

A meeting of the Inverclyde Council will be held on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 4pm.

Members may attend the meeting in person or via remote online access. Webex joining details will be sent to Members and Officers prior to the meeting. Members are requested to notify Committee Services by 12 noon on Wednesday 22 September 2021 how they intend to access the meeting.

In the event of connectivity issues, Members are asked to use the *join by phone* number in the Webex invitation and as noted above.

Information relating to the recording of meetings can be found at the end of this notice.

ANNE SINCLAIR
Interim Head of Legal Services

BUSINESS

****Copy to follow**

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest	Page
NEW BUSINESS	
2. Minutes of Meetings of The Inverclyde Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Boards	
Appointment Panel – Chief Executive (24 May 2021)	(pp 151)
General Purpose Board (9 June 2021)	(pp 152-153)
Inverclyde Council (10 June 2021)	(pp 154-158)
Appointment Panel – Chief Executive (11 June 2021)	(pp 159)
Inverclyde Council (16 June 2021)	(pp 160)
Appointment Panel – Chief Executive (16 June 2021)	(pp 161)
Environment & Regeneration (23 June 2021)	(pp 162-164)
Policy & Resources (24 June 2021)	(pp 165-166)
Audit (8 July 2021)	(pp 167)
General Purposes Board (13 July 2021)	(pp 168)
General Purposes Board (4 August 2021)	(pp 169)
Planning Board (4 August 2021)	(pp 170-172)
Policy & Resources (10 August 2021)	(pp 173-176)
Health & Social Care (19 August 2021)	(pp 177-181)
Environment & Regeneration (26 August 2021)	(pp 182-187)
Education & Communities (31 August 2021)	(pp 188-192)
Planning Board (1 September 2021)	(pp 193-196)
Local Review Body (1 September 2021)	(pp 197-202)
General Purposes Board (8 September 2021)	(pp 203-204)
** Policy & Resources (14 September 2021)	(pp 205-)
** Local Police & Fire Scrutiny (16 September 2021)	(pp)

3. **	Scheme of Administration – Political Balance Report by Interim Head of Legal Services	p
4.	Future Delivery of Council/Committee Meetings Report by Interim Service Director, Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery	p
5.	COP 26 Update Report by Interim Service Director, Environment & Economic Recovery	p
6.	Councillor Brooks – Resignation from River Clyde Homes Board Report by Interim Head of Legal Services	p
7.	Review of Bank and Post Office Closures – Notice of Motion by Councillor MacLeod Report by Interim Head of Legal Services	p
8.	Women Against State Pension Inequality Campaign – Notice of Motion by Councillor McCabe Report by Interim Head of Legal Services	p
9.	Community Group Lease and Transfer Arrangements – Request by Councillor Ahlfeld Report by Interim Head of Legal Services	p
<p>The documentation relative to the following item has been treated as exempt information in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, the nature of the exempt information being that set out in the paragraphs of Part I as detailed in the minute of the relevant Committee, Sub-Committee or Board.</p>		
NEW BUSINESS		
10.	Business in the Appendix	p
<p>The reports are available publicly on the Council's website and the minute of the meeting will be submitted to the next standing meeting of the Inverclyde Council. The agenda for the meeting of the Inverclyde Council will be available publicly on the Council's website.</p> <p>Please note that the meeting will be recorded for publishing on the Council's website. The Council is a Data Controller under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and data collected during any recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy, including, but not limited to, for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available.</p> <p>By entering the online recording, please acknowledge that you may be filmed and that any information pertaining to you contained in the video and oral recording of the meeting will be used for the purpose of making the recording available to the public.</p>		

Enquiries to – **Colin MacDonald** – Tel 01475 71 2113

Report To:	The Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Service Director of Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery	Report No:	FIN/55/21/AP/LA
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	01475 712223
Subject:	Future Delivery of Council/Committee Meetings		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the initial hybrid Committee meetings and thereafter to seek decisions on the future delivery of Council/Committee meetings.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Members have received a number of reports over the last 12 months regarding the delivery of Council /Committee and Quasi-Judicial meetings. The most recent report was submitted to the 10 June Council where it was agreed that Officers should develop proposals to move to live streaming of the Council's/Committee meetings and bring a report back outlining any financial and operational implications to the September meeting of the Council.
- 2.2 In July it was agreed, at a meeting of the Strategic Leaders' Forum (SLF), to commence hybrid meetings with effect from the 10 August Policy & Resources Committee. At the time of writing this report there have now been 4 hybrid Committee meetings and the feedback from Elected Members has been largely positive particularly from those in physical attendance but there are occasional audio or connectivity issues for those attending remotely. A protocol for hybrid meetings has been developed by the Interim Head of Legal Services in consultation with Officers involved in the delivery of committee services. A copy of the proposed Hybrid Meetings Protocol and Procedure Rules for Committees and Boards is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The majority of officers have continued to attend meetings remotely and this is acknowledged by the CMT to be beneficial in terms of both their time management but also in terms of making it a safer environment for those physically attending meetings. In accordance with the Hybrid Meeting Protocol and Procedure the press and public have the option to physically attend meetings but uptake of this has been very low.
- 2.4 Given the current high level of Covid cases in Inverclyde and to allow for any future situation when the Chair/Convener or Vice Chair/Convener cannot attend meetings in person, it would be appropriate for the Council to retain fully remote meetings as an option. In light of this the Interim Head of Legal Services has revised the Remote Meeting and Hybrid Meeting Protocol which was approved by the Council at its meeting on 10 June 2020. A copy of the revised Remote Protocol highlighting the main changes is set out at Appendix 2.
- 2.5 Meetings have continued to be recorded, throughout the period hybrid meetings have been held, however these recordings have not been placed on the website for access by the public. The recorded meetings assist with the drafting of the minutes and these recordings are not retained for any longer than they need be. Following discussion at the SLF on 9 September it is proposed to recommence the posting of meetings on the website from today's meeting pending a decision from Members as to whether they would wish meetings to be recorded at all, live streamed or recorded and retrospectively placed on the website for viewing.
- 2.6 Officers have developed costed solutions for Members to consider. Were the Council to instruct

