

A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held on Tuesday 3 June 2025 at 3pm.

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 Monday 2 June 2025 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.

Please note that this meeting will be live-streamed via YouTube with the exception of any business which is treated as exempt in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

Further information relating to the recording and live-streaming of meetings can be found at the end of this notice.

LYNSEY BROWN
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

BUSINESS

**** Copy to follow**

1.	Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	Page
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT		
2.	2024/25 Policy & Resources and General Fund Revenue Budget Report by Interim Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	p
3.	Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2024/28 Capital Programme Report by Interim Chief Financial Officer	p
4.	Finance Services Update Report by Interim Chief Financial Officer	p
5.	Corporate Policy and Performance Update: March – June 2025 Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	p
6.	Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 – Annual Refresh and performance summary 2024/25 Report by Chief Executive	p
7.	Impact of Hybrid Working on Inverclyde Council Service Quality and Outcomes Report by Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p

NEW BUSINESS		
8.	Chief Financial Officer Recruitment Report by Chief Executive	p
9.	Anti-Poverty Fund: Free Playschemes 2025-2027 Report by Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	p
10.	Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2023/24 Report by Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
11.	Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
12.	Addition to Flexible Working Policy Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
13.	Amended Flexible Retirement Scheme Report by Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	p
REMITTS FROM COMMITTEES		
ROUTINE DECISIONS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING		
14.	Information Classification Policy Update Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	p
<p>The documentation relative to the following items 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 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act whose numbers are set out opposite the heading to each item.</p>		
NEW BUSINESS		
15.	Tender for the Provision of an Intensive Family Support Service Para 8 Report by Acting Chief Officer Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership seeking approval for tender weightings for a forthcoming tender process.	p
REMITTS FROM COMMITTEES		
16.	Greenock Central Levelling Up Fund Project – Remit from Paras 6 & 8 Environment & Regeneration Committee Report by Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services requesting consideration of a remit from the Environment & Regeneration Committee.	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.

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Enquiries to – Colin MacDonald – Tel 01475 712113
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Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Interim Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Executive	Report No:	FIN/28/25/AE/AB
Contact Officer:	Angela Edmiston	Contact No:	01475 712143
Subject:	2024/25 Policy & Resources and General Fund Revenue Budget		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the projected position of the 2024/25 Policy & Resources Revenue. The report also highlights a projected underspend in the overall General Fund Revenue Budget and the impact on the General Fund Reserve.
- 1.3 The revised 2024/25 Revenue Budget for the Policy and Resources Committee is £22,490,000, which excludes Earmarked Reserves. The latest projection is an underspend of £365,000 (1.62%), mainly due to a £428,000 underspend within the Non Pay Inflation and a reduction in the impact of the 2024/25 Pay award. Overall, this is an increase in costs of £52,000 since last reported. More details are provided in section 3.3 and the appendices.
- 1.4 The latest projection for the General Fund Budget is an underspend of £46,000, an increase in costs of £91,000 since last reported, this is mainly due to various minor movements. Based on these figures the Council's unallocated Reserves are currently projected to be £0.052million more than the minimum recommended level of £4.0million by 31 March 2025. The General Fund reserve balance reflects decisions taken at the budget setting March 2025.
- 1.5 This report also includes updates in respect of earmarked reserves spend, Workstream Savings and the Common Good Revenue budget.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the current projected underspend in the Committee's Revenue Budget for 2024/25 of £365,000, an increase in costs of £52,000 since the last report.
- 2.2 Note the projected underspend of £46,000 for the General Fund and the projected reserve balance of £4.052 million as at 31 March 2025.
- 2.3 Note the projected 2024/25 surplus of £12,100 for the Common Good Budget set out in Appendix 5.
- 2.4 Note the update in relation to the Savings Workstream programme set out in Appendix 9.

Angela Edmiston
Interim Chief Financial Officer

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & ODHR

Stuart Jamieson
Chief Executive

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the current position of the 2024/25 Revenue Budget and to highlight the main variances contributing to the projected underspend of £365,000 for 2024/25.
- 3.2 The revised 2024/25 Revenue Budget for the Policy & Resources Committee is £22,490,000 excluding Earmarked Reserves. This is a decrease of £2,708,000 from the approved budget largely due to both Non Pay and Pay Inflation transferred to Service budgets. Appendix 1 gives more details of this budget movement.
- 3.3 2024/25 Projected Outturn - £365,000 underspend 1.62 %.

The main projected variances contributing to the net overspend are listed below –

- (a) Overall committee Employee Costs are projected to underspend by £195,000 due to an over achievement of turnover savings to date. This is a decrease in turnover of £5,000 since the last report across the Committee's services.
- (b) Projecting £30,000 over recovery within Housing Benefits Recoveries income, change of £60,000 since last reported.
- (c) Project a £32,000 shortfall within the Benefits Subsidy after completion of the final return.
- (d) Over-recovery of income within Revenues & Benefits of £68,000, this is mainly due to one-off SWF administration income from the Government with no off-setting costs. No movement since last reported.
- (e) Over-recovery of £30,000 projected within Council Tax Prior Years based on collection rates and previous years outturn. No movement since last Committee.
- (f) Projecting an overall combined overspend of £51,000 within ICT computer software and hardware. The Service are currently reviewing the budget to bring back in line for 2025/26.
- (g) Projected over-recovery of £32,000 for ICT service recharges for internal maintenance recharges for computer equipment purchased outside of the refresh programme. No change since last reported.
- (h) Legal Capital Recharges under-recovery of £21,000, this is in line with previous years.
- (i) External Licences are currently projecting at an under recovery of £38,000 for liquor and taxi operators. These projections are in line with previous outturns.
- (j) Now projecting £180,000 overspend within the pay inflation contingency. No change since last Committee.
- (k) Non Pay Inflation Contingency is projecting an underspend of £426,000 within 2024/25. This is due to a reduction in non pay inflation requests and has been reflected within 2025/26 budget process. £26,000 increase since last Committee.

3.4 General Fund Budget & Reserves Position

Appendix 6 shows that the General Fund is projecting a £46,000 underspend (excluding Health & Social Care) which represents 0.02% of the net Revenue Budget. The Policy & Resources Committee is projecting an underspend of £365,000. Offsetting this underspend are overspends within both other Committees; £182,000 overspend within the Environment & Regeneration and £69,000 for Education & Communities

3.5 Reserves

Appendix 4 gives an update on the Committee's operational Earmarked Reserves, i.e. excluding strategic funding models. Spend to 31 March 2025 on these operational Earmarked Reserves is £2,250,000 (29.45% of projected spend), the majority of the earmarked reserve budgets within the Policy & Resources reserves occur at the end of the year and final allocations still to be made. Appendix 7 gives the overall earmarked reserve position which shows £227,000 (4.61%) slippage against phased budget.

Appendix 8 shows the latest position in respect of the General Fund Reserves and shows that the projected balance at 31 March 2025 is £4.052 million which is £0.052 million above the minimum recommended balance of £4.0 million. The reserve balance reflects decisions taken at Full Council March 2025.

3.6 Workstream Savings

Appendix 9 provides the latest update on the Workstream savings. It can be seen that there remains a projected shortfall of £74,000 against the 2024/25 target.

3.7 Virements

None.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Committee's own revenue budget is showing a £365,000 underspend. The 3 service budgets are showing a projected underspend of £135,000 an increase in costs of £78,000 since the last report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

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

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

The Financial Regulations state the responsibility for ensuring Revenue Budgets are not exceeded lies with the Committee and budget holding Chief Officers.

5.4 Human Resources

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

5.5 Strategic

There are no specific strategic implications arising from this report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The paper has been jointly prepared by the Interim Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director Education, Communities, and Organisational Development and the Chief Executive.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 There are no background papers for this report.

Policy & Resources Budget Movement - 2024/25

Service	Approved Budget	Inflation	Virement	Movements	Transferred to	Revised Budget
	2024/25 £000			Supplementary Budgets £000	EMR £000	2024/25 £000
Finance	5,634	278	123	426		6,461
Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services	5,279	64	264	0		5,607
Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,301	0	25	0		2,326
Chief Exec	336	0	12	0		348
Miscellaneous	11,648	(510)	(5,151)	2,061	(300)	7,748
Totals	25,198	(168)	(4,727)	2,487	(300)	22,490

Supplementary Budget Detail

Inflation

Miscellaneous - Non Pay Inflation	(265)
Accountancy - Comp Soft Maint (CIVICA PAY)	6
Revs & Bens - DHP	19
ICT - Software Maintenance	57
Internal Audit- Chief Internal Auditor Inflation	7
R&B - Postages (Critiqom)	8
	(168)

Virements

Miscellaneous - Pay Inflation	(5,342)
Legal - Information Governance Monies from Social Work	131
Legal - Members Superann reduction returned to Contingency Fund	(57)
Chief Executive Directorates - Pay Award 24/25	357
Reg - Monies to Finance Creditors Post	(7)
ICT - NWOW Monies from Property Services	40
HR - Employee budget reduction from budget upload error returned to Contingency Fund	(47)
Miscellaneous - HR employee budget returned to Contingency Fund	47
Miscellaneous - Election Superann returned to Contingency Fund	57
Miscellaneous virements	87
Miscellaneous virements	0
Fin- Monies to Finance for Creditors Post	7
R&B - Budget transfer from Council Tax Prior Years to R&B Employee Costs	0
R&B - Budget transfer from R&B Miscellaneous to R&B Employee Costs	0
	(4,727)

Supplementary Budgets

Scottish Welfare Fund	
Pay Offer	426
Teacher Pensions	794
	1,267
	2,487

Total Inflation & Virements

(2,408)

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

2023/24 Actual £000	SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Revised Budget 2024/25 £000	Projected Out-turn 2024/25 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
10,153	Employee Costs	8,647	9,100	8,905	(195)	(2.1%)
739	Property Costs	744	744	744	0	-
895	Supplies & Services	915	1,025	1,100	75	7.3%
2	Transport & Plant	5	5	5	0	-
1,279	Administration Costs	1,331	1,972	1,995	23	1.2%
28,636	Payments to Other Bodies	38,946	40,095	39,852	(243)	(0.6%)
(28,404)	Income	(25,390)	(30,151)	(30,176)	(25)	0.1%
13,300	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	25,198	22,790	22,425	(365)	(1.6%)
	Earmarked reserves		(300)	(300)	0	
13,300	Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves	25,198	22,490	22,125	(365)	

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

2023/24 Actual £000	OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Revised Budget 2024/25 £000	Projected Out-turn 2024/25 £000	Projected Over/(Under) Spend £000	Percentage Over/(Under)
5,793	Finance	5,634	6,461	6,402	(59)	(0.9%)
5,571	Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services	5,279	5,607	5,563	(44)	(0.8%)
2,431	Organisational Development, Policy & Communications	2,301	2,326	2,294	(32)	(1.4%)
2,431	Total Net Expenditure Education, Communities & Organisational Development	13,214	14,394	14,259	(135)	(0.9%)
380	Chief Executive	336	348	364	16	4.6%
(875)	Miscellaneous	11,648	8,048	7,802	(246)	(3.1%)
1,936	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	25,198	22,790	22,425	(365)	0
	Earmarked reserves		(300)	(300)		
1,936	Total Net Expenditure excluding Earmarked Reserves	25,198	22,490	22,125	(365)	

POLICY RESOURCES

REVENUE BUGET MONITORING REPORT

MATERIAL VARIANCES (EXCLUDING EARMARKED RESERVES)

Appendix 3

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

MATERIAL VARIANCES

Outturn 2023/24 £000	Budget Heading	Budget 2024/25 £000	Proportion of Budget £000	Actual to 2024/25 £000	Projection 2024/25 £000	Over/(Under) Budget £000	Percentage Variance %
	<u>Finance Services</u>						
1,630	Accountancy - Employee Cost	1,542	1,403	1,339	1,545	3	0.2%
1,406	R&B - Employee Cost	1,283	1,167	1,173	1,293	10	0.8%
(23)	R&B - Recoveries	(110)	(101)	(181)	(140)	(30)	27.3%
(64)	R&B - Income	(31)	(31)	(47)	(99)	(68)	219.4%
	R&B Ctax Prior Years	(330)			(360)	(30)	9.1%
	R&B - Benefits Subsidy	(20,776)	(20,776)	(41,520)	(20,744)	32	(0.2%)
	<u>Organisational Development, Policy & Communications</u>						
2,023	ODHR - Employee Cost	1,958	1,781	1,708	1,892	(66)	(3.4%)
	<u>Legal, Democratic Digital & Customer Services</u>						
4739	Employee Costs	3,995	3,634	3,481	3,837	(158)	(4.0%)
587	ICT - Supplies - Software Maintenance	702	657	753	753	51	7.3%
(299)	ICT - Admin Costs - Telephone Recharges - offset in Income	333	305	252	301	(32)	(9.6%)
(60)	ICT - Income Costs - Telephone Recharges - offset in Admin	(333)	(305)	(252)	(301)	32	(9.6%)
(49)	ICT - Income - Recharges (5 Year Computer Refresh)	(30)	(28)	(62)	(62)	(32)	106.7%
(7)	Legal - Capital Recharges	(24)	(22)	(2)	(3)	21	(87.5%)
(310)	Legal - Income Licenses	(327)	(300)	(262)	(289)	38	(11.6%)
	<u>Miscellaneous Services</u>						
	Pay Inflation Contingency	8,426	8,426	8,606	8,606	180	2.1%
	Non Pay Inflation	1,133	733	733	707	(426)	(37.6%)
9,573	TOTAL MATERIAL VARIANCES	(2,589)	(3,457)	(24,281)	(3,064)	(475)	

