

## POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2023

### Policy & Resources Committee

Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 3pm

**Present:** Councillors Clocherty (for McCluskey), Curley, Daisley (for Law) McCabe, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Reynolds (for Armstrong), Robertson and Wilson.

**Chair:** Councillor McCabe presided.

**In attendance:**

Louise Long	Chief Executive
Alan Puckrin	Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance
Stuart Jamieson	Director Environment & Regeneration
Iain Strachan	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Steven McNab	Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications
Tony McEwan	Head of Culture, Communities & Educational Resources
Anne Sinclair	Legal Services Manager (Licensing, Litigation & Committees)
Matt Thomson	Finance Manager (Environment & Technical)
Angela Edmiston	Finance Manager (Corporate Services & Strategic Finance)
Tracy Bunton	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Morna Rae	Service Manager Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Colin MacDonald	Senior Committee Officer
Lindsay Carrick	Senior Committee Officer
Allan McDonald	ICT & Customer Service Manager
George Barbour	Service Manager Communications, Tourism and Health & Safety

This meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Curley, Daisley, McCormick and McGuire attending by video-conference.

**The following paragraphs are submitted for information only, having been dealt with under the powers delegated to the Committee.**

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| <b>181</b> | <p><b>Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Armstrong, with Councillor Reynolds substituting, Councillor Law with Councillor Daisley substituting and Councillor McCluskey with Councillor Clocherty substituting.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were intimated, but certain connections were intimated for the purposes of transparency as follows:</p> <p>Agenda Item 13 (Remit from Education and Communities Committee to fund early release costs in order to source funding for the provision of free swimming for under 16s) – Councillor Clocherty and Councillor Reynolds.</p> | <b>181</b> |
| <b>182</b> | <p><b>2022/23 Policy &amp; Resources Committee and General Fund Revenue Budget Update as at 31 January 2023</b></p> <p>There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance &amp; Corporate Governance, Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development and the Chief Executive advising the Committee of (1) the 2022/23 Committee Revenue Budget</p>  | <b>182</b> |

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projected position as at 31 January 2023, (2) the overall General Fund Revenue Budget projection and (3) the position of the General Fund Reserve.

**Decided:**

(1) that the current projected overspend for 2022/23 of £809,000 as at 31 January 2023 within the Committee's Budget be noted;

(2) that the projected 2022/23 surplus of £18,340 for the Common Good Budget be noted; and

(3) that the (a) projected underspend of £861,000 for the General Fund; and (b) projected surplus reserves of £2.081million as at 31 March 2023, be noted.

<b>183</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Capital Budget and 2022/26 Capital Programme</b>	<b>183</b>
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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme budget and the 2022/26 Capital Programme.

**Decided:** that the following be noted (a) the current position of the 2022/26 Policy & Resources Capital Budget; and (b) the current position of the 2022/26 Capital Programme.

<b>184</b>	<b>Finance Update</b>	<b>184</b>
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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance providing an update on a number of matters being progressed by the Finance Service relating to (1) cost of living / welfare supports, (2) Council Tax & Annual Billing, (3) Accounts Commission Housing Benefit thematic study, (4) Non-Domestic Rates, and (5) Recent Treasury activity.

**Decided:** that the contents of the report and the various updates provided be noted.

<b>185</b>	<b>Corporate Policy Update Report</b>	<b>185</b>
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There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on a number of performance and policy matters relating to (1) equalities, (2) a new approach to Best Value auditing (3) the Corporate Services' Corporate Directorate Improvement Plan Progress Report, (4) The Programme for Government, and (5) use of emergency powers to approve funding for an external review of the Human Resources & Organisational Development Team.

**Decided:** that the latest updates in relation to Corporate Policy and Performance be noted.

<b>186</b>	<b>Capital Strategy 2023-2033 and Treasury Management Strategy Statement &amp; Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24-2026/27</b>	<b>186</b>
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There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance requesting that the Committee considers the 2023-33 Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 – 2024/27 and that they be remitted to the Inverclyde Council for approval.

**Decided:**

(1) that (a) having considered the Capital Strategy 2023-33, the significant financial challenges the Council faces in maintaining the existing asset base be noted, and (2) the Capital Strategy be remitted to the Inverclyde Council for approval; and

(2) that (a) the contents of the report and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy as detailed in appendix 2 of the report be noted, and (b) the report and

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Treasury Management and Investment Strategy be remitted to the Inverclyde Council for approval.

**187 Council Plan and Partnership Plan from 2023 and New Performance Management Strategy 187**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development proposing a vision and high-level outcomes for the new Council and Partnership Plans and the adoption of an associated Performance Management Strategy.

**Decided:**

- (1) that (a) the vision and high-level outcomes for the Inverclyde Council Plan 2023-2028 be agreed, and (b) it be agreed that the plan will form the basis of a report to Council on 20 April 2023;
- (2) that the vision and high-level outcomes for the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023-2033 be endorsed; and
- (3) that the adoption of an associated Performance Management Framework be agreed.

**188 SOLACE Improving Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2021/22 188**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an overview of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework data 2021/22 and Inverclyde Council's performance across a range of indicators.

