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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>25 March 2025</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/06/25/MR/KM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morna Rae</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712146</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update: February-March 2025</b>		

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## **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 review of the Strategic Planning and Performance Management Framework.
- The Best Value Improvement Plan progress report.
- The Inverclyde Strategic Needs Assessment.
- The Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
- VE/VJ 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration plans 2025

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the latest updates relating to corporate policy and performance.

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

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

3.1 A corporate policy and performance update report is considered at every meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee; the last such report was submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### **3.2 REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

3.3 In early 2023, the Council implemented a new strategic planning and performance management framework (SPPMF) to better reflect the organisational structure and to strengthen existing arrangements in preparation for the new approach to Best Value audit.

3.4 A post-implementation review of the SPPMF was included as an action within the Policy and Resources Committee Plan 2023/26. This took the form of a survey to capture the views of Elected Members, Service Managers and the Extended Corporate Management Team. The survey ran from mid December 2024 – mid January 2025 and a total of 28 responses were received, including partial responses where at least 1 question was answered.

3.5 Overall, the feedback indicated that the original SPPMF objectives are largely being met, particularly with regard to supporting the role of Elected Members in monitoring performance. The CMT has reviewed all the feedback and identified the following areas for improvement:

- Implementation of an annual briefing on the Council Plan 2023/28.
- Develop new ways to communicate and promote the Council Plan 2023/28.
- Ensure that strategic plans and performance reports are clear and easy to understand.

3.6 The review of the SPPMF demonstrates the Council's commitment to continuous improvement. The Committee Plans 2023/26 are due to begin the final year in their planning cycle, following which new three-year plans will be implemented. This will provide a further opportunity to evaluate the SPPMF arrangements.

### **3.7 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

3.8 The Inverclyde Council Annual Audit Report 2022/23 included a recommendation that the Council should implement a process for reporting on the overall achievement and delivery of Best Value. To address this, the CMT agreed to conduct a corporate self-assessment focusing on Best Value performance.

3.9 The development of an Improvement Plan following the self-assessment was noted by the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 August 2024. The Improvement Plan focuses on seven areas with a number of actions and deadlines for each. A progress report is provided for the Committee in Appendix 1.

3.10 As at February 2025, 4 actions were complete, 15 were in progress, and 3 were yet to start, with the due date falling into 2026 or 2027. A change in approach has been approved by this Committee for one Best Value action, i.e. the development of a Digital and Customer Services Strategy.

3.11 Overall, good progress has been made in the delivering the Best Value Improvement Plan. Progress will continue to be monitored, with a further performance report brought to this Committee in six months.

### **3.12 INVERCLYDE STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

3.13 The Inverclyde Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) was originally developed in 2017 to support the development of Inverclyde Alliance and Inverclyde Council strategic plans. It brings together a range of data on the local population, economy, local deprivation, health and the environment and is updated at least every two years.

3.14 The most recent update to the SNA was carried out towards the end of 2024 and incorporates data from the Census 2024. It is available to download on the Inverclyde Council website: <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning-partnership/inverclyde-outcome-improvement-plan>

3.15 A briefing session will be arranged to provide an opportunity for the Alliance Board, Elected Members and senior managers to have a more detailed discussion on what the SNA highlights as a key issue for Inverclyde.

### **3.16 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) REFRESH**

3.17 The Improvement Service's national LGBF report 2023/24 is due to be published in early April 2025. The Committee will be informed of its key messages in the next LGBF performance report 2023/24. In the meantime, the latest LGBF performance data can be found in the online data dashboard which is updated by the Improvement Service throughout the year: <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/explore-the-data>.

### **3.18 VE/VJ DAY 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION PLANS 2025**

3.19 Following on from the success of D-Day 80 on 6th June 2024, there is an opportunity to join the national celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, which marked the end of the war in Europe and WWII on 8th May 1945.

3.20 The 80th anniversary of VJ Day is on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

3.21 A series of local events are planned for 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025:

- the raising of a unique VE Day flag at 9am, further to the appropriate approvals.
- the ringing of church bells at 6.30pm.
- lighting up of the Lyle Fountain in Greenock, the Cross of Lorraine at Lyle Hill and the Ship Builders sculptures in Port Glasgow.

3.22 Discussions are also underway regarding Gourock faith leaders holding a dedicated service on Thursday 8 May 2025. A similar event is being considered in Port Glasgow for VJ Day commemorations, with the aim of holding it on a suitable date in August to enable local school children to attend. Elected Members will also be invited.

