
Report To:	Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	Date:	21 April 2020
Report By:	Head of Legal & Property Services	Report No:	LP/049/20
Contact Officer:	Gerard Malone	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Engagement with Scottish Government		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Sub-Committee with information on engagement with the Scottish Government.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following consideration of a report by the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources providing an update on the response received from the Scottish Government relative to the Council's resolution in relation to Inchgreen Dry Dock, the Executive Sub-Committee at the meeting held on 7 April 2020 agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting on any outstanding items of representation made by the Council to the Scottish Government.
- 2.2 Two items in respect of which the Council is engaged with the Scottish Government have been identified, being (1) the temporary withdrawal by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde of the Out of Hours GP Service in Inverclyde and (2) a request to meet with Inverclyde's constituency MSPs to examine opportunities for additional funding and to re-examine the funding Inverclyde receives.
- 2.3 Copies of the relevant correspondence are attached at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 and the report updates Members on the current position.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive Sub-Committee notes the current position with regard to the Council's engagement with the Scottish Government on (1) the temporary withdrawal by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde of the Out of Hours GP Service in Inverclyde and (2) the request to meet with Inverclyde's constituency MSPs to examine opportunities for additional funding and to re-examine the funding Inverclyde receives.

Gerard Malone
Head of Legal & Property Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee at its meeting on 7 April 2020 agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting on any outstanding items of representation made by the Council to the Scottish Government.
- 4.2 Two items in respect of which the Council is engaged with the Scottish Government have been identified, being (1) the temporary withdrawal by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde of the Out of Hours GP Service in Inverclyde and (2) a request to meet with Inverclyde's constituency MSPs to examine opportunities for additional funding and to re-examine the funding Inverclyde receives.
- 4.3 The Leader of the Council and the Convener of the Health & Social Care Committee wrote to Professor John Brown CBE, Chair of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, on 27 February 2020 seeking an urgent review of the Board's decision to temporarily withdrawal by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde of the Out of Hours GP Service in Inverclyde, requesting details of the operation of the voluntary transport service and the implementation of home visits and asking how the impact of the service reduction will be monitored (Appendix 1).
- 4.4 The response from Professor Brown, received on 9 March, indicated that the suspension of the Out of Hours GP Service is temporary, that anyone who urgently needs to see a GP outwith normal hours is still covered by one of the other core centres and that transport can be arranged through the patient transport service. He also confirmed that the GP home visiting service is available for those too unwell to travel. He further advised that services in Inverclyde will be reinstated as soon as there is capacity to do so. There is a sustained recruitment campaign for more salaried GPs and work is ongoing to identify a model that will work for Inverclyde (Appendix 2).
- 4.5 The Depute Leader of the Council wrote to Stuart McMillan MSP on 31 January 2020, following publication of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) by the Scottish Government on 28 January 2020, seeking a meeting with Inverclyde's constituency MSPs to examine opportunities for additional funding and to re-examine the funding Inverclyde receives (Appendix 3). A response has been received with availability of possible dates and a telephone conference is currently being arranged.
- 4.6 The Executive Sub-Committee is requested to note the current position with regard to the Council's engagement with the Scottish Government on (1) the temporary withdrawal by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde of the Out of Hours GP Service in Inverclyde and (2) the request to meet with Inverclyde's constituency MSPs to examine opportunities for additional funding and to re-examine the funding Inverclyde receives.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.2 Legal

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

5.3 Human Resources

There are no Human Resources issues arising from this report.

5.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

5.5 Repopulation

The availability of an Out of Hours GP Service may affect people's decisions to reside in Inverclyde.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

Councillor Stephen McCabe
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
PA15 1LX

Councillor Robert Moran

Leader of the Council

Convener: Health & Social Care Committee

APPENDIX 1

Professor John Brown, CBE
Chair
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
J B Russell House
Gartnavel Royal Hospital Campus
1055 Great Western Road
GLASGOW
G12 0XH

Direct Line: 01475 712727
Email: stephen.mccabe@inverclyde.gov.uk
Our Ref: SMcC/RM/sc
Your Ref:
Date: 27 February 2020

Dear Professor Brown

Withdrawal of Out of Hours GP Service Greenock Health Centre and Inverclyde Royal Hospital

We write to express our deep disappointment with the Board's decision to temporarily withdraw the Out of Hours GP Service in Inverclyde and to ask for an urgent review of this decision.

As you will be aware, Inverclyde has areas of significant deprivation, including the most deprived datazone in Scotland. This significant deprivation means that Inverclyde residents suffer some of the worst health and related outcomes in the NHS GG&C Board area. It is difficult to understand how a decision impacting on some of the most deprived areas in Scotland can be made without an equality impact assessment to truly understand the impact on our communities.

Residents of Inverclyde also have some of the lowest levels of car ownership in Scotland and travel to the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) in Paisley will cause significant difficulties for many residents. For those not in possession of a car, or the support of family and friends, travel to the RAH would include a train journey to Paisley Gilmour Street and a bus or taxi for the remainder of the journey as the RAH is not within easy walking distance of the station. Clearly trains and buses would not be available outwith normal operational hours.