Officers to develop either Option 3 or Option 4 then this will take a number of months to implement during which the current approach would be maintained. Live streaming is technically more challenging to deliver in a professional way and carries a number of legal and reputational risks and would not be recommended by the CMT.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council note the successful implementation of hybrid Committee meetings.
- 3.2 It is recommended that approval be given to all meetings of the Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Boards continuing to be held on a hybrid basis except in the following situations:
 - a) the Chair/Vice Chair or Convener/Vice-Convener is unable to attend the meeting in person; or
 - b) holding a hybrid meeting would be contrary to the legislation/regulations/guidance of the Scottish Government relating to the Covid-19 pandemic with regard to public health and the requirement for social distancing measures.
- 3.3 After considering the budgetary and other implications it is recommended that the Council decide which options set out in Section 6 officers are to pursue in respect of recording meetings.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the Council approve the Revised Remote Meeting Procedure and Protocols contained in Appendix 2 covering fully remote meetings and the new Protocol for Hybrid Meetings set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 It is recommended that the Council note that Officers will continue to investigate how the ventilation and the operation of hybrid meetings within the Council Chambers can be improved.

Alan Puckrin
Interim Service Director of Corporate Services & Organisational Recovery

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Committee/Council meetings where physical attendance was a pre-requisite for participation were suspended in March, 2020. Since then members have received a number of reports over the last 12 months regarding the delivery of Council /Committee and Quasi-Judicial meetings
- 4.2 The most recent report came to the 10 June Council where it was agreed to continue fully remote/recorded meetings whilst social distancing was in place but that elected members may attend meetings in person once social distancing was no longer a requirement. It was also agreed that Officers would develop proposals to allow live streaming of Councils/Committee meetings and submit a report outlining any financial and operational implications to the September meeting of the Council.
- 4.3 Following announcements from the Scottish Government in July 2021 regarding the relaxation of many of the Covid restrictions and following discussions through the Strategic Leadership Forum it was agreed that hybrid meetings would commence with effect from the 10 August Policy & Resources Committee.
- 4.4 The majority of officers have continued to attend meetings remotely and this is acknowledged by the CMT to be beneficial in terms of both their time management but also in terms of making it a safer environment for those physically attending meetings. The press and public have the option to physically attend but uptake of this has been very low.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION- HYBRID MEETINGS

- 5.1 At the time of writing the report there have now been 4 hybrid Committee meetings and by and large the feedback from Members has been positive particularly from those in physical attendance but there are occasional audio or connectivity issues for those attending remotely.
- 5.2 Specific issues identified include difficulty hearing those in the Chambers when not speaking directly into the microphone, same issue for those remote attendees who did not speak into the microphone, those attending by phone not always remembering to mute their phones when not speaking and the location of the large screen within the Chambers.
- 5.3 Officers installed 2 air purifiers and a CO2 monitor within the Chambers whilst opening the main and side doors during public business. The readings monitored by officers have been well within acceptable limits albeit the warm spell in late August did generate comments about the Chambers feeling stuffy. Officers will continue to investigate ways in which the ventilation within the Council Chambers can be enhanced.
- 5.4 Overall officers believe that the hybrid meeting approach has been relatively successful and has afforded Members the flexibility to attend meetings either in person or remotely. It is recommended that this approach is retained post pandemic. However this approach does mean that the locations from which Committees and Council meetings can be delivered are largely restricted to those serviced by the Council network, and are of an appropriate size which lend themselves to the potential delivery of recorded hybrid meetings.
- 5.5 Given the current high level of Covid cases, with the potential for the re-introduction of social distancing measures in future, and to allow for any future situation when the Chair/Convener, failing which the Vice-Chair/Convener, cannot attend a meeting in person, it would be appropriate for the Council to retain fully remote meetings as an option. In light of this the Interim Head of Legal Services has revised the Remote Meeting Protocol which was approved by the Council in June 2020 and a copy is set out at Appendix 2. Separately, the new draft Protocol for Hybrid meetings is attached to Appendix 1.

6.0 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

- 6.1 During the hybrid meetings proceedings have continued to be recorded, however these recordings have not been placed on the website for access by the public on the basis that the public could physically attend the meetings if they wish. The recorded meetings are currently to assist with the drafting of the minutes and a disposal policy is being prepared by Legal Services to ensure that these recordings are not retained for any longer than they need be.
- 6.2 Following discussion at the SLF on 9 September it is proposed to recommence the posting of meetings on the website from today's meeting pending a decision from Members as to whether they would wish meetings to be recorded at all, live streamed or recorded and retrospectively placed on the website for viewing.
- 6.3 Officers have undertaken an analysis of the number of "hits" those meetings currently posted on the Council's website have received. The table provides a summary of the analysis.

Total Committees	53
Highest Views	60
Lowest Views	0
Average Views	8

These hits will not differentiate between those generated internally within the Council and those generated by a member of the public wishing to view the whole or aspects of the Committee meeting. It can be seen however that the number of hits are relatively low. It would be expected that numbers watching live streamed meetings would be lower.

6.4 Option 1 – No Recording of Meetings

This reverts to the pre-pandemic position and means that any member of the public who wishes to view /hear proceedings is required to physically attend. There are no extra resources associated with this option.

Option 2 – Record Meetings using current equipment and place on Council Website

This was the approach used during the fully remote meetings and was relatively successful as all attendees appeared on the screen and generally the audio was good provided attendees spoke clearly and used the technology correctly.

With the move to hybrid meetings the quality of this approach has diminished slightly as those in the Chambers cannot be clearly viewed as the Chambers takes up the same space on the screen as an individual remote attendee. As a result the meeting becomes more of an audio recording than an audio visual one. Whilst there are options that allow the screen to only show the person talking this can become problematical if there is an extraneous noise or more than one person is speaking at a time.

As indicated above the numbers viewing pre-recorded meetings is low but on the basis of using the current technology there are no material extra costs.