3.23 In addition, there may an opportunity for the Cultural Partnership, Inverclyde Veterans Network and Heritage Network to be allocated space at the Gourock Highland Games for some VE/VJ Day programming. This is currently being reviewed by the Corporate Communications team.

## 4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the latest updates in relation to corporate policy and performance.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO
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.



## **6.0 CONSULTATION**




6.1 None.






## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.






## Best Value Improvement Plan Progress Report







Reference	Improvement area	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	CMT Lead Owner	Status	Progress as at February 2025
BV001 Communication & Engagement	Strengthen employee communication and engagement.	Explore the most effective means of communication with employees, particularly employees with a protected characteristic(s) (PC).	30-Sep-2024	Louise Long	 Complete	<p>It was decided the initial focus would be to gauge employee interest in a forum for those with protected characteristics. The following steps were taken to progress this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A news item was published on ICON on 5 December 2024 publicising the new forums/groups, inviting interest from staff.</li> <li>• An email was circulated to the members of the Corporate Equalities Group and the Staff Disability Forum asking if they, or someone they know, would like to take part.</li> <li>• Information was shared with colleagues who do not have access to email and/or Icon.</li> <li>• Consultation with the Trades Union Liaison Group.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporate Equalities Group reviewed the interest received at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025. It was agreed that there was insufficient interest to justify setting up another group in addition to the established Disability Forum. Direct contact was made with the individual employees who expressed an interest to discuss any particular issues that they wished to raise.</p> <p>The 2025 Employee Survey will include questions on employee communication methods.</p>
		Establish a schedule of meetings with managers (3rd tier) to discuss key issues; promote the work of the Council and highlight opportunities for collaborative working.	31-Dec-2024	Louise Long	 Complete	<p>A cross-service meeting for third tier managers took place in 2024, with a focus on the Council Plan and Partnership Plan. Further meetings with third tier managers have been set for March 2025 and September 2025.</p>


Reference	Improvement area	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	CMT Lead Owner	Status	Progress as at February 2025
		Explore the introduction of a Chief Executive Employee Briefing.	30-Sep-2025	Louise Long	 Complete	A Chief Executive's quarterly update / newsletter is in place, commencing from September 2024.
BV002 Improving the customer experience	Improving the customer experience	Develop and implement a Digital & Customer Service Strategy.	31-Oct-2024	Lynsey Brown	New approach agreed, as per comment.	At its meeting on 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2024, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the adoption of a phased approach to creating a combined new Digital and Customer Services Strategy. The Committee also approved Phase 1 of the Strategy. This revised approach was agreed in response to wider developments relating to transformation, including a new Audit Scotland report on the subject, and the related recommendations within the Inverclyde Council Annual Audit Report 2023/24.
		Explore opportunities to integrate current systems via the work of the Digital Modernisation Group.	31-Mar-2025	Louise Long	 In progress	The Digital Modernisation Group continues to oversee the Digital Modernisation Programme. Recent developments include the approval of the procurement of Engage Process, a system which will help with mapping and recording processes and outputs. It also approved the implementation of electronic forms for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates. More detailed updates are provided separately to the Policy and Resources Committee on a regular basis.
		Continue to upskill our employees, with particular regard to digital skills.	31-Mar-2025	Lynsey Brown	 In progress	A corporate training matrix has been developed to support employees and managers in identifying the appropriate training needs of employees. Courses focusing on developing digital skills have been provided by West College Scotland. Online learning events are shared via internal officer networks / corporate groups.

