes Prevention Support Programme: funding for the specialist diabetes service to work with the community in preventing type 2 diabetes.

- My Inclusive Digi Support: Giving service users and tenants with additional support needs tablets and access to a specialised app so that they can have a voice in their care plan.

- Little Acorns: Developing a safe space for women in Inverclyde who are fleeing violence.

- Inverclyde Inclusive Radio: A community radio station where the programming is created by people with additional needs, for people with additional needs.

The next stage in the process is the provision of support with practicalities as the Idea Teams move to the implementation phase.

□ **Technology Enabled Care Smart Pad Innovation**

The Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Smart Pad is a new initiative that launched in September 2024 and represents a significant step forward in the adoption of technology within health and social care.

The data collected from this monitoring system will be invaluable in generating information that reflect a person's day-to-day capabilities, enabling practitioners to make informed decisions regarding the level of support required. This approach helps to maximise the safety and independence of individuals and improves person-centred care

These objectives focus on enabling individuals to stay well, safe, and independent at home, ensuring they receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

□ **External Inspection Reports**

A number of external inspections relating to services provided by Inverclyde Council and the HSCP have been published in 2024/25. You can find a link to each of the inspection reports below:

Education Scotland: Community Learning and Development Progress Visit Report
[Community Learning and Development in Inverclyde Council | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

Education Scotland: St. Stephen's High School Inspection Report
[St Stephen's High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

Education Scotland: St Columba's High School Inspection Report
[St Columba's High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

Education Scotland: St John's Primary School and Nursery Class Inspection Report
[St John's Primary School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

Care Inspectorate and Health Care Improvement Scotland: Inverclyde HSCP Joint inspection of Adult Services:
[Joint Inspection of adult services in Inverclyde (2).pdf](#)

Care Inspectorate: Inverclyde Council Fostering Service: [Find care](#)

Care Inspectorate: Inverclyde Council Adoption Service: [Find care](#)

Care Inspectorate: Inverclyde Council Continuing Care Service Adult Placement Service: [Find care](#)

Care Inspectorate: Inverclyde Learning Disability Support and Care at Home Service: [Find care](#)

Council Plan 2023/28 KPI Dashboard: Mid-Year Performance 2024/25

The Council Plan 2023/28 is underpinned by 41 KPIs, 14 of which have more frequent updates, allowing us to provide performance data at the mid-point of this year in this report. For the remainder of the KPIs, performance data is published annually and the latest data is provided in the Council Plan Annual Performance Report 2023/24, which can be found here: Council Plan 2023/28 - Inverclyde Council

Where more frequent data is available this is provided in the performance dashboard below. The status shown relates to performance for the year against target or, where appropriate comparator data is available, our benchmarking performance.

Council Plan Performance Measure	Mid-Year Performance 2024/25	Mid-point target 2024/25	Additional information
Claimant Count as a percentage of the 16–19-year-old population (April – September 2024)	4.3% ✅	Benchmarked against Family Group	Mid-year performance is better than our LGBF Family Group, 4.4%
Claimant Count as a percentage of the working age population (April – September 2024)	3.6% ✅	Benchmarked against Family Group	Mid-year performance is better than our LGBF Family Group, 3.8%
Number of people progressed into employment from Council funded / operated employability programmes (April – September 2024)	170 🔴	210	The year end target is 420.
Number of employability clients supported by the Employability Service have gained a partial / full vocational qualification (April – September 2024)	211 ✅	200	The year end target is 400.
The total number of days lost due to sickness absence between (April – September 2024)	5.9 days 🔴	4.5 days	Mid-year performance is below target. The year-end target is 9 days.
Employee turnover (%) (April – September 2024)	7.3% 🔴	6%	Mid year performance is below target. The year-end target is 12%

Council Plan Performance Measure	Mid-Year Performance 2024/25	Mid-point target 2024/25	Additional information
The percentage of Council Tax owed to the Council that was collected by the end of September 2024.	53% ⚠️	53.55%	Mid-year performance is just below target. The year-end target is 94.7%.
The percentage of invoices were paid within the target of 30 days (April – September 2024)	96% ✅	95.5%	Performance is better than target. The year-end target is 95.5%.
The average time taken (days) to process changes in circumstances to Housing Benefit (April – September 2024)	2.76 days ⚠️	2.5 days	Performance is slightly below target. The year-end target is 2.5 days.
The number of complaints received (April – September 2024) per 1,000 population.	1.73 ✅	2	Performance is better than target. The year-end target is 4 days.
The percentage of street lighting repairs were carried out within 7 days (April – September 2024)	96.8% ✅	92%	Performance is better than target. The year-end target is 92%.
The percentage of all planning applications decided in under 2 months (April – September 2024)	81.3% ✅	72%	Performance is better than target. The year-end target is 72%.
The percentage of category 1 potholes repairs were made safe within 24 hours of identification (April – September 2024)	100% ✅	92%	Performance is better than target. The year-end target is 92%.
Tonnes of waste sent to landfill (April – September 2024)	13,243t -	📈	This is a data only KPI. Performance trends are monitored. Performance in the same period in 2023 was 13,131 tonnes.

More information on quarterly service performance can be found in the performance reports relating to the Council's Committee Plans which are available on the Council's website:

[Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan Performance Reports - Inverclyde Council](#)

Contact us

For further information please contact:

e-mail:

Corporate.policy@inverclyde.gov.uk

write to:

Corporate Policy Team
Education, Communities and
Organisational Development
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
Inverclyde PA15 1 LY

telephone:

01475 717171

We are committed to using our
website and a range of social media
to communicate with people,
communities and businesses across
Inverclyde and beyond.

follow us on:

@inverclyde

www.inverclyde.gov.uk

Report To:	**Policy and Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Corporate Director, Education, Communities and OD**	**Report No:**	**PR/04/25/RB/TM**
Contact Officer:	**Tony McEwan**	**Contact No:**	**Tel 01475 712828**
Subject:	**Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantries**		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☒For Decision ☒For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee on the funding positions of the Inverclyde Zero Waste Pantries situated at Grieve Road, Greenock and John Wood Street, Port Glasgow. Both pantries are operated by the Inverclyde Community Development Trust (ICDT).

1.3 Council funding for the Grieve Road Pantry, made via the Anti-poverty fund, ended on 31 December 2024 and this report is recommending the Policy and Resources Committee extends this funding from the Anti-poverty fund until March 2026. The pantry at Port Glasgow is funded through the National Lottery and ICDT has submitted another application to extend its funding.

1.4 This report also provides background on the pantries' operations, including the arrangements for sourcing food, volunteer engagement, future funding opportunities and potential partnerships.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Policy and Resources Committee:

- notes the update on Inverclyde's Zero Waste Pantries;
- agrees further funding of up to £40k from the Council's anti-poverty fund to support the Grieve Road Pantry until March 2026;
- note that ICDT has applied for external funding to support the Port Glasgow pantry beyond April 2025; and
- notes officers' intention to undertake work during 2025 to map Inverclyde's current position in relation to alleviating food poverty and specifically to consider the future Food Pantry provision within Inverclyde.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1   The first Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantry opened in early December 2020 in Grieve Road, with £30,000 allocated from Inverclyde Council Anti-Poverty Funding, initially for a two-year period. This was then further extended for an additional two-year period to December 2024. Furthermore, Anti-poverty funding pays for two Fare Share memberships to facilitate the provisions of food to the pantries. This funding continues.

3.2   This £30k funding was supplemented by £57,306 which The Trust has received from Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) via the Community Recovery Fund for the Inverclyde Zero Waste Pantry based at Grieve Road Greenock.

3.3   Inverclyde Community Development Trust secured £149,456 from the National Lottery to leverage match funding to open a 2nd pantry in Port Glasgow which ends in March 2025.

3.4   Both Inverclyde Pantry projects aim to provide affordable access to healthy food while minimising food waste. Both Inverclyde Pantry projects have experienced significant growth since opening with a strong membership base at both John Wood Street (JWS) and Grieve Road locations. JWS has 885 members, while Grieve Road has 1,221 members. This growth indicates the value the Pantry provides to the community, becoming valued services for an increasingly large number of individuals facing hardship across Inverclyde.

3.5   The Pantry supports a diverse range of families across various postcodes within Inverclyde. The Pantry provides a service to families considered a priority within the Child Poverty Act with 3 or more children (JWS - 213, Grieve Road - 440) and supports families with English as a Second Language (JWS - 223, Grieve Road - 80) and to families with young babies and young mothers (JWS - 16, Grieve Road - 30). Furthermore, the Pantry extends its reach to other community groups, including those being supported by the Salvation Army, I.FIT, Thrive Under 5, HSCP, and Oak Tree Housing Association.

3.6   In addition to accessing of affordable and healthy food in the community, the Pantries can provide a sense of community and belonging for their members. Importantly, the Pantries also connects their members with valuable support services, including monthly drop-in sessions with Financial Fitness to check member's eligibility for various benefits and pension credit. The Trust's Employability Team have staff available monthly to offer support and advice for any members looking to improve their employment prospects via training, CV writing, interview skills and much more. Members are offered support on mental health and counselling through referrals to Mind Mosaic.

3.7   However, with the funding for the Grieve Road Pantry from the Council's anti-poverty fund ending in December 2024 and the outcome of future funding for the Port Glasgow pantry beyond 31 March 2025 yet to be confirmed, the Committee is being asked to consider extending support for the Grieve Road Pantry to March 2026.

4.0 Current challenges

4.1   One of the key objectives of the Pantry was to become community led within 3 years of opening. However, it is not felt that the volunteers have sufficient capacity to take this step at this time. Furthermore, there have been a variety of other challenges that have prevented the ICDT achieving the community ownership and sustainability within the timeframe provided. These challenges include:

- A continued increase in membership and the resultant expectations and demands for a variety of surplus food types. This has resulted in the Trust having to top-up the Fare Share deliveries;
- Increases in emergency provisions for an increasing number of residents who are facing significant financial hardship and food insecurity;
- The funding streams from DTAS funding and lottery funding, external funding opportunities' have all reduced; and
- Increasing overhead costs for both Pantries.

5.0   ICDT work to date

5.1   ICDT is now exploring the transition of The Pantry towards a standalone charitable social enterprise model. This transition is expected to take 18-20 months and will allow the Pantry to pursue crowdfunding, public donations, and direct fundraising. It is projected that this shift will generate approximately 25% of the Pantry's overhead costs. The ICDT expects to achieve this by 31st March 2026.

5.2   In the meantime, ICDT is working on several other developments:

- Working closely with Community Links Scotland and the local registered social landlords to strengthen partnerships with local housing associations and identify future funding opportunities. However, this approach is expected to take 8-10 months to fully develop into viable funding strategies. Cloch Housing Association has also expressed an interest in collaborating on a Greenock Central location pantry model to support their tenants;
- ICDT has recently secured funding from the Acorns to Trees charitable trust to support fundraising efforts, including the creation of a full-time media and marketing role. This role will help raise awareness and generate financial support for The Pantry. The total value of the funded post is £21,500 until March 2025;
- Seeking funding for a Business Development Role to enhance The Pantry's ability to secure reduced-cost food supplies through bulk buying and direct donations. The role will also focus on building relationships with local housing associations to increase support and funding for the Pantry. This initiative is expected to take around 18 months to implement;
- Collaboration with the Scottish Pantry Network to introduce the Prepmate Project, which will provide pantries across Scotland with meal kits to ensure a reliable supply of nutritious food. This initiative is vital in ensuring the sustainability of The Pantry and meeting the growing demand for affordable, healthy food;
- successfully integrating additional services, such as an advocacy service for adults and affordable after-school and holiday childcare. ICDT is seeking funding to expand these services, supporting parents and families with employability skills, community engagement, and additional pathways to support;
- building pathways with local and national food suppliers to secure more reliable and cost-effective sources of food. These partnerships will help alleviate costs and improve the variety of food available to Pantry members; and
- exploring the option of increasing the membership fee to £3 per year and the cost of shopping from £2.50 to £3.50 per visit. This adjustment will help cover rising operational costs and ensure continued access to affordable food for those in need

5.3   A new application has been submitted to the National Lottery to secure funding for the next financial year, ensuring the continuity of The Pantry service in Port Glasgow beyond its current funding period, which ends in March 2025.

6.0 PROPOSALS

6.1 It is proposed to extend the funding for the Grieve Road Pantry until March 2026 from the Council's Anti-poverty funding. This extension would provide ICDT with more time to develop and implement a comprehensive external funding strategy to secure sustainable long-term support for the pantries. ICDT will actively pursue funding from various sources, including Scottish Government, the National Lottery, and other relevant external funders, while also exploring avenues for direct fundraising and donations and collaborating with housing associations. This continued support will also facilitating a smooth transition towards a more sustainable, externally funded model.

6.2 Officers recognise that there is a significant amount of activity across Inverclyde in relation to projects and initiatives aimed at alleviating food poverty. As such the Communities Service intends to map this work in 2025 after which time will be in a position to advise the Committee on the range of services available and bring forward proposals in relation to Pantry provision in Inverclyde.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 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

7.2 **Finance**

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti Poverty Fund EMR	Pantries	1.1.25-31.3.26	Up to £40k		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

7.3 **Legal/Risk**

There are no legal implications from this report. There is a risk that the Trust may not be able to attract external funding.

7.4 **Human Resources**

There are no HR issues for the council arising from this report.

7.5 **Strategic**

This report delivers on the strategic priorities from the partnership and council plan.

7.6 **Environmental/Sustainability**

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

The zero waste food pantries are good for the environment by minimising food waste.

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.

7.7 **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.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The CMT support the proposals in this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

Report To:	**Policy and Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**The Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services**	**Report No:**	**LS/008/25**
Contact Officer:	**Peter MacDonald**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712618**
Subject:	**2025 Greenock West and Cardwell Bay Community Council Interim Election**		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☒For Decision ☐For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval of a timetable for an interim election for Greenock West and Cardwell Bay Community Council and to appoint the Chief Executive as Returning Officer for those elections.

1.3 Greenock West and Cardwell Bay Community Council (GWBCC) was re-established in the 2024 Community Council Elections with a membership of 5, being the minimum membership they could have to do so. Following: (a) one of their number moving out of the community council area; and (b) the election of Councillor Hellyer as a member of the Inverclyde Council, that membership has now fallen below that minimum meaning an interim election is appropriate.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee decide to hold an interim election for the Greenock West and Cardwell Bay Community Council.

2.2 It is recommended that the Committee appoints the Chief Executive to act as Returning Officer for the Interim Election and delegates authority to her to administer it on the Council's behalf.

2.3 It is recommended that the Committee approves the provisional election timetable at Appendix 1 and grants the Chief Executive (as Returning Officer) delegated authority to make such changes to this timetable as are considered appropriate for the effective administration of the election and to take account of the views of GWBCC.

Lynsey Brown
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Community Council Elections were held in 2024, at which GWCBCC was re-established with a membership of 5. This is the minimum membership level at which a community council could be established or re-established.