Option 3 – Record Meetings using enhanced technology and place on the Council Website

This would use the same technology as live streaming but not have the inherent risks that live streaming presents. A 3 year contract would cost around £50,000 for the hardware and support. This option along with the live-streaming option will require increased Committee Services resource to set up and moderate proceedings. Based on 12 hours per week the cost would be £15k /year.

Option 4 – Live Stream Meetings

This would largely have the same costs as option 3 but does carry a greater risk given that proceedings are live and once streamed cannot be "pulled back" in the event that something inappropriate is said or happens. Members will be aware of well publicised problems occurring in other meetings in other Local Authorities and how quickly these can go "viral". Officers do not believe that based on the pre-recorded "hits" to-date the perceived benefits of live streaming justify the potential risks.

- 6.5 There is likely to be a range of views from Members regarding the benefits/risks of recording/live-

streaming meetings and officers will progress which ever option is chosen. At a recent SLF there was support for recoding meetings but no support indicated for live streaming.

- 6.6 It is proposed that Quasi-Judicial meetings should continue to be excluded from recording for the website/using enhanced technology/ live streaming and should continue to operate with members of the public either attending in person or joining remotely with recordings only being for the restricted purpose of drafting Minutes.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

The estimated net annual revenue cost of Options 3 & 4 is around £32,000. There is no specific budget to meet this cost and if Members were minded to support either of these options then it is recommended that this be considered in the context of the 2022/23 Budget and the current financial challenges.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
TBC	TBC	2021/24	£95k		Based on a 3 year contract

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

7.2 Legal

It is likely that there will be Data Protection implications should Members decide to record/live stream meetings at which members of the public are in attendance.

7.3 Human Resources

Any HR implications are highlighted in the report.

7.4 Equalities

(a) Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

X	YES (An EIA was completed when hybrid Committees were implemented and can be viewed at: https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2021)
	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

7.5 Repopulation

There are no repopulation issues arising.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The Corporate Management have been consulted and would not recommend Option 4.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

Appendix 1

HYBRID MEETINGS PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURE RULES FOR COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

This protocol and these procedure rules provide guidance for the conduct of any hybrid meeting of the Council and its various Committees, Sub-Committees and Boards, including quasi-judicial meetings, whereby at their discretion Members can attend in person or can join meetings remotely.

This protocol and these procedure rules should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration. In the event of a conflict between (i) this protocol and these procedure rules, and (ii) the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration, then this protocol and these procedure rules shall prevail while they remain in force and effect.

1. Advance Questions

All Members are encouraged to support the meeting arrangements by asking questions of clarification or detail in advance of the meeting. This may assist Members on points of clarification before the meeting and will allow Members to focus on the key issues and items for decision at the online meeting. Questions can still, of course, be asked at the meeting.

2. Meeting Management

- a. All Members have been provided with the Webex meeting guide for attendees and have been invited to participate in Webex training. Any training requests will be supported by officers.
- b. At their discretion, Members can choose a neutral background for the meeting but Members should note that this may affect their connectivity.
- c. All Members will receive a Webex or other electronic invitation prior to each meeting. Members should contact the Committee Section at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of a meeting in order to indicate if they wish to attend remotely or if they wish to attend in person.
- d. To support the remote element of the meeting, the Committee Officer's role will be to issue the Webex or such other electronic invites, to host the meeting, to manage declarations of interest by moving remotely connected Members to the lobby and re-admitting them to the meeting at the appropriate time and expelling the public and press from the meeting at the appropriate juncture. It will also be the Committee Officer's role to make contact with any Member who loses connectivity by sending a text message to that Member with the number which will permit that Member to rejoin the meeting by phone if they are unable to reconnect by video. A note of the

number will also be provided on the hard copy of the agenda/papers issued to Members.

- e. The Convener will, at the beginning of the meeting, briefly recap the protocol for participation in the meeting. A roll call of Members will then be taken by the Committee Officer and declarations of interest will be requested. If a Member joins the meeting remotely after the roll call, he/she is requested to use the chat function to notify everyone.
- f. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration shall apply to hybrid meetings.
- g. Members should not leave the meeting during any item of business. If Members do leave during an item of business which is not of a quasi-judicial nature they should consider carefully whether they should participate in the decision on any item of business for which they were not present. If the item of business is of a quasi-judicial nature, the Member must be present throughout its consideration and, if not present continuously for that item, the Member cannot participate in the decision-making on that item. Failure of the remote meeting connection is dealt with later in this note.
- h. It assists meeting management for remote Members to be logged in to all meetings as "Cllr" NAME.
- i. It will be necessary for the Convener/Chair of each hybrid meeting to physically attend the meeting in person. In the event the Convener/Chair is unable to physically attend the Vice-Convener/Chair will preside, failing which it will be necessary to hold a fully remote meeting. In the event the Convenor/Chair or Vice-Convenor/Chair are only able to attend remotely they should, where possible, provide the Committee Section with 48 hours' notice in order that suitable arrangements can be made to hold a fully remote meeting.

3. Meeting Procedure

Members should follow the meeting procedure below. This procedure also applies to the outside representatives on the Education & Communities Committee.

(a) Meeting procedure for Members who attend a meeting remotely

- The Committee Officer will open the meeting 15 minutes prior to its commencement and Members who are joining remotely are asked to co-operate by joining the meeting as early as possible prior to the stated commencement time.

- All Members attending remotely should ensure their automatic Webex or other service identifier clearly states their name.
- Members must not allow exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video feed.
- All Members attending remotely should have their microphones muted when not talking.
- Members attending remotely should indicate to the Convener that they wish to speak by sending a message “to everyone” through the chat facility, for noting by the Convener and Committee Officers. Messages sent “to everyone” in the chat facility are part of the public record.
- Members should only unmute their microphone when the Convener invites them to speak.
- Only one person may speak at any one time.
- If a remotely connected Member requires to leave the hybrid meeting temporarily for any reason other than connection failure, the Member must send a message “to everyone” through the chat facility for notice of the Convener and Committee Officers to ensure their temporary absence can be noted and the Member must send a similar message when returning to the meeting to ensure this is recorded in the minute.
- If a Member participating remotely requires to leave the hybrid meeting early, the Member must send a message through the chat to everyone facility for notice of the Convener and Committee Officer to ensure this is recorded in the minute.
- Any Officer who is attending remotely who leaves the meeting must advise the Convener and Committee Officers of their departure by using the chat to everyone facility.

