

## THE INVERCLYDE COUNCIL – 6 MARCH 2025

### The Inverclyde Council

**Thursday 6 March 2025 at 4pm**

**Present:** Provost McKenzie, Councillors Armstrong, Brennan, Brooks, Cassidy, Clocherty, Crowther, Curley, Daisley, Hellyer, Jackson, Law, McCabe, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Nelson, Quinn, Reynolds, Robertson and Wilson.

**Chair:** Provost McKenzie presided.

**In attendance:**

Louise Long	Chief Executive
Alan Puckrin	Chief Financial Officer
Lynsey Brown	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services
Ruth Binks	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Stuart Jamieson	Director Environment & Regeneration
Kate Rocks	Chief Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership
Craig Given	Chief Finance Officer, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership
Margaret McIntyre	Head of Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services, Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership
Angela Edmiston	Finance Manager (Corporate Services & Strategic Finance)
Mary McCabe	Finance Manager (Education & Communities)
Matt Thomson	Finance Manager (Environment & Technical)
Tracy Bunton	Revenue & Benefits Manager
Karen MacVey	Members' & Committee Services Team Leader
Diane Sweeney	Senior Committee Officer
Colin MacDonald	Senior Committee Officer
PJ Coulter	Corporate Communications

The meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Crowther, Reynolds and Robertson attending remotely.

### 105 **Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

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No apologies for absence or declarations of interest were intimated.

**At the commencement of proceedings, the Provost being of the opinion that the report 'Appointment of Council Leader' by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services was relevant, competent and urgent moved its consideration to allow the Council to take a view on the matter at the earliest opportunity. This was unanimously agreed in terms of the relevant Standing Order.**

### 106 **Mr Alan Puckrin**

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Prior to the commencement of business, the Provost referred to the forthcoming retirement of Mr Puckrin, the Chief Financial Officer, and thanked him for his long and dedicated service to Inverclyde Council. The Provost added that Mr Puckrin would be much missed and wished him a long and happy retirement.

**2025/26 Revenue Budget, 2025/28 Capital Programme and approval of the Band D Council Tax for 2025/26**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the Council with the latest position of the 2025/26 Revenue Budget and the 2025/28 Capital Programme and thereafter seeking approval of (1) the Council's 2025/26 Revenue Budget and the 2025/28 Capital Programme, and (2) the Band D Council Tax for the year 2025/26.

Following discussion, Councillor Moran seconded by Councillor McGuire moved:

"That the Council notes that the results of the Council's Budget Consultation have been duly considered and due regard has been given to the Equality Impact Assessments, the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment, the UNCRC Impact Assessment and the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, all as relating to the savings and proposals set out in the Chief Financial Officer's report, and as referred to in paragraph 5.6 of the report.

The Council approves all the recommendations contained in the Chief Financial Officer's report, subject to those adjustments detailed in the Members Budget Working Group's Proposals as circulated (document '2025/26 Budget Proposal – Members Budget Working Group – 6 March 2025' which forms appendix 1 to the minute) including the use of available Reserves where noted.

The Council approves the following Council Tax Resolution: That Council Tax be increased by 8.5% in 2025/26 meaning that the level of Band D Council Tax for Inverclyde for 2025/26 be £1,551.30."

As an amendment Councillor Curley seconded by Councillor Reynolds moved:

"That the Council notes that the results of the Council's Budget Consultation have been duly considered and due regard has been given to the Equality Impact Assessments, the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment, the UNCRC Impact Assessment and the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, all as relating to savings and proposals set out in the Chief Financial Officer's report, and as referred to in paragraph 5.6 of the report.

The Council approves all the recommendations contained in the Chief Financial Officer's report subject to those adjustments detailed in the Scottish National Party Group's Budget Proposals as circulated (document '2025/26 Budget Proposal – Scottish National Party Group – 6 March 2025' which forms appendix 2 to the minute) including the three recurring increased budget proposals and the use of available Reserves where noted.

The Council approves the following Council Tax Resolution: That the level of Council Tax in 2025/26 is increased by 7.75% from the 2023/24 Council Tax levels and that the level of Band D Council Tax for Inverclyde for 2025/26 be £1,540.58."

Following a roll call vote, 6 Members, Councillors Armstrong, Crowther, Curley, Daisley, Reynolds and Robertson voted for the amendment, and 16 Members, Provost McKenzie, Councillors Brennan, Brooks, Cassidy, Clocherty, Hellyer, Jackson, Law, McCabe, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Nelson, Quinn and Wilson voted for the motion which was declared carried.