**Decided:**

- (1) that it be noted that the Local Government Benchmarking Framework data for reporting year 2021/22 is now published and that Inverclyde Council continues to be a highly performing Council; and
- (2) that it be noted that an Elected Member briefing on this subject will be held on 19 April 2023.

**189 Anti-Poverty Funding Update 189**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the financial position of the anti-poverty recurring budget and position of the anti-poverty ear-marked reserve.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the changes to the recurring anti-poverty budget detailed in the report be noted;
- (2) that the allocation of the recurring anti-poverty budget as detailed in appendix 1 of the report be agreed;
- (3) that the position of the anti-poverty ear-marked reserve as detailed in appendix 2 of the report be noted; and
- (4) that it be agreed that a report on the evaluation of current initiatives and proposals for the unallocated ear-marked reserve is brought to a future meeting of the committee.

**190 Digital Modernisation Programme 190**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services advising as to how the Council's Digital Modernisation Programme is to be taken forward, the

principles it will adopt and the governance arrangements.

**Decided:**

- (1) that it be noted that following a review of the business case for the corporate roll out of an Electronic Records and Document Management System it is not intended to progress with the project due to the estimated level of resourcing that would be required, as detailed in the report;
- (2) that (a) the content of the report be noted, and (b) it be noted that a Digital Modernisation Project Board has been established, chaired by the Chief Executive, to oversee delivery of the Council's Digital Modernisation Programme;
- (3) that the projects intended to form part of the Digital Modernisation Programme, as detailed in paragraph 4.6 of the report, and subject to the provision of suitable business cases and with approval of the Committee being required for the use of the Digital Modernisation Reserves, be noted; and
- (4) that it be noted that updates on the progress of the Programme will be reported to the Committee.

**191 Energy Bills – Notice of Motion by Councillors Reynolds**

191

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services advising of the receipt of a Notice of Motion by Councillor Reynolds relative to energy bills. Following discussion, Councillor Wilson moved that no action be taken in relation to this matter.

As an amendment, Councillor Reynolds moved that it be remitted to the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in relation to the impact of rising costs on Inverclyde residents and businesses and demand that the UK Government use its powers to address these concerns, in consultation with the Convenor, Vice-Convenor, Leader of the largest non-administration group on the Committee and Councillor Reynolds.

Following a roll-call vote 1 Member, Councillor Wilson voted in favour of the motion and 10 Members, Councillors Clocherty, Curley, Daisley, McCabe, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Reynolds and Robertson voted in favour of the amendment which was declared carried.

**Decided:** that it be remitted to the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in relation to the impact of rising costs on Inverclyde residents and businesses and demand that the UK Government use its powers to address these concerns, in consultation with the Convenor, Vice-Convenor, Leader of the largest non-administration group on the Committee and Councillor Reynolds.

**192 Inverclyde Council Criminal Finances Act 2017 Policy – Remit from Audit Committee**

192

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to consider a remit from the Audit Committee regarding the Inverclyde Council Criminal Finances Act 2017 Policy.

**Decided:** that (a) the requirement for the Council to have in place adequate prevention procedures in relation to tax evasion offences in terms of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 be noted, (b) the Criminal Finances Act 2017 policy, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report, be approved, and (c) that it be remitted to the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Chief Financial Officer to take all necessary action to implement the policy.

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193 **Remit from Education and Communities Committee to fund early release costs in order to source funding for the provision of free swimming for under 16s** 193

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to consider a remit from the Education & Communities Committee to fund early release costs linked to the funding for the provision of under-16 free swimming, and to return £35,000 from the salary saved to the Education & Communities Committee to fund the revised under -16s free swimming policy.

Councillors Clocherty and Reynolds declared a connection as Members of the Board of Inverclyde Leisure. They also formed the view that the nature of their connection and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision making process and they were declaring for transparency.

**Decided:** that (a) the request from the Education and Communities Committee of 7 March 2023 to fund the one off VER costs be agreed, and (2) it be agreed to return £35,000 from the £46,900 saved to the Education & Communities Committee to fund the revised under-16s free swimming policy to provide the preferred model for free swimming.

**The Convener being of the opinion that the undernoted report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development was relevant, competent and urgent moved its consideration in terms of the relevant Standing Order to allow the Committee to consider the matter and to give Parklea Branching Out the opportunity to accept the tender for the proposed work by the Scottish Government deadline of 31 March 2023, should the Committee be minded to provide financial support. This was agreed unanimously.**

194 **Parklea Branching Out Community Garden Hub – Funding Gap** 194

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development seeking agreement of the Policy & Resources Committee, for Inverclyde Council, to provide £250,000 funding in support of the Parklea Branching Out Community Garden Hub project.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the contents of the report and the imminent deadlines for the area to secure a significant capital grant be noted;
- (2) that (a) it be agreed to provide up to £250,000 to the Parklea Branching Out capital project in order to construct a community garden hub and to address the estimated funding shortfall, and (b) the agreement by the Scottish Government to allocate a further £201,000 towards the project be noted; and
- (3) that authority be delegated to the Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development to agree the terms and conditions upon which the additional funding will be released to Parklea Branching Out, in consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance.