

Inverclyde Council 2021/23 Revenue Budget - Fairer Scotland Duty Statement

While an impact assessment has been carried out for each individual savings option, as appropriate, in relation to both Equality Impacts and the Fairer Scotland Duty, a wider assessment is also given in relation to the Revenue Budget proposals for Inverclyde Council covering the period 2021/23.

The proposal considered by Council sees a minimal number of savings options presented for consideration with no/minimum reductions to front-line services, together with investment in the Inverclyde Jobs Recovery Plan which will create more than 200 jobs. The Budget Gap in 2021/22 and in 2022/23 will be funded through the use of Reserves. This recommendation/decision is based on a desire to see the setting of the Council Budget 2021/23 have as minimal a negative/detrimental impact on the local population as possible, particularly in relation to socio-economic disadvantage.

The investment in the Inverclyde Jobs Recovery Plan of £5.6 million during the period 2021/23 will aim to reduce inequality of outcome and socio-economic disadvantage in the local area by providing enhanced access to skills, training and employment. Inverclyde is an area which faces both material and area-based deprivation, as can be seen from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), as well as lower income levels and a history of socio-economic deprivation over time. The Council acknowledges that it is likely that a large percentage of our unemployed residents may reside in SIMD areas. By investing in this way, Inverclyde Council will provide a range of support and opportunities which will directly target inequality of outcome for our citizens – building skills, providing employment and improving health and well-being overall. While these impacts will be seen over a longer period of time than the duration of the investment, it is important to note the positive direction made by Council.

Additionally, the proposal to provide support to households which have largely not benefited from the various Covid-19/Government financial supports - via a one-off payment to the 2021/22 Council Tax accounts of eligible people - will increase the income of those households, a move which is recognised as being a driver to improve inequalities of outcome. Similarly, the proposed Council Tax Freeze 2021/22 will also help to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

The Council is aware that disabled people in Inverclyde may disproportionately experience socio-economic disadvantage and will therefore welcome the investment of more than £6 million in a new learning disability facility.

Finally, the decision to reduce as far as possible any savings decision which would have a direct impact on service delivery, will ensure that critical services and support continue to be delivered to Inverclyde citizens as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic as a community. While the Council cannot mitigate against all impacts from the pandemic, the budget decisions being taken ensure a focus on delivering for a fairer Inverclyde in line with the Fairer Scotland Duty.

10 March 2021