**Decided:**

(1) that the latest position of the 2025/26 Revenue Budget and 2025/28 Capital Programme be noted, and that after consideration of the updates provided in the report and appendices, including the Fairer Scotland Duty assessment and Equality Impact Assessments, the following be approved:

- (a) the savings/budget adjustment as detailed at appendix 2 to the report;
- (b) the retention of a £2.5million allowance to meet the estimated cost pressures for the Council arising from the increases in employers' National Insurance contributions;
- (c) the 2025/26 Council contribution to the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board, as detailed at appendix 3 to the report;

- (d) the deferral of the previously approved Inverclyde Integration Joint Board contribution of £0.5million towards the cost of Historic Child Abuse claims pending a review of reserves by the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board over 2025/26;
- (e) the creation of earmarked reserves for Probationer Teachers Income (£415,000) and Waste Recycling (£1.988million);
- (f) the 2025/28 Capital Programme, as detailed at appendix 5 to the report, which includes a £1.0million increase in the Capital Contingency and the earmarking of the sums detailed at paragraph 3.24 of the report; and
- (g) the 2025/26 Common Good Budget, as detailed at appendix 8 to the report;
- (2) that the Council notes the remaining material risks around the 2025/26 Budget and that officers will monitor and report on developments to the Policy & Resources Committee throughout 2025/26;
- (3) that the Council notes the estimated funding gap over 2026/28 of £16.6million, before any Council Tax increases, and the advice from the Chief Financial Officer to consider this when determining the use of time-limited reserves to balance the 2025/26 Revenue Budget;
- (4) that the 8.2% increase in Band D Council Tax approved on 29 February 2024 be reversed, resulting in a Band D Council Tax of £1429.77 before any approved 2025/26 increase;
- (5) that the Council approve the use of Reserves, as detailed at appendix 2 to the Motion document; and
- (6) that the Council approve the following Council Tax Resolution: That Council Tax be increased by 8.5% in 2025/26 meaning that the level of Band D Council Tax for Inverclyde for 2025/26 be £1,551.30.

**The Provost being of the opinion that the undernoted report was relevant, competent and urgent moved its consideration in terms of the relevant Standing Order to allow the Council to make a decision on the matter at the earliest opportunity.**

Prior to the consideration of the following item the Provost thanked Councillor Moran for his service as Leader of the Council.

## 108 Appointment of Council Leader

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services (1) advising the Council that Councillor Moran had indicated his resignation from the role of Leader of the Council with effect from the consideration of this report, (2) requesting that the Council appoints a new Leader of the Council following the resignation of Councillor Moran, and (3) requesting that the Council notes changes to the Council representatives on certain Outside Bodies, detailed at paragraph 3.4 of the report, as a result of this change.

Following discussion, Councillor Clocherty seconded by Councillor Moran moved that Councillor McCabe be appointed as Leader of the Council.

As an amendment Councillor Armstrong seconded by Councillor Daisley moved that Councillor Curley be appointed as Leader of the Council.

As a further amendment Councillor Quinn seconded by Councillor Law moved that the Leader of the Council not be appointed at the meeting and that this appointment be made at a later date.

On a roll call vote between the two amendments, 2 Members, Councillors Law and Quinn, voted for their amendment, and 6 Members, Councillors Armstrong, Crowther, Curley, Daisley, Reynolds and Robertson, voted for the amendment by Councillor Armstrong

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seconded by Councillor Daisley. The amendment by Councillor Quinn, having received fewer votes, then fell. Provost McKenzie, Councillors Brennan, Brooks, Cassidy, Clocherty, Hellyer, Jackson, McCabe, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Nelson and Wilson abstained from voting.

On a roll call vote between the motion and the amendment by Councillor Armstrong seconded by Councillor Daisley, 6 Members, Councillors Armstrong, Crowther, Curley, Daisley, Reynolds and Robertson voted for the amendment, and 14 Members, Provost McKenzie, Councillors Brennan, Brooks, Cassidy, Clocherty, Hellyer, Jackson, McCabe, McCormick, McGuire, McVey, Moran, Nelson and Wilson voted for the motion which was declared carried. Councillors Law and Quinn abstained from voting.

**Decided:**

- (1) that Councillor Moran's resignation from the role of Leader of the Council with effect from consideration of this report be noted;
- (2) that Councillor McCabe be appointed as Leader of the Council; and
- (3) that the changes required to the representation on certain Outside Bodies as a result of this, as detailed at paragraph 3.4 of the report, be noted.