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	<u>Project</u>	<u>Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager</u>	<u>Total Funding</u> <u>2024/25</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Phased Budget 2024/25</u> <u>2024/25</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2024/25 Spend</u> <u>2024/25</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Projected Spend</u> <u>2024/25</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Amount to be Earmarked for 2025/26 & Beyond</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Lead Officer Update</u>
B	Early Retiral/Voluntary Severance Reserve	Angela Edmiston	3,127	0	289	740	2,387	Projection for 24/25 based on offers expected to be issued linked to 25/26 savings & workstreams.
C	Equal Pay	Morna Rae	100	0	0	0	100	Balance for equal pay legal fees which is under review on an annual basis
C	Digital Strategy	Louise Long	1,149	319	255	296	853	<u>2024/25 Committed project costs to date</u> £37K purchases of Schools Cashless Catering System replacement £37K Revenue and Benefits Victoria Forms system £39K Project Officer Post £39k (29/05/24 for 2 years), £46K ICHRIS upgrade with temp Service Improvement Lead from 01/07/24, £17K CLD Digital Outcome Solution £66K Civica Pay Upgrade £21K Engage subscription (1 year). £8K CenefitsSystem for 24/25 £4K Victoria Forms (Events) £16K Library Publications Fundingx £5K Solace
C	Welfare Reform - Operational	Angela Edmiston	52	0	10	10	42	Employee Costs £10k in 24/25, £42k uncommitted.
C	Anti-Poverty Fund	Ruth Binks	2,248	215	389	636	1,612	Proposals to utilise £480k of the unallocated balance of £774k agreed at P&R 17 September 2024. Also proposal to terminate the IRISE project early with the balance of funding remaining within the Anti Poverty EMR. The projected spend, and phasing has been adjusted on this basis. Proposal approved P&R Committee on 19 November to utilise up to £600k of this to create a Fuel Poverty Fund, leaves £270k unallocated.
B	Loan Charge Funding Model	Angela Edmiston	3,621	0	0	1,113	2,508	Based on Dec Finance Strategy including a further £2.8million over 2024/27 to the EMR to deliver a recurring saving from 2025/26.
B	2023/26 Budget Funding Reserve	Angela Edmiston	5,373	0	0	2,628	2,745	Per approved 2025/26 Budget (March 25). £1.245 million utilised 25/26, £1m 26/27 & £0.5m 27/28.
C	ICT Technicians To Support Digital School Inclusion/Covid Recovery	Lynsey Brown	13	13	13	13	0	Completed.
C	New Ways of Working	Stuart Jamieson	258	100	20	25	233	Work on-going on James Watt building for transfer of HSCP staff from HMH.

EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION STATEMENT

COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources

C a t e g o r y	Project	Lead Officer/ Responsible Manager	Total Funding	Phased Budget 2024/25	2024/25 Spend	Projected Spend	Amount to be Earmarked for 2025/26 & Beyond	Lead Officer Update
			2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
C	Project Resource	Louise Long	63	0	22	22	41	Budget set aside to aide the process of difficult to fill posts and certain council memberships/reviews. Projects approved to date; Co-operative Councils membership £5k & Solace assistance to fill CFO post £17k. Unallocated balance of £41k with £20k writte back agreed 27/01/25 Full Council.
C	Covid Recovery - Marketing Post & Support for Discover Inverclyde	Morna Rae	44	8	8	8	36	Further development of the 'discover Inverclyde' website and social media as the single trusted source of events and activity for residents and visitors to Inverclyde, local marketing campaigns to support priorities above and local partners and venues, develop trusted and timely marketing data. £8k funds spent in 24/25 for associated prints. Development of facilities and resources to share Inverclyde's Historic Links to Slavery through the Watt Institute.
C	Scottish Welfare Fund	Angela Edmiston	129	0	0	0	129	To Pay for the balance of Scottih Welfare Fund Crisis Grants expenditure as funded by Scottish Government. To be carried forward to 25/26
C	Smoothing Reserve (Service Consession)	Angela Edmiston	490	0	0	201	289	Phasing over 2023/28, per Feb 2023 report.
B	Budget Delivery Reserve	Angela Edmiston	2,771	44	1,185	1,380	1,391	Allocated costs to date: ASN transport (£400k), HR Review (£88k), Utility Costs (£800k), IL Smoothing Reserve (£200k), Winter Gritting (£150k), Finance Officer (£90k), SWAN contract (£370k), Catering Review (£30k) & £350k Office AMP costs. £200k write back agreed 23/01/25 at Full Council. £200k write back in 202425 and further £500k approved to be written back within 2025/26
C	Student Training Fees	Morna Rae	80	0	3	8	72	The funding is to support professional qualifications and the consequent retention and development of employees. Spend for 24/25 £8k across Revenues & Benefits, Environmental & Legal . £67k uncommitted.
C	IRI Smoothing Reserve	Angela Edmiston	946	0	0	0	946	Linked to Dec Finance Strategy, a further £300k added to support model. £7m saving approved 2023/27.
C	Empty Property Relief	Angela Edmiston	80	0	6	6	75	£94k for E&R Business Support transferred to E&R , £5.5k cost EPR software for upcoming EPR changes. Remainder £75k balance to be carried forward to cover any retrospective applications for Empty Property Relief.
C	Elections 2024/27	Lynsey Brown	300	100	50	55	245	Budget approved at 2024/25 budget process for local election costs.
C	Allocation towards Historic Child Abuse settlements	Angela Edmiston	500	0	0	500	0	Add to the Insurance Fund during as part of 2024/25 Year End. HSCP contribution of £500k due 2026/27 per Full Council report 06/03/25.
Total Category A			0	0	0	0	0	
Total Category B			14,892	44	1,474	5,861	9,031	
Total Category C to E			6,452	755	776	1,780	4,673	

COMMON GOOD FUND**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024/25**

	Final Outturn 2023/24	Approved Budget 2024/25	Budget to Date 2024/25	Actual to Date 2024/25	Projected Outturn 2024/25
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>PROPERTY COSTS</u>	47,219	65,200	46,200	36,200	58,700
Repairs & Maintenance	19,144	17,500	14,600	12,535	17,500
Rates	23,171	23,200	19,300	19,630	23,200
Property Insurance	4,034	8,000	4,000	4,030	8,000
Property Costs	870	16,500	8,300	0	10,000
<u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u>	6,200	7,700	800	0	7,700
Sundries	0	1,500	800	0	1,500
Commercial Rent Management Recharge	2,200	2,200	0	0	2,200
Recharge for Accountancy	4,000	4,000	0	0	4,000
<u>OTHER EXPENDITURE</u>	114,192	109,500	102,210	100,210	108,200
Christmas Lights Switch On	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Christmas Decorations	38,885	44,000	41,470	41,470	42,700
Gourock Highland Games	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Armistice Service	9,527	8,300	5,540	5,540	8,300
Comet Festival	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300	13,300
Events	4,000	4,000	2,000	0	4,000
Bad Debt Provision	8,580	0	0	0	0
<u>INCOME</u>	(202,080)	(183,700)	(150,200)	(165,950)	(186,700)
Property Rental	(228,200)	(234,200)	(195,200)	(195,200)	(234,200)
Void Rents	33,164	54,000	45,000	29,250	54,000
Internal Resources Interest	(7,044)	(3,500)	0	0	(6,500)
<u>NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURE</u>	(34,469)	(1,300)	(990)	(29,550)	(12,100)
<u>EARMARKED FUNDS</u>	0	0	0	0	0
<u>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</u>	(34,469)	(1,300)	(990)	(29,550)	(12,100)

Fund Balance as at 31st March 2024 £ 158,037

Projected Outturn 2024/25 12,100

Expenditure on Port Glasgow Burgh 250th Anniversary approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 13th August 2024 (40,000)

Projected Fund Balance as at 31st March 2025 130,137

Notes:**1 Rates (Empty Properties)**

Rates are currently being paid on empty properties, projection reflects current Rates levels however all historic Rates costs are being examined to ensure all appropriate empty property relief has been obtained. Any subsequent credit will be included in future reports.

2 Current Empty Properties are:

12 Bay St	Vacant since:
10 John Wood Street	April 2015, currently being marketed
17 John Wood Street	August 2018
	June 2023

Policy & Resources Committee

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25

Committee	Approved Budget 2024/2025	Revised Budget 2024/2025	Projected Out-turn 2024/2025	Projected Over/(Under) Spend	Percentage Variance
	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	£,000's	
Policy & Resources	25,198	22,490	22,125	(365)	(1.62%)
Environment & Regeneration	21,394	22,249	22,431	182	0.82%
Education & Communities	116,384	121,498	121,567	69	0.06%
Health & Social Care	73,714	74,397	74,424	27	0.04%
Committee Sub-Total	236,690	240,634	240,547	(87)	(0.04%)
Loan Charges	16,590	16,590	16,590	0	0.00%
Saving Approved yet to be Allocated (Note 1)	(100)	(100)	(100)	0	0.00%
Workstream Savings Approved (Note 2)	(364)	(419)	(345)	74	0.00%
Service Concession Flexibility	(1,650)	(1,650)	(1,650)	0	0.00%
Contribution from Other Funds (Note 3)	0	(87)	(87)	0	0.00%
Earmarked Reserves	0	1,015	1,015	0	0.00%
Total Expenditure	251,166	255,983	255,970	(13)	(0.01%)
Financed By:					
General Revenue Grant/Non Domestic Rates (Note 4)	(208,102)	(214,882)	(214,888)	(6)	0.00%
General Revenue Grant - Teachers Hold Back (Note 4)	(2,119)	0	0	0	0.00%
Contribution from General Reserves (Note 5)	(2,628)	(5,628)	(5,628)	0	100.00%
Council Tax	(38,317)	(35,473)	(35,473)	0	0.00%
Integration Joint Board - Contribution to Reserves	0	0	(27)	(27)	100.00%
Net Expenditure	0	0	(46)	(46)	

Note 1 - Approved savings yet to be allocated

Note 2 - Workstream Savings Approved yet to be vired

Note 3 - Contribution from Insurance Fund for redress scheme

Note 4 - General Revenue Grant - Teachers Hold Back funding now received

Note 5 - General Revenue Grant - £3m funded from Capital Grant

Earmarked Reserves Position Statement

Appendix 7

Summary

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Total Funding 2024/25</u>	<u>Phased Budget</u>	<u>Spend 2024/25</u>	<u>Variance Actual to Phased Budget</u>	<u>Projected Spend 2024/25</u>	<u>Earmarked 2025/26 & Beyond</u>	<u>2024/25 %age Spend Against Projected</u>	<u>2024/25 %age Over/(Under) Spend Against Phased Budget</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>		
Education & Communities	435	161	161	0	176	277	91.48%	0.00%
Health & Social Care	8,828	2,459	1,210	(1,249)	2,251	6,577	53.75%	(50.79%)
Regeneration & Environment	7,027	1,509	1,080	(429)	1,454	5,573	74.29%	(28.42%)
Policy & Resources	24,437	799	2,250	1,451	7,641	13,704	29.44%	181.54%
	40,727	4,928	4,701	(227)	11,522	26,131	40.80%	(4.61%)

Actual Spend v Phased Budget Behind Phasing = (£227k) (4.61%)

Last Update (Period P10) Behind of Phasing = (£967k)

Increase in slippage £740k
Only categories B-E included above excluding HSCP with categories C-E only

Appendix 8

GENERAL FUND RESERVE POSITION 2024/25

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
Usable Balance 31/3/24		4470
<u>Available Funding:</u>		
Actuarial Pension Review (2024/26)	9000	
Additional IRI 2023/27	3500	
Reduced Use of Reserves Budget 2024/26	384	
IRI shortfall 2023/26 (£3.5m less £3.144m Actual 2023/24)	356	
Earmarked Reserve required for 2024/25	<u>160</u>	
		13400
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) 2024/25	<u>46</u>	
		46
<u>Use of Balances Approved 2024:</u>		
Additional IRI to Loans Charges	(3000)	
Increased support to the Revenue Budget	(6000)	
Increased support to the 2024/28 Capital Programme	<u>(4400)</u>	
		(13400)
<u>Use of Balances Approved - Fin Stratgey Dec 2024</u>		
Fin Stratgey Dec 2024:		
City Deal	(300)	
Internal Resources Model	(300)	
Full Council January 2025:		
Chief Executive Recruitment	<u>(30)</u>	
		(630)
<u>Write Backs - Full Council January 2025:</u>		
Budget Delivery Reserve 2025/26	500	
Covid - Business Development Interventions	50	
Covid - Import/Export/Access to stock support	50	
Budget Funding Reserve	534	
CFCR - 24/28 Capital Programme	514	
Project Resource/capacity	20	
Budget Delivery Reserve	<u>200</u>	
		1868
<u>Use of Reserves Approved - Full Council March 2025:</u>		
Write back of planned use of reserves	5838	
Use of reserves budget 2025/28	(2745)	
Proposed use of Reserves:		
Anti Poverty Initiatives (including employability)	(600)	
Roads Investment	(600)	
ASN Initiatives/Resources	(600)	
Tourism	(270)	
Transformation	(1500)	
Capital Programme (FMS Replacement)	(1200)	
Freedom of Inverclyde event	<u>(25)</u>	
		(1702)
Projected Reserve Balance		<u><u>4052</u></u>

Minimum Reserve required is £4 million

Policy & Resources Committee

Workstreams Saving Monitoring at April 2025

Saving Title	CMT Lead Officer	Chief Officer Update	Approved Saving 2024/25 £000's	Achieved to Date 2024/25 £000's	Projected Saving 2024/25 £000's	Over achievement/ (Shortfall) 2024/25 £000's
Income Generation Original Target £700k	A Edmiston	5% increases in fees/charges for both 2024/25 and 2025/26 agreed as part of the 2024/26 Budget. Balance anticipated to come from Inchgreen JV no later than 2025/26. £11k identified for 2025/26 relating to uplift in charges for Building Warrant fees.	250	245	245	(5)
Procurement Original target £600k, then £750k , then £805k (to fund Procurement post) now £945k over 24/27 after £140k New target added. Note 2	S Jamieson	£671k achieved in 2024/25 from the new Residual Waste contract with £80k achieved from the new SWAN contract. This has been phased 50% 24/25 and 50% 25/26 and requires £350k investment from the Budget Delivery emr. CMT have increased the target by £55k in order to help increase capacity within the Procurement Team. Further increase approved as part of August 2024 savings exercise (£140k) including purchase cards.	710	711	711	1
Energy Original Target £500k , now £1250k	A Edmiston	£800k reduction in gas/electricity budgets over 2023/26 approved as part of the 2024/26 Budgets. Increased by £100k (Jan 2025 Council) and a further £300k (Feb 2025 P&R)and the position will continue to be monitored given the current volatility. A £50k reduction in fuel costs was applied from 2024/25 based on 2023/24 out-turn. 2026/27 potential saving and IL saving to be reviewed later in 2025.	250	250	250	0
Asset Management Original Target £400k	S Jamieson	Initial saving will arise from the demolition of Hector McNeil House as part of the Levelling Up Fund project later in 2024. Officers developing a process for the consideration by members of other proposals which will be presented in October. A report will be presented to the Programme Board February 2025 regarding office proposals. Target slipped over 2026/28 per P&R January 2025. FTE reflects HMM cleaning saving.	50	0	0	(50)
Management Restructure Ph3 Original Target £200k	S Jamieson	Update presented to 14.11.24 Programme Board and 19.11.24 P&R Committee agreed to use £104k from the contingency to meet the 31.3.26 projected shortfall. Shortfall updated in line with latest saving proposal, now utilising £65k from contingency balance.	0	0	0	0
Digital & Customer Services Original Target £100k	S Jamieson	A number of projects delivering service improvements progressing . Updated via regular reports to Policy & Resources Committee. Update to 14.11.24 Programme Board and 19.11.24 P&R Committee agreed to use £35k from the contingency to meet the 31.3.26 projected shortfall. In line with latest saving proposal, shortfall increased to £41k funded from contingency.	20	0	0	(20)
Community Learning & Development- Delivering Differently Review Original Target £180k	R Binks	This saving was agreed at the Education and Communities Committee on 21 January 2025.	40	40	40	0
Schools Catering Review Original Target £120k	R Binks	3.8FTE vacant posts delivering an £80k saving in 25/26 have already been identified and APSE are undertaking a review with the service to identify potential areas for efficiencies. This review has been underatken with results pending.	0	0	0	0
Over achievement Contingecy Currently £300k	A Edmiston	This reflects the fact that targets exceed the overall allowance in the 2024/26 Budget. Policy & Resources Committee approved the use of £139k on 19.11.24. Phasing updated, £106k required from contingency.	0	0	0	0
Totals			1,320	1,246	1,246	(74)

Approved Saving 2025/26 £000's	Achieved to Date 2025/26 £000's	Projected Saving 2025/26 £000's	Total Projected Saving 2024/26 £000's	Over achievement/ (Shortfall) 2024/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	Est FTE Impact
450	256	455	700	0	0	0	0.0
165	40	164	875	0	70	0	(2.0)
1000	1000	1,000	1,250	0	0	0	0.0
50	0	100	100	0	200	100	3.8
200	0	135	135	(65)	12	0	2.5
80	0	59	59	(41)	17	0	2.0
140	0	140	180	0	0	0	4.3
100	0	100	100	0	20	0	3.4
(300)	0	(40)	(40)	260	(154)	0	0.0
1,885	1296	2113	3359	479	165	100	14.0

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/32/25/AE/MT
Contact Officer:	Matt Thomson	Contact No:	01475 712256
Subject:	Policy & Resources Capital Budget and Council 2024/28 Capital Programme		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with the latest position of the Policy & Resources Capital Programme and the 2024/28 Capital Programme.
- 1.3 The Policy & Resources Capital Programme has a capital budget over 2024/28 of £8.337m with total projected spend on budget. The Committee is projecting to spend £0.590m in 2024/25 against an approved budget of £0.668m.
- 1.4 The overall 2024/28 Capital Programme budget is £83.329m with projects totalling £86.194m. This represents a £2.865m (3.44%) over allocation. This is within the agreed 5% tolerance. It should be noted that this is based on a 4-year Capital resource and the over provision will represent approximately 4.56% of the reduced, 3 year, resources of the 2025/28 programme, which is within the acceptable levels. In the current year net advancement of £0.398m, (1.93%) is being reported. Slippage has occurred in the programme within the individual Committees as follows; Health & Social Care (£2.287m) and Policy & Resources (£0.078m) offset with an advancement within Environment & Regeneration (£0.838m advancement) and Education & Communities (£1.925m advancement). A further breakdown of this movement can be seen within the individual breakdown per Committee in paragraph 3.13. Expenditure at 31 March was £17.510m.
- 1.5 The Capital Programme reflects changes made as a result of the Scottish Government Capital Settlement for 2025/26.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the current position of the 2024/28 Policy & Resources Capital Budget and the current position of the 2024/28 Capital Programme.

Angela Edmiston
Interim Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 On 6 March 2025 the Council approved the 2025/28 Capital Programme as part of the overall Budget approval. This report shows the revised grant and allocation assumptions for 2025/28.

2024/28 Policy & Resources Capital Position

- 3.2 The Policy & Resources capital budget is £8.337m. The current projection is £8.337m which means total projected spend is on budget.
- 3.3 The approved budget for 2024/25 is £0.668m and the Committee is projecting to spend £0.590m in 2024/25. The spend at 31 March is £0.479m (71.71%) of the approved budget.
- 3.4 PC Refresh Programme – The 2024/25 Corporate refresh programme is now complete. A programme replacing the first phase of laptops procured following the pandemic and shortly after has now replaced 660 devices. Of these, 300 laptops have been redeployed into Schools to replace the oldest desktop devices that were remaining in the estate. A further small tranche of 60 devices will be deployed into the schools before the end of the Financial year. A number of Android Smartphones have been identified as no longer in support for security and functionality updates – as a result a refresh programme has been implemented to upgrade and review usage as required.
- 3.5 Server and Switch Replacement – Several servers are being upgraded in response to security and performance requirements, in response, a range of network and server replacement programmes are being developed. Several device replacements across the network estate to improve service and support the implementation of SWAN2 are now under way. Options for improvements to back-up systems are being developed and the replacement of the file storage system in the school estate is being considered.
- 3.6 As part of the 2023/26 budget setting process £4m was added to a small existing contingency to meet potential cost increases, fund unforeseen projects and to protect core service delivery from unexpected fluctuations in costs. At the 2024/28 budget setting process, a further £1m was added to this contingency. This budget will be allocated by this Committee following the receipt of relevant reports. To date £2.771m has been allocated by Committee leaving an unallocated balance of £2.329m.
- 3.7 As part of the 2024/28 Capital Programme approval in February 2025, £3.75million generated from reprofiling loans charges repayments was allocated towards the refreshed asset management strategies. These are due to be completed by March 2026 and this expenditure is phased accordingly.

2024/28 Capital Programme

- 3.8 The overall 2024/28 Capital Programme reflects the confirmed 2024/25 capital grant. The 2024/25 allocation is £9.268m, however this includes £0.052m allocation for Coastal Change Adaptions which is passported to the Property Assets budget, £0.188m for Play Parks strategy which is passported to the Environmental budget and £3m which has to be used for the Pay Award. Therefore, available core funding is £5.782m.
- 3.9 The 2025/26 Capital Grant has now been issued by the Scottish Government and is, £6.940m, as well as an additional £0.576m for Active Travel Infrastructure Funding and £0.488m for Climate Emergency, which are both shown on the Capital Grants line of the Appendices. The Capital Programme has been updated to reflect the Grant with corresponding expenditure added where appropriate. This has resulted in a decrease in the deficit of £0.630m. An estimate of the 2025/28 Programme, reflecting this settlement and increased estimated Grants in 2026/27 and 2027/28,

together with recommendations regarding the use of any available resources were approved by Council on the 6 March 2025.

- 3.10 An over provision of projects against estimated resources of up to 5% is considered acceptable to allow for increased resources and/or cost reductions. Currently the Capital Programme is reporting an over provision of £2.865m which represents 3.44% of the 2024/28 estimated resources. It should be noted that this is based on a 4-year Capital resource and the over provision will represent approximately 4.56% of the reduced, 3 year, resources of the 2025/28 programme.
- 3.11 In terms of the overall Capital Programme, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that at 31 March 2025 expenditure in 2024/25 is currently 83.35% of projected spend, the committee should note that this figure is not the final outturn position for the year end as Final Year End charges and fees have to be processed at this point. Phasing and projected spend has been reviewed by the budget holders and the relevant Director. The position in respect of each individual Committee is reported in Appendix 2 and in paragraph 3.13 of this report. Overall Committees are projecting to outturn on budget.
- 3.12 In the current year net advancement of £0.398m, (1.93%) is currently being reported. This is largely due to slippage within Health & Social Care (£2.287m) and Policy & Resources (£0.078m) offset by advancement within Education and Communities Committee (£1.925m) and Environment & Regeneration Committee (£0.838m).
- 3.13 The position in respect of individual Committees for 2024/25 is as follows:

Policy & Resources

Expenditure at 31 March 2025 is £0.479m against an approved budget of £0.668m. Net slippage of £0.078m (11.68%) is due to slippage within the Capital Programme Contingency line.

Environment & Regeneration

Expenditure at 31 March 2025 is £12.458m against an approved budget of £14.589m. Net advancement of £0.838 m (5.74%) and is mainly due to advancement in West Blackhall Street (£1.009m), Greenock Town Hall Roofing, Ventilation & Windows (£0.252m), Scheme of Assistance (£0.100m), Park, Cemeteries & Open Spaces (£0.051m) & Cycling, walking & Safer Roads (£0.193m) offset by slippage in various projects such as Place Based Funding (£0.170m), Town & Village Centre projects (£0.600m) alongside other minor movements across the committee.

Education & Communities

Expenditure at 31 March 2025 is £3.818m against an approved budget of £1.907m. Net advancement of £1.925m (100.94%) mainly due to advancement within Parklea Branching Out (£0.179m), the New Community Hub at the King George VI Building (£0.361m), complete on site projects (£0.111m) and the Education Lifecycle Fund (£1.283m).

Health & Social Care

Expenditure at 31 March 2025 is £0.755m against an approved budget of £3.447m. There has been slippage in this Committee of £2.287m (66.35%). All the slippage is due to the delayed start of the New Community Hub Project.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The continued annual shortfall between the Councils core asset investment requirement and the level of Capital Grant continues to put pressure on the wider finances of the Council, however, the 2024/28 Capital Programme remains affordable based on current estimates.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

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

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal issues to raise as part of this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR matters arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

The overall Capital Programme contains many projects which contribute to the strategic priorities of the Council. As a result, timeous delivery of projects remains a focus for officers.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been prepared based on updates to the relevant Strategic Committees.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Project Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	<u>Est Total Cost</u>	<u>Actual to 31/3/24</u>	<u>Approved Budget 2024/25</u>	<u>Revised Est 2024/25</u>	<u>Actual to 31/03/2025</u>	<u>Est 2025/26</u>	<u>Est 2026/27</u>	<u>Est 2027/28</u>	<u>Future Years</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<u>Policy & Resources</u>									
<u>ICT</u>									
Storage/Backup Devices/Minor Works and Projects	19	-	0	19	15	0	0	0	0
Rolling Replacement of PC's	365	-	0	365	345	0	0	0	0
Meeting Room, Videoconferencing & Hybrid Working Equipment	5	-	48	5	0	0	0	0	0
Server & Switch Replacement Programme	201	-	0	201	119	0	0	0	0
Home Working Allocation	15	15	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Annual Allocation	1,653	-	532	0	0	585	534	534	0
<u>ICT Total</u>	2,258	15	590	590	479	585	534	534	0
<u>Miscellaneous</u>									
Capital Programme Contingency	2,329	-	78	0	0	968	1,361	0	0
Asset Management Strategy	3,750	-	0	0	0	0	1,750	2,000	0
<u>Miscellaneous Total</u>	6,079	0	78	0	0	968	3,111	2,000	0
TOTAL	8,337	15	668	590	479	1,553	3,645	2,534	0

Capital Programme - 2024/25 - 2027/28

	Available Resources					
	A	B	C	D	E	G
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Government Capital Support	9,268	6,940	6,104	6,350	-	28,662
Capital Receipts (Note 1)	434	315	315	315	-	1,379
Capital Grants (Note 2)	6,626	1,064	300	300	-	8,290
Prudential Funded Projects (Note 3)	3,495	7,546	4,174	2,714	125	18,054
Balance B/F From 23/24	12,513	-	-	-	-	12,513
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	594	4,740	4,664	4,433	-	14,431
	32,930	20,605	15,557	14,112	125	83,329

Overall Position 2024/28

	£000
Available Resources (Appendix 2a, Column A-E)	83,329
Projection (Appendix 2b, Column B-F)	86,194
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources	(2,865)
(Shortfall)/Under Utilisation of Resources %	(3.44)%

Notes to Appendix 2aNote 1 (Capital Receipts)

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales	369	315	315	315	-	1,314
Contributions/Recoveries	65	-	-	-	-	65
	434	315	315	315	-	1,379

Note 2 (Capital Grants)

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000			£000
Government Grant - Place Based Funding	170	-				170
Free School Meals	621	-	-			621
Watt Institute LED Lighting	41	-	-			41
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	538	576	300	300		1,714
Active Travel Transformation Fund (ATTF)	296	-	-			296
SPT	29	-	-			29
Climate Emergency	-	488	-			488
Boglestone Community Centre	500					500
Peatland Action Trust	769	-	-			769
Recycling Improvement Fund	96	-	-			96
Sustrans	3,566	-	-			3,566
	6,626	1,064	300	300	-	8,290