(b) Members participating by phone

- Members participating by phone should if possible mute their telephone microphone when not speaking.
- Any Member participating by phone who requires to leave the remote meeting temporarily must state this when departing from and rejoining the meeting.
- Any Member participating by phone who requires to leave the remote meeting early must state this when departing from the meeting.
- Members participating by phone should only speak when invited to do so by the Convener/Chair.

(c) Members attending the Chambers in person

- Members attending in person must indicate that they wish to speak by pressing their light.
- A Member must wait to be invited to speak by the Convener/Chair.

- All Members in the Chambers will require to project their voice and speak clearly.
- Only the Convener/Chair may attend the Chambers with their laptop for the purpose of monitoring the chat function.
- Members must wear masks at all times when not seated in the Chambers for so long as this remains a requirement of Coronavirus legislation and guidance of the Scottish Government.

(d) Officers attending remotely or in person will also require to comply with the above protocol.

4. Debate and Voting

- a. The Convener will introduce each item on the agenda and manage the business on the agenda.
- b. Normal Council and Committee procedures will be followed in terms of questions, discussions, motions, amendments etc. As stated above, Members on video feed must use the chat facility on Webex or such other electronic system in use to indicate to the Convener that they wish to speak. The Convener will regularly monitor the chat function to ensure that Members are engaged. The chat function will not be available to Members who have joined the meeting by phone. The Convener will therefore ask those Members individually at each item if they wish to speak. Members who wish privacy for any reason can choose to disable temporarily, or for the whole duration of the meeting, their own video function but in this situation the chat function remains available to them for their participation in the progress of the meeting. If Members disable their video function temporarily to retrieve papers or to relocate their seating/access location this will not constitute leaving the meeting unless they are not able to hear meeting progress or participate in the meeting in which case they should instead notify everyone they are temporarily leaving the meeting as noted above.
- c. When the Convener is satisfied that there has been sufficient debate, the Convener will progress to making a decision.
- d. If there is a vote on an agenda item, the vote will be taken by roll call and the number of votes for or against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be recorded.
- e. The Legal Adviser to the Committee will call out the name of each Member present with:
 - Members stating “motion” or “amendment” to indicate their vote when their name is called or otherwise to “abstain”;
 - the Legal Adviser to the Committee will clearly state the result of the vote and the Convener will then move onto the next agenda item.

5. Declarations of Interest

Any Member who declares an interest in any item of business which would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the hybrid meeting. The Committee Officer will move any Member attending remotely to the lobby and readmit the Member to the meeting at the appropriate time.

6. Exclusion of Public and Press

- a. Where a confidential or “exempt” item is under consideration, the Committee Officer and Legal Adviser to the Committee will ensure that there are no members of the public or press in physical attendance or remotely accessing the meeting and able to hear or see the proceedings once the exclusion has been agreed by the meeting and the Legal Adviser to the Committee will confirm this to the Convener prior to any private business being conducted.
- b. Members who are joining remotely must ensure that there are no other persons present at their location who are not entitled to be present (either hearing or seeing) during consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings.

7. Connection Failure

- a. If any Member who is attending the meeting remotely loses connection they should try to rejoin the meeting. If unsuccessful, Members should call the *join by phone* number provided in the electronic meeting invitation. One of the Committee Officers, immediately upon becoming aware that a Member has lost connectivity, will notify the Convener and send a text message to the Member with a note of the phone number to enable the Member to re-join the meeting by audio. It will be the responsibility of each Member attending remotely to ensure that their mobile phone is charged and within reach during the meeting. A note of the phone number will also be provided to Members on the hard copy of the agenda and papers issued.
- b. When it appears there has been a remote meeting connection failure affecting a Member or Members, the Convener should immediately determine if the meeting is still quorate:
 - If the meeting is still quorate, then, at the discretion of the Convener, having regard to the nature of the item of business, **either**:
 - i. the business of the meeting may continue; **or**
 - ii. the meeting will be paused for a maximum period of 5 minutes to allow reconnection of the Member or Members affected, during which time no business will be considered or transacted, the presumption being that when **either** the affected Members have reconnected **or** 5 minutes have expired the meeting will continue to deal with business, provided it remains quorate.

- If the meeting is no longer quorate, then:
 - i. the meeting will be paused for a maximum period of 5 minutes, to allow reconnection of the Member or Members affected, during which time no business will be considered or transacted;
 - ii. if the affected Member or Members reconnect to the meeting and the meeting is once again quorate, the meeting will continue to deal with business;
 - iii. if after 5 minutes the meeting is still not quorate, the meeting shall adjourn for a further period specified by the Convener, expected to be no more than 15 minutes, to allow the connection to be re-established; and
 - iv. if, after such an adjournment, the meeting is still not quorate then the meeting shall be further adjourned to an appropriate date and time.

The presumption is that a quorate meeting will continue to deal with business.

- c. If the connection is successfully re-established, then the remote Member(s) will be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment.
- d. If a remote Member has a connection failure and is able to rejoin the meeting, the Member must use the chat “to everyone” to advise the Convener, the Committee Officers and the Committee and to indicate the items for which they were not present.
- e. In the event of a fully remote meeting if the connection to the Convener is lost, the Vice-Convener will exercise discretion in terms above. If the Vice-Convener is not present (or connection is lost), the remaining Members will elect a replacement Chair for the purpose only of exercising the Convener’s discretion in terms above.
- f. If a connection to a Member is lost during a meeting of a Quasi-Judicial Board, the Chair will stop the meeting to enable the connection to be restored. If the connection cannot be restored within a reasonable time, which period shall be specified by the Convener/Chair, the meeting will only proceed at the discretion of the Chair, and if the meeting is quorate but the Member who was disconnected will not be able to take part in the decision on the matter under discussion. If the Chair so chooses, the quasi-judicial item may be adjourned to an appropriate later time or day. In the event of connection failure of more than one Member for a quasi-judicial item, the presumption will be that the Chair adjourns the meeting to an appropriate later time or day.

