Two year budget agreed

The budget for 2015/16 was set and an indicative budget for 2016/17 agreed unanimously.

The revenue budget for next year will deliver over £91m for education, communities and organisational development; nearly £49m for health and social care services and £31m for environment, regeneration and resources.

There will be additional areas of investment including services to school children with additional support needs; increasing the school clothing grant per child for the next four years; an increase by 20 per cent in the value of Christmas vouchers for older people and to double the lowest council apprentice wage rate.

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Green light for new £1.8 million community centre for Inverkip

New designs have been revealed and planning permission agreed for a brand new community centre for Inverkip.

This new £1.8m development is an investment in the Inverkip community and work could begin as early as May this year. Within the centre there is a multi-purpose hall with a 90-seat capacity with tables and storage facilities, space for a Library facility, a meeting room, changing facilities and a small café and kitchen.

Inverclyde Council schools will take part in the £20m Scottish Attainment Challenge aimed at closing the attainment gap in Scottish schools.

The council is joining with six other Scottish Councils to tap into the first batch of funding totalling £20m from the Scottish Government.

Inverclyde’s Council leader, Councillor Stephen McCabe, said: “Bringing the attainment gap is absolutely critical to the success of our young people. When resources are being pressed it is important that we are tapping into additional funding when it is available and will add to the quality services already being delivered in our schools.”

Depute Leader of Inverclyde Council, and seconder of the budget, Councillor Jim Clocherty, said: “This is a prudent budget with some difficult decisions behind it. But, those decisions have all their heart the views of the most important people – our residents, businesses and service users across Inverclyde.”

The council budget also decided that the council tax will be frozen.

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The Council agreed a two year budget. In this edition of InView, you will find updates in the centre pages. Particularly popular last year were savings in the second year were subject to Inverclyde Council’s financial management arrangements.

It also resulted in a cross party approach to examining the difficult decisions which lie ahead. For me, and I know for the other members of the budget working group, working closely with the Council’s corporate management team and our trade union colleagues, making sure we listened to the feedback from our citizens and businesses was an essential part of good Inverclyde were key principles in this budget review.

They are only difficult decisions ahead for Scottish Councils and for other public services. That’s why it is crucially important that we recognise the value we deliver.

In the Council’s budget for the next two years we are spending over £190m on public services in our community in each year. That’s money invested in schools, invested in roads and lighting, and invested in social work services. It’s money invested in services, which affect every corner of Inverclyde, that touch every community.

Our school estate programme is still the most ambitious in Scotland and is continuing space. The refurbishments of Ardgowan and St John’s primaries will be completed and work is starting on the refurbishment of Kilmacolm primary with a new build for St Patrick’s Primary School.

While the focus is rightly on areas we need to save, there are still areas where we are expanding the service to meet the needs of the community. Funding has been earmarked for new community facilities in Inverkip, WOODBRAIL and BENBROOK and for the refurbishment of Ravenglass Sports Centre. Plans are in place to build two new nurseries in Greenock and PORT GLASGOW to replace the outdated existing ones.

We are also continuing to invest in regeneration projects in Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow. Over the next two years we will spend over £1.5m on improving our roads, footways and street lighting and tackling the area’s funding problems. These are challenging times for the Council. But, with the overall budget spending in place, the additional areas of investment and hard work to protect essential services as much as we can from the worst of cuts, you can see we are still ambitious to make Inverclyde a better place for us all to live and work.

Inverclyde Council’s Education and Communities Committee, in partnership with Inverclyde Art in Education, have created Inverclyde’s top ten tips for exam success.

Two well-known artists have gifted artwork to Greenock’s McLean Museum. Port Glasgow born artist Jimmy Watt donated his painting named ‘Greenock’ featuring an iconic view of the shipyards in the 1970s. Jimmy Watt said: “This is a token of thanks to Inverclyde for my artistic career and as a principal artist teacher in the area for over 40 years. I thought it would be well-placed in the museum for the people of Inverclyde to take an interest in what used to be there.”

The second painting came from an internationally recognised artist, the late William Scott, who was donated by his family as a tribute to the town through the William Scott Foundation. Inverclyde Council’s Education and Communities Vice-Convenor Martin Brennan said: “It is a great pleasure and privilege to be able to add these paintings to Inverclyde’s collection, enabling the local museum to bring each artist’s work to a new audience.”

Newark Castle in Port Glasgow has joined New York’s Empire State Building as the latest landmark to be illuminated with state-of-the-art lighting, using LED technology.

At the request of Councillor Michael McCormick said: “It has been four years since we first started to think about bringing the castle to life. It’s been a long journey but we’re getting there. We will be able to see the castle lit up in all its glory and if the technology is good enough for the Empire State building and Edinburgh Castle then it’s definitely good enough for Inverclyde.”

Newark Castle was built in 1474 and has been added to and altered many times over the centuries. An early record to the castle was James IV in 1495 on his way to the Hebrides to quell unrest in the islands.

Audit praise for council finances

Independent auditors have ruled that Inverclyde Council performs well in delivering services, has good financial management arrangements and strong leadership.