Note 3 (Prudentially Funded Projects)

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Future	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Vehicle Replacement Programme	701	1,075	1,214	1,214	-	4,204
Borrowing in lieu of VRP Reduction	-	636	-			636
Asset Management Plan - Depots	128	50	160			338
Capital Works on Former Tied Houses	6	-	200	-	125	331
New Community Hub	1,160	4,285	1,100			6,545
Additional Prudential Borrowing to Fund Capital Programme	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500		6,000
	3,495	7,546	4,174	2,714	125	18,054

Appendix 2b

Capital Programme - 2024/25 - 2027/28

Agreed Projects

Committee	A Prior Years	B 2024/25	C 2025/26	D 2026/27	E 2027/28	F Future	G Total	H Approved Budget	I (Under)/ Over	J 2024/25 Spend To 31/03/2025
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy & Resources	15	590	1,553	3,645	2,534	-	8,337	8,337	-	479
Environment & Regeneration	8,738	15,427	12,747	15,800	8,365	125	61,202	61,202	-	12,458
School Estate	279	2,375	1,936	4,591	5,000	-	14,181	14,181	-	2,375
Education & Communities (Exc School Estate)	1,333	1,457	276	401	120	-	3,587	3,587	-	1,443
HSCP	655	1,160	6,592	1,500	-	-	9,907	9,907	-	755
Total	11,020	21,009	23,104	25,937	16,019	125	97,214	97,214	-	17,510

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Interim Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/31/25/AE
Contact Officer:	Angela Edmiston	Contact No:	01475 712143
Subject:	Finance Services Update		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Committee on several matters relating to the Finance Service.
- 1.3 This update to Committee provides updates in terms of the following:
- Non-Domestic Rate- Empty Property Relief
 - Council Tax Second Homes
 - Council Tax E-Billing
 - Council Tax Collection 2024/25
 - Scottish Welfare Fund
 - Welfare Reforms
 - Citizens Advice – Supporting People with Council Tax Debt
 - Insurance Fund Actuarial Review
 - FMS Replacement System Update
 - 2024/25 Annual Accounts Closure

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the various updates from the Finance Service.

Angela Edmiston
Interim Chief Financial Officer

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Finance Service covers a wide range of functions ranging from Accountancy, Payables, Treasury/Insurance to Revenues, Benefits Discretionary Payments and from 1 January, Internal Audit. This update covers several areas relating to Revenues, Insurance, Annual Accounts process and the replacement Financial Management System.
- 3.2 **Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief**
The Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief (NDR EPR) policy was agreed by committee in January 2023 with a budget of £500,000. Empty Property Relief expenditure in respect of 2024/25 was £500,152 which related to 241 non-domestic rates accounts. As reported previously, increased expenditure in 2024/25 primarily related to relief provided for the premises formerly occupied by Amazon of £192,000, which if it remains empty throughout 2025/26 will be £54,000.
- 3.3 Amendments to the NDR EPR Policy were agreed by committee in February 2024 and took effect from October 2024. The changes equalise relief for unoccupied industrial premises with the provision for non-industrial premises and limit the level of relief for unoccupied listed buildings.
- 3.4 The NDR EPR Policy is due to be reviewed by February 2026 at which point the effect of the October 2024 amendments to the Policy will be evaluated. Empty property relief expenditure and policies are monitored by the Scottish Government and the quantum for the next funding period and allocations are expected later this year. The Policy review also coincides with the revaluation from April 2026 of every non-domestic property being assigned a new rateable value on which they pay rates.
- 3.5 The NDR EPR Policy will be reported to Committee post the review recommending any amendments for Committee's consideration, taking account of the impact of the October 2024 amendments, the funding allocation for the next funding period and the 2026 revaluation
- 3.6 **Council Tax Second Homes**
The Council Tax Long Term Empty and Second Homes Policy was amended by Committee in February 2024 to introduce a Council tax second homes premium of 100% from 1st April 2024, aligning with the 100% premium on long term empty properties.
- 3.7 In December 2023 there were one hundred and one second homes in Inverclyde, with minimal movement in this number since a second homes council tax discount of 10% was removed in 2017. The introduction of the 100% premium in April 2024 prompted enquiries from Council taxpayers and in eighteen cases, sufficient evidence was provided to determine the second home premium was not due. In eight cases the home was found to be the main residence of the liable party; a family member or friend is resident in five cases; three properties were occupied by people who reside in the property to work in Inverclyde, with their main home being elsewhere; and two owners went on to sell their property. Other second homeowners, no longer liable for the premium did not make an enquiry so the reason for the change in status from being a second home cannot be analysed. There are seventy-six second homes attracting the premium in March 2025.
- 3.8 The additional income from increasing the council tax premium on second homes is available to Councils, to use at their discretion. The policy was agreed based on £120,000 being collected, which allowed for an element of attrition, in line with the main policy aim. An additional £168,000 was billed in respect of the second home premium in 2024/25 with £166,000 being collected by 31st March 2025.

3.9 Council Tax online services

The Council tax online system for electronic bills (e.bills) and electronic forms (e.forms) launched in early February 2025. Users of the e.bill system which the new solution replaced were transferred across and following the promotion of the new solution between February and April 2025, the number of e.bill recipients increased from 1,705 to 3,408 (100% increase). The use of e.forms over the same period increased from 309 forms being completed on the previous solution to 1,058 forms (242% increase) on the new system. The use of e.forms and e.bill uptake will continue to be promoted to improve the customer user experience with the Service and to help address increasing postage costs. Electronic forms for non-domestic rates customers are scheduled to be launched in the coming months.

3.10 Council Tax Collection Rate

The level of Council Tax collected “in-year” in 2024/25 was 94.8% of Council tax billed, an improvement of 0.1% against performance in 2023/24. This is a good achievement considering a delay of six weeks in debt recovery action being instigated at the beginning of 2024/25 to allow new Council Tax Notices including the one-off Council tax credit to be issued. Unpaid prior years’ Council tax continues to be pursued with assistance from the Council’s debt recovery partner. The Debt Recovery Annual Report for Year Ended 31 March 2025 will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2025.

3.11 Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund provided 857 Community Care Grants totalling £676,078 and 1,514 Crisis Grants totalling £182,129 during 2024/25. The application approval rate was 81%, slightly higher than previous years. Expenditure above core Scottish Government allocation of £756,305, was met by ear marked reserves and Anti-Poverty funding totalling £219,781 plus a government in-year top-up notified in December 2024 of £373,000.

3.12 Committee agreed a supplementary one-off grant payment in February 2025 of £100 from the in-year top up to SWF crisis grant applicants when the applicant is approved for assistance with fuel costs. In total, 90 one-time fuel supplements were paid from 5th February until 31st March, with payments continuing in 2025/26.

3.13 The core allocation for 2025/26 has not changed and while expenditure is projected to exceed this amount, an earmarked reserve of £490,879, together with Anti-Poverty Funding of £75,000 for 2025/26 provides a total budget in 2025/26 of £1,322,184 which will contain costs.

3.14 Welfare Reforms

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has set out plans to complete the move to Universal Credit before the end of March 2026. Migration Notices to inform claimants that their current benefits are ending and to claim UC continue to be issued to households receiving income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (and ESA including housing benefit (HB)). This is the final cohort to migrate, with the last of the Notices scheduled to be issued in September 2025.

3.15 Support will continue to be delivered by DWP for customers moving to UC, including phone calls, and if needed, home visits to support the customer to claim. A complex case team will undertake additional checks where the customer cannot be contacted and aims to prevent any vulnerable customers from having their legacy benefit stopped before they move to UC.

3.16 The latest published statistics show 10,026 households in November 2024 representing 31.9% of Inverclyde’s working age households claim UC. In total there are 11,422 people on UC, and of these, 32.25% are employed.

- 3.17 Previous updates reported the Department for Work and Pensions has commenced strategic work to bring together the administration of pension credit and HB. The latest communication advises the earliest possible date for a first phase of reform for pension age benefits would be in late 2026. Officers will continue to monitor developments and report the impact on the delivery of HB for people of pension age.
- 3.18 **Citizens Advice – Supporting People with Council Tax Debt**
The Scottish Government recently announced £2.2 million funding until March 2026 for the Citizens Advice Bureau network to engage with Local Authorities across Scotland to support good practice in Council Tax debt collection through expansion of a new project – Supporting People with Council Tax Debt. The service was originally piloted across 9 Local Authorities in Scotland. Officers evaluated a proposal and agreed to collaborate with the East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) which will bring additional Money Advice capacity to Inverclyde through engagement with the Council and the CAB's partnership with the third sector. The project objectives are to prevent individuals from falling into Council Tax (CT) debt; provide support to those currently in CT debt; CT debt advice in more complex cases including Debt Arrangement Schemes (DAS), bankruptcy, and repossession. The project will commence on 2 June 2025.
- 3.19 **Insurance Fund Actuarial Review**
The Insurance Fund is the subject of an actuarial review every 3 years. The purpose of the review is to assess the financial position of the Fund and advise on the level of the annual contribution required to be made into the Fund based on current and projected claims and on any specific Local Authority or general issues that will or may affect the Fund.
- 3.20 The draft results of the Insurance Fund actuarial review have been received from the Council's broker. The report recommends a balance at 31 March 25 of approximately £1.9million compared to the projected closing balance of £3.774 million per the unaudited 2024/25 accounts. Council Services currently contribute £350,000 per year to the Fund to meet any "self insurance" costs. The contribution increases to £450,000 from 2025/26, rising to £550,000 from 2028/29. The report recommends future contributions of around £700,000.
- 3.21 At the December 2024 Financial Strategy, the Council agreed to end one of the insurance premium holidays from 1 April 2025. The latest Financial Strategy projects that the Fund balance will remain approximately £3.8million by 2033 after the second holiday ends in 2028. Officers propose that the second holiday payment of £100,000 is ended early at 31 March 2026 funded from the unallocated non pay inflation contingency resulting in contributions from services rising to £550,000 from 2026/27. This will result in a fund balance of approximately £4 million by 2033. As the Fund balance is slightly higher than the recommended level, but contributions are below the recommended level, then the level of contributions be reviewed again at the next actuarial review.
- 3.22 The Insurance Fund reflects the Council's estimated contribution to the Child Abuse Redress Scheme of £1.5 million and a contribution of £0.5 million from the HSCP in 2026/27 towards the Scottish Government managed Scheme.
- 3.23 **FMS Replacement System**
As part of the budget setting process 6 March 2025, the Council approved £1.2 million earmarked reserve to assist with the replacement of the current Financial Management System. During 2024, a 3 year extension was negotiated to March 2028 on the SLA allowing time to scope, procure and implement a replacement system.
- 3.24 Finance Services are currently exploring system availability and developing a strategy of implementation. Work is commencing on recruiting and developing the implementation team. A business case will be developed post summer period and updates provided to future Committees.

3.25 **2024/25 Annual Accounts Closure**

The draft annual accounts for 2024/25 are due for completion by the end of June and will be considered by the Audit Committee on 26th June.

3.26 Progress against External Audit Action Plans is reported regularly to the Audit Committee and where appropriate any actions will be reflected in the draft accounts. Specific actions which could impact on the accounts closure include:

- Heritage Asset Valuations – the valuer has been re-appointed for 2024/25 and is progressing the valuation of the 3rd and final tranche of the collections.
- IFRS16 – changes to reporting of leased assets has been implemented from April 2024. Work has been ongoing throughout the year to identify all relevant leases and these will be included in the 2024/25 annual accounts.
- Infrastructure Assets – changes to reporting of Infrastructure Assets (mainly Road Assets) have been delayed nationally and will not be reflected in the 2024/25 accounts.

Work is progressing well with the bulk of the internal processing having been completed during April/early May with further work being undertaken to allow the accounts to be drafted by mid-June and it is anticipated that the accounts will be complete by the deadline.

3.27 The External Audit Plan was presented to Audit Committee on 6th May and highlights the anticipated audit risks and the audit approach taken to examine those risks as well as further work to be undertaken around the wider scope and best value. Early planning work for the audit is underway however the bulk of the audit work will take place from July with the aim of completion by early September allowing the Annual Report and Audited Accounts to be presented to Full Council by the end of September.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 There are no specific proposals arising from this update.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

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

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no issues arising from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR issues arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic issues.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required and will be completed prior to the Committee
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/12/25/RB/KM
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712146
Subject:	Corporate Policy and Performance Update: March – June 2025		

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)

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

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Chief Executive	Report No:	PR/12/25/KM
Contact Officer:	Stuart Jamieson	Contact No:	01475 712146
Subject:	Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 - Annual Refresh and performance summary 2024/25		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is present the Committee with the refreshed Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan. The Plan contains new, or revised improvement, actions for 2025/26 that require approval.
- 1.3 The Committee received a comprehensive report, providing an update on the progress made in delivering the Committee Plan 2023/26, at its last meeting on 25 March 2025. For completeness, this report includes a summary of the overall progress that was achieved in delivering the Committee Plan at the end of year two (2024/25).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- Note the progress that has been made in delivering the Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan during 2024/25.
 - Approve the refreshed Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan, to be implemented in 2025/26.