We understand that a voluntary transport service may be available to Inverclyde residents travelling to Paisley. We would request details of the hours of operation of this service and what assurances you can give that volunteer drivers will be available at all times, as required, and these journeys will take place in a timely manner.

Whilst we understand that home visits will still be available, we would, again, seek assurance that these visits will be triaged as priority and would ask that you provide us with information on how the prioritisation will be implemented across the Clyde area – specifically, will a car be stationed at all times within the Inverclyde area?

/...

2.

27 February 2020

Professor John Brown, CBE

We understand this decision was made on a contingency basis. How long do you expect the people of Inverclyde to be without a local GP Out of Hour Service? How will you monitor the impact of this service reduction, particularly on the accident and emergency service at Inverclyde Royal Hospital and the people of Inverclyde?

We would welcome your early response to the points raised above.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Stephen McCabe
Leader of Inverclyde Council

Councillor Robert Moran
Convenor
Health and Social Care Committee

APPENDIX 2

Date: 9th March 2020
Our Ref: JJB/GD

Enquiries to: John Brown
Direct Line: 0141-201-4410
E-mail: JJBrown@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

**Councillor Stephen McCabe and
Councillor Robert Moran
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX**

Dear Councillor McCabe and Councillor Moran

I am writing in response to your letter dated 27th February 2020 in which you raise concerns regarding the temporary suspension of GP Out-of-Hours services within Inverclyde. I am grateful to you for taking the time to bring your specific concerns to my attention.

First and foremost, I fully recognise and appreciate your concerns regarding the temporary suspension and I want to reassure you that absolutely central to the decision made last week, was that it is a temporary and essential one – to provide a reliable service in the short-term which enables us to focus on implementing a long-term plan to ensure a consistent and safe urgent GP Out-of-Hours service is available.

It is crucial to clarify that anyone who urgently needs to see a GP outwith normal hours is still covered by one of the other core centres. NHS 24 will direct them to their nearest centre. For patients who have no means of transport available, NHS 24 can make arrangements to get them to and from the centre through our patient transport service. In addition to this, our GP home visiting service covers the whole of Inverclyde, meaning if patients are too unwell to travel, a GP can come to see them.

We will reinstate services in Inverclyde as soon there is capacity for us to be able to do so. We have a sustained recruitment campaign for more salaried GPs underway and are working with colleagues in the local area to identify a model that will work for Inverclyde, potentially linking with the local work on the development of a resource hub.

We will monitor the impact of the suspension on other services but we will continue to provide a full home visiting service if patients cannot leave their home and, if they do not have transport, there is a patient transport service to take people to their nearest centre.

While it was a difficult decision to implement a temporary suspension of urgent GP Out-of-Hours, the previous model was simply unsustainable. Ad hoc closures and no consistency in opening hours due to staff shortages runs the risk of patients turning up to find the centres closed, which is something we want to avoid at all costs.

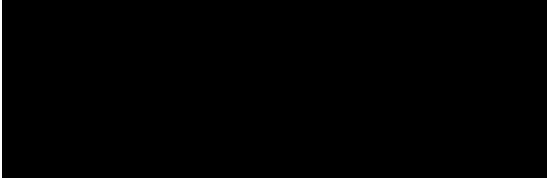
Unfortunately, because of this, we had no other option than to introduce a short-term suspension which will consolidate services and ensure a consistent and stable service can be delivered across the Board area. This will allow urgent GP Out-of-Hours to continue operating until a number of longer term changes can be implemented.

Patient safety is, and will always be, prioritised above all else, and providing safe, effective person centred care remains at the heart of all decisions being made.

In closing, I appreciate your concerns regarding the Inverclyde GP Out-of-Hours service and wish again to assure you this is a temporary arrangement.

I hope my response has been helpful to you. If you have any further concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely



Professor John Brown CBE
Chairman
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Councillor Jim Clocherty
Ward 4 – Inverclyde North
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
PA15 1LX

Depute Leader of the Council

APPENDIX 3

Stuart McMillan MSP
M4.11
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Direct 01475 712939
Line:
Email: jim.clocherty@inverclyde.gov.uk
Our Ref: JC/dr
Your Ref:
Date: 31 January 2020

Dear Stuart,

I was disappointed to read your attacks on the council and its leadership on the back of the statistical release of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) figures.

Your statement claims you will hold both Inverclyde Council and the Scottish Government to account and then proceeds to highlight multiple achievements of the Government coupled with attacks on the council and its political leadership.

In your haste to criticise the council's lack of vision you have ignored the fact that our vision for the area is part of a partnership agreement delivered through the Inverclyde Alliance.

The partnership involves community councils; Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS; Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce, Greenock and District Trades Council, Job Centre Plus, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Police Scotland, West College Scotland, the voluntary sector representation facilitated by CVS Inverclyde and , of course Inverclyde Council.

