

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Budget Savings Proposals

Essential Information
Name of Officer(s) completing this Template: Gail Macfarlane
Designation(s): Shared Head of Service – Roads and Environmental Services
Directorate/Service: Roads and Environmental Services
Date of Impact Assessment: 20 February 2023
Name of Proposed Budget Saving ¹ : Reduction in 10 Full-Time Equivalent employees, Grounds, Street Scene and Burial Grounds

1. Does the proposed budget saving impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)	x	
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty ² (see Section 6)	x	
c. Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 ³ (see Section 7)	x	

¹ Please attach the Budget Saving Proposal to this Template

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](#)

³ [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/22](#)

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d. Corporate Plan 2018/22 ⁴ (see Section 8)	x	
2. If 'yes' is selected for any part of Section 1, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.		

3. Impact – Protected characteristics			
Which of the protected characteristics will the proposed budget saving have an impact upon? (See guidance for examples of key considerations under each characteristic – this is on ICON.)			
Equality Target Group	Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
Age			x
Disability			x
Gender Reassignment		x	
Marriage and civil partnership		x	
Pregnancy and maternity			x
Race		x	
Religion and belief		x	
Sex			x

⁴ [Corporate Plan 2018/22](#) (agenda item 5)

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Sexual orientation			
Other groups to consider			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/Carers • Trunk Road Authority • Local community groups 			X X X

4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the proposed budget saving impact on?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
x	Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between from different groups

5. Impact - groups	
From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.	
Positive impacts + (Describe groups affected.)	Negative impacts - (Describe groups affected.) <u>Age; Sex:</u> The Grounds, Street Scene and Burial Grounds operational workforce is predominantly male and the service has an ageing demographic. <u>Age; Disability; Pregnancy and Maternity;</u> Reduction in footway gritting may increase the risk of slips, trips and falls.

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	<p><u>Parents/Carers</u>: Reduction in playground maintenance may impact this group.</p> <p><u>Local community groups</u>: There will be reduced capacity to support local community groups.</p> <p><u>Trunk Road Authority</u>: Advised of removal of flower beds and concrete structures or transfer maintenance to the Trunk Road Authority.</p>
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6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will this budget saving proposal have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage? *Please tick.*

Positive Impact +	Neutral Impact =	Negative Impact -
+	=	- X

Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.

Affected staff are among the lower pay grades and predominantly reside in lower rated Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas.

A number of the Recovery actions relate to play parks and improvements in park areas due to the recognition of the importance of these areas particularly in areas of deprivation. It is likely that the importance of these areas will remain high whilst communities experience the impact of the cost of living crisis.

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7. Impact – LOIP 2017/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the LOIP 2017/22 will this budget saving proposal impact on?

x	1. Population: Inverclyde's population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio-economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Inequalities: There will be low levels of poverty and deprivation and the gap between the richest and poorest members of our communities will be reduced (This may already have been highlighted during section 6)
x	3. Environment, culture and heritage: Inverclyde's environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit
x	4. The local economy: Inverclyde has a thriving and diverse local economy, economic activity is increased and skills development enables both those in work and those furthest from the labour market to realise their full potential

Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on the LOIP Priority/Priorities.

Priority 1: Well-maintained and attractive open spaces and parks play an important role in attracting people to move in, businesses to set up and tourists to come to an area.

Priority 3: Reduction in the maintenance of our open spaces directly impacts on people's access, use and enjoyment of these areas. The diminution in the attractiveness and opportunities to use outdoor spaces can adversely affect incoming investment, migration and potential tourism. Access to open spaces is seen as a valuable addition to people's wellbeing and ongoing health.

A number of the Recovery actions relate to play parks and improvements in park areas due to the recognition of the importance of these areas particularly in areas of deprivation.

The increase in biodiversity sites and reduced grass cutting supports climate change action plans.

Priority 4: The reduction of the workforce will have an impact on employment opportunities for the local community.

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8. Impact – Corporate Plan 2018/22	
Which Priority/Priorities from the Corporate Plan 2018/22 will this budget saving impact on?	
x	1. To promote Inverclyde, to both residents and visitors alike, as a great place to live, work and visit
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. To work collaboratively, to enable strong, connected and empowered communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that residents have influence and control over the things that matter to them
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. To grow the local economy in a way that creates opportunities for all our residents, including access to good quality jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. To reduce the prevalence of poverty and in particular, child poverty in our communities
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. To safeguard, support and meet the needs of our most vulnerable families and residents
x	6. To improve the health and wellbeing of residents so that people live well, and for longer
x	7. To protect and enhance our natural and built environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. To preserve, nurture and promote Inverclyde’s unique culture and heritage
x	9. To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and are underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. To develop motivated, trained and qualified employees who deliver quality services that meet current and anticipated service needs
<p>Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on the Corporate Plan Priority/Priorities.</p> <p><u>Priorities 1, 6, 7 and 9:</u> A reduction in the maintenance and general appearance and access to our open spaces can impact directly on investment, migration, tourism, wellbeing and healthy active lifestyles as per Section 7. Well-maintained and attractive open spaces and parks play an important role in attracting people to move in, businesses to set up and tourists to come to an area. The increase in biodiversity sites and reduced grass cutting supports climate change action plans.</p>	

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9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the proposed budget saving?