Stuart Jamieson
Chief Executive

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Committee Delivery and Improvement Plans (referred to as Committee Plans) are a key component of the Council's refreshed strategic planning and performance management framework. The Committee Plan enables scrutiny of:
- Strategic activity within the Committee remit; and
 - How the Committee is helping to deliver the Council Plan outcomes.
- 3.2 The Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 was approved on 23 May 2023. Committee Plans have also been approved by the Environment and Regeneration Committee and the Education and Communities Committee.
- 3.3 Now entering the final year of its three-year term, the Committee Plan has been reviewed and refreshed to ensure that actions that continue to be priorities for the Directorate carry forward to the next planning year; actions that have been delivered are closed off and new opportunities, challenges and responsibilities are captured.
- 3.4 **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE PLAN 2023/26: YEAR END PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**
- 3.5 The Committee Plan 2023/26 contains an action plan with 11 high level actions, each underpinned by a number of sub-actions.
- 3.6 This Committee has previously considered two performance reports in relation to the delivery of the Policy and Resources Committee Plan in year two, the most recent of which was presented at the last meeting held on 25 March 2025. Details of the status of each action, i.e. complete, on track or slippage, along with a performance narrative was provided within that report. The latest KPI performance data was also provided.
- 3.7 A summary of the status of the 11 high level actions at the end of 2024/25 is provided below for the attention of the Committee.

Status at end March 2025	Fully complete	On track / ongoing	Slippage
	5	1	4

One action, relating to the refresh of governance documents, is due to commence in 2025/26.

Complete

Actions that are fully complete i.e. all the associated sub-actions were delivered by the end of year two are as follows:

- A governance, delivery and reporting framework for the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 has been established and implemented.
- Further work to embed the strategic planning and performance management framework (SPPMF), including a new Strategic Needs Assessment and a review of the SPPMF, was carried out during the year.
- A review of Community Councils was undertaken and the outcome reported to a meeting of Inverclyde Council on 10 April 2025.

- The Revenue Budget 2025/26 was developed and approved.
- A review of the Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy was carried out and new actions for 2025/26 identified.

Ongoing

The following action was originally scheduled for delivery beyond 2024/25. As it is ongoing, it has been rolled forward into the refreshed Committee Plan.

- Review of options for a replacement Finance system.

Slippage

Actions where completion of all sub-actions by the original due date was not achieved in 2024/25 are as follows:

- The review of the Conditions of Service, which was included within a wider action focusing on the People and Organisational Development Strategy.
- The upgrade to the Human Resources and Payroll system.
- Process updates relating to Human Resources, Organisational Development and Payroll.
- The completion of a Digital Maturity assessment to support the modernisation of the Council.

These actions have been carried forward into year three, with new deadlines set.

3.8 KPI performance 2024/25

The most recent performance data for all the Committee Plan KPIs is provided within the refreshed Plan. The Committee is asked to note that where a measure is part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, the publication of national data can be subject to a significant time lag, which in turn can have an impact on setting targets for the year ahead.

3.9 Measures where the year-end performance target was achieved (green status) include (n.b quarter four data is still being compiled for one measure noted below and status may therefore change):

- Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a percentage of annual budgeted net revenue (LGBF).
- Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream (LGBF KPI).
- Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure (LGBF KPI).
- Gender pay gap (LGBF KPI).
- The percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days.
- The percentage of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulation requests that were responded to within statutory timescales.
- The number of complaints received per 1,000 population.
- The Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (Socitm) accessibility score of the Council website (as at March 2025)
- Employee turnover for the year (*as at end of quarter 3*).

3.10 Performance for a small number of measures fell below target but remained within a 5% tolerance level (amber status). These are:

- The Council Tax in year collection level was very slightly below target.
- The total number of days lost due to sickness absence.

3.11 A number of KPIs have a red status, i.e. performance in the year fell 5% or more below target (n.b quarter four data is still being compiled for one measure noted below and red status may therefore change).

- Total useable reserves as a percentage of Council annual budgeted income (LGBF KPI, 2023).
- The percentage of the population with an active Community Council.
- Number of RIDDOR incidents (reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulation) per 100,000 employees.
- The number of data breaches notified to the Information Commissioner's Office.
- The number of corporate training courses attended (*as at end of quarter 3*).
- Percentage of transactions dealt with through the customer service centre portal that are digital.

3.12 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE PLAN ANNUAL REFRESH

3.13 The Committee Plans are subject to annual review to ensure that the improvement actions remain relevant and reflect any emerging challenges or legislation that will impact on the Directorate during the remaining term of the Plan.

3.14 Appendix 1 contains an 'Action Tracker' to provide the Committee with full oversight of the changes that have been made to the refreshed action plan. The refreshed Policy and Resources Committee Plan is attached as Appendix 2.

3.15 The focus of the Committee Plan continues to be on the areas of strategic importance that support the achievement of Council Plan 2023/28 outcomes. All actions and delivery timescales have been updated to reflect the current position as the Plan enters its final year. Performance in key areas will continue to be monitored and reported to the Committee.

3.16 In particular, the attention of the Committee is drawn to the inclusion of a new action which focuses on the delivery of transformation within the Council.

3.17 The Risk Register has also been reviewed and is included within the refreshed Committee Plan. Updates against the areas of highest risk will continue to be provided on a six-monthly basis.

3.18 The refreshed Plan includes details of Council policies that fall within the remit of this Committee and the date of the next planned review.

3.19 Progress in the delivery of the Committee Plan will continue to be reported to every second meeting of this Committee. The Committee will also continue to receive a number of annual reports on a range of thematic work related to its remit.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress that has been achieved in delivering the Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 in its second year.

- 4.2 The Committee is asked to approve the refreshed Committee Plan, which will be implemented in year three (2025/26).

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications associated with this report, whilst the key Committee risks are highlighted within the full Committee Plan 2023/26.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

5.5 Strategic

The Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 directly supports the Council Plan 2023/28 and is aligned to the delivery of the Council Plan outcomes.










6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.











Appendix 1: Delivery and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Action Tracker

Ref	Original Action	Overall status 31/03/25	Original key deliverables	Original Due Date	Revised due date	Annual Refresh 2024/25: Key points
CMTE/ PR001	A new Partnership Plan 2023/33 for the Inverclyde Alliance will be implemented, underpinned by an effective governance, delivery and reporting framework.	 Complete  Complete  Complete  Complete	<p>Development of the Partnership Action Plans and key performance indicators to support the delivery of the Partnership Plan.</p> <p>New/ refreshed delivery groups established, and regular progress reports provided to the Alliance Board.</p> <p>Publish an annual report on progress made against the Partnership Plan.</p> <p>Implement the new Locality Planning model, with updated local priorities and engagement processes in place.</p>	31/10/24 31/03/25 31/10/24 31/12/24	Complete Complete Complete Complete	<p>Complete. All Partnership Plan actions set for 2024/25 have been delivered.</p> <p>New actions have been developed for 2025/26 focusing on further embedding the governance, delivery and reporting framework.</p>
CMTE/ PR002	Further embed the new strategic planning and performance management arrangements to support the delivery of the Council Plan 2023/28.	 Complete  Complete  Complete	<p>Update the Inverclyde Strategic Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Development of Service Plans for each Head of Service for reporting year 2024/25.</p> <p>With the CMT conduct a review of the performance management arrangements introduced in 2023/24.</p>	30/09/24 30/06/24 30/09/24	Complete Complete Complete	<p>Complete. The SNA has been reported to the Alliance Board.</p> <p>The Service planning process is now well established and is now business as usual. This action been removed from the Committee Plan.</p> <p>This work has been carried out and reported to the P&R Committee in March. Actions arising from the SPPMF review have been developed for 2025/26.</p>
CMTE/ PR003	Support the development of the newly established Community Councils and monitor arrangements in those areas where no Community Council has been established.	 Complete  Complete	<p>Review developments of Community Council activity, within 12 months of the Community Council elections.</p> <p>Following the review, development of recommendations and report to full Council.</p>	31/03/25 31/03/25	Complete Complete	<p>Complete. A report on this matter was considered by the Inverclyde Council on 10 April 2025.</p>





Appendix 1: Delivery and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Action Tracker

Ref	Original Action	Overall status 31/03/25	Original key deliverables	Original Due Date	Revised due date	Annual Refresh 2024/25: Key points
CMTE/ PR004	Development of a Revenue Budget 2025/26	✓ Complete	Development of a Revenue Budget for 2025/26.	31/05/26	Complete	Complete. A new action is included in the refreshed Plan to reflect the requirement to develop a new budget for 2026/27.
CMTE/ PR005	Report options for the replacement of the current Finance System, due to become unsupported from 31 March 2028.	▶ Ongoing	Develop options for Committee to consider including estimated financial implications.	30/09/25	30/09/25	This is an ongoing action, no change to original due date. Additional milestones have been added to follow on from the options appraisal.
CMTE / PR006	Delivery of the Year 1 actions within the People and Organisational Development Strategy 2024/27.	✓ Complete	Deliver the Pride of Inverclyde Employee Awards.	30/06/24	Complete	Complete. The Employee Awards 2025, including HSCP awards, is included in the refreshed action plan.
		▶ Ongoing	Support the achievement of professional qualifications within the workforce and implement an improved approach to mandatory training courses.	31/03/25	31/03/26	This has been implemented but as an ongoing workstream, it will continue to feature in the refreshed action plan.
		✓ Complete	Review the performance appraisal process (Positive Conversations).	30/09/24	Complete	Complete. This has been removed from the action plan.
		✓ Complete	Support managers to improve the use of absence monitoring reporting.	30/06/24	Complete	Complete. A follow-on action relating to absence management has been added.
		▶ Ongoing	Implement the Mentoring Scheme and evaluate its impact.	31/03/25	31/12/25	Implementation and evaluation complete, the action has been rolled forward to include a review of arrangements.
		✓ Complete	Provide guidance on the implementation of new / updated policies.	31/03/25	Complete	Complete. This has been removed from the action plan.
		⚠ Slippage	Commence a review of the Conditions of Service and Pay and Grading	31/03/25	31/03/25	Slippage due to resource issues, action will be continued in the refreshed action plan with a new delivery date set.

Appendix 1: Delivery and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Action Tracker

Ref	Original Action	Overall status 31/03/25	Original key deliverables	Original Due Date	Revised due date	Annual Refresh 2024/25: Key points
			structure, including identification of implications.			
CMTE / PR007	Implement an upgrade to the Human Resources and Payroll system.	 Complete	Development of a project plan.	30/09/24	Complete	Complete. A new action has been added relating to communication plan.
		 Slippage	Implement upgrade and associated testing.	31/12/24	30/08/25	Slippage previously reported to Committee. New delivery date for the project 30/08/25.
		 Slippage	Develop training and user guides.	31/12/24	30/09/25	Delivery date change to reflect anticipated completion of rollout.
CMTE / PR008	Update and improve Human Resources, Organisational Development and Payroll processes	 Complete	Monitor the effectiveness of automatic of processes through Victoria Forms.	31/03/25	Complete	Complete. This action has been removed.
		 Slippage	Undertake process mapping and identify and implement related improvements.	31/03/25	31/03/26	Slippage has previously reported to Committee. New delivery date set.
		 Slippage	Maximise use of Talentlink system in relation to contracts.	31/12/24	31/03/26	As above.
CMTE / PR009	Continue to progress projects that support the modernisation of the Council.	 Complete	Report on the progress against the actions identified in the ICT and Digital strategies.	31/07/24	Complete	This action has been removed from the action plan.
		 Ongoing	Develop a Digital and Customer Service Strategy.	31/10/24	-	New approach to developing a Digital and Customer Services Strategy previously approved by Committee. Revised action in the Committee Plan 25/26 to reflect this.
		 Slippage	Carry out a Digital Maturity exercise to benchmark the Council's position against peer authorities.	31/03/25	30/11/26	This is an ongoing action following Council approval to fund the Digital Office.
		 Ongoing	Consider options to optimise use of Council buildings.	31/03/25	-	This is an ongoing action with reports to the Programme Board, CMT and the Environment and Regeneration Committee.

Appendix 1: Delivery and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Action Tracker

Ref	Original Action	Overall status 31/03/25	Original key deliverables	Original Due Date	Revised due date	Annual Refresh 2024/25: Key points
						As such, it will not be reported separately in the P&R Committee Plan.
CMTE / PR0010	Refresh the key Inverclyde Council governance documents.	 Not started	Renewal of the Financial Regulations.	31/03/26	31/03/26	Both actions were scheduled to be delivered by 2026 and will continue in the refreshed Committee Plan.
		 Not started	Renewal of the Standing Orders for contracts.	31/03/26	31/03/26	
CMTE / PR011	Review, prioritise and deliver key actions within the Communication and Engagement Strategy.	 Complete	Analyse performance against strategy.	30/06/24	Complete	Complete.
		 Complete	Review Strategy, identify priority actions for delivery in 2024/25 and progress delivery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of templates for Service use in graphic design • Confirm corporate approach to tourism. • Creation of basic dashboards and monitoring. 	31/03/25	Complete	Complete. New actions relating to the Communication and Engagement Strategy with a focus on social media protocol, tourism and a communications action plan have been added for 2025/26.

Policy and Resources

COMMITTEE DELIVERY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/26

ANNUAL REFRESH 2025/26

Policy and Resources Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26

In April 2023, Inverclyde Council committed to the delivery of a new, ambitious Council Plan 2023/28. The Council Plan established a number of priorities for the Council.

Theme 1: PEOPLE

- Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education;
- Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced;
- People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing;
- More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions; and
- Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported.

Theme 2: PLACE

- Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable
- Our strategic housing function is robust;
- Our economy and skills base are developed;
- We have a sufficient supply of business premises; and
- Our natural environment is protected.

Theme 3: PERFORMANCE

- High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money; and
- Our employees are supported and developed.

Annual Refresh 2025/26

This Committee Delivery and Improvement Plan 2023/26 was developed following an assessment of how the Services that report to the Policy and Resources Committee could support the delivery of Council Plan priorities and the achievement of Best Value. Now entering the final year of its three-year term, the Plan has been reviewed and refreshed to ensure that actions that continue to be priorities carry forward to the next planning year; actions that have been delivered are closed off and new opportunities, challenges and responsibilities are captured.