3.2 Since that time their membership has reduced. Firstly, one of their members moved out of the community council area, meaning they no longer met the eligibility requirements to be a community councillor in terms of the 2023 Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Inverclyde (the Scheme). Secondly, Councillor Hellyer was previously an elected member of GWBCC, but on his election as an Elected Member of Inverclyde Council (IC) he also ceased to meet the eligibility requirements to be an elected community councillor in terms of the Scheme.

3.3 As their membership is now 3, GWCBCC is below the minimum membership required for a community council. In such circumstances the Scheme requires the community council to advise IC, which they have done, following which IC may arrange an interim election to seek new membership and bolster the numbers of the community council.

3.4 Over the period since the Community Council Elections, officers have been engaging with GWCBCC on the question of recruitment. It was initially hoped to bring their membership back up to the minimum by way of a co-option. However, now their membership is 3, the maximum number of co-opted members they can have under the Scheme is 1. It is therefore the view of officers that an interim election is the appropriate course of action. GWBCC are also keen to take steps to recruit new membership. The maximum membership of GWBCC under the Scheme is 11, so as at the date of this report, there are 7 vacancies for members.

3.5 A Provisional Election Timetable has been prepared and is included in this report, along with a timeline diagram, at Appendix 1 for the Committee's approval. As arrangements proceed it may be necessary for the Returning Officer to vary the terms of this timetable and authority to do so is therefore sought in this report. In particular, there will be further engagement with GWBCC to seek their views on the timing of the process.

3.6 Nomination Forms will be made available on the Council website, from all Council libraries, from the Customer Service Centre and directly to the community council. Completed nomination forms (signed by a qualifying nominee and qualifying proposers and seconders) will require to be submitted to the Returning Officer by the Close of Nominations, as per the Election Timetable.

3.7 In terms of the Scheme, to be nominated as a member of a community council, or to act as a proposer or seconder on a Nomination Form, an individual must:
   a) be resident in the community council area;
   b) be named on the Electoral Register for the community council area;
   c) be aged 16 or over; and
   d) not currently be elected as a Member of IC, or of the Scottish or UK parliaments.

3.8 Following the Close of Nominations:
   - if there are more validly nominated candidates than there are vacancies, then a poll will be held to determine which of them are elected; and
   - if there are not more validly nominated candidates than there are vacancies then there will not be a poll and all such candidates will be duly elected.

3.9 In terms of the Scheme, to vote in a community council election, an individual must:
   a) be resident in the community council area;
   b) be named on the Electoral Register for the community council area; and
   c) be aged 16 or over.

3.10 Any poll will proceed by way of secret ballot and voting in person. The election will proceed on a modified first past the post system, in that:

a) voters will be allowed to make a number of votes (up to the maximum number of members for that community council) on one ballot paper; and
b) each vote will be of equal ranking.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Should the recommendations in this report be approved, officers will proceed with the organisation the interim election.

4.2 Working in partnership with the existing Community Councillors for Greenock West and Cardwell Bay, Council officers from Community Learning and Development will engage in various activities to promote the interim election and assist community members with the process. These activities will include targeted outreach at community warm spaces, information sessions, and the distribution of promotional materials in community venues and surrounding areas, alongside digital engagement efforts

4.3 Funding has been secured to support communications for promoting the interim elections. Corporate Communications will lead this effort supported by officers from Community Learning and Development, utilising a variety of publicity materials, from local media to digital engagement.

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**

Advertising costs may be incurred as part of the election process, but will be contained within existing budgets for community council funding. Similarly, any staffing requirements for a ballot will be met from existing Council resources.

5.3 **Legal/Risk**

The Council is required to administer community council elections in terms of the Scheme. The Council may in terms of the Scheme make arrangements for an interim election for a community council where the membership has fallen below the minimum of 5.

5.4 **Human Resources**

None

5.5 **Strategic**

None.

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:

	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. 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 The Corporate Management Team, the Community Council Champion and GWCBCC have been consulted on the proposals set out in this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1

Provisional Election Timetable – 2025 Greenock West and Cardwell Bay Community Council Interim Election.

No	Task	Comment	Date
1	Appoint a Returning Officer and start the formal election process.		4/2/25
2	Make nomination forms available at libraries, online and directly to community council.		not later than 5/2/25
3	Notice of Election.	Public notice online, in libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre and inviting nominations. This will include: • details on how to obtain nomination forms; • the date and time of close of nominations; and • the dates of any polls that may be held.	per 2
4	**CLOSE OF NOMINATIONS**	Nominations received later than the date and time of close **will not** be accepted.	4.00pm on 28/2/25
5	Notice of Validly Nominated Candidates.	Public notice online, in libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre.	As soon as practicable following 4.
6	Declaration of Result for if uncontested.	Where the number of validly nominated candidates is between the maximum number and half the maximum number of members (inclusive), public notice online, in libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre will confirm the formation and membership of the community council. This will include details of the first meeting to be held and, if practicable, will be combined with the notice at item 5 above.	Per 5.

7	If contested, last date for withdrawal of a nomination.		4pm on 5/3/2025
8	Notice of Poll if contested.	Where the number of validly nominated candidates exceeds the maximum number of members, public notice online, in libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre will confirm the place date and time at which a poll will be held, and a time and place in each case fora count. If practicable, this notice will be incorporated in the notice at item 5 above.	As soon as practicable following following 7.
9	Polling date if contested.	Officers are liaising with the community council to link in with the normal cycle and venue for their meetings.	12/3/25
11	First meeting if uncontested.	Officers are liaising with the community council to link in with the normal cycle and venue for their meetings.	Per 9
12	Count if contested community.	These will be held as soon as practicable following any poll, however where polls are held in close succession, the counts for more than one community council may be held on the same day.	As soon as practicable following 9.
13	Declaration of Result if contested election.	Public notice online, in libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre. If practicable, this will include details of the first meeting to be held.	As soon as practicable following 10.
14	First meeting if contested.	Officers are liaising with the community council to link in with the normal cycle and venue for their meetings.	9/4/25

Provisional Timeline - Interim Election

Approve Election and Appoint RO (4/2/25)

Nomination Period

1st Meeting (Uncontested) and Polling Date (Contested) (12/3/25)

1st Meeting (Contested) (9/4/25)

Withdrawal Period

23/01/2025   02/02/2025   12/02/2025   22/02/2025   04/03/2025   14/03/2025   24/03/2025   03/04/2025   13/04/2025

Notice of Election (5/2/25)

Close of Nominations and Declaration if Uncontested (28/2/25)

Count and Declaration (Contested) (13/3/25)

Last Date for Withdrawal and Notice of Poll (Contested) (5/3/25)

Inverclyde council

Report To:	**Policy & Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services**	**Report No:**	**LS/007/25**
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 7 January 2025 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.

1.5 The Audit Committee decided:

(1)   that the Committee note the position on the most significant corporate risks facing the Council, and the key actions being taken in response to them, all as detailed in the Corporate Risk Register appended to the report;
(2)   that it be noted that the Corporate Risk Register will be reported to the February 2025 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee; and
(3)   that it be remitted to officers to submit a report to a future meeting of the Audit Committee detailing the outcome of the Digital Maturity Exercise referred to in the Risk Register appended to the report.

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 1.

Lynsey Brown
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customers Services

Report To:	**Audit Committee**	**Date:**	**7 January 2025**
Report By:	**Lynsey Brown** **Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services**	**Report No:**	**LS/089/24**
Contact Officer:	**Deborah Clark**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712137**
	Corporate Risk Adviser		
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 latest Corporate Risk Register to the Audit Committee for its consideration and highlight key risk management developments since the last report. 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 There are currently 10 key corporate risks which sit above the Council's currently defined acceptable risk boundary for consideration by the Committee. There are also a further 3 lower rated risks which are also included in the Corporate Risk Register.

1.4 Mitigations are in place for each risk which are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Corporate Risk Management Group and responsible officer(s).

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; included in the Corporate Risk Register in Appendix 1 to this report.

(ii) note that the Corporate Risk Register will be reported to the February 2025 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Lynsey Brown

Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

3.0   BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1   Strategic risks in relation to the implementation of the Council Plan are monitored by the Corporate Risk Management Group and the Corporate Management Team.

3.2   The Corporate Risk Register details the most significant Strategic risks facing the Council, and the key actions being taken by the Council in response to them. Risk registers have also been developed at Committee, Directorate, Service and project level.

3.3   Following a review of the format of the risk registers, a new approach has been taken to separate the information on the risk into the respective component parts. These are: risk event, causes, consequences and risk category. Current mitigating actions and future mitigating actions are also separated. It is considered that this better enables the key aspects of the risk to be highlighted and current and future mitigations to be identified.

The information from the existing Corporate, Committee and Service level risk registers has been transferred onto the Council's performance management system Ideagen (formally called Pentana), training has been given to risk owners and updates to the risks are now completed within the system. An extract from the system has been generated onto a report which is included in Appendix 1.

3.4   Following the review of the risk register format, an interactive workshop took place involving representation from all service areas, to review the Corporate Risk register against the Council's key themes of People, Place and Performance. The existing risks were validated as still accurate, and the discussion resulted in the creation of one new risk, which falls below the acceptable risk boundary. Following further CMT review one additional new risk was created (CRR13 in the Appendix).

3.5   To refresh the understanding of Elected Members' knowledge of risk management and introduce the topic of risk appetite, a training session was delivered by the Corporate Risk Adviser in September 2024. Following the training and agreement of Elected Members, further work will be completed during 2025 to develop risk appetite statements for the Council.

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 in February 2025, 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.

4.0   PROPOSAL

4.1   The Audit Committee is asked to consider and provide feedback on the Corporate Risk Register.

4.2   The Audit Committee is also asked to note that the Corporate Risk Register will be reported to the February 2025 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

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**

There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report.

5.5 **Strategic**

This report helps ensure strong governance to ensure the Council Plan 2023-28 is delivered in relation to:

Theme 3 – Performance, with the Council seeking to provide high quality and innovative services that deliver value for money.

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:

	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.

(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**

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 The review of the format of the risk register information and the draft Corporate Risk Register have been presented to the Corporate Risk Management Committee and Corporate Management Team, and feedback has been taken into consideration in producing this draft.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Corporate Risk Register (attached).

Latest Corporate Risk Register

Risk Code	Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Potential Causes	Potential Consequences	Impact	L'hood	Risk Score	Last reviewed	Current mitigation	Future mitigation
CRR01	Significant budgetary pressures	Alan Puckrin	The risk is that the Council will have insufficient financial resources to effectively deliver its services, key projects and ultimately achieve it strategic outcomes	• SG Financial Settlements not keeping pace with inflation or demographic pressures • Ring Fencing • Legislative pressures • Real term reductions in Capital grant whilst assets require significant investment	• Service reductions • Potential for compulsory redundancies • Impact on delivery of key projects • Council Strategic Priorities not delivered	4	4	16	Dec 2024	10 year financial strategy Monitoring and reporting of Treasury / Capital Management strategy Budget setting and monitoring Debt collection policies CMT review of savings delivery and key financial data Corporate Asset Management Strategy Embedded budget process with Trades Unions Sharing of best practice with Directors of Finance section	Annual refresh of savings options and workstreams Development of a savings strategy
CRR13	High level of children and families with complex packages of care and high demand for external residential placements	Jonathan Hinds	The risk is the increase in volume and complexity of children who require longer term, high-cost care packages to appropriately meet their needs	• Complexity of needs have changed and continue to generate higher demand on services • Has been exacerbated by ongoing impact of Covid 19 pandemic • Change in demographics • Levels of vulnerabilities	• Overspend in HSCP budget • Limited workforce capacity, vacancy rate and staff experience • High reliance on partner providers • Limited capacity of third and independent sector partner providers	4	4	16	Nov 2024	Monthly meetings with operational and finance managers to review Children's placements and packages of care IJB Financial strategy Redesign of Children Services	
CRR02	Inappropriately resourced or resilient workforce	Morna Rae	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	• Skillset availability - smaller pool to draw from with national shortages in some professions e.g. planning officers, environmental health • Lack of upskilling and development of workforce, particularly with specific skill sets where there are identified gaps • Aging workforce • Pay disparity between other local authorities • Perception and attractiveness of working for the council and location fails to attract new recruits • Expectations of terms & conditions, particularly from candidates moving from the private sector fail to attract new staff • Competition for candidates where preferred candidate accepts a different post • Inconsistent approach to succession planning • Increasing sickness absence • Reduction in apprenticeship posts available to fund through Fair Work First	• Single points of dependency or failure within workforce • Capacity stretch on existing workforce • Disengagement, morale issues with existing workforce • Impact on quality or continuity of service delivery • Missed regulatory or reporting deadlines • Lack of capacity to develop or improve a new idea / project • Reputational impact	3	4	12	Oct 2024	Accessible platforms used to advertise roles Additional promotion and recruitment activities used for advertising certain roles Modern apprenticeship and graduate recruitment programme Disability Confident Scheme Positive Conversations with staff to identify aspirations and training needs External training opportunities through local college Inhouse training opportunities Opportunities for paid professional qualifications Succession and workforce planning Increased access to absence monitoring information Investment in employee wellbeing and engagement Armed Forces Covenant	Conditions of Service & Pay & Grading Review Induction Training (Mandatory Training) - Inverclyde Council Succession & Workforce Planning

APPENDIX 1

Risk Code	Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Potential Causes	Potential Consequences	Impact	L'hood	Risk Score	Last reviewed	Current mitigation	Future mitigation
CRR03	Council assets are not fit for purpose	Stuart Jamieson	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 • Old assets cannot be replaced • Uncoordinated or unclear approach to Corporate asset management	• Serious injury or fatality of staff or third party • Impacts on ability to deliver services	3	4	12	Dec 2024	Corporate Asset Management Strategy RAAC Management Strategy and Remediation Assessment Operational Estate Capital Programme Property and Land Disposal Asset Rationalisation Programme Board	Asset Management Strategies Review and Refresh of Strategies
CRR04	ICT infrastructure is not innovative or does not fit end user needs	Lynsey Brown	The risk is that there is a failure to keep pace with changing technology and deliver new systems that support service delivery	• Lack of IT skills • Lack of capacity • Failure to keep up to date with changes in technology	• Impact on quality and continuity of service delivery • Poor customer service experience • Inability to successfully deliver on key projects • Impacts on retention and attraction of staff	3	4	12	Dec 2024	Digital Modernisation Programme Microsoft 365 Development Group Customer & Digital Modernisation Saving Workstream	Digital Maturity Exercise
CRR05	Net Zero targets are not met	Stuart Jamieson	The risk is that there is a failure to reduce the Council's carbon footprint in line with Council and national targets	• Funding issues to implement initiatives • Capacity to be involved in relevant projects	• Reputational impact • Lack of resources to deliver net zero • Breach of regulatory duties • Increased costs in operation of estate and delivery of services	3	4	12	Dec 2024	Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan Grant Funding Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan Annual Public bodies Climate Change reporting Additional funding from Scottish Government	
CRR08	Lack of resource to meet growing ASN needs	Michael Roach	The risk is that the Council does not have the capacity or service provision to meet the changing and increasing complex ASN needs for young people	• ASN needs change beyond expectations • Required provision exceeds current capacity	• Reduction in quality or continuity of service provision • Parents / guardians of ASN children raise court action • ASN tribunal • Financial costs of court fees and subsequent expenses if tribunal is successful • Reputational impact • Further spend may be required on adapting or building physical assets or changes to existing staffing structures to meet need	3	4	12	Dec 2024	Workforce plan Review of ASN provision and related staffing Regular reporting and monitoring for children with complex needs	Review of ASN provision Officers seeking clarity on additional funding from Scottish government for ASN
CRR06	Major partner or supplier failure	Stuart Jamieson	Major partner or supplier failure which then requires financial support or the Council to step in to manage the services or project fails	• Poor selection process • Poor quality or small pool of suppliers / partner • Services provided are ceased • Reduction in National Insurance threshold and increase in contributions becomes unsustainable	• Impact on quality and/or resilience of service delivery • Financial impact to source new or more expensive options • Reputational impact	4	3	12	Dec 2024	Tender process Financial checks Contract Strategy Committee reporting H&S vetting Governance meetings in place	Procurement Strategy
CRR07	Regulatory requirements on Information Governance are not adhered to	Lynsey Brown	There is a risk that the Council fails to meet its legal and regulatory duties around information governance matters, including Data Protection/GDPR,	• Lack of understanding of regulations • Failure to keep updated with changes in regulations or new regulations	• Fines and penalties • Potential legal action • Reputational impact	4	3	12	Dec 2024	Information Governance controls Information Governance policies Digital Modernisation Programme	

Risk Code	Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Potential Causes	Potential Consequences	Impact	L'hood	Risk Score	Last reviewed	Current mitigation	Future mitigation
			Freedom of Information and Records Management	• Lack of capacity to deal with Information Governance						Committee reporting	
										Information Governance group	
CRR09	Cyber attack	Lynsey Brown	Risk that the Council's ICT systems, and the data held on them, is subject of a successful security attack	• Staff error • Ineffective security systems • Out of date or unsupported software • Unable to keep one step ahead of cyber actors	• Personal or sensitive data could be compromised • Impact on continuity of service delivery • Potential fines • ICO reporting requirements • Reputational impact	4	3	12	Dec 2024	PSN certification	
										ICT disaster recovery plan	
										Information Governance controls	
										Information Governance group	
										Key supplier security	
										Cyber defence	
										Annual cyber security report	
										Compulsory elearning	

Report To:	**Policy and Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**4 February 2025**
Report By:	**Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications**	**Report No:**	**PR/03/25/RB/MR**
Contact Officer:	**Morna Rae**	**Contact No:**	**01475 711160**
Subject:	**OD, Policy and Communications Policy Updates**		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1   ☒For Decision   ☐For Information/Noting

1.2   The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the following updated policies:

- Infection Control Policy
- Reservists Policy
- Moving and Handling Policy
- Discipline and Supporting Performance Policy

1.3   As part of the wider work in developing a policy framework a number of policies were identified for review and update. This work has been undertaken on a phased basis.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   The Committee is recommended to approve the policies.

Morna Rae
Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The *Review of Council Policy Framework* report to the 26 March 2024 Policy and Resources Committee included a review schedule for Organisational Development, Policy and Communications policies. A total of twelve updated policies have been agreed by Committee from June 2024. Further policies have been reviewed and are now provided for approval.

3.2 The updated policies are provided in the appendices. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the key changes.

Infection Control Policy

3.3 The following changes have been made to the existing policy:

- Use of new policy template with related additional information added, and
- Reference to Covid-19

Reservists Policy

3.4 The changes made to the existing policy include:

- Use of new policy template with related additional information added,
- Updated legislative references

Moving and Handling Policy

3.5 The following changes have been made to the existing policy:

- Use of new policy template with related additional information added,
- Simplification of policy with removal of some sections to appendices.

Discipline and Supporting Performance Policy

3.6 The changes made to the existing policy include:

- Use of new policy template with related additional information added
- Additional sections on Expectations of Conduct, failure to maintain registration with professional bodies, and responsibilities to inform regulatory bodies & to make referral to Disclosure Scotland
- Added section on anonymous allegations
- Amendments to section on Added electronic, audio or video recording

3.7 The Family Friendly policy was previously included in the review schedule presented to the 26 March 2024 Policy and Resources Committee. Committee are asked to note that following review this will no longer be a standalone policy as its provisions sit within the terms and conditions of employment.

3.8 Similarly it was previously planned that the Media and Social Media Protocol would be updated and presented to Committee for approval as part of the policy review schedule. The CMT have agreed that this should be considered outwith the policy review schedule as it is a protocol document. An audit of our social media presence and review process will still take place, this will include engagement with Elected Members and an updated protocol brought to Committee for agreement.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that Committee approve the updated policies.

Communication of the changes will be undertaken through the Health and Safety Committee, Trade Union Liaison Group, ICON post and website updates.

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**

There are risks in the failure to have updated and relevant policies.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no Human Resources implications in terms of posts.

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

5.6 **Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People**

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 and will be made available on the Council website: https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments
	NO – will be completed as required for specific topics.

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.

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

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Overview of Policy Updates		
Infection Control Policy		
PAGE	**TITLE**	**PROPOSED CHANGE**
Throughout		Use of new policy template
7	Policy Content	Additional information added in relation to Covid-19
10	Policy Content	Additional information added in relation to Covid-19
Reservists Policy		
PAGE	**TITLE**	**PROPOSED CHANGE**
Throughout		Use of new policy template
4	Policy Content	Updated legislation
Moving and Handling Policy		
PAGE	**TITLE**	**PROPOSED CHANGE**
Throughout		Use of new policy template
5	Policy Content	Simplification of policy with removal of some sections to appendices.
Discipline and Supporting Performance Policy		
PAGE	**TITLE**	**PROPOSED CHANGE**
Throughout		Use of new policy template and content moved between policy and procedure
6	Expectations of Conduct	New text added
8	Registration with Professional Bodies	Additional detail added on responsibilities
9	Obligation To Inform Regulatory Bodies	Additional detail added on responsibilities
9	Notification To Disclosure Scotland	Additional detail added on responsibilities
10	Anonymous Allegations	New section added
11	Fraud/Corruption	Reference added to Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy
		Added electronic, audio or video recording by any device of the hearing will not be permitted

Inverclyde
council

Organisational Development, Human Resources and Performance

Infection Control Policy

Version No 3

Produced by: 2.3

Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX

2024

Inverclyde Council is an Equal Opportunities employer

This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	**Corporate Group**	**Service**
David Strain	Health and Safety Team Leader	OD, HR & Comms

Change History		
Version	**Date**	**Comments**
1.0	October 1998	Original Interim Document (Withdrawn)
2.0	February 2015	Updated to Infection Control and BBV
3.0	September 2024	Reviewed after Covid 19

Distribution		
Name	**Date**	**Designation**
CMT and Extended Management Team		
Union Representatives		

Policy Review		
Updating frequency	**Next Review Date**	**Responsible Officer**
5 yearly review	2030	Health and Safety Team Leader

Policy Review and Approval			
Name	**Action**	**Date**	**Communication**
Infection Control Policy	Policy and Resources Committee Approval	4 Feb 2025	

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy aims to provide guidance and information to Council services to help them manage infection control standards. It is essential to ensure the safety of staff by making reasonable adjustments and providing sufficient resources where necessary.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 require the Council to ensure that employees are protected from substances hazardous to health, this includes biological hazards. The Council are required, so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect its employees and others from acquiring infections, including blood borne viruses as a result of their work activities.

Micro-organisms which can cause infection in the workplace are generally spread by one of four main routes.

- Airborne Transmission - In this route, micro-organisms spread by aerosol droplets through the air e.g. respiratory discharges such as coughs and sneezes, or contaminated dust.

- Faecal-Oral Transmission - This route is spread by hand to mouth e.g. going to the toilet, not washing hands then transferring micro-organisms to food which is then eaten.

- Direct Contact Transmission - This can either be directly from person to person, from animal to person or indirectly via things such as inanimate objects.

- Blood and Body Fluid Transmission - This includes a skin penetrating injury e.g. via a contaminated needle or other sharp object or through a bite caused by challenging behaviour or by an infected animal or insect.

Some of the key areas where employees may be exposed to or transmit infectious organisms are:

- Those providing personal care to service users[1] or others.

- In a pandemic or outbreak situation where high levels of community based transmission may result in a significant spread of disease.

- Those in contact with service users with additional support needs who are known to scratch or bite or be subject to unpredictable behaviours.

- Working in the presence of or finding discarded/used needles.

- Cleaning up of blood or body fluid spillages.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This policy supports the Council in the delivery of the Council Plan 2023/28 in relation to the following outcomes:

---

[1] Service Users can be anyone receiving personal care within the Council, i.e. pupils in educational establishments, people receiving homecare, those attending residential accommodation, anyone receiving first aid.

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

1.4 LINKS TO LEGISLATION

This policy is consistent with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. The Policy also takes account of the requirements within Public Health Scotland.

Public Health Scotland

Infections at work - Biosafety - HSE

HSE and infections at work

1.5 AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Inverclyde Council undertake appropriate assessments of risk to employee

1.6 LINKS TO CORPORATE GROUPS

This policy links to the work of the Health and Safety Committee.

2 SCOPE

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 pupils, service users or members of the public who have access to Council premises.

3 POLICY CONTENT

3.1 ARRANGEMENTS

These arrangements outline the Council's intentions regarding infection control.

3.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

The risks from infection at work can be dealt with in the same way as any other health and safety issue - through carrying out a risk assessment. In line with the corporate policy on Hazardous Substances, a risk assessment must be carried out for all work activities where employees may come into contact with infectious organisms at work.

Various factors need to be considered in assessing the risk. The key points are:

- Where the organism may be present e.g. in an animal, person or environment.

- How employees may be exposed e.g. direct skin contact and/or inhalation.
- What effects it may have e.g. infection, cause allergies.
- Exposure i.e. frequency of contact taking into account the systems of work and protective measures in place.
- Who is at risk e.g. employees, visitors, service users.
- Identify employees who may be at greater risk e.g. vulnerable staff.
- Community risks in the event of outbreaks of infectious diseases.

The aim of the assessment is to enable decisions to be made about the actions needed to prevent or control the risk. This includes the setting up of practical control measures, providing information and training, monitoring exposure and carrying out immunisation and/or health surveillance where the assessment shows that these are required.

An Infection Control/BBV Risk Assessment proforma is available in Appendix 1.

3.3 IMMUNISATION

The need for staff to be immunised is determined by the risk assessment process. Immunisation is a supplement to reinforce other control measures. Staff groups identified by the risk assessment process as requiring immunisation will have vaccines made available to them free of charge. The line manager should refer the employee to Occupational Health by completing a Health and Safety Occupational Health referral form (See Occupational Health Policy) and sending it to the Health and Safety Team Leader at:

3rd Floor
Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY
Or emailing it to: health.safety@inverclyde.gov.uk

Post exposure treatments are available for some diseases. Advice on post exposure treatments is available from the Council's occupational health provider. Enquiries should be emailed to health.safety@inverclyde.gov.uk or call (71)4720.

The Council's occupational health provider have a needlestick process in place see Appendix 2.

3.4 STANDARD INFECTION CONTROL PRECAUTIONS

Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICP's) are to be used by all employees in all settings where care is being provided at all times for all Service Users, whether infection is known to be present or not, to ensure the safety of those being cared for, including employees and visitors to the Council.

SICPs are the basic infection prevention and control measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious agent from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection. Sources of (potential) infection include blood and other body fluids secretions or excretions (excluding sweat), non-intact skin or mucous membranes and any equipment or items in the care environment or establishment that could have become contaminated.

The application of SICPs during service delivery is determined by an assessment of risk to and from individuals and includes the task, level of interaction and/or the anticipated level of exposure to blood and/or other body fluids.

To be effective in protecting against infection risks, SICPs must be used continuously by all employees. SICPs implementation monitoring must also be ongoing to ensure compliance with safe practices and to demonstrate ongoing commitment to service user and visitor safety.

There are 10 elements of SICP's.

3.4.1   Assessment of Infection Risk

Service users must be assessed for infection risk prior to care being given and this should be continuously reviewed while they are under the care of the Council or HSCP. This assessment will influence any decisions in regard to the care needs.

Service users who may present a cross-infection risk include those:

- With diarrhoea, vomiting, an unexplained rash, fever or respiratory symptoms. This includes Covid 19.
- With a known (laboratory confirmed) or suspected pathogen for which the duration of precautions are not yet complete. i.e. a person with a group a streptococcus infection will remain infectious for 24 hours after antibiotics have been administered.
- Known to have been previously positive with a Multi-drug Resistant Organism e.g. MRSA, CPE.
- Been a close contact of a person who has been colonised or infected with CPE in the last 12 months.
- Who have been hospitalised outside Scotland in the last 12 months.

3.4.2   Hand Hygiene

Hand washing is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important ways of controlling the spread of infection. Employees may think that they know how to wash their hands but evidence suggests that many people do not use the correct technique. This means that areas of the hands can be missed.

The diagrams in Appendix 3 demonstrate the hand hygiene procedure that should be followed when washing with soap and water or using alcohol based hand rubs (ABHR).

Hands should be cleaned:

- Before and after personal contact with service users
- After touching a service user's immediate surroundings
- Between carrying out different care activities on the same service user
- Following cleaning/disinfection procedures
- Before handling food
- Before eating, drinking or smoking
- Before taking medication or giving it to someone else
- Before inserting contact lenses
- After contact with body fluids

- After removing gloves
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- After any activity or contact that contaminates the hands including using the toilet, coughing, sneezing, handling waste etc. even if gloves have been worn.

Alcohol/antibacterial hand gels and rubs are a practical alternative to soap and water where employees do not have immediate access to suitable washing facilities. However, hands that are visibly dirty or potentially grossly contaminated should wherever possible be washed with soap and water and dried thoroughly.

Wash hands with non-antimicrobal liquid soap and water if:

- Hands are visibly soiled or dirty.
- Caring for service users with suspected or known gastrointestinal infections i.e. norovirus.
- Caring for service users with vomiting or diarrhoeal illness
- After cleaning up vomit or faeces.

3.4.2.1 Hand Preparation

Preparation of the hands increases the effectiveness of cleaning. Employees identified as at risk from infection and/or deliver personal care should:

- Expose their forearms.
- Keep nails short, clean and free of polish or artificial nails.
- Avoid wearing jewellery, such as wristwatches, bracelets and especially rings with ridges or stones. A plain metal finger ring is acceptable but it should be moved up or removed during hand hygiene.
- Cover all cuts and abrasions with a waterproof dressing.

3.4.2.2 Hand Washing Facilities

In premises, adequate hand washing facilities must be available and easily accessible. Designated hand washing facilities must be provided in hygiene/treatment rooms, laundries and kitchens. Designated hand washing facilities must have basins provided with liquid soap dispensers, paper towels and foot-operated waste bins. Where hand washing facilities are not readily available for example when working at outside locations employees should have access to alternatives i.e. alcohol/antibacterial hand gels and rubs.