8. Attendance of the Public

- a. Members of the public can attend remotely or in person, subject to the

legislation, regulations and guidance of the UK and Scottish Government with regard to social distancing measures in place at any time.

- b. For quasi-judicial meetings where there is no legal entitlement for applicants or others to make representations, arrangements will be made in the interests of transparency and community engagement to issue electronic invites to those members of the community with an interest who make a request that they wish to attend the meeting but do not wish to attend the Chambers in person..
- c. For those other quasi-judicial meetings where there are legal entitlements for applicants or others to make representations, arrangements will be made for online participation for parties involved with electronic invitations being issued to those who wish to join remotely rather than attend the Chambers in person

Appendix 2

REMOTE MEETINGS PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOL FOR COMMITTEES

This protocol and procedure rules provide guidance for the conduct of any remote online meeting of the Council and its various Committees and Sub-Committees and Boards **including quasi- judicial meetings.**

This protocol and procedure should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration. **In the event of a conflict between (i) this protocol and these procedure rules, and (ii) the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration, then this protocol and these procedural rules shall prevail while they remain in force and effect.**

1. Advance Questions

All Members are encouraged to support the meeting arrangements by asking questions of clarification or detail in advance of the meeting. This may assist Members on points of clarification before the meeting and will allow Members to focus on the key issues and items for decision at the online meeting. Questions can still of course be asked at the meeting. It will also assist if any Members who wish to speak on a particular agenda item could inform the Convener in advance of the start of the meeting, where it is possible to do so, and this will help the progress of the meeting.

2. Meeting Management

- a. All Members have been provided with the Webex meeting guide for attendees and have been invited to participate in Webex training. Any training requests will be supported by officers.
- b. At their discretion, Members can choose a neutral background for the meeting but Members should note this may affect their connectivity.
- c. To support the videoconferencing meeting, the Committee Officer's role will be to issue Webex invites, to host the meeting, to manage declarations of interest by moving Members to the lobby and re-admitting them to the meeting at the appropriate time and expelling the public and press from the meeting at the appropriate juncture. **It will also be the Committee Officer's role to make contact with any Member who loses connectivity by sending a text message to that Member with a number which will permit that Member to rejoin the meeting by phone if they are unable to reconnect by video. A note of the number will also be provided on the hard copy of the agenda/papers issued to Members.**
- d. The Convener will, at the beginning of the meeting, briefly recap the protocol for participation in the meeting. A roll call of Members will then be taken by the Committee Officer and declarations of interest will be requested. If a

Member joins the meeting after the roll call, he/she is requested to use the chat function to notify everyone.

- e. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Administration shall apply to remote meetings.
- f. Members should not leave the meeting during any item of business. If **Members do leave**, ~~they should not take part in the decision on any item of business they are not present for~~ **during an item of business which is not of a quasi-judicial nature, they should consider carefully whether they should participate in the decision on any item of business for which they were not present.** If the item of business is of a quasi-judicial nature, the Member must be present throughout its consideration and, if not present continuously for that item, the Member cannot participate in the decision-making on that item. Failure of the remote meeting connection is dealt with later in this note.

3. Meeting Procedure

Members should follow the meeting procedure below. This procedure also applies to the outside representatives on the Education & Communities Committee.

- The Committee Officer will open the meeting 15 minutes prior to its commencement and Members are asked to co-operate by joining the meeting as early as possible prior to the stated commencement time.
- All Members should ensure their automatic Webex identifier clearly states their name.
- Members must not allow exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video feed.
- All Members on video should have their microphones muted when not talking.
- Any Members participating by phone should, if possible, mute their telephone microphone when not speaking.
- Members should use the chat facility on Webex to indicate to the Convener that they wish to speak. This can be facilitated by sending a message to all participants. The chat facility "to everyone" is part of the public record.
- Members should unmute their microphone when the Convener invites them to speak.
- Only one person may speak at any one time.
- If a Member requires to leave the remote meeting temporarily for any reason other than connection failure, the Member must send a message through the chat to everyone facility to ensure their temporary absence can be noted and the Member must send a similar message when returning to the meeting to ensure this is recorded in the minute.

- The chat record is the official record of attendance.
- Any Member participating by phone who requires to leave the remote meeting temporarily must state this when departing from and rejoining the meeting.
- If a Member requires to leave the remote meeting early, the Member must send a message through the chat to everyone facility to ensure this is recorded in the minute.
- Any Member participating by phone who requires to leave the remote meeting early must state this when departing from the meeting.
- Any Officer who leaves the meeting must advise the Committee of their departure by using the chat to everyone facility.

4. Debate and Voting

- a. The Convener will introduce each item on the agenda and manage the business on the agenda.
- b. Normal Council and Committee procedures will be followed in terms of questions, discussions, motions, amendments etc. As stated above, Members on video feed must use the chat facility on Webex to indicate to the Convener that they wish to speak. The Convener will regularly monitor the chat function to ensure that Members are engaged. The chat function will not be available to Members who have joined the meeting by phone. The Convener will therefore ask those Members individually at each item if they wish to speak. Members who wish privacy for any reason can choose to disable temporarily, or for the whole duration of the meeting, their own video function but in this situation the chat function remains available to them for their participation in the progress of the meeting. If Members disable their video function temporarily to retrieve papers or to relocate their seating/access location this will not constitute leaving the meeting unless they are not able to hear meeting progress or participate in the meeting in which case they should instead notify everyone they are temporarily leaving the meeting as noted above.
- c. When the Convener is satisfied that there has been sufficient debate, the Convener will progress to making a decision.
- d. If there is a vote on an agenda item, the vote will be taken by roll call and the number of votes for or against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be recorded.
- e. The Legal Adviser to the Committee will call out the name of each Member present with:
 - Members stating “motion” or “amendment” to indicate their vote when their name is called or otherwise to “abstain”;
 - the Legal Adviser to the Committee will clearly state the result of the vote and the Convener will then move onto the next agenda item.