That annual report to the councillors states: “Overall, the council performs well in delivering services and has good financial management arrangements in place.” In particular, the Council has been able to build up significant reserves during a period of financial austerity. This has been achieved through disciplined financial management, strong leadership by the senior management team in delivering the Council’s vision and corporate priorities to focus investment and maintain services.

Keep attending classes. Much valuable information and advice is given out immediately prior to exams. Take advantage of any extra classes on offer. Remember that staff are there to help.

Painting donated to Museum

Welcome to Spring 2015 Edition of InView

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The Living wage has been increased for the Council’s lowest paid employees.

And Council Leader Councillor Stephen McCabe said: “The Living Wage is fair for fair paid workers. The Living Wage goes above the National Minimum Wage and as the largest employer in Inverclyde we can lead the way in making sure that all our fair paid workers are well rewarded for the Living Wage and that they are not exploited.

The National Minimum Wage. Inverclyde Council Leader Councillor Stephen McCabe said: “The Living Wage is fair for fair paid workers. The Living Wage goes above the National Minimum Wage and as the largest employer in Inverclyde we can lead the way in making sure that all our fair paid workers are well rewarded for the Living Wage and that they are not exploited.

Call for employers to pay the living wage

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Watt's Watt celebrates moment of genius

Jane Martin, Director of Young Engineers and Science Club Scotland said: “The Watt’s Watt celebration was a brilliant opportunity to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

The project is closely linked to funding the theory into practice and James Watt continues to be as inspiring today as he was 250 years ago.”

The Watt's Watt challenge held at Port Glasgow Community Campus saw teams from 24 schools tasked with a bulb moment of radically improving the Pinhole camera. Glasgow Community Campus saw 30 teams from 24 schools tasked with a bulb moment of radically improving the Pinhole camera. Glasgow Community Campus saw 30 teams from 24 schools tasked with a bulb moment of radically improving the Pinhole camera.

More than 120 school children from across Inverclyde have celebrated the 250th anniversary of a science and engineering discovery that helped fuel the industrial revolution.

Inverclyde Council has welcomed £390,000 grant from the National Lottery Fund to roll out an innovative project involving schools and community groups across the area.

The project is closely linked to funding the theory into practice and James Watt continues to be as inspiring today as he was 250 years ago.

The £3.9 million refurbishment of Ardgowan Primary in Greenock has raised more than £80,000 for the school.

The school is set to accommodate changing rooms, staff and pupils activity space, seating and covered canopy multi-use games area, raised social space, seating and covered canopy multi-use games area, raised social space, seating and covered canopy multi-use games area, raised social space, seating and covered canopy multi-use games area.
The budget for 2015/16 was set at £248m, with an indicative budget for 2016/17 agreed unanimously. The revenue budget for next year will deliver over £68m for education, communities and organisational development; nearly £46m for health and social care services and £41m for environment, regeneration and resources.

Councillors have agreed savings totalling £4.1m for the second year with the temporary use of reserves to deliver a total savings package of £7m for 2016/17.

Council Leader, Councillor Stephen McCabe said: “The council embarked on an extensive public consultation, where residents were encouraged to examine the detailed budget proposals and put forward their views on the proposals. The council used a range of engagement techniques, including a new and innovative online budget simulator. The simulator alone, which set out budget savings proposals and gave people the chance to select their preferred options and balance the budget by selecting up to £7m of savings, generated over 600 responses. The online budget simulator was set up which was accessible through the Council’s website and publicised through a variety of mechanisms, including a special four page InView Budget Special in December.

It is no surprise that the responses show that respondents are more likely to take more savings from efficiencies and services redesign rather than reducing services. There was also live public community consultation meetings held across Inverclyde, along with specially arranged briefings for businesses and parents councils, all hosted by the Chief Executive.

A citizens’ panel budget questionnaire was also distributed to the one thousand members, with extra copies of the questionnaire made available at the public meetings and in the libraries throughout Inverclyde.

There were more than 1,400 responses to what’s been described as Inverclyde’s biggest budget consultation.

Four focus groups were held; one each for young people and older people and two groups with a cross section of Inverclyde residents. Residents from every location across Inverclyde responded to the budget consultation and the information provided has helped the councillors make the difficult decisions for the budget setting for 2016/17, which starts in April 2016. The Council would like to thank you for taking part in Inverclyde’s budget challenge.

You can see copies of the consultation documents and budget papers at www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay

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**New central library returns home to Wallace Place**

The central library has taken up its new home in the fully refurbished iconic building at Wallace Place in Greenock town centre.

Developed as part of Inverclyde Council’s asset management programme, the new 21st century library offers a wide range of services in a flexible, modern and comfortable environment, with knowledgeable and friendly staff on hand to help.

This bright and spacious children’s area has lots of comfortable seating and space for families to relax and read in a safe and friendly environment. Families can have lots of fun together in the new ‘reading lodge’ in the centre of the children’s area.

Teenagers continue to have their own section of books to borrow from central library and will be keen to use the special study areas and reading nooks.

The new library features a flexible learning centre, with 4 desktop computers within an enhanced space with comfortable PC seating and a mobile smartboard.