Staff working in the community should carry a supply of alcohol based hand rub to enable them to carry out hand hygiene when necessary.

Where staff are required to wash their hands in the service user's home they should do so for at least 20 seconds using any hand soap available.

Staff should carry a supply of disposable paper towels for hand drying rather than using hand towels in the indiviual's own home. Once hands have been thoroughly dried, ABHR should be used.

3.4.2.3 Hand Drying/Skin Care

Improper drying can contaminate hands that have been washed. Wet surfaces transfer organisms more effectively than dry ones and inadequately dried hands are prone to skin damage.

- Alcohol based hand rubs provided should contain emollients in their formulation.
- Warm/tepid water should be used to reduce the risk of dermatitis, hot water should be avoided.
- Dry hands thoroughly after hand washing using disposable paper hand towels.
- Use an emollient hand cream during work breaks and when not working.
- Do not use or provide communal tubs of hand cream in settings where personal care is being provided.
- Staff with skin problems should report this to their line manager and be referred by the line manager to occupational health. Staff should also seek advice from their own GP.

3.4.3   Respiratory and Cough Hygiene

Respiratory and cough hygiene is designed to minimise the risk of cross-transmission of respiratory illness:

- Cover the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing wiping and blowing the nose.
- If a disposable tissue is not available use the elbow to cover the nose and mouth when sneezing
- Service users showing symptoms of respiratory illness should be encouraged to wear a surgical (type II R FRSM) face mask where it is clinically safe and tolerated by the wearer.
- Staff members showing symptoms of respiratory illness should be encouraged to wear a surgical (type II R FRSM) face mask where it tolerated by the wearer.
- Dispose of all tissues and face masks promptly into a waste bin.
- Wash hands with a non-antimicrobial liquid soap and warm water after coughing, sneezing, using tissues, or after contact with respiratory secretions or objects contaminated by these secretions.
- In the absence of disposable tissues and hand hygiene facilities only, cough or sneeze into their elbow/sleeve.
- Keep contaminated hands away from the eyes, nose and mouth.

Employees should promote respiratory and cough hygiene helping those (e.g. elderly, children or those with additional support needs) who need assistance with this e.g. providing service users with tissues, plastic bags for used tissues and hand hygiene facilities as necessary.

3.4.4   Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment is used to protect both staff and service users from the risk of cross-infection. It may also be required for contact with animals, hazardous chemicals and some pharmaceuticals. PPE includes items such as gloves, aprons, masks, goggles or visors. In certain situations it may also include hats and footwear.

All PPE should be:

- Located close to the point of use
- Stored to prevent contamination in a clean/dry area until required for use (expiry dates must be adhered to.)
- Be single use only items where possible.
- Disposed of immediately after each service user and/or following completion of a procedure or task.
- Disposed of correctly i.e. contaminated waste or domestic waste.

Reusable PPE items i.e. non disposable goggles or face shields must have a decontamination schedule with responsibility assigned.

3.4.4.1 Disposable Gloves

Gloves:
- must be worn where there might be contact with body fluids and or blood, non-intact skin, lesions, mucous membranes, hazardous drugs and chemicals etc.
- must be put on immediately prior to exposure risk and changed immediately after each service user and/or following completion of a procedure or task;
- must never be worn inappropriately i.e. going between service users, moving around the work area or at IT workstations.
- changed if a perforation or puncture is suspected and appropriate for use, fit for purpose and well fitting.
- must be appropriate for use, fit for purpose and well-fitting.

Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene. Disposable gloves are for single use only and they must be removed and discarded appropriately as soon as the task is completed. Hands must always be washed following their removal. The disposable gloves provided must be either powder free vinyl or nitrile. Latex gloves must not be issued to staff due to the risk of sensitivity and allergic reaction associated with latex.

The correct procedure for the safe removal of re-usable and single use gloves is shown in Appendix 4.

3.4.4.2 Disposable Plastics Aprons

These should be worn whenever there is a risk of contaminating clothing. They should be worn when in direct contact with a service user or their immediate environment. E.g. providing toileting support or changing bed linen. Employees should dispose of them appropriately once the task is completed and/or changed between Service users.

3.4.4.3 Visors and Eye Protection

These should be worn when a work activity is likely to cause body fluids or substances to splash into the eyes/face and always during aerosol generating procedures.

3.4.4.4 Fluid Resistant Type IIR surgical face masks

Masks may also be necessary if infection is spread through the airborne route – for example, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), COVID, flu. Staff should ensure that this equipment fits correctly, is handled as little as possible, and changed between service users or tasks. Masks should be disposed of appropriately immediately after use.

If a service user requests that a staff member providing close personal care wears a mask then employees should comply, in addition if an employee has signs of a respiratory illness and is working in close proximity to service users, or others, then wearing a mask would be good practice in order to reduce the risk of passing on their infection. This is especially important when dealing with or providing care to service users who are vulnerable to respiratory illnesses. This is especially important where there are high instances of community based infections.

Where a staff member choses to wear a mask this should be supported.

In the event of a cluster situation, an outbreak or in situations where there is increased risk then wearing of masks may be reintroduced. This decision will be risk based and driven by public health advice. Services should determine a suitable level of stock to maintain and ensure that a system of stock rotation is implemented.

Where use of mask has been identified as required through risk assessment these must be worn by employees.

3.4.5   Safe Management of Care Equipment

Care equipment is easily contaminated with blood or other body fluids, secretions, excretions and infectious agents. Consequently, it is easy to transfer infectious agents from communal equipment. Care equipment is classified as either:

- Single-use – equipment which is used once on a single service user and then discarded. It must never be reused even on the same person. The packaging carries this symbol.
    - Needles and syringes are single use devices.
    - Never administer medications from a single dose vial to multiple service users.
- Single Service User use – equipment which can be reused on the same Service User.
- Reusable invasive equipment – used once then decontaminated. (It is unlikely that Inverclyde Council will deal with this equipment stream.)
- Reusable non-invasive equipment – or communal equipment. Reused on more than one service user following decontamination between each use.

Before using any sterile equipment check that:

- The packaging is intact
- There are no obvious signs of packaging contamination; and
- The expiry date remains valid.

Decontamination of reusable non-invasive care equipment must be undertaken:

- Between each use
- After blood and/or body fluid contamination;
- At regular predefined intervals as part of an equipment cleaning protocol; and
- Before inspection, servicing and repair.

Follow manufacturers' guidance for use and decontamination of all care equipment.

All reusable non-invasive care equipment must be rinsed and dried following decontamination then stored clean and dry.

Decontamination protocols should include responsibility for; frequency of and method of environmental decontamination.

For guidance on how to decontaminate non-invasive care equipment see Information Sheet 58, Appendix 5.

3.4.6   Safe Management of the Workplace Environment

The cleanliness of the environment where a service user is being cared for is important to prevent the spread of infection. The person responsible for maintaining this environment must be identified and a clear reporting mechanism in place to ensure that any deficiencies are notified so that they can be acted upon.

The environment must be:

- Visibly clean, free from non-essential items and equipment to facilitate effective cleaning;
- Well maintained and in a good state of repair; and routinely cleaned in accordance with an agreed cleaning schedule.
- A fresh solution of general purpose neutral detergent in warm water is recommended for routine cleaning. This should be changed when dirty or at 15 minute intervals when changing tasks.
- Routine disinfection of the environment is not recommended. However, 1,000ppm available chlorine should be used routinely on sanitary fittings.

Employee groups should be aware of their environmental cleaning schedules and clear on their specific responsibilities. Cleaning protocols should include responsibility for; frequency of; and method of environmental decontamination.

3.4.7   Safe Management of Linen

Clean linen should be stored in a clean, designated area, preferably an enclosed cupboard. If it is not stored in a cupboard then the area it is stored must be designated for that purpose and the linen covered with an impervious cover able to withstand decontamination.

For all used linen:

- Ensure a laundry receptacle is available as close as possible to the point of use.

Do not:

- Rinse shake or sort linen on removal from any beds etc.;
- Place used linen on the floor or any other surfaces, i.e. tables;
- Re-handle used linen once bagged;
- Overfill laundry receptacles; or
- Place inappropriate items in the laundry receptacle i.e. used equipment/needles.

For all infectious linen i.e. linen or clothing that has been used by a service user who is known or suspected to be infectious and/or linen that is contaminated with blood and/or other body fluids e.g. faeces:

- Place directly into a water-soluble/alginage bag (Appendix 6) and secure; then place into a plastic bag e.g. clear bag before placing in a laundry receptacle or returning to the Service User. This applies to any items heavily soiled and unlikely to be fit for reuse.

3.4.8   Safe Management of Blood and Body Fluid Spillages

Spillages of blood or other body fluids may transmit blood borne viruses. Spillages must be decontaminated immediately by staff trained to undertake this safely. Responsibilities for the decontamination of blood and body fluid spillages should be clear within each area.

For management of blood and body fluid spillages see Appendix 7 Information Sheet 57.

3.4.9   Safe Disposal of Waste (including sharps)

There are many different categories of waste however for the purposes of this policy three main types are included:

- Domestic Waste
  - Recyclates (glass, paper and plastics, metals, cardboard)
  - Residual waste (any other domestic waste that cannot be recycled)
- Special (or hazardous) waste (Clinical Waste)

  - Generally is produced as a result of healthcare activities e.g. soiled dressings, sharps. Or waste which may contain infectious materials, i.e. blood or body fluid contamination.
- Offensive Hygiene Waste
  - dog faeces from collection bins
  - dog/cat faeces and animal bedding from kennels/catteries
  - feminine hygiene wastes
  - nappy wastes from nurseries
  - domestic type incontinence wastes

Clinical waste should be put into clinical waste yellow bags, clearly identified as clinical waste. These bags must be removed and incinerated by an approved waste management provider, and should not be disposed of in any other manner.

3.4.9.1 Clinical Waste Deposit Area

To comply with the "Waste Management Licensing Regulations" Inverclyde Council have made available a central clinical waste collection point.

A clinical waste skip (yellow in colour) is located at the Pottery Street Waste Depot adjacent to the port-a-cabin at the weighbridge.

This facility is available to allow the safe deposit of clinical waste that may be collected by Inverclyde Council employees during the course of their duties.

The clinical waste skip will be controlled by Transport and Waste employees operating from the garage office. The key for the skip and the "Clinical Waste Deposit Register" will be held and controlled from this location.

Employees wishing to deposit clinical waste should report to the garage office and give the appropriate information to employees controlling the waste collection point.

If no employees are present efforts should be made to locate them or a return visit made.

- Clinical waste should not be deposited in this area if no employees are present to provide access to the skip.
- Clinical waste being deposited must be in either a sharps container or clinical waste yellow bag.
- Clinical waste must always be properly bagged; it must never be deposited loose.

Sharps boxes must:

- Have a dedicated handle.
- Have a temporary closure mechanism, which must be employed when the box is not in use.
- Be disposed of when the manufacturers' fill line is reached; and be labelled with the point of origin and the date of closure.

Information Sheet 49 – BBV: Sharp/needle uplift awareness provides further information on the correct method of uplifting needles. Appendix 9

3.4.9.2 Offensive Hygiene Waste

Segregation of these wastes as a discrete waste stream is expected where they are produced by the Council in quantity (approx 7kg or 1 bag per interval period). A failure to segregate may have significant implications for the subsequent management of other waste it is mixed with.

Non-healthcare businesses (like householders) may dispose of smaller quantities in their mixed municipal waste ('black bag') without it affecting the classification or management of that waste.

These wastes are not normally considered to be clinical wastes unless a healthcare professional identifies through risk assessment that waste may be infectious. It must then be identified and managed as clinical waste.

3.4.10 Occupational Safety: prevention and exposure management (including sharps)

A sharp is defined as any item that is capable of penetrating the skin and may be contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Sharps include needles, glass, metal and knives. The main hazards of a sharps injury are Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. Sharps handling must be assessed kept to a minimum and eliminated is possible with the use of approved safety devices. Manufacturers' instructions for safe use and disposal must be followed.

A significant occupational exposure is:

- An injury which breaks the skin, e.g. injuries from needles, bites etc.
- Exposure of broken skin (abrasions, cuts, eczema, etc; and/or
- Exposure of mucous membranes including the eye from splashing of blood or other high risk body fluids.

There is a potential risk of transmission of a Blood Borne Virus (BBV) from a significant occupational exposure and employees must understand the actions they should take when a significant occupational exposure incident takes place. All sharps injuries or near misses must be reported to line managers and recorded on the Council's incident reporting system "figtree".

Accidents can occur at any stage and to reduce the risk of injury and exposure to blood-borne transmissible diseases. To avoid injury employees should ensure that:

- Sharps are not passed directly from hand to hand.
- Handling is kept to a minimum.
- Needles are not broken or bent before use or disposal.
- Syringes or needles are not dismantled by hand before disposal.
- Needles are never re-sheathed.
- They plan for the safe handling and disposal of sharps before they are used.
- Used sharps are placed in a special container at the point of use, by the user and not a third party. This should conform to UN Standard 3291 and British Standard 7320.
- Service users who self-medicate must be encouraged to dispose of sharps themselves directly into a sharps container at the point of use.
- Where needles are regularly used consideration should be given to the use of retractable needles.
- Sharps containers must be kept in a secure place away from unauthorised people.

Employees who are identified at risk from injury by discarded needles should be provided with puncture resistant gloves and suitable equipment for safe handling and disposal.

Premises or locations that identify a risk from discarded sharps such as syringes must have suitable equipment available/accessible to remove the sharps. Out of hours, they can liaise with the Community Wardens to make arrangements for the area to be made safe.

For information on the management of an occupational exposure incident see Appendix 9

3.4.10.1   Managing Accidents

Accidental exposure to body fluids can occur by:

- Injury penetrating the skin – for example, from needles, instruments, bone fragments or significant bites that break the skin.
- Exposure of broken skin – for example, abrasions, cuts or eczema.
- Exposure of mucous membranes, including the eyes and the mouth.

The action that should be taken immediately following accidental exposure to body fluids, including blood is given below and illustrated in Appendix 9.

Action to be taken by the person exposed:

- Immediately stop what you are doing and attend the injury.
- Encourage bleeding of the wound by applying gentle pressure – do not suck. Wash well under running water, dry and apply a waterproof dressing as necessary. If body fluids splash into eyes, irrigate with cold water. If body fluids splash into your mouth, do not swallow. Rinse out several times with cold water. Report the incident to your manager and complete an online Accident Form Figtree and the Accident Book
- If line manager is not available contact Health and Safety on ext. 4720.
- Go to A&E

Action to be taken by the line manager:

- Initiate an investigation into the cause of the incident.
- If the Service User involved in the incident is known gain information from the Care Plan about medical history.
- Assess the degree of risk to the employee. Incident that will normally be regarded as high risk are:
  - Needlestick injuries
  - Bites – that break the skin
  - Any incident resulting in the skin being broken
- Contact the Health & Safety Team for follow up action/treatment as necessary.
- Inform Health and Safety of all relevant information about the incident.
- Ensure an accident form is completed.
- Complete/review risk assessment.
- Following an incident, exposed staff should be given time to talk about their concerns, provided with information about the risks arising from the exposure, and informed of the support available from the staff counselling service.