5. Declarations of Interest

Any Member who declares an interest in any item of business which would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting. The Committee Officer will move that Member to the lobby and readmit the Member to the meeting at the appropriate time.

6. Exclusion of Public and Press

- a. Where a confidential or “exempt” item is under consideration, the Committee Officer and Legal Adviser to the Committee will ensure that there are no members of the public or press in remote attendance or remotely accessing the meeting and able to hear or see the proceedings once the exclusion has been agreed by the meeting and the Legal Adviser to the Committee will confirm this to the Convener prior to any private business being conducted.
- b. Members must ensure that there are no other persons present at their location who are not entitled to be (either hearing or seeing) consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings.

7. Connection Failure

- a. If any Member loses connection they should try to rejoin the meeting. If unsuccessful, Members should call the *join by phone* number provided in the Webex meeting invitation. **One of the Committee Officers, immediately upon becoming aware that a Member has lost connectivity, will notify the Convener and send a text message to the Member with a note of the phone number to enable the Member to rejoin the meeting by audio. It will be the responsibility of each Member attending remotely to ensure that their mobile phone is charged and within reach during the meeting. A note of the phone number will also be provided to Members on the hard copy of the agenda and papers issued.**
- b. When it appears there has been a remote meeting connection failure affecting a Member or Members, the Convener should immediately determine if the meeting is still quorate:
 - **If it is, then at the discretion of the Convener, having regard to the nature of the item of business, of the meeting will continue; or either:**
 - **(i) the business of the meeting may continue; or**
 - **(ii) the meeting will be paused for a maximum period of 5 minutes to allow reconnection of the Member or Members affected, during which time no business will be considered or transacted, the presumption being that when either the affected Members have reconnected or 5 minutes have**

expired the meeting will continue to deal with business, provided it remains quorate.

- **If there is no quorum, then:** ~~the meeting shall adjourn for a period specified by the Convener, expected to be no more than 15 minutes, to allow the connection to be re-established.~~
 - (i) the meeting will be paused for a maximum period of 5 minutes to allow reconnection of the Member or Members affected, during which time no business will be considered or transacted;**
 - (ii) if the affected Member or Members reconnect to the meeting and the meeting is once again quorate, the meeting will continue to deal with the business;**
 - (iii) if after 5 minutes the meeting is still not quorate, the meeting shall adjourn for a further period specified by the Convener, expected to be no more than 15 minutes to allow the reconnection to be re-established; and**
 - (iv) if, after such an adjournment, the meeting is still not quorate then the meeting shall be further adjourned to an appropriate date and time.**

The presumption is that a quorate meeting will continue to deal with business.

- c. If the connection is successfully re-established, then the remote Member(s) will be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment.
- d. If a Member has a connection failure and is able to rejoin the meeting, the Member must use the chat to everyone facility to advise the Committee and to indicate the items for which they were not present.
- e. If the connection to a Convener is lost, the Vice-Convener will exercise discretion in terms above. If the Vice-Convener is not present (or connection is lost), the remaining Members will elect a replacement Chair for the purpose only of exercising the Convener's discretion in terms above.
- f. If a connection to a Member is lost during a meeting of a Quasi-Judicial Board, the Chair will stop the meeting to enable the connection to be restored. If the connection cannot be restored within a reasonable time, **which period shall be specified by the Convener/Chair**, the meeting will only proceed at the discretion of the Chair **and if the meeting is quorate**, but the Member who was disconnected will not be able to take part in the decision on the matter under discussion. If the Chair so chooses, the quasi-judicial item may be adjourned to an appropriate later time or day. In the event of connection failure of more than one Member for a quasi-judicial item, the presumption will be that the Chair adjourns the meeting to an appropriate later time or day.

8. Attendance of the Public

- a. **When meetings are held remotely** the public will therefore be excluded from meetings in terms of paragraph 13 of Schedule 6 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 **be unable to physically attend the meeting.**
- b. **For quasi-judicial meetings where there is no legal entitlement for applicants or others to make representations, arrangements will be made in the interests of transparency and community engagement** to ~~webcast live the proceedings of the Planning Board and Local Review Body (to be introduced as soon as arrangements can be made).~~ **Issue electronic invitations to those members of the community with an interest to make a request that they wish to attend the meeting.**
- c. **For those other quasi-judicial meetings where there are legal entitlements for applicants or others to make representations, arrangements will be made for online participation for parties involved** ~~A secure, safe room with online meeting availability has been made available for applicants and those who may make representations. In this way, meetings of the General Purposes Board, Education Appeals Committee (Placing Requests & Exclusions) and HR Appeals Board etc. and, separate from the Council, the Licensing Board will be facilitated.~~ **with electronic invitations being issued to those who wish to join remotely.**
- d. ~~The meeting room availability will be given to any parties making representations to the Petitions Committee.~~ **A secure safe room with on-line meeting availability will be offered to any parties or their representative who do not have electronic means to join a meeting.**

Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Service Director, Environment and Economic Recovery	Report No:	IC/12/21/MM
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	COP26 Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update members on the arrangements for the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties 26 (COP26) and how these are likely to affect Inverclyde.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Most of the updates given to officers at the West of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (WoS RRP) around COP26 up until relatively recently have been very high level and focussed on the arrangements around the Scottish Events Campus (SEC). This report intends to update members on the arrangements at a wider level and in particular as they might affect Inverclyde. As many of the areas covered in the report are subject to ongoing discussion a verbal update will be given to members on any recent developments.
- 2.2 Section 5 of the report reaffirms Inverclyde's commitment to transitioning to "net zero" which will be the subject of a more detailed report to the October Environment & Regeneration Committee.
- 2.3 Section 6 covers some of the exercises currently being held on various areas of civil contingencies in the run up to COP26. Section 7 covers the potential impacts on Covid 19 arising from COP26, Section 8 covers some of the transport impacts, Section 9 covers the impact on policing in Inverclyde and Section 10 covers some of the marketing and promotion of Inverclyde being carried out around COP26.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That members note the contents of this report.