Adjustable technology is available for people with additional support needs, such as visual or motor impairments. Classes in the new library will include courses in basic computers, tablets, laptops and help with job searching.

Education Convener Councillor Terry Lowman said: “Wallace Place was originally used as a free public library from 1965 until the opening of the central library in Clyde Square in 1985. We are delighted to see the library return to its former home in all its modern technology and design, giving children and adults across Inverclyde a new common hub to be proud of.”

More information and online services can be accessed via: www.inverclyde.gov.uk/education-and-learning/libraries

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**Inverclyde secures £1m regeneration funds**

Inverclyde Council’s Environment and Regeneration Committee has approved over £800,000 on new projects as part of its investment programme.

- They include £175,000 to replace and repair rotten structures and lighting improvements in Inverclyde in an attempt to be compliant with current fire regulations. Inverclyde Council’s Environment and Regeneration Committee has approved over £800,000 on new projects as part of its investment programme.

- The roads team have completed 27 of the 28 planned roads projects for this financial year, as part of the ongoing roads and maintenance plan, known as the Roads Asset Management Strategy. In addition, eight reserve projects are complete, with a further 2 due to be completed by the end of March. Gourock roads have also had the application of a protective roads treatment to enhance their life span.

- Kilmacolm Road will also be completed by the end of March.

Inverclyde’s Environment and Regeneration Convener, Councillor Michael McCormick, said: “We have continued to deliver physical regeneration, create jobs and encourage everyone to come along and join in the fun.”

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**Ramping up road repairs**

A £5 million programme of road, footway, structures and lighting improvements in Inverclyde is on track to be completed this financial year.

- Inverclyde Council’s roads team has completed 27 of the 28 planned roads projects for this financial year, as part of the ongoing roads and maintenance plan, known as the Roads Asset Management Strategy. In addition, eight reserve projects are complete, with a further 2 due to be completed by the end of March. Gourock roads have also had the application of a protective roads treatment to enhance their life span.

- Another 12 footway resurfacing projects are complete, with a further 2 due to be completed by the end of March. Gourock roads have also had the application of a protective roads treatment to enhance their life span.

- Kilmacolm Road will also be completed by the end of March.

Inverclyde’s Environment and Regeneration Convener, Councillor Michael McCormick, said: “We have continued to deliver physical regeneration, create jobs and encourage everyone to come along and join in the fun.”

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**Support for SMEs**

Our business development team within economic development, assists companies in Inverclyde to grow, develop and succeed through programmes providing specialist business advice and funding support.

The Inverclyde Employer Plus Partnership comprises of a range of public and third sector agencies working together to provide support to local businesses to access a wide range of services, including recruitment support (including candidate screening and work trials), business advice and funding initiatives through the following:

- Business Information Training Support
- Graduates Program
- New Start Growth Fund
- Young Company Development Fund
- New Business Loan Scheme
- Entrepreneurial Fund
- Innovation Fund
- Marketing Grant
- Sme Business Assist
- Regional Selective Assistance
- Small Business Assistance Grant
- Start Up Business Loan Fund
- Tourism Grants
- Small Loan Fund Ltd
- Venture Capital
- Young Company Development Fund

For further information visit www.inverclyde.gov.uk/business-and-trade/business-development or email us at eda.empولي@inverclyde.gov.uk or call us on 01475 715555

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**Let the games begin…back page**

**InView**

www.inverclyde.gov.uk
Glass collection a smashing success

In the first month of Inverclyde Council’s new kerbside glass recycling service, more than 79 tonnes of glass has been diverted from landfill.

The launch of a new service took place in early December and saw nearly 28,000 households in Inverclyde receive a 40 litre black box for the storage and recycling of glass.

The new fortnightly collection service complements the existing kerbside collection services and allows householders to recycle clear and coloured glass bottles and jars including sauce bottles, wine bottles, spirits bottles, baby food jars, beer bottles and medicine bottles.

Environment and Regeneration Convener Councillor Michael McCormick, said: “I am pleased we have been able to respond to requests from the public by introducing this new service. The kerbside collection of glass is so convenient and will help reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill. It has been well-received and I am delighted that people are recycling more of their household waste than ever before.”

Glass is stored and bulked in Inverclyde then transferred to the reprocessor where it is crushed, moulded into new glass bottles and jars.

Inverclyde is one of only nine local authorities in Scotland to meet the Scottish Government’s 2013 performance target of 50% household recycling and in the second quarter of 2014 we achieved the new 60% recycling target for 2020.

If you have a comment to make about any Council service or you have concerns about your neighbourhood you can contact your Councillor during office hours on: (01475) 712727 / 712020

You can write to your Councillor at:
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
Inverclyde PA15 1LY

Councillors’ surgery information is available on our website at: www.inverclyde.gov.uk
Scottish Highland Games season starts in Inverclyde

LET THE GAMES BEGIn!
Gourock Highland Games

Sunday 10 May 2015
noon – 5pm
Gourock Park, Inverclyde PA19 1YT

Gourock kicks off the Scottish Highland Games Season with pipe bands, Highland dancers, heavy competitors, a range of Scottish food & drink and much more!

For more information visit www.gourockhighlandgames.org.uk or call 01475 712032