Action to be taken by Occupational Health

- Check the immune status of the exposed employee if known and discuss their immune status with the employee.
- Dependent on best practice, offer the employee the chance to have their blood tested.

3.5 Special Considerations for First Aiders

The risk of being infected whilst carrying out first aid duties is small. The following precautions can be taken to reduce the risk of infection:

- Cover any cuts or grazes on your skin with a waterproof dressing.
- Wear disposable gloves when dealing with blood or any other body fluid.
- Use suitable eye protection and a disposable plastic apron where splashing is possible.
- Use devices such as a resusciade when giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but only if you have been trained to use them.
- Wash hands after the procedure.

3.6 Vulnerable Employees

If there is a known infectious risk, managers must consider if any of the staff exposed would be at increased risk due to their own health. Guidance on other infections is available in Appendix 10.

3.6.1 New or Expectant Mothers

Some infections in pregnancy may cause damage to the developing baby and pregnant staff should not work with these infectious hazards. (Advice must be sought from the Health and Safety Team or Occupational Health Service, on individual cases when appropriate.)

Main risks are from chicken pox, rubella, measles like rashes, slapped cheek and certain zoonosis such as toxoplasmosis and psittacosis. All pregnant staff must have a risk assessment completed as soon as their pregnancy is known.

3.6.2 Those with lowered immune system (immunocompromised)

This would include those being treated with radiotherapy and chemotherapy for cancer, and high doses of steroids or illness that affects immunity such as Leukaemia, HIV. These individuals are more likely to develop some infections and these may be more severe. Advice must be sought from the Occupational Health Unit on an individual case basis and an individual risk assessment carried out.

3.7 Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Services should actively safeguard and protect confidentiality about the medical status of all staff and service users. When the medical status of a staff member or service user is known, either through recorded information or verbally, the indisputable "need to know" is the criteria for disclosure not "want to know".

Deliberate breaches of confidentiality will be considered a disciplinary matter. An individual who wishes his/her medical status to remain confidential should have his/her wishes respected. For information to be shared the informed consent of the individual should be obtained. Before an individual gives consent, it is vital that she/he should be aware of the implications of agreeing to disclosure of information. The Council's Data Protection Policy and Data Protection Protocols must always be followed.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 CORPORATE DIRECTORS

Corporate Directors have a collective and individual responsibility to employees in providing Health and Safety Leadership within Inverclyde Council, they should ensure that their Directorate has:-

- As far as is practicable, the adequate provision of financial resources to meet the foreseeable expenditure for Personal Protective Equipment and training to deal with BBV's and other infections.
- Have included within business continuity plans the risks from an outbreak of an infectious disease.

4.2   HEADS OF SERVICE

Heads of Service will have a pivotal role in the effective implementation of the Infection Control Policy. They shall be responsible for ensuring:

- That this policy is implemented within those areas under their control or influence.
- That there is a system to monitor that their managers are complying with this policy.
- That where two or more Services are located within a building to liaise with other Heads of Service to co-ordinate infection control arrangements.
- That adequate equipment or facilities are provided and maintained and;
- That suitable notices are displayed informing employees of the arrangements for infection control.

4.3 MANAGERS/TEAM LEADERS/SUPERVISORS

Any person who has a managerial/supervisory responsibility for other employees, whatever title they are given has the responsibility to:

- Assess the risks of transmission of infection or blood borne disease to employees and others, and to establish appropriate procedures.
- Refer employees in areas of known risk of infection to occupational health via ODP&C to have their immune status confirmed. If an employee does not have immunity and immunisation is identified as an appropriate control measure for an individual employee they will be offered a course of vaccinations in work time and at no cost to the employee; or their work activities will be changed to reduce their exposure risk.
- Inform employees of the level of risk in their workplace.
- Ensure that infection control training is provided where required and retraining carried out every three years.
- Provide employees with guidance and information to minimise the risk of needle stick injuries and the action they should take in the event of a contamination injury.
- Ensure that infection control PPE and other materials or equipment are checked and stocks maintained.
- Ensure that suitable notices are displayed informing employees of the arrangements for first aid provision.
- Provide employees with guidance on standard infection control procedures to reduce the risk of transmission of blood borne diseases or other infections.

4.4 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBLITIES

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are complying with the health and safety procedures and requirements appropriate to their job. To achieve this, in relation to this policy, employees should:

- Where designated as a responsible person ensure that checks on equipment or facilities are checked and maintained.
- Inform their line manager if they have an infectious disease, especially if working in areas where there is close contact with others or dealing with vulnerable service users.

- Inform their line manager immediately if there are any concerns about safety in relation to infection control.
- Inform their line manager if they require immunisation.
- Report any incidents where there is a risk of infection or contact with Blood Borne Viruses.

4.5 HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM LEADER

The Council Health and Safety Team Leader shall ensure that the Infection Control Policy is monitored for effectiveness, is subject to regular review, and is revised when necessary. This shall be done in conjunction with Heads of Service and Trades Union safety representatives.

4.6 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.

The safety committee will oversee monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and other measures to reduce risks and promote workplace health and safety.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

Inverclyde Council recognises the need to provide staff with relevant information on the how to deal with the risk of infection and exposure to BBV's. Employee awareness will help with the implementation of this policy. Information on infection control will be made available on the Council's Intranet System ICON, and on Information Sheets. The information will be updated on a regular basis.

5.1 TRAINING

The Council recognises that training of employees is important to ensure that all relevant employees have the necessary skills to carry out the requirements of this policy. Employees identified as at risk from infection and/or deliver personal care must receive information and training on the Infection Control Policy and standard precautions on induction. This must be reviewed on a regular basis and the training recorded.

5.2 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, the Council's team briefing system and a copy will be placed on the Council's Intranet system ICON. Line managers and services are responsible for communication of this policy to any employees within their areas of responsibility who may be affected by the contents of this policy.

6 RISK

6.1 LEGISLATIVE RISK

The principal legislation that applies to infection control is the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). These regulations cover hazardous substances including biological agents (pathogenic micro-organisms) and they contain a schedule of special provisions relating to biological agents.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain.

It sets out the general duties which:

- employers have towards employees and members of the public
- employees have to themselves and to each other
- certain self-employed people have towards themselves and others.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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 Unions representatives through the Corporate Health and Safety Committee
- All Chief Officers
- Employees through internal communication channels

7.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equality impact assesment has been carried out.

Inverclyde
council

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL RESERVISTS POLICY

Version No 2

Produced by:

Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX

2024

Inverclyde Council is an Equal Opportunities employer.

This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	**Corporate Group**	**Service**
Reservists Policy		OD & HR and Communications

Change History		
Version	**Date**	**Comments**
1	Jan 2017	Agreed at Policy & Resources Committee on 31 January 2017
2	Nov 2024	Updated template and legislative references

Distribution
Corporate Directors, Heads of Service, Trade Unions, ECMT

Policy Review		
Updating Frequency	**Next Review Date**	**Responsible Officer**
5 years	2029	Service Manager (HR Operations and Health and Safety)

Policy Review and Approval			
Name	**Action**	**Date**	**Communication**
Policy and Resources Committee	Approved	TBC	Website, ICON, Trade Unions, ECMT

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inverclyde Council has pledged its support for members of, or those wishing to join the Reserve Forces and acknowledges the training undertaken by Reservists that enables them to develop skills and abilities that are of benefit to both the individual and their employer. This policy intends to define our obligations towards all employees who are members of the Reserve Forces.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Inverclyde Council is committed to employing staff who are members of the Reserve Forces, and they recognise the valuable contribution that Reservists make to the UK Armed Forces, their communities, and the civilian workplace. The Council will not disadvantage those Reservists who notify the Council of their Reserve status or those Reservists who are made known to the Council directly by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Inverclyde Council was presented with the Employer Defence Recognition Scheme, Gold Award in 2017 and retained the award in 2022.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The policy supports delivery on the Council Plan 2023/28 in relation to the following outcomes – "Outcome 1.4 More people will be in employment, with fair pay and Conditions;" "Outcome 3.2 Our employees are supported and developed"

1.4 LINKS TO LEGISLATION

The Armed Forces Bill 2021 enshrined the Armed Forces Covenant in law for the first time to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing essential services like healthcare, education, and housing.

The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 (SOE 85) provides reservists who have a liability to be mobilised with 2 types of protection:
1.protection of employment: the Act provides protection from unfair dismissal and makes it a criminal offence for an employer to terminate a reservist's job without their consent solely or mainly because he or she has a liability to be mobilized;
2. rights to reinstatement: the Act provides a legal right to reinstate the reservist to their former job, subject to certain conditions.

The Reserve Forces Act 1996 (RFA 96), sets out the call-out powers under which reservists can be mobilised for full-time service.

1.5 AIM

This aims of this policy are:

- To pledge Inverclyde Council's support for members of, or those wishing to join the Reserve Forces and acknowledges the training undertaken by Reservists that enables them to develop skills and abilities that are of benefit to both the individual and their

employer. This policy intends to define our obligations towards all employees who are members of the Reserve Forces.

- That the Council will not disadvantage those Reservists who notify the Council of their Reserve status or those Reservists who are made known to the Council directly by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

- That the Council shall, subject to the provisions set out in Section 3.2/3.3, agree to Release Reservists for attendance at Reserve Forces Training events where these take place on their normal working days.

  - That the Council shall, subject to the provisions set out in Section 3.2 agree to the release of all employees mobilised for Reservist duties.

  - To continue to treat the contracts of employment of employees mobilised for Reserve Service as operable throughout the period of such service and there will be no loss of continuous service or service-related benefits but refer to para 3.6.

  - To ensure that Managers are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and associated procedures

  - To ensure that employees are aware of the terms of this policy and associated procedures and of their responsibilities to comply with them.

1.6 LINKS TO CORPORATE GROUPS

This policy links to the Trade Union Liaison Group.

1.7 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Policy content is designed to meet our obligations in respect of the Armed Services/Veterans Covenant and the duties within the Armed Forces Bill

2 SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all Council employees. That is, to those employed under the:

- Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees;

- Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT);

- Scheme for Salaries and Conditions of Service laid down by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Officials of Local Authorities (Scotland)

3 POLICY CONTENT

3.1 TYPES OF RESERVIST

3.1.1 There are two main types of Reservist:

- Volunteer Reservists - civilians recruited into the Royal Naval Reserves, Royal Marines Reserves, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

- Regular Reservists - ex-regular servicemen who may retain a liability to be mobilised depending on how long they have served in the Armed Forces.

3.1.2   The Reserve Forces Act 1996 also provides for other categories, such as:

- Full Time Reserve Service -Reservists who wish to serve full time with regulars for a predetermined period in a specific posting
- Additional Duties Commitment - part-time service for a specified period in a particular post
- Sponsored Reserves - These are personnel employed by a contractor to provide a service to the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- High Readiness Reserves – These are Reserves, usually with a particular skill set, that are available at short notice (with written agreement from their employer)

3.2   RESERVE STATUS NOTIFICATION

3.2.1   Reservists are required to inform their employer that they are a member of the Reserve Forces and the specific force that they belong to. This is so that the Council can provide the appropriate level of support to the Reservist. It also assists with resource planning during periods of leave e.g. training and/or mobilisation. The Council also recognises the additional skills and experiences that being a Reservist can bring to the Council and therefore it is useful for the Council to understand where these skills and experiences exist.

3.2.2   Reservist employees are also required to grant permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write directly to their employer. This is known as 'Employer Notification' and ensures the Council is made aware that the employee is a Reservist and the benefits, rights and obligations that apply.

3.2.3   The MoD will issue written confirmation to the employer informing them the employee is a Member of the Reserve Forces. The letter will provide detail of mobilisation obligations and rights as an employee; rights as an employer; and details of the financial assistance available if an employee is mobilised. Where possible, it will also provide details of any annual training commitments. The MoD will also send a follow-up letter each year to confirm that the information held is still accurate.

3.2.4   It is the responsibility of the Reservist to ensure their personal details are kept up to date e.g. if they change employer or leave their respective Reserve Force.

In any circumstance, the Reservist will not be disadvantaged because of notifying the Council of their Reserve status.

3.3.   TRAINING COMMITMENTS AND TIME OFF

3.3.1   The Council recognises the importance of the training undertaken by Reservists that

enables them to develop skills and abilities that are of benefit to their respective Reserve Force, the individual and the Council

Reservists are typically committed to 24-40 days training per year. Training tends to take place 1 evening per week, over various weekends throughout the year and one 2-week training period also known as 'annual camp'. Training commitments vary but, in most cases, include:

- **Weekly training** - most Reservists train at their local centre for around two-and-a-half hours, one evening a week.
- **Weekend training** - all Reservists are expected to attend several training weekends which take place throughout the year.
- **Annual training** - a 2-week annual training course sometimes referred to as 'annual camp'. This may take place at a training establishment, as an attachment to a Regular Unit, a training exercise or a combination of any of these. Training normally takes place within the UK, although each year some Reservists train overseas.

3.3.2   An employee who is member of the non-regular forces and attends an annual training camp for a period of not less than a week will be granted special leave with pay equal to the period which the employee attends the camp, but not exceeding a period of 15 days and subject to the deduction of service pay and allowances received in respect of the period of special leave.

3.3.3   **Additional Leave**

Out with these provisions leave, with or without pay, may be authorised by the Director or Head of Service in conjunction with the Head of Organisational Development and Human Resources, in accordance with para 17.11 of the Conditions of Service.

3.3.4   Line Managers will where practicable facilitate work rosters to allow attendance at annual camp and other training commitments (e.g. weekly or weekend training sessions).

Reservist employees should give as much notice as possible of training commitments to allow appropriate planning for absences. Permission once given will not be rescinded unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3.4   MOBILISATION

3.4.1   Mobilisation is the process of calling Reservists into full time service with the Regular Forces, to make them available for military operations. The maximum period of mobilisation will depend on the scale and the nature of the operation and is typically no longer than 12 months.

3.4.2   The Call-out papers for mobilisation are sent by post to the employer or sometimes delivered in person by the Reservist to their line manager. The documentation will include the call-out date and the anticipated timeline. Whenever possible, Defence aims to give at least 28 days' notice of the date that a Reservist will be required to report for mobilisation, although there is no statutory requirement for a warning period prior to mobilisation.

A period of mobilisation comprises three distinct phases:

- Medical and pre-deployment training;
- Operational tour;
- Post-operational tour leave

Pre-mobilisation – Line Managers should:

- Meet with Reservist to ensure all mobilisation paperwork completed (including pay, benefits & pension arrangements)
- Make a claim for financial assistance as appropriate (see s.12 of policy)
- Discuss any handover of work and return of equipment
- Arrangements for keeping in touch

During mobilisation – Line Managers should:

- Keep in touch with Reservist as arranged

Post-mobilisation – Line Managers should:

- Ensure both employer and reservist fulfil their return-to-work obligations (including reference to template letters)
- After care and support requirements

3.5.   APPLYING FOR EXEMPTION/DEFERRAL/REVOCATION

3.5.1   In all cases of mobilisation, the Council will release the Reservist to report for duty unless there are exceptional circumstances, whereby the decision and reasoning will be explained to the Reservist.

3.5.2   In such circumstances line managers have the right to seek exemption, deferral or revocation if the Reservist's absence is considered to cause serious harm to service delivery.

Definitions of 'harm' will vary from case to case, but may include:

- loss of reputation, goodwill or other financial harm
- impairment of the ability to produce goods or provide services
- harm to the research and development of new products, services or processes (which could not be prevented by the granting of financial assistance under sections 83 and 84 of The Reserve Forces Act 1996).

3.5.3   Details of how to apply for exemption are included in the call-out pack. The application must reach the Adjudication Officer within 7 days of the Council receiving a call-out notice. If this timescale is not met, permission to make a late application will need to be obtained from the Adjudication Officer. The Reservist also has the right to apply for exemption or deferral if the call-out papers arrive at a difficult time.

3.5.4   If an unsatisfactory decision is received following the application for a deferral, the Council can appeal for a hearing by the Reserve Forces Appeals Tribunal. Appeals

must reach the Tribunals Secretary within 5 days receipt of written notice of the decision. If the tribunal rejects the application for exemption or deferral, the Council will be required to release the Reservist for mobilisation.

3.6. TREATMENT OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS DURING MOBILISATION

3.6.1   The Council will continue to treat the contracts of employment of employees mobilised for Reserve Service as operable throughout the period of such service and there will be no loss of continuous service or service-related benefits

Pay

The MoD will assume responsibility for the Reservist's salary for the duration of their mobilisation. They will pay a basic salary according to the Reservist's military rank. If this basic element is less than the Reservist receives from the Council, it is the Reservist's responsibility to apply to the MoD for the difference to ensure that they suffer no loss of earnings. This is known as a Reservist Award.

Where mobilisation occurs, the employee will be given special unpaid leave of absence.

The Council is not required to pay the Reservist's salary during the period of mobilisation.

Benefits

Contractual benefits that are suspended by the Council during mobilisation can be claimed by the Reservist as part of their Reservist Award. The Line Manager and Reservist should discuss any benefit arrangements during the pre-mobilisation meeting. This should cover those benefits which will be suspended and for any continuing benefits, arrangements should be made as to how these are paid.

Pension

If the Reservist is a member of the Council pension scheme and the employer suspends the employer contribution, and the Reservist chooses to remain within it, then the MoD will make the employer contributions for the period of mobilisation, as long as the Reservist continues to make their personal contributions.

Annual Leave

Reservists should be encouraged to take any accrued annual leave before mobilisation. The Council is not obliged to accrue annual leave for a Reservist employee during the period of mobilisation. Reservists accrue annual leave with the MoD whilst they are in full time service. When they demobilise, Reservists are entitled to a period of post-operational leave (POL). During this period, they will continue to be paid by the MoD.

Dismissal/Redundancy

A Reservist's employment cannot be terminated on the grounds of their military

duties or their liability to be mobilised. To do so would be a criminal offence under s.17 of The Reserve Forces (Safeguarding of Employment) Act 1985.

Reservists can be included in the redundancy pool if this is necessary due to a downturn in business or closure of a department. However, all employees should be treated consistently, and redundancy criteria should not discriminate against Reservists on the grounds of their Reserve service or call-up liability.

Sick Pay
Should a Reservist become sick or injured during mobilisation they will be covered by Defence Medical Services and any financial assistance will continue to be received (including pay) until demobilised. If the sickness or injury continues and this results in early demobilisation, the Reservist will remain covered by Defence until the last day of paid military leave.

After this time The Reservist will be covered by the Council sickness arrangements (in line with local policy).

3.7.   RETURN TO WORK

3.7.1   Both the Reservist and their employer have obligations under The Reserve Forces (Safeguarding of Employment Act) 1985 regarding the return-to-work process

3.7.2   **Reservist:**
The Reservist must write to their employer by the third Monday after their last   day of military service making their request to return to work and suggesting a date which should fall within 6 weeks of their last day of full-time service. This letter formally starts the return-to-work process.

They are also encouraged to informally contact the employer to discuss their return to work at the earliest opportunity, whether via a letter, a meeting or a telephone call. The formal application must be made in writing for it to be valid under the Act.

If a Reservist is not happy with the offer of alternative employment they must write to the employer stating why there is reasonable cause for them not to accept it. If a Reservist believes that an employer's response to their application denies their rights under the Safeguard of Employment Act 1985, an application can be made to a Reinstatement Committee for assessment. This committee will consider the Reservist's application and can make an order for reinstatement and/or compensation.

3.7.3 Employer**:**
The Employer has an obligation under Reserve Forces (Safeguarding of Employment) Act 1985 to reinstate the Reservist, where possible to their former role, and if not, to a mutually acceptable role on the same terms and conditions prior to mobilisation.

The Reservist should be reinstated within 6 weeks of the last day of their full-time service. They must be reinstated for a minimum period of 13, 26 or 52 weeks, depending on their length of service prior to mobilisation.

Sometimes Reservists may need refresher training when they return to work, or

be given time to familiarise themselves with processes and procedures in the workplace. Financial assistance may be available for retraining if it is required as a direct result of their mobilisation, although applications cannot be made for training courses that would have taken place anyway. Evidence of costs will be required in addition to evidence that the Reservist could not reach the required standard by any other means, such as workplace experience.

3.8   AFTERCARE

3.8.1 A Reservist returning to work will benefit from a smooth re-integration into the workplace/team. The following should be considered as part of this process:

- The need to update on changes and developments in the Council.
- The need to offer specific refresher training where it is sought/considered necessary.
- Where the job duties have changed since mobilisation a period of skills training may be required to assist with new aspects of the job.
- Whether the reservist can meet up with colleagues informally or socially before or after return to work to prevent any feeling of dislocation, if this is sought.
- Reasonable time off to seek therapeutic treatment if required.

3.8.2 Positive Conversations

Line managers who carry out Positive Conversation meetings with a Reservist should be aware that Reserve Forces activities undertaken by an individual (either through training or mobilisation) bring essential skills into the workplace such as leadership, communication, team working and organisational ability, which ultimately lead to improved performance in the workplace.

3.9.   FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

3.9.1 Financial assistance for employers in the event of an employee who is a Reservist being mobilised is governed by the Reserve Forces (Call out and recall) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2005. These cover additional costs above the normal earnings of the called-up Reservist associated with replacing that employee. There are 3 types of award available:

One-off costs

- Agency fees, if a recruitment agency or employment agency is used to find a temporary replacement; or Advertising costs
- No financial cap on claims, but any claim must be supported by relevant documentation

Recurring costs

- Overtime costs, if other employees work overtime to cover the work of the Reservist [by the amount that such costs exceed earnings of the Reservist]

- Costs of temporary replacement [by the amount that such costs exceed earnings of the Reservist]

The maximum claim available is £110 per day (£40,000 per annum). Claims can be made for every normal working day that the Reservist is away on service. An application for one-off costs and recurring costs must be made within 4 weeks of the end of full time Reservist service.

Training award

If a returning Reservist has to undertake additional training as a direct result of their mobilisation (routine training excluded), then the Council can make an application for the financial assistance.

3.10.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further sources of guidance and information can be obtained from the following:

- Defence Relationship Management
  https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-relationship-management

  Helpline: – 0800 389 5459. This is a free telephone helpline open during office hours where advice and guidance can be obtained on training, mobilisation and employment issues.

- Royal Navy website www.royalnavy.mod.uk/the-fleet/maritime-reserves

- Army website: www.army.mod.uk/join/20233.aspx

- Royal Air Force website www.raf.mod.uk/rafreserves

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.

4.2 DIRECTORS

Directors are responsible for setting the strategic direction of their Service consistent with the aims of the policy.

4.3 HEADS OF SERVICE/SERVICE MANAGERS

Heads of Service & Service Managers should promote a culture whereby the Policy is followed, ensuring consistency and fairness, appropriate supports put in place and that employees are aware of the contents of the policy.

4.5 EMPLOYEES

Employees are required to familiarise themselves with the terms of the policy and ensure that they comply with the content.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 TRAINING

Appropriate training will be provided for managers in the effective implementation and operation of the Policy

5.2 COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

The policy will be available on ICON, the intranet, as well as publically via the Council website.

6 RISK

6.1 LEGISLATIVE RISK

The Council has certain legal responsibilities regarding liability for mobilisation and reinstatement at work afterwards.

6.2 WIDER RISKS

In employing reservists, the Council needs to be aware of the commitments our reservists will need to fulfil such as training and mobilisation. Reservists may be mobilised for anything from a few days up to a maximum of 12 months. This could impact on service delivery at ashort notice although there is financial assistance to Employers

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This policy was updated in consultation with the Trade Union Liaison Group.

7.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy was assessed in relation to the Council's equality duties. All employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Protected Characteristics.

Inverclyde
council

Moving and Manual Handling Policy

Version No 3

Produced by:
Health and Safety
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX

November 2024

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	**Corporate Group**	**Service**
Moving & Manual Handling	Education, Communities and Organisational Development	OD,HR & Comms

Change History		
Version	**Date**	**Comments**
1.0	October 1998	Original Interim Document (Withdrawn)
2.0	February 2015	Updated to Infection Control and BBV
3.0	November 2024	Reviewed and policy format change

Distribution		
Name	**Date**	**Designation**
CMT and Extended Management Team		
Union Representatives		

Policy Review		
Updating frequency	**Next Review Date**	**Responsible Officer**
5 yearly review	2030	Health and Safety Team Leader

Policy Review and Approval			
Name	**Action**	**Date**	**Communication**
Moving & Manual Handling	Committee approval	February 2025	

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy supports the council in providing a safe place of work, a safe environment and safe systems of work, including the provision and maintenance of plant so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes the need to minimise the risks arising from moving and handling.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Manual Handling Operation Regulations 1992 require the Council to ensure that employees are protected for the risk of injury or ill health due to the requirement to lift and carry loads. These loads can either be inanimate objects or people.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This policy 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

1.4 LINKS TO LEGISLATION

The council will comply with all aspects and provisions of the following regulations which underpin this policy:

•   Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;

•   The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992;

•   The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999,

•   The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998,

•   The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

This sits alongside all other relevant statutory obligations. This includes the organisation and arrangements required to ensure the risks from manual handling are adequately controlled for employees and others who may be affected by our undertakings.

1.5   AIM

The aim of this policy is to minimise the risk of exposure to musculoskeletal injuries due to manual handling activities. We aim to eliminate or minimise the risks of moving and handling activities where possible. Where it is not possible we aim to implement a range of support and develop safer moving and handling practices. Where moving and handling cannot be avoided it will then be subjected to a moving and handling risk assessment where the risks will be reduced to the lowest levels as far as reasonably.

1.6   LINKS TO CORPORATE GROUPS

This policy links to the work of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

2 SCOPE

2.1 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 reasonably practicable and to pupils, service users or members of the public who have access to council premises.

3 POLICY CONTENT

3.1 POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Inverclyde Council to take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare at work of all of its employees.

A high standard of health and safety performance is recognised as an integral part of the council's service delivery. Therefore, sufficient resources will be allocated to meet the requirements of the council's Moving and Handling Policy.

This standard will be achieved by Inverclyde Council :-

- Providing managers with sufficient information to identify work activities and persons at risk from manual handling activities.

- Providing managers with information about the manual handling and management standards for identifying the risk of exposure.

- Providing managers with information and training in respect of :-

1. Identifying high risk activities where manual handling is likely to be a hazard.

2. Appropriate control measure.

3. The suitability of workplaces, safe working practices, and equipment used by employees.

3.2 RISK ASSESSMENTS

The risks from manual handling can be dealt with in the same way as any other health and safety issues through carrying out a risk assessment. This must be carried out for all work activities where employees are required to move or handle items or people as part of their work tasks.

Various factors need to be considered in assessing the risk. The key points are:

- Task – Does the task involve handling away from the trunk, twisting, stooping, reaching. Is the employee required to lift or carry a distance.

- Load – Is the load, heavy, bulky, unstable, sharp, or hot etc.

- Environment – what space is there, is the floor in good condition, is it hot or cold, is the lighting good.

- Individual – Is the individual pregnant, have health problems, require special training.

The aim of the assessment is to enable decisions to be made about the actions needed to prevent or control the risk. This includes eliminating the requirement for manual handling, the

setting up of practical control measures, providing information and training, monitoring of the effectiveness of these controls.

A number of risk assessment proformas are available as appendices:

- Generic Inanimate Load Handling with guidance

- Generic People Handling

- Individual Person Handling Risk Assessment – Council premises

- Person Handling Assessment – Care in the community

These forms can be adapted depending upon the individual needs of the Service. Where the forms have been adapted these must be clearly labelled with the council's logo and the heading changed to indicate the Service or section the form is used by.

The assessment of manual handling tasks within the council must only be undertaken by staff that have a level of knowledge, experience and competence appropriate to the task being assessed.

Care should be taken not to overcomplicate manual handling assessments and where simple and straightforward controls can be implemented the need for a 'specific' manual handling assessment can be negated. There will however be tasks that do require a more 'in depth' manual handling assessment and the information provided below offers advice and guidance on how the various issues associated with manual handling and the differing types of assessment may be carried out.

3.3 LIFTING OF LOADS AND INANIMATE OBJECTS

This type of assessment is aimed specifically at manual handling tasks that require loads, materials etc. to be transferred and moved by staff from one place to another. Many of these tasks can be incorporated within the general risk assessment process and the flow chart above should be followed to identify the areas to be considered to determine the level of assessment required. Each service will have varied tasks in terms of manaul handling with the main control measure being can this be avioded or can this be carried out using equipment.

The following guidelines apply to tasks involving the lifting, carrying, or moving of loads and inanimate objects:

Risk Assessment

See apendix 1 for creating a specific task manual handling risk assessment, where a task(s) are part of an employees everyday duties this can be built into job specific risk assessments with the guidelines below.

All manual handling must undergo a risk assessment to evaluate:

- The Task: Repetition, distance, posture, and frequency.

- The Load: Weight, size, shape, and stability of the object.

- The Environment: Floor condition, lighting, and obstacles.

- Individual Capabilities: Physical ability, training, and health considerations.

General Guidelines

Assess Before Lifting:

- Evaluate the weight and shape of the load.

- Plan the route to ensure it is clear of obstructions.

- Check the stability and secure any loose parts of the load.

Adopt Proper Lifting Techniques:

- Stand close to the load with feet shoulder-width apart.

- Bend at the knees, not the waist, keeping the back straight.

- Grip the load firmly with both hands.

- Lift smoothly, using the strength in your legs, not your back.

- Avoid twisting your back; turn your whole body instead.

Avoid Overloading:

- Do not attempt to lift or carry loads that exceed your capacity.

- Use mechanical aids (e.g., trolleys, hoists, plant machinery) where necessary.

- Seek assistance for heavy or awkward loads.

Lifting Aids and Equipment

- Use mechanical lifting aids (e.g., sack trucks, dollies, pallet jacks, hoists, plant machinary) for heavy loads.

- Where equipment is not available a cost exercise to hire equipment should take place for short and long term use.

- Ensure lifting aids are well-maintained and inspected regularly.

- Training will be provided for the correct use of lifting aids.

Team Lifting

For larger or heavier objects, ensure team lifting is coordinated:

- Assign a leader to direct movements.

- Communicate clearly before lifting and while carrying.

- Lift and lower the load in unison.

- Ensure weight limit is relevant to number of people lifting

3.4 EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT AND NEW TECHNIQUES

All directorates and services should look procure equipment to reduce the need for physical moving andhandling where resonabaly practicle. Services when refreshing equipment should look at new technologies in terms of equipment and techniques such exoskelton technology

3.5 MOVING AND ASSISTING SERVICE USERS/PATIENTS

This type of assessment is aimed specifically at tasks that involve the care of service users and, in particular, the help and assistance provided by employees to service users who have additional support needs.

These types of assessments can be carried out at two levels, with a 'Level 1' assessment being an initial assessment of the client to determine:

a)   The level of the client's incapacity

b)   If assistance from carers is required

c)   If the current controls available are adequate

d)   The methodology to be used by carers assisting the client

e)   If a more 'in-depth' assessment is required

Assessments at this level can be undertaken by staff with basic knowledge, understanding and experience of moving and assisting issues within a 'care environment' and will form part of any initial care plan developed for a service user or patient.

'Level 2' assessments will be carried out when the person undertaking the 'Level 1' assessment identifies a requirement for a more in-depth assessment as, in their opinion, they do not have the competence to carry this out. Where the need for this level of assessment is identified it will be the responsibility of the appropriate manager to arrange for a competent person(s) to carry out such an assessment.

Given the nature of the council and health and social care partnership undertakings, many of the 'moving and assisting' assessments that need to be carried out for service users/patients will be intrinsically linked to an individual service user's/patient's general care needs.

In recognition of this service user's/patient's Care Plans have been developed that will allow both the 'care' needs of the service user/patient and the 'moving and assisting' needs of the client to be initially addressed on a single pro forma (see appendices section). These care plans will incorporate the 'Level 1' assessment described above whilst the specific 'moving and assisting pro forma' should be used where a more in-depth assessment is required. This should be accessible within the Care Plan and used for reference by carers.

The flow chart available in the appendix outlines the areas to be considered to determine the level of assessment required.

Other information relevant to the care of the client should be included in the Care Plan as per normal arrangements within each section/department.

3.6 MANUAL HANDLING/CLIENT CARE PLAN PRO-FORMA

The following pro forma/guidance for carrying out assessments are available in the appendices section of this document:

•   Client Care Plan – 'In the Community' (Including Initial M & H Assess.)

•   Client Care Plan – Residential & Daycare (Including Initial M & H Assess)

•   Moving & Handling Assessment (All Services)

•   Guidance Sheet for Moving & Handling Assessments

•   Manual Handling Assessment (Lifting loads)

3.7 SAFE WORKING LOADS

All equipment provided by Inverclyde Council, or the Health Social Care Partnership will be maintained and tested for the safe working loads of people. At no time should this equipment exceed the maximum limit as this will affect the stability of the equipment provided.

Where service users or patients exceed the maximum weight limit for equipment then bariatric equipment should be used. Further advice should be taken from occupational health staff, community nursing staff or moving and handling co-ordinators.

3.8 SERVICE USERS/PATIENTS WHO ARE OBESE OR MORBIDLY OBESE (BARIATRIC)

When a bariatric service user/patient comes into contact with the service then contact should be made with the Occupational Therapist, community nursing staff, moving and handling co-ordinator or adviser for additional support and advice.

3.9 PATIENT HANDLING ASSESSMENT IN AN EMERGENCY

The Health and Safety Executive states that the law is not intended to stop "well-intentioned" improvisation in an emergency. This would include an unexpected life-threatening situation involving the safety of service users/patients, employees and members of the public in situations such as a fire, a major spillage or other emergency.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities laid out in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy the following responsibilities are specific to this Policy.

4.1 THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.

4.2 DIRECTORS

Directors have a collective and individual responsibility to employees in providing health and safety leadership within Inverclyde Council and the Health Social Care Partnership, they should ensure that this policy is cascaded downwards to all employee levels and that:

As far as is practicable, the adequate provision of financial resources to meet the foreseeable expenditure for appropriate equipment or handling aids to eliminate or reduce the risks from manual handling and manual handling training relevant to the risks identified.

4.3 HEADS OF SERVICE/SERVICE MANAGERS

Heads of Service will have a pivotal role in the effective implementation of the Moving/Manual Handling Policy. They shall be responsible for ensuring:

- That this policy is implemented within those areas under their control or influence.

- That there is a system to monitor that their Managers are complying with this policy.

- That where two or more Services are located within a building to liaise with other Heads of Service to co-ordinate manual handling arrangements and provision of manual handling aids and equipment.

- That adequate equipment or facilities are provided and maintained and;

- That suitable notices are displayed informing employees of the arrangements for manual handling.

4.3 TEAM LEADERS/SUPERVISORS

Any person who has a managerial/supervisory responsibility for other employees, whatever title they are given has the responsibility to:

- Assess the manual handling risks to employees and others, and to establish appropriate procedures..

- Inform employees of the level of risk in their workplace.

- Ensure that manual handling training is provided where required (different for each service) but no longer than every three years.

- Provide employees with guidance and information to minimise the risk of manual handling injuries.

- Ensure that handling aids and equipment are checked and maintained as per manufacturer's instructions.

- Ensure that a designated person(s) is identified who will monitor and keep approriate records in regard to:
  - o Training
  - o Equipment inspection and maintenance
  - o Statutory inspections and test of lifting equipment.

4.4 MOVING AND HANDLING CO-ORDINATOR/MOVING AND HANDLING TRAINERS

Where the Service have appointed a Moving and Handling Co-ordinator or Trainer they will ensure that:

- Adequate training programmes for moving and handling are in place within their area of responsibility.

- Oversee the implementation of this policy within their area of responsibility.

- Moving and assisting courses are evaluated and reviewed as necessary and in line with current legislation and guidance.

- Ensure adequate record keeping in relation to training.

- Support the service in carrying out risk assessments.

- To review the moving and handling training programme annually and update any training materials or working practices.

- Advising managers and employees on best practice of moving and handling, and where risks cannot be eliminated.

- Delivering manual handling training as per their training to the Service area they have responsibility for.

- Maintain records of employees who have attended training.

- Designing, facilitating and evaluating the moving and handling training programme for all staffing groups.

- Providing advice and guidance on procurement of equipment and safe systems of work during use of equipment.

- To assist with investigations into moving and handling accidents/incidents, and to advise or make recommendations to prevent further accidents or incidents.

- To liaise with Health & Safety Adviser as and when required.

4.5 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are complying with the health and safety procedures and requirements appropriate to their job. To achieve this, in relation to this Policy, employees should:

- Where designated as a responsible person ensure that appropriate records are kept and that checks are carried out as per the Council policy.

- Inform their line manager immediately if there are any concerns about safety in relation to manual handling.

- Follow the training provided and use the appropriate handling aids where required.

- Report any incidents where there is a risk of injury due to manual handling or where a musculoskeletal injury has been sustained.

4.6 AGENCY WORKERS AND EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Any agency workers working on behalf of Inverclyde Council or the HSCP will have the same level of moving and handling training provided by their employer which is in line with the Scottish Manual Handling Passport Scheme.

Agency workers have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with the health and safety procedures and requirements appropriate to their job when working on behalf of Inverclyde Council or the HSCP.

All training records for agency workers should be available for inspection as and when required.

4.7 HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM LEADER

The Council Health and Safety Team Leader shall ensure that this Policy is monitored for effectiveness, is subject to regular reviews, and is revised when necessary. They will do so in conjunction with Heads of Service and Trade Union Safety Representatives.

4.8 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.

The safety committee will oversee monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and other measures to reduce risks and promote workplace health and safety.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 TRAINING

All staff must be trained in the proper moving and assisting techniques prior to undertaking work that involves moving and assisting service users or patients, lifting equipment, materials etc. Refresher training should be carried out within an appropriate timescale based on the tasks being undertaken, staff competence and the findings of any relevant risk assessments. Training shall be arranged and co-ordinated at a service level.

5.1.1 INDIVIDUAL – TRAINING RECORDS & COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS

To ensure that staff are well trained a competency based approach has been taken to ensure that both Council and HSCP staff meet the requirements of the moving and handling passport in Scotland.

Each staff member will have competency based level of learning and assessment which is modular based and assessed annually by approved persons within their respective organisations. The modules have been set out below to give an understanding of the moving and handling passport within Scotland.

- Module A Manual Handling Theory
- Module B Inanimate Objects
- Module C Chair Manoeuvres
- Module D Bed Manoeuvres
- Module E Hoisting
- Module F Lateral Transfers

5.2 COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

The policy will be available on ICON, the intranet, as well as publically via the Council website.

6 RISK

6.1 LEGISLATIVE RISK

This policy takes into account the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations, The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. These regulations cover work related tasks that involve the manual handling of items or objects including people or animals and as an employer we shall

- so far as is reasonably practicable, avoid the need for his employees to undertake any manual handling operations at work which involve a risk of their being injured; or
- where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the need for his employees to undertake any manual handling operations at work which involve a risk of their being injured

- o make a suitable and sufficient assessment of all such manual handling operations to be undertaken by them, having regard to the factors which are specified in column 1 of Schedule 1 to these Regulations and considering the questions which are specified in the corresponding entry in column 2 of that Schedule,
- o take appropriate steps to reduce the risk of injury to those employees arising out of their undertaking any such manual handling operations to the lowest level reasonably practicable, and
- o take appropriate steps to provide any of those employees who are undertaking any such manual handling operations with general indications and, where it is reasonably practicable to do so, precise information on
    - ▪ the weight of each load, and
    - ▪ the heaviest side of any load whose centre of gravity is not positioned centrally.

6.2 WIDER RISKS

Without this policy there is a risk that the Council does not fulfill its health and safety duties.This in turn could lead to health and safety incidents, financial claims and penalties.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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.

7.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy has been impact assessed in line with the Councils obligation to comply with the Equality duties.

Inverclyde
council

Organisational Development, Human Resources and Performance

Discipline & Supporting Performance Policy

Version No 2.0

Produced by:

Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX

December 2024

Inverclyde Council is an Equal Opportunities employer

This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	**Corporate Group**	**Service**
Discipline & Supporting Performance Policy		

Change History		
Version	**Date**	**Comments**
1.0	October 2013	Disciplinary Policy -Changed to reflect Policy & Resources outcomes on 24.9.13
1.1	October 2017	Disciplinary Policy Included reference to the Displacement Selection Criteria Matrix
2.0	February 2025	New policy template used. Added section on expectations of conduct Added section of failure to maintain registration with professional bodies in policy and procedure Added section on anonymous allegations Clarified position with discipline for sessional/supply teachers in policy Added reference to Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Added electronic, audio or video recording by any device of the hearing will not be permitted Added clarification it is responsibility of service in conjunction with HR to inform regulatory bodies & to make referral to Disclosure Scotland Sections moved between policy and procedure

Policy Review		
Updating Frequency	**Next Review Date**	**Responsible Officer**
5 years	2030	HR Manager

Policy Review and Approval			
Name	**Action**	**Date**	**Communication**
Policy and Resources Committee	Approval	February 2025	ICON, internet, trade unions and employee emails

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Discipline and Supporting Performance Policy will provide a sound basis for the maintenance of standards of conduct and performance for employees of the Council. Issues will be dealt with at the lowest possible level consistent with the seriousness of the alleged misconduct or performance issues.

1.2 BACKGROUND

This policy complies with the provisions outlined in the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. Employers and workers should always attempt to address and resolve workplace disciplinary issues. Disciplinary matters can in most cases be settled informally. Where this is not achievable, however, formal action may be necessary.

The ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance provides guidance to employers, employees and representatives seeking to resolve these conflicts in the workplace.

A key provision in the code states that disciplinary issues should be dealt with informally, wherever possible. Informal action is often the fastest and most effective way to resolve minor cases of misconduct or poor performance in employees.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This policy supports delivery of the Council Plan 2023/28. Aligning with the Council's vision and values, this policy supports strategic objectives related to workforce management, ensuring compliance with legislative and regulatory obligations. It supports the Council Plan 2023/28 outcomes of:
•   More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions
•   Our employees are supported and developed

1.4 LINKS TO LEGISLATION

The policy and the related procedure complies with the Employment Rights Act (2008), section 199 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act (1992) and the ACAS Statutory Code of Practice 1 – Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (March 2015).

Under this policy, the Council will ensure that everyone receives equal consideration and that the needs of all are taken into account as per The Equality Act 2010, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. For disabled workers Inverclyde Council will make reasonable adjustments so to allow participation in disciplinary procedure, as far as is reasonable, to the same standard as a non-disabled worker.

1.5   AIM

Inverclyde Council recognises that the provision of excellent services to the public requires employees to perform to the highest possible standards.

The desired outcome of this policy and associated procedure is to ensure employees achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and performance in a consistent, fair and supportive working environment. These standards are determined through the Code of Conduct, contract of employment, job description/person specification, professional standards and other relevant organisational policies, procedures and guidance or through reasonable expectations set by the manager.

The policy provides a framework with accompanying procedure to ensure that matters are addressed without unreasonable delay where informal support has failed to achieve the required results. However, there may be occasions when disciplinary action is the only recourse open to Inverclyde Council.

1.6 LINKS TO CORPORATE GROUPS

This policy links to the Trade Union Liaison Group and the Workforce Development Group.

2 SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all employees of Inverclyde Council including Local Government Employees, Teachers and Chief Officers. The Chief Executive is covered by a separate policy.

It is recognised that there is close partnership working through the Health and Social Care Partnership with NHS employees. Where issues arise in relation to NHS employees in relation to potential discipline issues then information sharing with the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde may be appropriate. This should only be done following agreement by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications and/or Head of Legal & Democratic Services

This policy does not apply to agency and casual workers. Natural justice requires that allegations about the conduct of a casual worker should be addressed using a fair process, with the person being allowed the opportunity to explain his or her side of the incident to the relevant Head of Service. This policy and procedure may be referred to, with advice from HR, to establish an appropriate approach. See associated procedure for further details.

3 POLICY CONTENT

This policy sets out the key principles of the approach to discipline and supporting performance. The related processes are set out in the procedure document.

3.1 EXPECTATIONS OF CONDUCT

The Role of Clear Expectations in Preventing Misconduct

Clear expectations are the foundation of any successful discipline process. Without clearly communicated standards, employees may struggle to understand what is acceptable behavior or performance, leading to misunderstandings or mistakes. Establishing clear expectations from the outset can prevent issues from arising and ensure that employees are aligned with Council objectives and values.

Clear expectations help employees know exactly what is required of them in terms of their job performance, behaviour, and adherence to Council policies. Whether it's setting performance targets, outlining acceptable conduct, or explaining the Council culture, providing these expectations ensures that everyone is on the same page.