Overview

This Plan encompasses the Organisational Development, Policy and Communications Service, Finance Service and Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services which deliver the key functions of:

Organisational Development, Policy and Communications	Organisational Development, Human Resources, Employee Development, Corporate Health and Safety, Payroll, Workforce Planning, Corporate Communications, Corporate Policy, Performance Management, Community Planning, Corporate Equalities
Finance Service	Strategic Finance, Directorate Finance and Accountancy, Budgeting, Statutory Group Accounts, Creditors, Insurance, Treasury Management, Council Tax Services, Revenues, Debt Recovery, Housing Benefits, Discretionary Payments

Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services

Legal Service, Administration, Licensing, Litigation, Contracts & Conveyancing, Courts, Members Services and Support, Committee support, Community Council liaison, Election Management, Information Governance, Customer Services, Customer Contact Service, ICT Strategy, Operation and Support, Modernisation, Registration Services, Internal Audit, Risk Management

The Delivery and Improvement Plan sets out how the Council Plan priorities will be delivered via the implementation of the following workstreams:

Delivery and Improvement Plan

PEOPLE

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
1.	<u>Strategic Planning</u> Further embed the new strategic planning and performance management arrangements to support the delivery of the Council Plan 2023/28.	Deliver an Annual Briefing on the Council Plan 2023/28. Develop new ways to communicate and promote the Council Plan 2023/28 and Strategic Needs Assessment. Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications	31/10/25 31/03/26	The strategic planning framework is strengthened, with evidence of a strong 'Golden Thread', supporting the delivery of Council priorities.	All Council Plan outcomes

PLACE

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
2.	<u>Partnership Plan</u> Embed the Partnership Plan 2023/33 governance, delivery and reporting framework across the Alliance partners.	Review the Inverclyde Alliance reporting framework (following completion of a full cycle). Review and establish Partnership Plan KPIs. Review the Inverclyde Alliance Delivery Groups. Lead Officer: Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager	30/09/25 30/09/25 31/12/25	Partnership working brings renewed added value, and a governance and performance management framework is in place to support the delivery of partnership priorities and improved outcomes for our communities.	Our communities are thriving, growing and sustainable

PERFORMANCE

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
3.	<u>Budget</u> A Budget and Council Tax level for 2026/27 will be approved.	Development of a Revenue Budget for 2026/27 and Capital Programme for 2026/29 via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Strategy presented to Policy and Resources Committee. Development of savings Settlement due Approval of Council Budget Lead Officer: Chief Financial Officer	31/03/26 31/08/25 30/11/25 31/12/25 31/03/26	There is greater certainty around Council finances including Council tax income, allowing services to plan more effectively.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money
4.	<u>Replacement of FMS</u> Report options for the replacement of the current Finance System, due to become unsupported from 31.03.28.	Develop options for Committee to consider, including estimated financial implications. Award of contract Contract start Implementation complete Parallel run complete	30/09/25 31/03/26 31/03/26 30/07/27 31/03/28	The system meets current requirements and integrates with other key systems, delivering improved efficiency.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money

Appendix 2

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
		System is fully live Lead Officer: Chief Financial Officer	31/03/28		
5.	<p><u>People and Organisational Development Strategy (POD) 2024/27</u></p> <p>Delivery of the Year 2 actions within the People and Organisational Development Strategy 2024/27.</p>	<p>Focus on reducing sickness absence across the organisation by capturing the learning from the 'hot spot' exercise and rolling out best practice.</p> <p>Evaluate the impact of the new Mentoring Scheme and review future arrangements.</p> <p>Deliver the Employee Awards 2025 and work with HSCP to amalgamate employee awards from 2026</p> <p>Support the achievement of professional qualifications within the workforce and implement an improved approach to mandatory training courses.</p> <p>Continue to scope out the review of the Conditions of Service, including the potential impact of pay settlements and notice periods.</p> <p>Conduct an Employee Survey.</p> <p>Assess the impacts of hybrid working. (Annual Audit Action 2023/24)</p>	<p>31/03/26</p> <p>31/12/25</p> <p>31/12/25</p> <p>31/03/26</p> <p>31/03/26</p> <p>31/12/25</p> <p>30/06/25</p>	<p>Workforce planning and management of change is facilitated by the effective use of employees.</p> <p>Employees will be supported with improved skills and knowledge to deliver corporate initiatives.</p>	Our employees are supported and developed.

Appendix 2

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
		Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications			
6.	<u>HR and Payroll System</u> Implement an upgrade to the Human Resources and Payroll system.	Commence communications plan. Upgrade completed by provider, receipt of employee training and manuals and commence associated testing. Conduct parallel pay runs and complete implementation. Complete rollout of training and user guides across services. Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications	31/05/25 30/06/25 31/08/25 30/09/25	More efficient processes that result in improved customer service.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.
7.	<u>HR, OD& Payroll Processes</u> Update and improve Human Resources, Organisational Development and Payroll processes	Implement changes in response to requirements of Disclosure Scotland including promotion across services, changes to recruitment processes, updating information for prospective employees and recruiting managers and adoption of new recording systems. Undertake process mapping and identify and implement related improvements.	31/03/26 31/03/26	More efficient processes that result in improved customer service.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.

Appendix 2

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
		Review and improve our approach to contracts. Lead Officer: Head of OD, Policy and Communications	31/03/26		
8.	<u>Modernisation of the Council</u> Continue to progress projects that support the modernisation of the Council.	Delivery of the Digital and Customer Service Strategy phase 1 action plan. Carry out a Digital Maturity exercise to benchmark the Council's position against peer authorities. Assess the impact (time, cost and quality) of digital modernisation investment. <i>(Annual Audit action 2024/24)</i> Lead Officer: Chief Executive / Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services	31/03/25 31/03/26 30/09/25	Efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's services is improved along with improved customer/citizen experiences.	High quality and innovative services are provided giving value for money.
9.	<u>Governance Documents</u> Refresh the key Inverclyde Council governance documents.	Renewal of the Financial Regulations Review of Standing Orders for Contracts Lead Officer: Chief Financial Officer/ Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services	31/03/26 31/03/26	The Council can clearly demonstrate that it is operating in a transparent and accountable manner.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.

Appendix 2

What will be delivered?		How will this be delivered?	Due Date	What difference will it make?	Alignment to the Council Plan
10.	<u>Communication and Engagement Strategy</u> Review, prioritise and deliver key actions	Review and update the media and social media protocol. Carry out a social media audit and develop a new social media strategy. Support the development of a Tourism Strategy. Develop and implement a communications action plan based on committee and service improvement plans, identifying and prioritising communications activity. Lead Officer: Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager	30/09/25 31/03/26 31/03/26 30/09/25	A consistent approach is in place across the Council.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.
11.	<u>Transformation 2025/27 (NEW)</u> Plans for future service delivery are shaped by the national transformation agenda.	Review the Council's Delivering Differently programme. Establish a Transformation group to develop ideas and actions. Briefing for Elected Members on the Transformation programme. Identify opportunities for the organisation arising from the SOLACE local government transformation programme.	30/09/25 30/09/25 30/09/25 31/03/26	Challenges and pressures relating to the workforce, financial sustainability and sustainable service delivery challenges are reduced.	High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.

Policy and Resources Annual Report Schedule

The following reports will be submitted to Committee on an annual basis:

- Annual Report & Accounts
- Treasury Annual Report
- Governance of External Organisations
- Freedom of Information Annual Report
- Complaint Handling Annual Report
- RIPSAs Annual Report
- Data Protection Annual Report
- Workforce Information Activity Annual Report
- People & Organisational Development Annual Report
- Equality Mainstreaming Report 2025, Equality Outcomes and the Equal Pay Statement (every two years)

Policy and Resources: Policy & Strategy Review Register

The Policy and Strategy review register brings together all the policies and strategies due to be reviewed by Legal, Digital, Democratic and Customer Services; Organisational Development, Policy and Communications and the Finance Service over the period 2024/2026.

The table below shows the status of those policies and strategies that were scheduled for review in 2024 and the date of the next review.

2024

Name of Policy / Strategy	Lead Officer	Service Area	Status	Next review due:
People and Organisational Development Strategy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 26.03.24	March 2027
Treasury Policy Statement	Chief Financial Officer	Finance	Reported 26.03.24	March 2028
Discretionary Non-Domestic Rates Relief	Service Manager	Revenues and Benefits	Reported 04.06.24	June 2028
Code of Conduct (Employees)	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistleblowing)	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Dignity and Respect at Work Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Grievance Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Domestic Abuse Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Equality and Diversity	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Violence, Managing Aggression and Lone Working in the Workplace	Team Leader	Health & Safety	Reported 04.06.24	June 2029
Financial Strategy 2024/34	Chief Financial Officer	Finance	Reported 05.12.24	June 2025
Policy for the retention and disposal of documents and records, paper and electronic	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	Reported 25.03.25	March 2029

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Name of Policy / Strategy	Lead Officer	Service Area	Status	Next review due:
Short Term Lets Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Licensing)	Reported 28/11/24	When necessary
ICT Strategy	Service Manager	ICT & Customer Services	Interim strategy approved 18.11.24	These no longer sit as a separate Strategy but are part of the Digital & Customer Services Strategy.
Digital Strategy	Service Manager	ICT & Customer Services	Interim strategy approved 18.11.24	
Discipline Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.02.25	February 2030
Overpayment of Wages	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 19.11.24	November 2029
Recruitment & Selection Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 19.11.24	November 2029
Redeployment Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 17.09.24	September 2029
Relocation Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 19.11.24	November 2029
Supporting Employee Attendance Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 17.09.24	September 2029
Anti Fraud, Corruption and Irregularity Policy	Chief Internal Auditor	Internal Audit	Reported 07.01.25	January 2028
Sexual Entertainment Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Licensing)	Consultation extended until 11 April. The Policy will be considered by the GPB on 14 May 2025	
Unacceptable Actions Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	Reported 25.03.25	March 2030
Policy and Procedures for Authorisation of Covert Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Services (RIPSA)	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	Reported 19.11.24	November 2025
Petitions Criteria	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Committee Services)	Reported 25.03.25	March 2030
Licensing Board Gambling Policy Statement	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Licensing)	Reported 06.03.25	April 2028
Reservist Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	Reported 04.02.25	February 2030

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Name of Policy / Strategy	Lead Officer	Service Area	Status	Next review due:
Infection Control	Team Leader	Health & Safety	Reported 04.02.25	February 2030
First Aid	Team Leader	Health & Safety	Reported 19.11.24	November 2029
Moving and Handling	Team Leader	Health & Safety	Reported 04.02.25	February 2030
Workplace Transport and Occupational Road Risk	Team Leader	Health & Safety	Reported 19.11.24	November 2029

The table below shows the policies and strategies that are due for review in 2025.

2025

Name of Policy / Strategy	Lead Officer	Service Area	Date of next planned review
Pension & Retirement Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	November 2025
Voluntary Severance Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	November 2025
Construction Design and Management Regulations	Team Leader	Health & Safety	November 2025
Smoke Free Policy	Team Leader	Health & Safety	November 2025
Capital Strategy 2025/35, Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy 23/24-26/27	Chief Financial Officer	Finance	March 2025 (full Council April 2025)
Information Classification Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	March 2025
Financial Strategy	Chief Financial Officer	Finance	June 2025
Performance Management Framework	Service Manager	Corporate Policy,	September 2025

Name of Policy / Strategy	Lead Officer	Service Area	Date of next planned review
		Performance and Communications	
Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	November 2025

2026

The table below shows the policies and strategies that are due for review in 2026.

Name of Policy / Strategy	Lead Officer	Service Area	Date of next planned review
Discretionary Housing Payment	Service Manger	Revenues and Benefits	February 2026
Reserves Policy	Chief Financial Officer	Finance	April 2026
Data Protection Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	May 2026
Records Management Policy	Legal Services Manager	Legal (Information Governance)	August 2026
Flexible Working Policy	Service Manager	OD&HR	September 2026
Risk Management Strategy	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital and Customer Services	Legal (Information Governance)	November 2026

Corporate Debt Policy	Service Manger	Revenues and Benefits	December 2026
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Policy and Resources Key Performance Indicators

The performance of these key performance indicators will be monitored over the lifetime of the Plan. Depending on the data source, new performance data will be provided to the Committee within the performance reports as it becomes available. In the case of national data, this is likely to be annually, however service performance data will be presented to the Committee more frequently.






The latest performance data for reporting year 2024/25 is provided below where data is available. Where it is not yet available, the 'latest status' icon relates to performance against target achieved in most recent year.