Note: Evidence could include consultations, surveys, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, officer knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, local, national groups.

Evidence	Details
Consultation/Engagement	<p>Engagement with external agencies through Environment Working Group and community sector identifies the potential to move to a more natural management of parks and open spaces. Community engagement has also identified areas where communities are willing to take on space to manage and benefit the local area.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2022: 12.89% of respondents supported the reduction of the street cleaning service by 50%; and 22.72% of respondents supported a 50% reduction in the grounds services budget.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2019: 38% of respondents supported a reduction in the frontline grounds maintenance budget of 15%.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2017: 48% of respondents in the budget consultation exercise were in favour of retaining the current level of service with 48% in favour of a reduction.</p> <p>Citizens' Panel Summer 2017 Survey: When we asked how interested respondents would be in seeing urban meadows in Inverclyde, 87% said they would be very or quite interested in seeing urban meadows in the local area.</p>
Research	<p>Gov.Uk Green space, mental wellbeing and sustainable communities https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2016/11/09/green-space-mental-wellbeing-and-sustainable-communities/</p>

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	<p>https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-56091-5_11</p> <p>Journal of Psychological Science studies on Greenspace and wellbeing. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/</p> <p>European Centre for Environment and Human Health at the University of Exeter, UK, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23613211</p> <p>Published national satisfaction surveys which form part of the national audit process and benchmarks would be adversely impacted, marking Inverclyde as performing poorly compared to other local authorities.</p> <p>A number of local authorities are reviewing grounds maintenance as this area is non-statutory. All local authorities are experiencing budgetary pressures.</p>
<p>Officer's knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)</p>	<p>Information from various associations such as the Association of Public Service Excellence, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and The Institute of Leisure Management shows a move towards more natural planting and a less rigid 'municipal' approach to grassed areas, wild flowering and wilding of areas which allow members of the public access in a more natural setting are becoming more popular and publically acceptable.</p> <p>Reduced grass cutting will reduce the tonnage of green waste requiring collection and treatment.</p>
<p>Equalities monitoring data</p>	<p>Links to mental health and access to open greenspaces - in the period of the pandemic open spaces and parks were valuable for communities to support mental health particularly for those without their own outdoor space; this will continue to be important through the cost of living challenges.</p>
<p>User feedback (including complaints)</p>	<p>There may be a perception by local residents and visitors that Inverclyde has become a less well-maintained and clean Council area.</p> <p>Response times to attend to complaints or unplanned maintenance would increase.</p>
<p>Stakeholders Other</p>	

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Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	

10. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of this Budget Saving Proposal.

A number of flower beds across the Council would be either grassed over or, where this was not possible, they would be planted with low maintenance shrubs. Additionally, grounds maintenance regimes would substantially reduce in lower amenity areas with a focus on more limited high footfall parks and recreational spaces.

A prioritisation exercise will be carried out to programme the grass cutting to prioritise areas of high amenity.

Grass maintenance regimes would be much less frequent, extending from once every two weeks to once every three or even four weeks in some areas. Grass mowings would not be raked or collected in all but the most high profile areas such as town and village centres. This would be noticeable in some areas to residents. A biodiversity action plan would require to be developed to mitigate the impact of this Budget Saving Proposal.

There would be a reduced capacity to respond to customer complaints and enquiries. Works would not be carried out at the same frequency or timeously.

The Budget Saving Proposal reflects reduced support to community groups in the event of community participation in parks maintenance.

The grounds maintenance element in the graveyards or areas of cemeteries which are less visited would be significantly reduced, maintenance would fall from once every couple of weeks in some areas to four weekly. Other grassed areas would be reduced to three weekly and where appropriate some grassed areas would be planted with shrubs and any mowing would remain in situ in low footfall areas.

The overall grounds maintenance and cleanliness standards will reduce across the Council's burial grounds and there will be a noticeable difference for local residents and visitors that cemeteries were less well maintained than before.

Seasonal staff will be deployed as necessary to maintain areas as required.

The digging of graves would be maintained and remain a priority.

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Street cleaning regimes would be much less frequent, extending from once every four weeks in some areas to two monthly or more. Standards would continue to be maintained in high profile areas such as town and village centres. There would be a noticeable impact in some areas to residents.

There may be a reduced level of servicing and capability to introduce additional bins.

The capacity to assist in maintaining key routes and spreading grit during frost and ice would be reduced. It would not always be possible to guarantee that all routes would be cleared prior to schools opening.

The reduction in posts associated with this Budget Saving Proposal is expected to be achieved by voluntary severance.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:	Name: Gail Macfarlane
	Position: Head of Service
	Date: 20 February 2023
Authorised by:	Name: Stuart Jamieson
	Position: Director - Environment and Regeneration
	Date: 23 February 2023

Thank you for your assistance with the completion of this task.

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer: karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.