

Inverclyde Council 2022/23 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 2022/23.

The Budget Gap in 2022/23 will mainly be funded through the use of Reserves. This recommendation/decision is based on a desire to see the setting of the Council Budget 2022/23 have as minimal a negative/detrimental impact on the local population as possible, particularly in relation to socio-economic disadvantage. Overall, the Budget 2022/23 includes the reduction of less than nine jobs, all of which are either currently vacant or can be achieved via voluntary redeployment.

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 therefore acknowledges that it is likely that a significant percentage of our vulnerable residents will reside in SIMD areas. Mindful that those residents could potentially be disproportionately affected by the local impact of global climate change, a significant sum has been allocated to support the delivery of our Carbon Reduction Strategy 2021/45, one aim of which is to reduce the incidences and impact of flooding in Inverclyde. While the impact of climate change 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 experiencing a new, additional pressure – the spiralling costs of energy - will increase the income of those households, a move which is recognised as being a driver to improve inequalities of outcome. Similarly, while aiming to minimise the increase in Council Tax 2022/23 will also help to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, it is important to note that local residents who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will be unaffected by the Council Tax increase.

The Council is aware that older, vulnerable people in Inverclyde may disproportionately experience socio-economic disadvantage. Those residents, together with their families and carers, will therefore welcome the significant investment by the Council in adult social care services. This decision is in response to the recent Budget Consultation exercise where the least popular budget-saving proposal chosen by respondents was the reduction of services for older people.

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 continues to be delivered to Inverclyde citizens as we progress our recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as a community. While the Council cannot mitigate against all impacts of the pandemic, the budget decisions being taken ensure a focus on delivering for a fairer Inverclyde in line with the Fairer Scotland Duty.