## 2025/26 Budget Proposal

### Members Budget Working Group

6 March 2025

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Appendix 1 – 2025/26 Budget Summary

Appendix 2 – Reserves

Appendix 3 – Council Tax 2025/26 by Banding

Appendix 4 – 2025/28 Updated Position

Members Budget Working Group  
2025/26 Budget Summary

	£000
Funding Gap (Appendix 4 - 6/3/25 Report)	4220
Less = 8.5% Increase in Council Tax	2975
Reserves Required	1245
	<u>0</u>
Note	£000
Planned elimination in use of reserves = 25/26	1245
26/27	1000
27/28	500
28/29	-
Reserves Required 2025/28	<u><u>2745</u></u>

Members Budget Working Group

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<u>Reserves Available</u>		
Estimated available reserves (Para 3.20 Budget Report)	1700	
Add back previous Planned Use of Reserves	5838	
Less revised Reserves Required (Appendix 1)	(2745)	
		<u><u>4793</u></u>
 <u>Proposed use of Reserves</u>	 <u>£000</u>	
Anti Poverty Initiatives (including employability)	600	
Roads Investment	600	
ASN Initiatives/Resources	600	
Tourism	270	
Transformation	1500	
Capital Programmes (FMS Replacement)	1200	
Freedom of Inverclyde event	25	
Total	<u>4795</u>	



Band	Chargeable Properties*	Multiplier	2024/25 Council Tax (after 8.2% is reversed)	2025/26 Council Tax (8.5%)	Annual Increase	Weekly Increase
A*		200/360	£794.32	£861.84	£67.52	£1.29
A	17,469(46.44%)	240/360	£953.18	£1,034.20	£81.02	£1.55
B	5,980 (15.90%)	280/360	£1,112.04	£1,206.56	£94.52	£1.81
C	3,655 (9.72%)	320/360	£1,270.91	£1,378.94	£108.23	£2.07
D	3,380 (8.99%)	360/360	£1,429.77	£1,551.30	£121.53	£2.33
E	3,604(9.58%)	473/360	£1,878.56	£2,038.24	£159.68	£3.06
F	1,893 (5.03%)	585/360	£2,323.38	£2,520.87	£197.49	£3.79
G	1,416 (3.76%)	705/360	£2,799.97	£3,037.97	£238.00	£4.56
H	217 (0.58%)	882/360	£3,502.94	£3,800.69	£297.75	£5.71

Note - Estimated to be 37,614 Chargeable Properties. This excludes 2,237 exempt properties which gives a total of 39,851 properties in Inverclyde.

25/02/2025

**2025/28 Budget Gap - MBWG Proposal**

		2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2025/28 £m
Block Grant (Increase) -Post Floor	a/	(4.37)	0.0	0.0	(4.37)
Inflation - Pay (Non-Social Care)	b/	3.6	3.9	4.1	11.6
- Pay (Social Care)	b/	0.0	1.2	1.2	2.4
- Non-Pay (Inc Social Care)	b/	0.7	1.0	1.0	2.7
Pressures - General Pressures	c/	1.4	1.0	1.0	3.4
-Children's Services	d/	0.7	0.8	0.5	2.0
- Prudential Borrowing	e/	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
- ERS NI contribution	f/	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.5
Savings -Workstreams	g/	(2.04)	(0.17)	(0.10)	(2.31)
-Other	g/	(1.00)	(0.03)	0.0	(1.0)
Council Tax - 8.5% increase 2025/26	h/	(2.98)	0.0	0.0	(2.98)
(Increased)/Reduced Use of Reserves	i/	1.39	0.25	0.50	2.14
Funding Gap		-	8.05	8.30	16.35

a/ The movement in Block Grant excludes hypothecated funding increases as these are ring fenced for specific purposes and is after the application of the Floor. Includes £520k teacher workstream substitution

b/ Pay & Non-Pay inflation in 25/26 excludes HSCP. Pay inflation based on an allowance of 3% for 2025/28.

c/ Includes £1.2m January Council, & £0.2m for SLARC in 2025/26 & £0.5m for HSCP pressures from 2026/27.

d/ 26/28 figures subject to further report

e/ Assumes no new Prudential Borrowing above that already contained in the Loans Charges Model.

f/ Reflects allowance for Council contribution to eNIC increase

g/ Reflects workstreams & savings approved up to 6.3.25 Council Budget report

h/ No Council Tax increase factored in post 25/26

i/ £1.25m from Reserves used in 2025/26 is negated over 2026/29.