Key Performance Measures	Performance				Latest status	Target 2025/26	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25				
Total useable reserves as a % of Council annual budgeted income (LGBF)	23.7%	17%	20.8%	Due November 2025		22%	2023/24 target = 27% Family group average = 24.9% National average = 23.9%.	Annual
Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of annual budgeted net revenue (LGBF)	2.3%	3.5%	2%	Due November 2025		1.75%	2023/24 target = 2% Family group average = 1.6% National average = 2.3%.	Annual
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (LGBF)	10.2%	9.7%	0.4%	Due November 2025		7.8%	2023/24 target = 9.5% Family group average = 4.1% National average = 5.8%.	Annual
Actual outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure	99.4%	98%	100.4%	Due November 2025		99.5%-100.5%	2023/24 target = 99.5% Family group average = 99.7% National average = 99.6%.	Annual
Gender pay gap (LGBF)	6.6%	4.4%	4.16%	Due Sept 2025		4%	2023/24 target = 6% Family Group: 2% National average: 2.5%	Annual
Percentage of the population with an active Community Council	62.95%	62.95%	84.72%	84.72%		100%	2024/25 target = 100% 2023/24 figure is based on 2022 population figure and is the	Annual

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Key Performance Measures	Performance				Latest status	Target 2025/26	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25				
							position following February 2024 Community Council elections.	
Number of RIDDOR incidents (Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations 2013) per 100,000 employees	281	290	422	501		442	* While a target of zero RIDDOR incidents is the aim, this can encourage nonreporting of incidents which can result in failure to meet our legal requirement to report.	Annual
Employee turnover	10.09%	11.6%	13.1%	11.1% (as at Q3)		12%	2024/25 target = 12% Data presented represents year to date up to end of quarter 3 and is subject to change.	Six monthly
Corporate training courses attended	211	549	575	357 (as at Q3)		600	2024/25 target = 500 Data presented represents year to date up to end of quarter 3 and is subject to change.	Six monthly
Number of properties in receipt of Empty Property Relief	-	187	240	241			These KPIs are both 'data only' as performance is influenced by wider economic conditions that are outwith the control of the Council.	Quarterly
Value (£) of Empty Property Relief	-	£303,665	£308,508	£500,125				Quarterly
Council Tax in year collection level	95.5%	95.9%	94.7%	94.8%*		95%	2024/25 target = 95% *Draft out-turn subject to audit	Quarterly
Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	95.5%	96.15%	96.08%	96.34%		95.5%	2024/25 target = 95.5%	Quarterly
Sickness absence (total number of FTE days lost)	8.3 days	11.1 days	11.3 days	9.14 days (as at Q3)		9 days	2024/25 target = 9 days	Quarterly

Appendix 2

Key Performance Measures	Performance				Latest status	Target 2025/26	Comment	Frequency of reporting
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25				
							Data presented represents year to date up to end of quarter 3 and is subject to change.	
Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (Socitm) accessibility score (Council website)	March 2022 90 (excellent)	March 2023 94 (excellent)	March 2024 95 (excellent)	March 2025 96.3 (Excellent)		95	2024/25 target = 95	Quarterly
% of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests that were responded to within statutory timescales	2021 80%	2022 91%	2023 93.9%	2024 93.8%		92%	2024 target = 92% Full year data is reported annually to P&R Committee	Quarterly
Number of complaints received per 1,000 population	4.1	4	3.7	3.6		4	2024 target = 4	Quarterly
The number of data breaches notified to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	3	2	1	3		2	2024/25 target = 2	Quarterly
Percentage of transactions dealt with through the Council's Customer Service Centre portal that are digital	2021 66%	2022 71%	2023 67%	2024 66%		2025 75%	2024 target = 75%	Quarterly

PI Status	
	Performance is adrift of target by 5% or more
	Performance is below target, but is within a set tolerance level (between 0%-5%)
	Performance is at target level or higher
	Performance is being monitored but no target has been set (data only PI)

Policy and Resources Risk Management

Risk management is an integral part of corporate governance and sound management. The effective identification, assessment and management of risk is key to helping Inverclyde Council be successful in delivering its objectives, whilst protecting the interests of their stakeholders.

The highest risks to the Committee were reviewed in April 2025 and are presented below:

Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Potential Causes	Potential Consequences	Impact	L'hood	Risk Score	Current mitigation	Future mitigation
Significant budgetary pressures	Chief Financial Officer	There is a financial risk that 2025/26 will be challenging for the Committee to remain within its Revenue Budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Government Financial Settlements not keeping pace with inflation or demographic pressures Ring Fencing Legislative and demographic pressures Real term reductions in Capital grant whilst assets require significant investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service reductions Potential for compulsory redundancies Impact on delivery of key projects Council strategic priorities not delivered 	4	4	16	10 year financial strategy	
								Annual refresh of savings options and workstreams	
								Monitoring and reporting of Treasury / Capital Management strategy	
								Budget setting and monitoring and in service budget management	
								Debt collection policies	
								Corporate Asset Management Strategy	
								CMT review of savings delivery and key financial data	
								Embedded budget process with Trades Unions	
								Sharing of best practice with Directors of Finance section	

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Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Potential Causes	Potential Consequences	Impact	L'hood	Risk Score	Current mitigation	Future mitigation
Inappropriately resourced or resilient workforce	Head of OD, Policy and Communications	The risk is that there is a failure to ensure there is an appropriate resourced and resilient workforce in place to meet future organisational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skillsset availability - smaller pool to draw from with national shortages in some professions e.g. planning officers, environmental health• Lack of upskilling and development of workforce, particularly with specific skill sets where there are identified gaps• Aging workforce• Pay disparity between other local authorities• Perception and attractiveness of working for the council and location fails to attract new recruits• Expectations of terms and conditions, particularly from candidates moving from the private sector fail to attract new staff• Competition for candidates where preferred candidate accepts a different post• Inconsistent approach to succession planning• Increasing sickness absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single points of dependency or failure within workforce• Capacity stretch on existing workforce• Disengagement, morale issues with existing workforce• Impact on quality or continuity of service delivery• Missed regulatory or reporting deadlines• Lack of capacity to develop or improve a new idea / project• Reputational impact	4	4	16	Flexible working policy	Conditions of Service & Pay & Grading Review
								Accessible platforms used to advertise roles	
								Additional promotion and recruitment activities used for advertising certain roles	
								Use of modern apprenticeship and graduate training schemes	
								Disability Confident Scheme	
								Positive Conversations with staff to identify aspirations and training needs	
								External training opportunities through local college	
								Inhouse training opportunities	
								Opportunities for paid professional qualifications	
								Succession and workforce planning	
								Increased access to absence monitoring information	
								Investment in employee wellbeing and engagement	
								Armed Forces Covenant	
People and Organisational Development Strategy									

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Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Potential Causes	Potential Consequences	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Score	Current mitigation	Future mitigation
								Employee benefits	
								Refreshed suite of HR policies and procedures	
Major partner or supplier failure	Director of Environment and Regeneration	The risk is that external factors outwith the control of the Council impact on the Council's ability to deliver services / planned programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor selection process Poor quality or small pool of suppliers / partner Services provided are ceased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on quality and/or resilience of service delivery Financial impact to source new or more expensive options Reputational impact 	3	3	9	Tender process Major partnership board presence Regular reporting Financial governance reviews Contract Strategy	

Monitoring and Reporting

Inverclyde Council is committed to ensuring that accountability, transparency and openness is embedded throughout the organisation and in our public performance reporting.

Progress on the delivery of this Plan is monitored using the Council's performance management system, Ideagen Risk, which monitors Actions, KPIs and Risks. Progress reports will continue to be presented to every second Committee meeting for scrutiny and published on the Council's website.

These reports and a range of other performance information is published here:
<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/performance>

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Head of Organisational Development (OD), Policy and Communications	Report No:	PR/14/25/MR/KB
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	07385434459
Subject:	Impact of Hybrid Working on Inverclyde Council Service Quality and Outcomes		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the headline results from the assessment of the impact of hybrid working on Inverclyde Council service quality and outcomes which was carried out by the Improvement Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the main findings of the assessment of the impact of hybrid working on Council service quality and outcomes.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes that the findings of the assessment will be taken into account during the review of the Council's Flexible Working Policy and related procedures which is scheduled to take place next year.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee agrees to consider the updated Flexible Working Policy in 2026.

Morna Rae
Head of OD, Policy and Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24 October 2024, Inverclyde Council considered a report entitled *2023/24 Annual Audit Report and Best Value Thematic Report to Elected Members and the Controller of Audit*. The document included a reference to hybrid working, together with the recommendation that an assessment is conducted on the impact of the new flexible working arrangements with the aim of achieving greater insight into the achievement of the objectives of its introduction. It was further recommended that consideration should be given to amending the related policy and procedure to reflect instances when staff may wish to temporarily vary their work location. The latter is covered elsewhere on the meeting agenda.
- 3.2 In response to Audit Scotland's recommendations, it was agreed to conduct such an assessment and report the results to the Policy and Resources Committee by June 2025; this report fulfils that remit. A Briefing for the Elected Members on the contents of this report was arranged for 3 June 2025.
- 3.3 Hybrid working means that people typically split their time between working in an office or at another Council building and working remotely (usually at home). Approximately 20% of roles across the Council are suitable to work on a hybrid basis (i.e. around 800 posts), and not all of these postholders actually undertake hybrid working on a regular basis. The significant majority of Council roles are either mobile or wholly based within Council premises such as a school, depot or office.
- 3.4 The Council piloted a Hybrid Strategy in Spring 2022. In 2023, it was noted that the results of a review of the Strategy were positive and it was agreed that it should be incorporated into the Council's Flexible Working Policy. The updated Policy – which aims to support employee recruitment and retention at the Council - was approved at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 September 2023.
- 3.5 Methodology
- 3.6 A Project Scope was devised for the assessment and the Council worked with the Improvement Service to deliver the Project's key objectives. The Improvement Service prepared a report on their findings and presented it to the Corporate Management Team on 7 May 2025.
- 3.7 Hybrid working at Scottish Local Authorities
- 3.8 The Improvement Service undertook analysis of hybrid working at other Councils with the following key points emerging:
- hybrid working is not contractually agreed
 - the number of staff working in this way differs from Council to Council
 - the number of days worked remotely and in office locations varies
 - the processes through which permission is sought to work in a hybrid way, and the factors influencing whether or not it is granted, vary considerably from area to area.
- 3.9 Analysis of Audit Scotland Reports on hybrid working
- 3.10 An analysis was conducted of a selection of Audit Scotland Reports on hybrid working and evidence considered in the Reports' Case Studies, the results of which identified the benefits and challenges of hybrid working.

3.11 However, it should be noted that there are specific challenges for local government - and the wider public sector - regarding hybrid working. Because of the broad range of services provided by Councils, many roles cannot accommodate hybrid working. This can create a perception of a two-tier workforce i.e. those who can work from home and those whose jobs require them to attend the workplace every day.

3.12 In general terms, the positive aspects to offering hybrid working as an option for current and prospective Local Authority employees noted by the Improvement Service include:

- increased potential for recruiting and retaining staff;
- improvements to staff wellbeing and higher morale;
- increased productivity;
- cost savings for Councils via reduced costs and the provision of physical workspace;
- cost savings for staff via commuting costs;
- supporting climate change mitigation by reducing Councils' carbon emissions (including, for example, those associated with heating and energy);
- improved perception of Councils as responsible employers by current and potential staff; and
- reduced sickness absence.

3.13 In contrast, as well as issues with perceptions of inequality, as mentioned at paragraph 3.11, challenges may include:

- maintaining communication and team working;
- social isolation;
- difficulty in monitoring performance;
- ensuring a good work-life balance; and
- reduced opportunities for development, peer mentoring and support.

3.14 Employee Survey

3.15 Staff groups from a cross section of the Council were invited to complete a questionnaire, the aim of which was to assess the impact of, and approach to, hybrid working at Inverclyde Council from an employee and Team Leader/Manager perspective.

3.16 Council Services were selected because the only – or major – change in the way the Service is delivered has been to allow staff to access hybrid working. In contrast - and to factor in more general trends that may occur in relation to performance levels – two other Council Services were chosen: one in which there is no hybrid working and another in which there have been several changes, of which the introduction of hybrid working is one.

3.17 The survey opened on 7 April 2025 and closed on 22 April 2025. It was issued to 272 individuals. 198 responses were received, this reflects a response rate of 73% which is very good for a questionnaire of this kind. While not directly comparable, the response rates to the Council-wide Employee Surveys carried out in 2022 and 2018 were 42% and 32% respectively.

3.18 We introduced the Survey by reminding staff that the Covid-19 pandemic affected every organisation, large and small, and made us all re-think how we live and work. Beginning in March 2020, lockdown placed restrictions on non-essential journeys, while physical distancing measures were introduced with the aim of slowing the spread of the virus. This resulted in many Council employees working from home, some of whom had not done so before the pandemic.

3.19 The first question asked staff to describe their work situation with Inverclyde Council, both prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and at present. Unsurprisingly, the work locations of staff have

changed since the pandemic. Before 2020, a very limited number of employees worked from home, with just over two thirds (68%) (134 respondents) indicating that their work location was Council premises with only 3% (6 individuals) working between home and Council premises. The remainder did not work for the Council at that time, or reported predominantly working outdoors/in the community.

- 3.20 In contrast, in 2025, 40% of respondents report that they work on a hybrid basis. Of the individuals who participated in the survey this represents 80 individuals.

	%
• I split my time fairly evenly between home and an office/work location	21
• I work in an office/school	20
• I work occasionally from home but mostly in an office work/location	19.

- 3.21 When asked about their experience of working from home, two third of respondents (66%) said it was very positive or positive. In contrast, just 5% of staff said their experience of working from home was negative. The remainder chose the 'Not applicable' or 'Neutral' option in response to this question.

- 3.22 In terms of the benefits of working from home, the top three responses were:

	%
• A quieter environment – no office distractions	59
• I do not have to use time to travel to and from the workplace	55
• Better work-life balance	52.

- 3.23 In contrast, when asked about the challenges of working from home, the top four rated responses were:

	%
• Internet connectivity or other IT issues	62
• Social isolation	20
• Less physically active than in the workplace	15
• Heating and energy costs at home during the day	15.

- 3.24 When asked about the impact hybrid working had on service delivery, 39% of staff (77 individuals) thought it had improved, the reasons for which were increased productivity and staff morale. Respondents also said that working from home improves concentration, supports quicker task completion, and improves communication among staff. The effective use of technology in maintaining both service standard and meeting demands was also highlighted by respondents.

- 3.25 Among the 79 individuals (40% of respondents) who indicated that hybrid working had no impact on service delivery, there was consensus that staff could have positive relationships with Service Users and meet deadlines effectively, regardless of their work location.

- 3.26 Less than a fifth (17%) of staff (34 individuals) said they thought service delivery had declined during the period that hybrid working has increased. This is within the context of reduced resources and post-pandemic changes in community-based provision, and is not noted as being solely or directly attributable to hybrid working.

- 3.27 We then asked staff how often they had communication with their Line Manager regarding their workload and welfare, and with colleagues in their Team/Section; the responses were:

	Line Manager	Team/Section
	%	%
Daily	46	63
Weekly	30	23
Less often	22	11
No communication	2.	2.