Reference	Improvement area	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	CMT Lead Owner	Status	Progress as at February 2025
		Assess the potential to use the CONSUL platform as a single community engagement platform across all Services.	31-Mar-2025	Ruth Binks	 In progress	CONSUL is in use and has been used by the CLD Service for a number of pieces of engagement. Consultation on Port Glasgow 250 is also being carried out on this platform. A phased approach to the roll-out is being taken to utilise it across all Services.
		Develop our use of social media / communications for customers, informed by customer preferences.	31-Mar-2025	Ruth Binks	 In progress	This action is related to a wider review of the media and social media protocol. The CMT has approved the conclusion of the review by June 2025. This will include a social media audit to inform our digital direction for communications.
BV003 Systems, data and research.	Enhance the use of systems, data and research.	Establish a network of data analysts to support improvements in use of systems, data and research.	31-Dec-2024	Morna Rae	 Complete	A Data Analyst Network is established and comprises of representatives from the Council and the HSCP.
		Dissemination of research and best practice across the Council and HSCP.	Ongoing	Morna Rae	 In progress	Research and best practice are standing items on the agenda of the Data Analyst Network. Details of national events e.g. hosted by the IS, ONS or the Census team are shared across internal groups / networks to develop learning where possible. This will remain ongoing.
		Increase the usage of Ideagen Risk to support performance management.	Ongoing	Morna Rae	 In progress	Ideagen Risk continues to be promoted across the Council with increased usage noted since the development of the Risk module is used to manage the Council Risk Registers. In addition, the HSCP is developing its use of the 'Action' module to support the management of key strategies. Individual teams within Services are also increasing their use of the system to monitor KPI performance and action plans.



Reference	Improvement area	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	CMT Lead Owner	Status	Progress as at February 2025
BV004 Governance Processes	Deliver refresher training to senior officers on key Governance areas.	Deliver refresher training on key governance areas such as Finance, Legal and Procurement.	31-Mar-2025	Lynsey Brown; Stuart Jamieson; Alan Puckrin	 In progress	Finance training has been delivered to all DMTs.  Legal and Procurement training still to be scheduled.
BV005 Costed Asset Plans	Development of costed Asset Plans.	Assess asset condition and establish realistic costs to meet investment needs.	31-Jul-2025	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	A new Corporate Asset Management Strategy was approved by the Environment & Regeneration Committee in May 2024. As part of this it was agreed to refresh the individual asset sub-groups to develop longer term costed asset plans.  The procurement of consultants to carry out the next 5 yearly external condition surveys is underway. This will inform the projects that are brought forward throughout the year as part of the ongoing review and prioritisation of the allocation of lifecycle funding which is based on the property condition survey data.
		Artificial Pitches Asset Plan Review	30-Jun-2025	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	Review commenced, data collection on-going.
		Roads Asset Management Strategy Review	31-Aug-2025	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	Report drafted, data check and Officer review on-going.
		Develop Options for Elected Members, followed by the prioritisation of resources / projects including the identification of potential funding models and risks associated with volatility of costs and funding sources.	31-Dec-2026	Stuart Jamieson	 Not yet started	This will follow on from the actions above.

Reference	Improvement area	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	CMT Lead Owner	Status	Progress as at February 2025
BV006 Alignment of assets with delivery expectations	Alignment of assets and resources with service delivery expectations.	Proposals to be development alongside the refreshed Asset Management Plans.	31-Mar-2027	Stuart Jamieson	 Not yet started	This will follow on from the costed Asset Management Plan action outlined above.
		Elected Members are aware of how budget reductions align with service delivery and performance.	31-Mar-2027	Stuart Jamieson	 Not yet started	This will follow on from the first action.
BV007 Promotion of the sustainability agenda	Increased promotion of the sustainability agenda.	Continue to implement, monitor and publicly report on the progress made in the delivery of the Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan.	31-Mar-2025	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	The Net Zero Action Plan Annual Progress report was presented to the Environment and Regeneration Committee on 16th May 2024. In addition, the Environment and Regeneration Committee receives updates on matters within the net zero action plan that relate to Property as part of a capital programme report at every meeting.
		Continue to ensure that new builds are energy efficient.	Ongoing	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	Energy efficiency is at the forefront of new build design e.g. the design of the new support hub for people with learning disabilities incorporates enhanced energy efficiencies and a low operational carbon footprint.
		Delivery of sustainability training for Council employees.	Ongoing	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	The Council's induction modules have been updated and includes 7 modules around carbon efficiency behaviours, including modules on 'How to Stop Climate Change: Personal Action' and 'Tackling the Climate Emergency: What is the Council doing?'.
		Awareness raising on sustainability issues carried out within local communities.	Ongoing	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	This work will be taken forward by the Inverclyde Alliance 'Place' thematic group which the Net Zero sub-group report into. The Net Zero action plan contains a range of actions associated with awareness raising, with updates provided to the Environment & Regeneration Committee.

Reference	Improvement area	How will this be delivered?	Due Date	CMT Lead Owner	Status	Progress as at February 2025
		Build capacity within communities to support sustainable development initiatives.	Ongoing	Stuart Jamieson	 In progress	As per update above.