## 2025/26 Budget Proposal

### Scottish National Party Group

6 March 2025

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Appendix 1 – 2025/26 Budget Summary

Appendix 2 – Reserves

Appendix 3 – Council Tax 2025/26 by Banding

Appendix 4 – 2025/28 Updated Position

Scottish National Party Group  
2025/26 Budget Summary

	<u>£000</u>
Funding Gap (Appendix 4 - 6/3/25 Report)	4220
Add - Policy Developments	
Improved Summer Holiday Provision - ASN	300
Social Worker -Enhanced Posts x 20	100
Reinstate 2025/26 Pothole Budget cut	100
Less -7.75% Increase in Council Tax	-2713
Reserves Required	-2007
	<u>0</u>
Note	<u>£000</u>
Planned elimination in use of reserves = 25/26	2007
26/27	1000
27/28	0
28/29	0
Reserves Required 2025/28	<u>3007</u>

Scottish National Party Group

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<u>Reserves Available</u>		
Estimated available reserves (Para 3.20 Budget Report)	1700	
Add back previous Planned Use of Reserves	5838	
Less revised Reserves Required (Appendix 1)	(3007)	
		<u>4531</u>
 <u>Proposed use of Reserves</u>	 <u>£000</u>	
New Inverclyde Transformation Fund	1750	
Additional Transportation Interventions	1150	
Strategic Purchase & Demolition Fund	900	
Enhanced Investment - Footways	500	
Enhanced Investment- Streetscape	100	
Crematorium Traffic Management Improvements - Feasibility Study	70	
Community Gritting Pilot Scheme	60	
Total	<u>4530</u>	

Appendix 3

Band	Chargeable Properties*	Multiplier	2024/25 Council Tax (after 8.2% is reversed)	2025/26 Council Tax (7.75%)	Annual Increase	Weekly Increase
A*		200/360	£794.32	£855.88	£61.56	£1.18
A	17,469(46.44%)	240/360	£953.18	£1,027.05	£73.87	£1.42
B	5,980 (15.90%)	280/360	£1,112.04	£1,198.22	£86.18	£1.81
C	3,655 (9.72%)	320/360	£1,270.91	£1,378.94	£108.23	£1.65
D	3,380 (8.99%)	360/360	£1,429.77	£1,540.58	£110.81	£2.13
E	3,604(9.58%)	473/360	£1,878.56	£2,024.15	£145.59	£2.79
F	1,893 (5.03%)	585/360	£2,323.38	£2,503.44	£180.06	£3.45
G	1,416 (3.76%)	705/360	£2,799.97	£3,016.97	£217.00	£4.16
H	217 (0.58%)	882/360	£3,502.94	£3,774.42	£271.48	£5.21

Note - Estimated to be 37,614 Chargeable Properties. This excludes 2,237 exempt properties which gives a total of 39,851 properties in Inverclyde.

25/02/2025

**2025/28 Budget Gap - SNP Proposal**

		2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2025/28 £m
Block Grant (Increase) -Post Floor	a/	(4.37)	0.0	0.0	(4.37)
Inflation - Pay (Non-Social Care)	b/	3.6	3.9	4.1	11.6
- Pay (Social Care)	b/	0.0	1.2	1.2	2.4
- Non-Pay (Inc Social Care)	b/	0.7	1.0	1.0	2.7
Pressures - General Pressures	c/	1.4	1.0	1.0	3.4
-Children's Services	d/	0.7	0.8	0.5	2.0
- Prudential Borrowing	e/	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
- ERS NI contribution	f/	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.5
Policy Developments	j/	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5
Savings -Workstreams	g/	(2.04)	(0.17)	(0.10)	(2.31)
-Other	g/	(1.00)	(0.03)	0.0	(1.0)
Council Tax - 7.75% increase 2025/26	h/	(2.71)	0.0	0.0	(2.71)
(Increased)/Reduced Use of Reserves	i/	0.62	1.01	1.00	2.63
Funding Gap		-	8.81	8.80	17.61

a/ The movement in Block Grant excludes hypothecated funding increases as these are ring fenced for specific purposes and is after the application of the Floor. Includes £520k teacher workstream substitution

b/ Pay & Non-Pay inflation in 25/26 excludes HSCP. Pay inflation based on an allowance of 3% for 2025/28.

c/ Includes £1.2m January Council, & £0.2m for SLARC in 2025/26 & £0.5m for HSCP pressures from 2026/27.

d/ 26/28 figures subject to further report

e/ Assumes no new Prudential Borrowing above that already contained in the Loans Charges Model.

f/ Reflects allowance for Council contribution to eNIC increase

g/ Reflects workstreams & savings approved up to 6.3.25 Council Budget report

h/ No Council Tax increase factored in post 25/26

i/ £2.01m from Reserves used in 2025/26 is negated over 2026/28.

j/ Included in Appendix 1 of the Proposal