You are on the distribution list for all of the meetings, yet I do not remember you attending many meetings let alone putting forward an idea or proposal through that community planning partnership.

I have included a copy of the Inverclyde Alliance outcomes improvement plan (2017-2022) which sets out the vision we and our partners have developed and work towards delivering.

In your statement you highlight a range of achievements of the Scottish Government but do not include the council's role in activity such as the task force leading up to the original takeover of Ferguson Marine and the most recent with the takeover of Texas Instruments by Diodes. Both positive outcomes in protecting jobs and examples where as a council we have worked shoulder to shoulder with Government ministers.

Your most recent example of jobs being saved at Fergusons with the Government takeover of its own failed contracts still has significant questions to answer and with a parliamentary inquiry underway it is perhaps prudent that we do not dig deeper until the results are published.

When it comes to local government finance, I was surprised to see you talk about correspondence with Derek McKay MSP (to whom I have copied this letter) and a commitment from him to the council being encouraged to put forward a special case for funding.

This was news to us and not something you appear to have shared until now. In fact in the many meetings we have had with Government ministers around funding, through the task forces or as part of the wider west of Scotland network focusing on declining populations in this part of the country and the overheating in the East of the country, this has never been raised.

I would be grateful if you could forward a copy of that correspondence and on receipt, I can assure you we will be putting forward a special case for funding following the SIMD results.

As a council committed to working in partnership it is right that we do this as part of the Inverclyde Alliance and involve the wider community to encourage engagement and support.

I hope we can count on both you and Derek as our constituency MSPs to engage in and support that call and to that end I would like to invite you both to meet to examine the opportunities available for additional funding.

Part of that special case I would expect to involve the many cases we have already made to fund initiatives and activity such as the Inverclyde opportunities proposals we presented with a range of interventions and projects and didn't receive anything from that work. That was work that would have supported employment in places like Greenock Town Centre.

In addition, it will be an opportunity to re-examine funding we receive. For example Inverclyde received the lowest award of all Scottish mainland councils from the Town Centre Capital Grant Fund in 2019/20 and when we supported a recent bid to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) for investment in Greenock Town Centre it was turned down.

You highlighted that the funding formula at COSLA as a source of Inverclyde Council's budget woes but ignore the fact that we do not call for the formula to change. We are looking for a bigger pot for core local government services.

The council has been a consistent voice in supporting the COSLA campaign for a fair settlement for local government in recent years and in pushing for additional investment to reverse cuts and austerity.

That is because there are indisputable facts at play here.

The Scottish Parliament's research service, SPICE, report Local government finance: facts and figures 2013-14 to 2019-20 published in July 2019 showed the scale of cuts to local government in Scotland.

During that time Inverclyde Council's funding was reduced by the equivalent of £104 for every resident.

Nationally the report highlights that the real terms reduction in revenue settlement for Scottish Local Government was 7.5% or £810 million while the equivalent reduction for the Scottish Government was 2.8%.

Inverclyde, of all mainland councils, relies more heavily on income from the revenue settlement. According to the parliament report 72.1% in 2019/20 where other areas rely more heavily on council tax and non-domestic rates income.

In 2013, ring fenced funds to Inverclyde Council accounted for 0.3% of our budget and £0.5m. In 2019/20 that has increased to 4.9% or £8.3m.

Inverclyde funding over that same time has reduced by £13.9m, a decrease of 7.6% which does not in any way correlate with our population change during that time which was only 3.1%.

These are facts produced in the public domain by the Scottish Parliament.

As our MSPs I would expect you and Derek to be as outraged as I am to read this.

When political choices are made there are always consequences.

As a council we have, I am sure you would be the first to agree, made one of the most significant investments in Scotland in the infrastructure of our school buildings. We now, arguably, have the best estate in the country. That choice now means that while our young people are getting a better start in their lives, as the Scottish Government commits to more funding for school buildings we as an area will lose out to the councils that haven't made that investment. I don't criticise them or the Scottish Government for that, but highlight it to show that these are the choices we make and the consequences of those choices.

When the Scottish Government reduces local government core funding consistently for years, there are consequences to that where councils are less able to support our communities when they need us as resources are stretched and front facing services are reduced or cut altogether.

When council's ability to increase income for ten years is stopped there are consequences to that where councils, like Inverclyde, have to rely more on the revenue settlement.

When the Scottish Government ring fences more money for their own priorities there are consequences to that where locally elected councilors choices to spend on local priorities are limited.

The council statement on the back of the SIMD figures aims to highlight that and to press for more core funding and investment to reverse the cuts and put austerity where it belongs in the dustbin of history.

Something I would have hoped we could all agree on.

When it comes to the blame game we can keep pointing fingers but the simple fact is that it means we won't see a turnaround in core local government funding which can and will have an impact on our communities.

When the council is pushing for more funding for our area, I hope we can count on your support and the support of Derek and I look forward to meeting you both.

Regards

Jim Clocherty
Deputy Leader of Inverclyde Council

cc Derek McKay MSP

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