When expectations are clear and employees are fully aware of what is expected, the likelihood of misconduct decreases significantly. Employees are more likely to succeed in their roles when they understand the specific behaviours or performance levels that are required. Additionally, clear expectations can serve as a benchmark for both employees and employers to measure progress. If issues do arise, having a well-defined set of expectations in place ensures that the corrective process is based on agreed-upon standards.

Moreover, when expectations are clearly communicated and consistently reinforced, employees are less likely to feel confused, overlooked, or unfairly treated. This contributes to a healthier workplace where individuals understand their roles and responsibilities, and the Council can function more efficiently.

The standards of conduct we are all expected to follow are set out in a range of policies (and associated procedures) including (but not limited to) the:
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations
- Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy
- Grievance & Dignity & Respect Policy and Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy
- Corporate Health & Safety Policy
- Recruitment, Selection, Redeployment & Relocation Policy
- Supporting Employee Attendance Policy
- Supporting Alcohol, Substance Use and Gambling Concerns in the Workplace Policy
- Professional bodies and codes, such as Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), General Teaching Council (GTC)
- PVG Scheme.

We are expected to maintain these professional and reasonable standards of conduct at work.

These policies are available on ICON along with supporting procedures and/or guidance. Colleagues who don't have access to ICON can access them on the external website, or request copies from their manager, ask HR, or their Trade Union Representative if they are a member.

Occupations which are governed by rules and professional standards of conduct set by external regulatory bodies must also be adhered to. Failure to meet and maintain these may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.

The Council has a statutory duty to notify some external registration bodies and professional when misconduct has taken place or when disciplinary action has been taken. These external bodies include:
• The Scottish Social Services Council
• The Care Inspectorate
• Police Scotland
• Disclosure Scotland
• General Teaching Council

3.2 MISCONDUCT

Misconduct is behaviour that is considered unacceptable at work. It can also include unacceptable behaviours outside work if it impacts on your contract of employment.

Further details may be found in the associated procedure.

3.3 GROSS MISCONDUCT

Gross misconduct is behaviour and/or conduct that is so serious that your employment with us will normally be brought to an end without notice or pay in lieu of notice (summary dismissal). Gross misconduct can also occur outwith the workplace. There are more details surrounding misconduct and gross misconduct in the procedure, including examples of each.

Further details may be found in the associated procedure.

3.4 CONDUCT OUTWITH THE WORKPLACE

It is also important to note than an employee's conduct outside of the workplace may also lead to them being considered under the Disciplinary Policy, the Council's Code of Conduct is key in this respect and all employees and managers should familiarise themselves with their obligations.

3.5 CAPABILITY DUE TO PERFORMANCE

In the context of this policy, capability relates to an employee's ability to perform their duties. Capability in general relates to application of effort, quality of work, general performance or similar issues which may result in disciplinary proceedings being insitigated.

Normally, disciplinary proceedings under this heading will be applied following the exhaustion of a performance management process where the necessary level of performance has not been achieved.

Further details may be found in the associated procedure.

3.6 REGISTRATION WITH PROFESSIONAL BODIES

This policy emphasises that it is each employee's responsibility to ensure his or her registration with relevant professional bodies e.g. GTC/SSSC etc. remains current at all time.

It is a responsibility of employees to ensure that they maintain such registration as is necessary to enable them to practise their profession. Where registration is a requirement, and an employee allows their registration to lapse, they are not in a position to work in the capacity for which they are employed.

Further details can be found in the associated procedure.

3.7 OBLIGATION TO INFORM REGULATORY BODIES & THE RIGHT TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION

The Council will inform regulatory/inspectorate organisations and/or government bodies such as the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), General Teaching Council (Scotland) (GTCS), Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC), Police Scotland, Scottish Ministers, and any other organisations who become relevant in the future, of any disciplinary outcomes or proceedings as required in line with the individual requirements of each body.

This will be the responsibiity of the employing service. Any officers dealing with such cases must do so in conjunction with the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications.

Where relevant, appropriate representation at Disciplinary Hearings may be extended to allow a legal advisor in circumstances where the potential outcome of the proceedings would perhaps prevent employees from practicing their chosen   career either by being legally barred or making employment in their employment sector highly unlikely in the future.

3.8 NOTIFICATION TO DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND – PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS (PVG) SCOTLAND ACT (2007)

The PVG Act aims to provide a robust system by which unsuitable people are identified and prevented from doing regulated work with children or protected adults. To facilitate this aim, it is necessary for organisations to pass on information to Disclosure Scotland that indicates an individual may be unsuitable to do regulated work so that it can be properly evaluated and appropriate action taken. The process of providing such information to Disclosure Scotland is called 'making a referral'.

The referral process to Disclosure Scotland is entirely separate from any dispute or appeal against disciplinary action or dismissal.

It is an offence not to make a referral within 3 months of the criteria for referral being met. The criteria is set out in the Act itself and will be referred to relevant officers handling the case.

Failure to refer can result in a fine and a prison sentence of up to 5 years. Individuals within organisations may be prosecuted, alongside the organisation itself, if it can be demonstrated that the offence was committed with their consent, connivance or through their negligence.

A referral will be the responsibility of the employing service. Any officers dealing with cases which may involve a referral to Disclosure Scotland, must do so in conjunction with the Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources & Communications.

The Service will also notify Disclosure Scotland where an employee resigns in anticipation of punitive disciplinary action, is transferred to any alternative post, or were on a fixed term/temporary contract which has or was due to expire.

3.9 PVG STATUTORY DUTIES

While it is important to emphasize the supportive role given to employees and their families who find themselves experiencing difficulties, it should also be noted that there is a statutory requirement for the Council, and by implication, its employees, to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Further details can be found in associated procedure.

3.10 PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION

There may be instances where suspension with full pay is necessary following an incident. Normally this will be where there is good reason to believe that the individual's presence at work might:

- impede or inhibit the investigation;
- prejudice a subsequent dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct if challenged before an employment tribunal;
- present an immediate risk to colleagues, service users, pupils, the public or the Council's resources (physical or intellectual).

Suspension other than in cases to prevent an immediate risk should be a last resort.

Further details can be found in associated procedure.

3.11 ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

The question of whether employers can use anonymous evidence in a disciplinary procedure is a topic which often raises concerns regarding transparency, conflicting rights and reliability. The use of anonymous evidence can significantly impact the outcome of a disciplinary procedure, potentially affecting the career and reputation of employees involved. Therefore, it is important that a balance is maintained between the rights of witnesses who wish to maintain anonymity and the employee in question.

Further details can be found in associated procedure.

This provision sits alongside the Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting) Policy which is intended to encourage the raising of serious concerns.

3.12 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES:

Where formal action is being considered with regard to an accredited representative of a recognised trade union or professional organisation, the manager will seek to discuss the details with an official of the organisation concerned in advance.

3.13 FRAUD/CORRUPTION

It is the aim of the Council to provide excellent public services and it needs to ensure propriety and accountability in all matters. The Council considers that it has a duty to protect itself and the public from fraud and corruption and is committed to the rigorous maintenance of a strategy for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. Details of the policy for this and how it connects with the Council's disciplinary proceses can be found within the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

3.14 CRIMINAL CHARGES/ VACANCY CAUSED BY DISCIPLINARY ACTION OR IMPRISONMENT

Where the disciplinary action taken is dismissal and the employee lodges an appeal, consideration should be given to not filling the post on a permanent basis until the appeals procedure is completed.

Where an employee is charged with or convicted of, a criminal offence, consideration must be given to the nature of the offence and the likely impact on the workplace should the employment relationship be continued.

If an employee is imprisoned, it will be necessary for the Director or Head of Service to consider the specific circumstances and the needs of the Service to have the employee's duties performed. The matter should then be discussed with the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications.

Further details can be found in associated procedure.

3.15 INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING RESIDENTIAL CLIENTS ALLEGATIONS

In all cases involving children in residential accommodation, advice should be sought from the Chief Social Work Officer prior to arranging any interview of the child. Full details are documented in the supporting Disciplinary Procedures

It is the Council's policy that clients in residential accommodation are not called to any disciplinary hearing as attendance at such hearings could be detrimental to their care.

3.16 DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS RAISED AS A RESULT OF INFORMATION FROM NON-COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

It is possible that incidents will arise during the course of employment whereby an employee's conduct or capability is investigated as a result of information or complaints received from the Public, Service Users, Service Users Families, Pupils or their Parents/Carers/Guardians etc.

There is a Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure as well as a service specific complaint handling procedures which enable non-employees to raise concerns about services or employees delivering services. (HSCP and Education for example have different procedures depending on the client group and the nature of complaint etc). It is important that the Council considers these incidents fully; in many cases this is a legal requirement.

If any of these complaints received about employees are considered by   management   to merit further investigation under this policy & procedure, the complaint will be used as part of the investigatory/fact finding stage. Normally this information will be in the form of email or

letter and information will be anonymised as much as possible to ensure there are no data protection issues arising.

It may be necessary for Investigatory Officers to meet with non-employees to gather further information - this should only be done following agreement by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications and/or Head of Legal & Democratic Services.

3.17 ADDICTION

Where it is required to take account of an addiction problem at any stage throughout the formal disciplinary process, consideration should be taken of the Council's policies on Supporting Alcohol, Substance Use and Gambling Concerns in the Workplace prior to any decision making. The Council may also seek advice from Occupational Health Providers and/or support from specialist services for independent, specialist opinion.

3.18 CONFIDENTIALITY

All matters relating to discipline are confidential and no employee of the Council will disclose any information to anyone else within or outside the Council not involved in the case proceedings, including in circumstances where an employment reference has been requested, without the approval of the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications, or in the case of Chief Officers, the Chief Executive (or any delegated officer whom they deem appropriate).

Notwithstanding the above, if through the course of disciplinary proceedings, information comes to light, which raises concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, the Council has a statutory obligation to report these concerns to the appropriate authorities.

3.19 AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS

The use of covert recordings by employees and/or their management will not be accepted as evidence in any investigations, disciplinary proceedings or appeal hearings.

CCTV/audio or video recordings may be used. Where this is via CCTV the employee should be aware that the area is covered by CCTV.

All parties will be given the opportunity to view/hear any CCTV recordings which are being used in disciplinary proceedings. Where necessary, this will be done separately from a disciplinary hearing.

Electronic, audio or video recording by any device of the hearing will not be permitted.

3.20 CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Reference to the Disciplinary and Supporting Performance Policy and Procedures are included in an employee's Contract of Employment and Conditions of Service.

3.21 REDUNDANCY MATRIX

When the Displacement Selection Criteria Matrix is being applied in relation to the Voluntary Severance Policy consideration to any live disciplinary records will be given.

3.22 APPEALS

In the case of appeals against written and final written warnings or punitve action these will normally be considered by the next level of management up from that which issued the warning.

In the case of appeals against dismissal on the grounds of all matters relating to attendance or non-attendance e.g. capability, these will be considered by the Council's Human Resources Appeals Panel (Officers).

In cases of appeal against dismissal on the ground of misconduct (i.e. accumulation of misconduct issues) or gross misconduct these will be considered by the Council's Human Resources Appeals Board (Elected Members).

All punitive sanctions may be held in abeyance depending on the circumstances until the appeals process has been exhausted. If the appeal is not- upheld, backdating of sanction will be to the original date of the outcome decision being issued.

Letters of Appeal (emails will also be accepted) must be submitted within 14 days of the outcome letter being received, those received outwith this time scale will be considered time barred and will not take place.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1   Chief Executive

The Chief Execiutive will ensure that the Council will adhere to all its statutory responsibilities in relation to the provisions of this policy.

4.2   Directors

Chief Officers are responsible for the application of this policy and accompanying procedure within their Directorates.

4.3   Heads of Service

Chief Officers are responsible for the application of this policy and accompanying procedure within their service delivery remit.

4.4   Service Managers/Line Managers

Service Managers/Line Managers have responsibility for applying this policy, its provisions and those of the accompanying procedure and managing their employees conduct.

Line Managers should:
- Ensure fairness and consistency in decision-making in relation to the application of the policy.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Endeavour to try to resolve conduct issues informally in the first instance.

- Create an environment where employees are aware of this policy, its expectations, and the consequences of not meeting the required standards of conduct.
- Make sure that they and their team members are aware of the Council's required standards of conduct;
- Make sure that they and their team members are aware of any externally set occupational requirements and/or professional standards;
- Enforce these and take action to improve conduct where necessary; and
- Handle any disciplinary issue sensitively, fairly and within a reasonable timescale

4.5 Employees

Employees have a responsibility to:
- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy and accompanying procedure.
- Co-operate with the requirements of the policy.
- Act in a manner that is consistent with the Council's reputation and undertake work tasks and activities, as set out in job profiles.
- Maintain good working relationships with colleagues and managers.
- Comply with statutory requirements, for example, all health & safety regulations and observe all rules affecting their service area, regulations and operating policies and procedures.
- Meet and maintain the required standards of conduct; and
- Meet and maintain any externally set occupational registration requirements and/or professional standards of conduct.

4.6 Investigating Officer

The investigating Officer is responsible for conducting a thorough investigation and producing a comprehensive report with recommendations based on the evidence gathered in accordance with this policy and its accompanying procedure and guidance.

4.7 The Role of the Employee's Companion

The Employment Relations Act calls the person accompanying the employee "a companion". This policy allows a Trade Union Representative or Work colleague to be the companion. Under the Act, the companion can address the hearing to put the employee's case, sum up that case, and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. The companion may confer with the employee during the hearing. The companion may not answer questions on the employee's behalf. The companion should not be somebody who is directly involved in the incident leading to the hearing or be a relative.

4.8 The Role of Human Resources

The Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications is responsible for the formulation of disciplinary rules and procedures including the classification of misconduct.

HR are responsible for providing advice on the application of the policy and attending complex investigations/disciplines in accordance with categories details in associated procedure.

Where an HR advisor is present at either the Investigatory, Disciplinary or Appeal Hearings they will play an active role including questioning those present.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Training

Training will be in accordance with the Council's Corporate Training Matrix

5.2 Communication of the Policy

A copy of the policy will be stored electronically in the Human Resources section of ICON the intranet site and on the Council's internet.

A copy of the policy will be circulated to members of the Trade Union Liaison Group and the Workforce Development Group.

A communication will be sent to staff by Corporate Communications to make them aware that the revised policy has been issued and that they are responsible for familiarising themselves with the updated version.

6 RISK

6.1 LEGISLATIVE RISK

Not having a fair disciplinary policy and procedure in place puts an orgaisation at risk of legal claims, reputational damage, and poor employee morale. Employers are expected to follow the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. For example any unreasonable failure by either party to comply with the code may result in the tribunal increasing or decreasing compensation by up to 25%. This amount is in addition to the legal costs of preparing and attending the tribunal and, also, the lost time of key managers within the Council.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This policy was updated in consultation with the Trade Union Liaison Group.

7.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy was assessed in relation to the Council's equality duties. All employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Protected Characteristics.