

**Report To:** Policy and Resources Committee      **Date:** 22 September 2015  
**Report By:** Corporate Director, Environment, Regeneration and Resources      **Report No:** PR/141/15/GB  
**Contact Officer:** George Barbour, Corporate Communications Manager      **Contact No:** 712385

**Subject:** Budget Consultation and Communications Plan

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Policy and Resources Committee proposals regarding consultation and communications on the Council's budget.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The council budget consultation and communications plan sets out proposals to consult with residents, community organisations and a range of other stakeholders to inform the budget process.
- 2.2 The consultation will aim to deliver a consistent approach to branding and messaging, and combine utilising existing mechanisms with those used successfully deployed by the Council in the budget consultation launched in December 2014.
- 2.3 Appendix 1 contains a budget time line that outlines:
- The key internal stages involved in developing and setting the budget
  - The proposed consultation methods that will be used to consult with the public.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves:
- The consultation objectives, audiences, key mechanisms and timescales outlined in this report.
  - The detailed timescales for undertaking the consultation contained within Appendix 1.

**Aubrey Fawcett**  
Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council delivered a successful budget consultation and engagement process which launched in December 2014. The mechanisms deployed included the use of an innovative budget simulator tool and a range of public and other stakeholder meetings.

## 5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the consultation and communications timeline for the 2017/18 budget consultation. Below are the overall objectives of the consultation campaign, the key audiences targeted and the key mechanisms used.

5.2 The overall objectives of the consultation are:

- To ensure a high level of engagement across all audiences in setting the council's budget.
- To demonstrate clearly to the local community that Inverclyde Council and its elected members welcome and are actively listening to the views of its key audiences.
- To give all audiences the opportunity to be involved, influence and to have a say in determining the council's priority based budget.
- To seek feedback on the services Inverclyde Council needs to protect or reduce.

5.3 The key audiences for the council's budget consultation and communications plan are:

- Community
- Council staff and trade unions
- Politicians (internal and external)
- Public sector partners, voluntary sector and community organisations
- Business sector/Industry stakeholders

5.4 Appendix 1 highlights the timescales and key milestones for the council's budget consultation. Below are listed the key communication and consultation mechanisms:

- Online budget simulator
- Consistent branding of all consultation and communications activity using the message: 'Your Council, Your Say';
- Five community consultation events in communities across Inverclyde. The meetings would retain the format from 2014 and the only proposed change is the location for Port Glasgow to be the Town Hall as a more central location.
- Inverclyde HSCP Advisory Network - consultation forum for patients, service users and carers
- Business breakfast event with representatives of the business community;
- Four page feature published in InView newspaper and distributed to every household in Inverclyde.
- All member briefings
- Updates from the Chief Executive to Council employees and ICON updates.
- Presentation to Inverclyde Alliance board.
- Staff cascade and briefings;
- Dedicated budget consultation website pages set up at [www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay);
- Social media engagement through Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #Inverclydeyoursay to encourage residents to get involved in the consultation;
- Press releases and media briefing;
- One-to-one briefings offered to external politicians (MP and MSPs) on the budget options and consultation.
- Topic focused focus groups to be set up (the topics may be dependent on the actual proposed budget savings).
- Additional consultation for parent council chairs focussed on education savings proposals.

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## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Finance

A budget of £10,000 has been agreed by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee

### 6.2 Human Resources

N/A

### 6.3 Legal

N/A

### 6.4 Equalities

Additional support is provided at budget public meetings including sign language and hearing loop. Council material including InView newspaper can be made available in other languages on request.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES (see attached appendix)

NO -

### 6.5 Repopulation

N/A

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 N/A

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A

## Appendix 1

### Budget Consultation Timeline

Date	Mechanism/stage
3 August 2015	Members Budget Working Group
14 September 2015	Members Budget Working Group
22 September 2015	Policy & Resources Committee – budget update
5 October 2015	Members Budget Working Group
Date TBC	Presentation to Inverclyde Alliance Board
w/b 2 November 2015	All member budget consultation briefing held prior to launch of consultation. Briefings to employees/teams potentially affected by proposed budget savings Chief Executive update emailed to employees, published on ICON
9 November 2015	Members Budget Working Group
17 November 2015	Policy & Resources Committee – budget savings proposals agreed
w/b 23 November 2015	Consultation launched: -Budget simulator opened -Press release issued -Social media and online promotion begins -Dedicated website pages launched at <a href="http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay">www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay</a> Heads of service/service managers to meet with groups/organisations potentially affected by proposed budget savings (dependent on scale and nature of proposed savings). Chief Executive update emailed to employees, published on ICON Briefings to employees/teams potentially affected by proposed budget savings
w/b 30 November 2015	Public meeting - Greenock (Notre Dame High School) Public meeting – Gourrock (Gamble Hall) Public meeting - Port Glasgow (Port Glasgow Town Hall) Public meeting - Wemyss Bay/Inverkip (Wemyss Bay Primary School) Public meeting – Kilmacolm (Cargill Centre) Parent Council budget consultation meeting held (dependent on scale and nature of proposed school savings) Inverclyde HSCP Advisory Network - consultation forum for patients, service users and carers Business breakfast event with representatives of the business community (Beacon Arts Centre) InView newspaper (winter edition) published and distributed to every home in Inverclyde and published online. One-to-one briefings offered to external politicians (MP and MSPs)
7 December 2015	Members Budget Working Group Chief Executive update emailed to employees, published on ICON Press release issued highlighting half way point in budget consultation
Monday 11 January 2016	Consultation closes -Budget simulator closed -Press release issued -Social media and online promotion ends
w/b 11 January 2016	Analysis of budget consultation feedback
2 February 2015	Policy & Resources Committee – budget update
Date to be confirmed – the day before budget papers are published	Briefings to employees/teams affected by proposed budget savings
18 February 2016	All member budget briefing held prior to budget meeting in February. Inverclyde Council - budget decision Briefings to employees/teams affected by budget savings Chief Executive briefing emailed to employees, published on ICON Press release issued
w/b 22 February 2016	InView budget supplement sent/emailed to all who took part in the consultation
w/b 7/14 March 2016	InView newspaper (Spring edition) delivered to households and published online.

#### Colour key:

	Political liaison/Council meeting
	Community liaison/public meetings
	Business community
	External communication/Budget simulator
	Staff/internal communications