Martin McNab
Interim Head of Public Protection & Covid Recovery

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 COP26 was originally scheduled for autumn 2020 but delayed by the pandemic and is now Scheduled to occur between 31st October and 12 November 2021. The event will be held at the Scottish Events Campus (SEC) in Glasgow part of which will become UN territory for the duration of the conference.
- 4.2 The event will involve delegations, including at key points in the conference Heads of State from up to 120 countries. There will therefore be a huge security and police operation around the event both around the conference venue and around major hotels used by delegations as their bases. While we are not aware of any delegations planning to be based in Inverclyde there will be peripheral activities which will impinge on Inverclyde.
- 4.3 Significant numbers of people are also expected to visit Glasgow to attend demonstrations across the three weeks of the conference and the impact of these numbers together with press and media will be likely to use up all available accommodation in central Scotland and beyond.

5.0 INVERCLYDE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO NET ZERO

- 5.1 The Council is currently having a Net Zero Strategy prepared by consultants Mabbett Associates. The brief is for a public-facing strategy setting out the Council's commitment to net zero backed with a costed action plan setting out the actions required to achieve this. The strategy will focus on Inverclyde Council/HSCP emissions from buildings, internal waste, street lighting, fleet and business travel and other sources. It will also cover 'softer' measures to reduce and manage emissions such as governance, education and behaviour change. Whilst the focus of the strategy and action plan will be on emission reduction, the 'offset' of emissions that cannot be reduced, for example through tree planting or peatland restoration, will also be covered. The strategy is due to be completed by early October and will be reported in due course to the Council's Environment & Regeneration Committee.

6.0 CONTINGENCY PLANNING & EXERCISING

- 6.1 Although there is no specific threat relating to the event that we are aware of the profile of the event and those attending will put a spotlight firmly on Glasgow and Scotland more widely. As part of preparing for any risks arising from COP26 and ensuring that our organisational response and any multi-agency response required is effective a number of exercises are being held. Thus far an exercise has been held on cybersecurity and an exercise on any potential health response is being hosted by NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde at the beginning of October. At the time of writing we are awaiting an exercise to test the Council's wider incident response procedures with multi-agency partners. There will clearly be more focussed exercises on, for example, responses to terrorist threats around the venue itself however the emphasis for surrounding areas is on ensuring that we are confident that our normal incident response procedures are operating satisfactorily.

7.0 COVID 19 ISSUES

- 7.1 Meetings are currently ongoing around making the event safe for those attending from a Covid-19 perspective. Detailed plans exist for the event campus itself both for the delegates and the workforce. Plans are also in place at UK Government level for delegations coming from high risk "red" flag countries. Wider consideration is now being given by local partners to issues of testing and, where necessary, isolation for those visiting Glasgow and Central Scotland either to protest or to be present in the wider area during the conference.
- 7.2 There is clearly potential for an upsurge in numbers of cases of Covid overall owing to the large number of potential visitors to the area. This is potentially coming not too long after the current spike in cases which we are experiencing.

8.0 TRANSPORT

- 8.1 A number of roads in Glasgow City Centre around the SEC will be closed during the conference. These include the Clydeside Expressway and the on and off ramps to it from the Kingston Bridge. There may also be rolling closures around the transit of Heads of State and dignitaries to and from the venue. There are no proposed road closures in Inverclyde and Renfrewshire at this time although road works will be suspended on the A8 between the Bull Ring roundabout and the M8. Regular meetings

are being held between the West of Scotland roads authorities and Transport Scotland in the run up to COP26 to ensure Inverclyde Council is sighted on any issues at an early stage.

8.2 Overall some transport impacts are expected to be felt wider than the City Centre. Use of the M74 rather than the M8 is being encouraged for traffic crossing the city which could lead to more congestion on that route. Those travelling into Glasgow during the conference are being advised to consider the use of public transport. Up to date transport information will be published on the Get Ready Glasgow website (<https://www.getreadyglasgow.com/cop26>).

9.0 POLICING

9.1 The policing operation for COP26 will be one of the largest in the UK's history. Around 10,000 police officers from across Scotland and the UK will be deployed at the conference. As well as providing some of the security around the event and associated venues a major element of the policing operation will be around enabling and policing protests centred on COP26. The large numbers of police officers from the rest of Scotland and the UK requiring accommodation over the period of COP26 will also have a significant impact on availability across the West of Scotland.

9.2 Obviously supporting such a major operation will have impacts on local policing and meetings have been held with the Divisional Commander and his senior team to discuss how business as usual policing will be delivered in Inverclyde during the event. Members will obviously be aware that COP26 spans the period covering bonfire night and assurances have been sought and received from Police Scotland that an adequate level of response is being factored into their planning given the issues seen in Inverclyde last year. Regular meetings will be held with Police Scotland, Renfrewshire Council and the Civil Contingencies Service in the run up to COP26 to ensure that we have confidence both in the business as usual planning and in the level of intelligence received on potential impacts in Inverclyde in the run up to COP26.

10.0 MARKETING INVERCLYDE

10.1 As part of the 'discover Inverclyde' call to action, the council's communications, tourism and health & safety service has partnered with Belville Community Gardens to support a high profile advertising campaign with STV in the run up to COP26. The campaign features pupils from St Ninian's Primary School and a range of community and commercial partners including McLaren packaging, The Beacon Arts Centre and BPI to highlight Inverclyde's support for the climate messages of COP 26. The adverts will be broadcast in September in the run up to COP 26 and across social and digital media using the theme 'We're In. We're Inverclyde' to help market Inverclyde to a wider audience.

