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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 June 2025</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/12/25/RB/KM</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Performance Update: March – June 2025</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting

1.2 This report provides the Committee with an update on corporate policy and performance matters relating to:

- Update on national developments relating to Best Value.
- People and OD Strategy updates.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the latest updates relating to corporate policy and performance.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities and Organisational Development**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 A corporate policy and performance update report is considered at every meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee; the last such report was submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 25 March 2025.

#### **3.2 Update on national developments relating to Best Value**

- 3.3 Since the last update on national Best Value developments was considered by this Committee in February 2025, three further Controller of Audit reports have been published by the Accounts Commission. These reports relate to East Renfrewshire Council (February 2025); Fife Council (February 2025) and Argyll and Bute Council (April 2025) and are available on the Audit Scotland website: <https://audit.scot/publications/search>. A summary of the Accounts Commission's key findings on each Council's performance is presented below.
- 3.4 East Renfrewshire Council was praised by the Accounts Commission for consistently strong performance across corporate and service areas. Good practice was identified in areas such as cross-party working, budget scenario planning; relationships with health and other key partners; community engagement; strategic planning and performance management. The Council was also found to have taken an incremental approach to the transformation of service delivery in recent years.
- 3.5 The Commission noted that Fife Council demonstrates competent financial management over the years, however it also reported its concerns regarding worsening inequalities; large overspends in the Integration Joint Board in 2023/24, with the same projected for 2024/25, and significant levels of reserves utilised by the Council in 2023/24.
- 3.6 Whilst Fife Council was commended for its innovative work in relation to its workforce, it was recommended that the Council prioritise regular reporting of the impact of its initiatives and maintain a focus on continuous improvement. Similarly, it was recommended that the Council provides evidence of how its new change plans are having a positive impact on services performance and outcomes for communities.
- 3.7 The Commission reported no significant concerns about Argyll and Bute Council's performance. Given its remote and rural characteristics, the Council was found to be ahead of the game in terms of achieving efficiencies, including through its use of digital technology. It was recommended that the Council build on its culture of innovation and provide evidence of a more strategic approach to transformation and service redesign, aligned to its new corporate priorities and required savings.
- 3.8 A Controller of Audit report on Inverclyde Council, which will be draw on the findings of the Council's Annual Audit Reports and Thematic Inspections, is expected to be published by the Accounts Commission during the reporting period October 2025 - August 2026. The Committee will be kept apprised of any developments relating to this in future Best Value updates.

#### **3.9 People and Organisational Development Strategy Update**

- 3.10 The People and Organisational Development Strategy 2024-17 was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2024. An annual action plan is developed with key aspects reflected in the Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan. Committee therefore receive related updates through that reporting mechanism. There is wider complementary activity undertaken by Human Resources and Organisational Development and this report aims to reflect key achievements in 2024-25.

- 3.11 There has been development and initiation of a leadership development programme for the Extended Corporate Management Team. The aims of which include:
- building an understanding of what is working well, and how to build on the strengths and capabilities with the ECMT, continuing to develop a high level of trust and empowerment,
  - developing space for creativity and innovation,
  - exploring roles and responsibilities and how they can support each other in delivering priorities, and
  - building on the opportunities within the Council Plan to agree how the ECMT will work together, reflecting the values of the Council.
- 3.12 Wider leadership development activity has included a session for 60 senior managers held on 20 March with the purpose of meeting with other senior managers across Inverclyde Council, hearing about key corporate developments and inputting to plans for 2025-26. A further session is planned for September 2025.
- 3.13 There has been ongoing delivery of the face-to-face corporate induction led by the Chief Executive and supported by members of the Corporate Management Team. Feedback on this has been very positive with participants welcoming the opportunity to understand the strategic context in which they are working and meet Chief Officers in person.
- 3.14 The service has had a strong focus on statutory changes to HR and Health and Safety policies as well as undertaking an exercise of updating policies that had not been refreshed recently. Sixteen policies were updated and agreed by Committee. This also involved engagement with trade unions, amending the related procedure documents and promoting the changes across the workforce.
- 3.15 We have also worked closely with our Trade Unions through the monthly Trade Union Liaison Group and specific engagement on budget proposals. This has extended to their input on employee related savings and the HR Operations team successfully coordinated voluntary severance/early retirement trawls and releases for the Council and HSCP.
- 3.16 A significant amount of work has been undertaken in coordinating the recruitment of Chief Officers. Over the past year this has include the Head of Mental Health, Addictions and Homelessness, the Head of Children and Families and Justice Services, Chief Financial Officer recruitment exercises and the recent successful appointment to the Chief Executive role.
- 3.17 Succession planning has also been a theme beyond the Chief Officer level. New guidance for services was developed and support was given over the year to services in the updating of succession plans and workforce plans.
- 3.18 We have celebrated the success of our workforce through the 2024 Pride of Inverclyde Employee Awards and provided new opportunities for employment development through the coordination of the professional qualifications programme and the development of and delivery of a new Mentoring Programme.
- 3.19 Wider training provision has been updated and we are clearer on the expectations on employees to undertake training through the creation and roll out of a mandatory training matrix.
- 3.20 After a year's implementation period of Positive Conversations (our new approach to performance appraisal) a review was undertaken. 93% of the managers cited a positive experience implementing the use of Positive Conversations with their teams. The feedback focused on the improvement of the process, with the removal of grading giving a "relaxed",

“personal” and “simpler” experience. They described an “easy to follow” process which encouraged “natural conversations” and “value for staff”. Employees reported that it is more personal and a less stressful way of having a performance conversation. Further comments identified a positive change in the paperwork, with it being less bureaucratic and easier to complete, with helpful direction and topics.

- 3.21 A further focus over the past year has been to support managers to improve the use of absence monitoring reporting, by providing additional guidance and support. There has been production of a updated suite of materials in relation to maximising attendance and there has been targeted work in absence hotspot areas to better understand the challenges and opportunities.
- 3.22 We have recently undertaken detailed analysis of our employee profile to produce the Equality Mainstreaming reports, along with equal pay statements for gender, disability and ethnicity. We have also developed new equality outcomes that will support our workforce as well as our wider community.

## 4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the latest updates in relation to corporate policy and performance.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33/Council Plan 2023/28)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty and Children/Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X
Environmental and Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

## 5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/(Savings)

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

### 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### 5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

### 5.5 Strategic

The matters referred to in this report are of relevance to the following Council Plan 2023/28 Theme 3: Performance

- High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.