11.0 IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Finance

There are no new financial implications arising from this report.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments

Annually Recurring Costs/(savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With effect from	Annual net impact £000	Virement From	Other Comments

N/A					
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Legal

11.2 None

Human Resources

11.3 None

13.4 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

Repopulation

11.5 There are no impacts on repopulation arising from this report.

12.0 CONSULTATIONS

12.1 None

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None

Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal Services	Report No:	DS/LS/077/21
Contact Officer:	Diane Sweeney	Contact No:	01475 712147
Subject:	Councillor Brooks – Resignation from River Clyde Homes Board		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of Councillor Brooks' resignation from the Board of River Clyde Homes and to request the Council to appoint a Member to serve on that body in his place.
- 1.2 Two Council representatives serve on the Board of River Clyde Homes, the other Member being Councillor Curley.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council appoints a Member to serve on the Board of River Clyde Homes in place of Councillor Brooks, having due regard to Standing Order 54 of the Council's Standing Orders (Political Balance):

54. In making appointments to Committees and outside bodies (but in the latter instance only where more than 2 representatives of the Council to an outside body are required), the Council shall ensure that such appointments reflect, as far as practicable, the balance of political representation on the Council.

Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal Services	Report No:	CM/LS/079/21
Contact Officer:	Anne Sinclair	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Review of Bank and Post Office Closures – Notice of Motion by Councillor MacLeod		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the receipt of a Notice of Motion by Councillor MacLeod, countersigned by Councillor Curley, relative to the review of bank and post office closures, submitted in terms of Standing Order 22.
- 1.2 The terms of the Notice of Motion are set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council considers the request by Councillor MacLeod.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal Services

Appendix 1

Council notes with great concern the bank branch and post office closures across Port Glasgow over the past few years.

Inverclyde now only has one RBS branch. In Port Glasgow the RBS, Clydesdale and TSB have all closed their branches.

These closures have a very real impact on vulnerable members of our community who need access to banking and postal services.

We understand that banks are entitled to make commercial decisions which result in branch closures, however this is often detrimental to people's ability to access cash.

Recent research conducted by Which found that almost 10 million people in the UK were not ready to stop using cash while over half of those aged 65 plus still do not use internet banking.

Access to cash is vital to local economic recovery especially post-pandemic.

Therefore Council believes that the UK government should introduce legislation which acknowledges that banks have a responsibility to ensure the local community and businesses can access cash and banking services. This legislation could also protect our vital post offices by mandating that banks provide their banking services via the already established and regulated post office network.

This motion:

- Requests that Inverclyde Council reviews bank and post office closures across Inverclyde.
- Requests the Chief Executive writes to the relevant minister stating the concern of the Council with respect to the above in relation to the impact on the local economy, on the well-being of the local community and requesting nationwide legislation to mandate that banks provide banking services via the post office network when local branches close.

Proposed: Cllr MacLeod

Seconded: Cllr Curley

Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal Services	Report No:	CM/LS/080/21
Contact Officer:	Anne Sinclair	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Women Against State Pension Inequality Campaign – Notice of Motion by Councillor McCabe		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the receipt of a Notice of Motion by Councillor McCabe, countersigned by Councillor Clocherty, relative to the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign, submitted in terms of Standing Order 22.
- 1.2 The terms of the Notice of Motion are set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council considers the request by Councillor McCabe.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal Services

Appendix 1

Motion to Inverclyde Council – Women Against State Pension Inequality

Council welcomes the findings of stage one of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's investigation into the way the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) communicated changes to women's State Pension age, and related issues.

The Ombudsman found that in 2005 DWP failed to make a reasonable decision about targeting information to the women affected by these changes and that constituted maladministration. The Ombudsman also found that in 2006 DWP proposed writing to women individually to tell them about changes to State Pension age but it failed to act promptly and that was also maladministration.

Council notes that stage two of the Ombudsman's investigations will consider whether the failings identified led to an injustice for the complainants and, if so, stage three will consider potential remedies for this injustice, including financial compensation.

Council reaffirms our support for the WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) Campaign and commends the WASPI Inverclyde Supporter Group and similar groups across the UK for continuing to campaign for justice for women adversely affected by changes to state pension legislation.

Proposed by: Councillor Stephen McCabe

Seconded by: Councillor Jim Clocherty

Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal Services	Report No:	CM/LS/083/21
Contact Officer:	Anne Sinclair	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Community Group Lease and Transfer Arrangements – Request by Councillor Ahlfeld		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of a request received from Councillor Ahlfeld in the following terms:
- 1.2 “To request a full report from relevant Officers on the problems being encountered, and the time parameters involved, in finalising community leases and asset transfers.”
- 1.3 Further background information relating to the request is contained in Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council considers the request by Councillor Ahlfeld.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal Services

Request

To request a full report from relevant Officers on the problems being encountered, and the time parameters involved, in finalising community leases and asset transfer.

Background

Recent examples of community groups who are experiencing lengthy delays in concluding lease and transfer arrangements of council properties, are resulting in those groups becoming disillusioned and losing enthusiasm due to the protracted time scales and communication problems which appear to be a constant factor experienced by the community groups.

Examples include a two year plus wait for a bowling club to conclude a lease. A protracted time scale for an organisation who wish to take control and ownership of a council building.

Communication is a tortuous process for a community group. There is no apparent go to person in the council for community groups who are volunteers, enthusiasts and have no or little experience in dealing with quasi legal affairs and find the current system confusing and frustrating.

Often community groups are asked to contact four or five disparate officials in the council, who all appear to work in silos viz-a-viz legal, planning, CLD, asset transfers, finance etc. There is apparently no official who has the remit to pull together the internal requirements and liaise internally. In addition, the community groups invariably must engage their own solicitor at cost to them, which adds another cog to the confusion of well-meaning amateurs.

We request that a defined process is produced which includes a guide and step by step process map. This to include the contact name of the official who will co-ordinate internal affairs on behalf of the applicants and a proposed time frame for conclusion of affairs. We also wish confirmation that it is a pre requisite of such transactions that an independent solicitor is engaged by applicants, adding to costs. If agreements can be reached and signed off by both parties, council and applicants, without external involvement other than to note the agreement, then this should be an option for all applicants, and this should be clearly defined in the process which currently appears to be ad hoc, cumbersome, inconsistent, lengthy, confusing and demotivating for applicants.