- 3.28 The next question asked how motivated and productive staff felt they were, both at home and in the office (or other location). The results were positive: 89% of respondents are extremely or very motivated and productive at home, while more than two thirds (69%) of staff said they are extremely or very motivated and productive in the office.
- 3.29 Awareness of the Council's Flexible Working Policy was very high, with 93% of respondents (184 individuals) saying they had heard of it.
- 3.30 Just under three quarters of respondents (74%) who do not have currently have the option to work on a hybrid basis, would like to do so. This equates to approximately 87 individuals out of those surveyed..
- 3.31 When asked about the impact of hybrid working on recruitment and retention, slightly more than two-fifths (43%) of respondents said they would consider leaving the Council if they were not able to work remotely, while fractionally more (45%) of fairly new employees (i.e. who joined the Council within the last 2-3 years) indicated that the option to work flexibly was something that had encouraged them to apply.
- 3.32 The penultimate part of the Survey comprised a number of statements, together with a request that respondents indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each one, the results were:

	Strongly Agree or Agree
	%
I have adjusted well to my hybrid working pattern	86
I feel supported by my Line Manager while working remotely	86
I feel able to pay attention to my health and wellbeing while working remotely	87
I know how to access support for my wellbeing, if required, while working remotely	85.

- 3.33 Team Leaders and Managers were then asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with a number of statements; the results were:

	Strongly Agree or Agree
	%
I feel able to pay attention to my staff's health and wellbeing	78
I know how to help my staff access support for their wellbeing, if required	78
I have access to resources that enable me to maintain a positive Team culture for staff who are working remotely	71.

3.34 Service commentary

- 3.35 The results of the Employee Survey suggest that staff feel very positive about hybrid working and are experiencing benefits from being able to work this way. There is evidence that the option offers a better work life balance. There does not appear to be any material impact on service delivery. Hybrid working was also cited as a positive factor in the recruitment and retention of Council staff.
- 3.36 It is recognised that not all employees are able to work on a hybrid basis, the service delivery implications of some frontline services make this impossible. However there are other flexible working options beyond hybrid working that could be applicable to these employees which could be promoted. We should also ensure that the principles that underpin hybrid working are applied consistently across all teams.
- 3.37 While respondents noted some challenges in relation to IT setup to enable remote working it should be recognised that significant developments have been made over a short period to facilitate hybrid working. In 2000 the Council's IT setup provided a limited and strictly controlled opportunity for remote working, however that significantly changed during the pandemic with a rapid deployment of laptop devices, an increase in the number of VPN licences and the implementation of online meeting and communication tools. Further improvements will be progressed through phase 1 of the Digital and Customer Service Strategy including the systems and infrastructure review.
- 3.38 Team Leaders and Managers were generally positive about the benefits of hybrid working. They suggested that more support and information on hybrid working would be helpful, particularly for Teams with mixed working arrangements. Consideration will be given to provide additional supporting materials and training for managers who manage hybrid employees.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the findings of the assessment of the impact of hybrid working and agrees to consider the updated Flexible Working Policy and related procedures in 2026.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

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

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/(Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Not applicable					

5.3 HR

The matters referred to in this report are of relevance to the following Theme in the People and OD Strategy 2024/27:

Theme 3:

- Employer of choice - Continuous improvement.

5.4 Strategic

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

Theme 3: Performance

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

6.0 CONSULTATION

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

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy and Resource Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Chief Executive	Report No:	PR/16/25/SJ/MR
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712146
Subject:	Chief Financial Officer Recruitment		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting

1.2 Recruitment activity in relation to the role of Chief Financial Officer has not proven successful in the appointment of a permanent postholder. The purpose of this report is to propose the award of a market supplement to enhance the role of the Chief Financial Officer, and for a further recruitment exercise to take place.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- notes the work to date in relation to the recruitment of a Chief Financial Officer;
- agrees that a market supplement should be paid as a temporary allowance to the role; and
- notes that a further recruitment exercise will be undertaken.

Stuart Jamieson
Chief Executive

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Following the intimation of the retiral of the Chief Financial Officer recruitment activity has been progressed, however following interviews no appointment has been made. An interim Chief Financial Officer has been appointed pending the appointment of a permanent postholder.
- 3.2 There has been consideration of the options to secure permanent coverage of this key role and it is proposed that a market supplement is added to this post. Market supplements are used by other local authorities and the key features of which are:
- Temporary wage enhancement to bring salary closer to the going rate in the market
 - The grade of the post will not change
 - There is a governance process and sign off for each post
 - To ensure compliance with the Equal Pay Act, market supplements will be time limited and the continued need for the supplement normally reviewed annually. A market supplement can be withdrawn or increased/decreased if a review indicates that current evidence does not support the supplement continuing, or its continuation at the same level
 - Where it is identified that the supplement is no longer appropriate, or it is to be increased/reduced, the employee(s) in the relevant posts will be entitled to 3 months notice of the cessation of the allowance or its increase/reduction
 - Market supplements form part of an employee's pay and will be superannuable
 - A business case is required setting out the steps taken to try and fill the post previously and outlining the going rates elsewhere
- 3.3 The current salary for the Chief Financial Officer post is £104,801 (including statutory role allowance). Benchmarking has been undertaken with other local authorities. Whilst there are limited direct comparators due to the variety of remits that Chief Financial Officers undertake there is evidence that other local authority areas pay a higher rate for a similar role. Based on this research it is proposed that a market supplement is added to the Inverclyde Chief Financial Officer post which would increase the salary to £113,000. This is suggested as a proportionate increase which would bring the Inverclyde post salary level closer to other areas with a similar post. This would include the salary plus allowance for undertaking a statutory post, as well as the market supplement. As Inverclyde Council does not have an existing Market Supplement Policy and this is not specified within the Scheme of Delegation for Officers then Committee approval is required.
- 3.4 Following approval of the market supplement a further recruitment exercise will be undertaken. There will be consideration of an appropriate recruitment agency who can support this work, and additional promotion of the opportunity will be undertaken.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- notes the work to date in relation to the recruitment of a Chief Financial Officer;
 - agrees that a market supplement should be paid as a temporary allowance to the role; and
 - notes that a further recruitment exercise will be undertaken.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

There will be one off costs incurred in relation to the services of a recruitment agency and other promotional activity. These costs will be confirmed following procurement processes. These will be contained within the Project Resource EMR.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
EMR	Project Resource	2025/26	TBC		Balance £29k available in reserve

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

There would be an annual additional costs in relation to the increased salary.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Finance	Employee Costs	2025/26	10k	N/A	Will increase to £11.5k from 2026/27 for SA uplift Funded from the senior officer capacity budget (£190k unallocated)

5.3 Legal/Risk

To ensure compliance with the Equal Pay Act, market supplements will be time limited and the continued need for the supplement normally reviewed annually. A market supplement can be withdrawn or increased/decreased if a review indicates that current evidence does not support the supplement continuing, or its continuation at the same level.

5.4 Human Resources

The HR implications are outlined within the body of the report.

5.5 Strategic

This proposal supports the delivery of the following outcomes within the Council Plan:

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

- Our employees are supported and developed

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required and will be made available on the Council website: https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments
	NO – will be completed as required for specific topics.

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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 There has been consultation with trade unions and external legal advice obtained on the equal pay implications.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities and OD	Report No:	PR/15/25/RB/TM
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	Anti-Poverty Fund: Free Playschemes 2025-2027		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to request funding from the Council's Anti-poverty fund to extend the free summer playschemes for 2025 – 2027.
- 1.3 The Council has operated free summer playschemes since 2023 in response to the cost of living crisis, through the budget process and also through anti-poverty funding. The summer playschemes were very successful over several years while they were subsidised but have seen an increase in their popularity since the Council made them free of charge.
- 1.4 The Council has, as part of its 2025/26 budget process, set aside funding for additional support needs, including summer provision, and therefore is not being considered as part of this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- agrees to an allocation of up to £60k from the anti-poverty ear-marked reserve to ensure that playschemes remain free for families for the summers of 2025, 2026 and 2027.

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

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council has, for several years, provided subsidised funding of £75k per year so that families could access Inverclyde Leisure and Community Centre managed summer playschemes at a low cost.
- 3.2 Since 2023 and in response to a national cost of living crisis, the Council provided £35k of additional funding as part of the budget process in order that the playschemes could be accessed for free. This anti-poverty measure was extremely popular with families and resulted in greatly increased attendance, representing an increase in attendances of almost 17% in 2024.
- 3.3 The increase in demand for places also exceeded the budget available in 2024, with the £15k budget pressure being able to be met by the Communities Service for that year only.
- 3.4 It is now estimated that the cost of providing free playschemes requires additional funding of up to £20k per year.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to an allocation of up to £60k from the anti-poverty ear-marked reserve to ensure that playschemes remain free for families for the summers of 2025, 2026 and 2027. The increased uptake of playschemes shows that the activities are valued by the communities and addresses the cost of living pressure for families.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti Poverty Fund Earmarked Reserve	Playschemes	2025/26 – 2027/28	£60,000		Up to £60k over a three year period.

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

This fits in with the Strategic objective to ensure that our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: This report asks to continue a policy rather than to introduce a new one

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 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 – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Head of OD, Policy and Communications	Report No:	PR/11/25/RB/KM
Contact Officer:	Rhoda Braddick	Contact No:	01475 712146
Subject:	Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2023/24		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with details of Inverclyde Council's Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) performance in 2023/24. The key messages from the LGBF National Benchmarking Overview Report 2023/24 are also summarised for the Committee.
- 1.3 Performance data for 2023/24 is provided for a total of 94 measures (excluding housing). Appendix 1 presents information on Inverclyde Council's performance by LGBF theme. 59 (63%) of the 94 measures have a performance ranking that places Inverclyde in the top half of all Councils in Scotland.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- Consider Inverclyde Council's LGBF performance 2023/24, details of which are provided in the appendix.

Morna Rae
Head of OD, Policy and Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) *Improving Local Government* initiative was developed to:
- support SOLACE to drive improvement in local government benchmarking.
 - develop a comparative performance support framework for Scottish local authorities.
 - support Councils to target transformational change in areas of greatest impact: efficiency, costs, productivity and outcomes; and
 - focus on the big-ticket areas of spend, plus corporate services.
- 3.2 This led to the creation of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF), which brings together a wide range of information about how all Scottish Councils perform in delivering services to local communities.
- 3.3 A new approach to reporting the LGBF was introduced in spring 2023, with a move to an online dashboard presenting data and analysis for each indicator at a Council, family group and Scotland level. One advantage of the dashboard is that new data is published throughout the year, providing Councils with benchmarking information in a timelier manner. There is however still a data lag in the national publication of a large number of LGBF measures.
- 3.4 This Committee previously considered a report on Inverclyde Council's LGBF performance 2023/24 at its meeting on 19 November 2024. At that point, new data was available for 37 measures within the framework. This report provides the Committee with details of Inverclyde Council's performance for all LGBF measures published as at the end of March 2025.
- 3.5 Each Committee Plan also contains LGBF KPIs of relevance to that Committee and benchmarking performance information has been included within the performance reports presented throughout the year.

3.6 NATIONAL BENCHMARKING OVERVIEW REPORT 2023/24

- 3.7 A national LGBF report is published each year and sets out the views of SOLACE, COSLA and the Improvement Service on how Councils are performing and the pressures they face. The 2023/24 report contains the following key messages:

- **Funding pressures:** In real terms, total Scottish Government revenue funding for councils has decreased by 1.8% in 2023/24. Local government has suffered from a decade of underfunding for core and existing services, with funding levels not keeping pace with increased demand, growing need and rising cost pressures.
- **Growing demand:** Ageing populations, along with rising costs are leading to increased demand for services, particularly in statutory services like social care and housing. The cost-of-living crisis has further increased demand for council services particularly by the most vulnerable in society. Communities are experiencing increasing poverty and financial hardship, at a time when councils have reducing capacity to support them.

Further pressures are evident in the increasing rates of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in children and young people recorded in recent years. There has been a 41% growth in the number of pupils in need of additional support for learning since 2017-18.

- **Workforce pressures:** Councils face multi-faceted workforce capacity pressures including an ageing workforce, increased service demand, skills gaps, and recruitment

and retention difficulties which are impacting on organisational capacity and resilience. At a time of increasing service demands, additional workforce capacity issues have compounded and increased the scale of challenges. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that LGBF data continues to record increases in staff absence, particularly for reasons of stress, mental health and fatigue. In 2023/24, council staff absence levels reached the highest level ever reported.

- **Adult Social Care Sector:** Councils and their partners face significantly growing social care demands largely due to supporting the increasingly complex needs of people with disabilities and an ageing population. While adult social care is an area of expenditure growth, this is not keeping pace with demographic demands, and financial pressures from rising inflation, pay uplifts and Covid-19 legacy costs are making it difficult to sustain services at their current level. Being able to meet statutory service delivery let alone improving outcomes and meeting public expectations is becoming increasingly challenging across the social care sector.
- **Local Government financial sustainability and spending decisions:** There is significantly limited capacity for councils to manage and mitigate ongoing financial pressures, with financial resilience tested because of funding constraints and ring-fencing. To bridge the growing budget gap, councils are relying increasingly on recurring savings, increases to Council Tax, and the use of reserves.
- **Overall local government performance:** The evidence that local government performance improvement has slowed in recent years is to be expected. The long-term picture remains positive, with 68% of performance indicators within the LGBF showing improvement since the base year. In recent years however, year on year trends show a slowing in this improvement, and an increase in the number of performance indicators which are now declining. In the last two years, the rate of decline has overtaken the rate of improvement (45% compared to 39% respectively). If the current trend continues, the improvements and progress that has been achieved thus far, could potentially be lost and council service performance may start to decline over the longer-term.
- **Sector-led improvement:** Local government is taking clear pro-active steps to mitigate the effects of these challenges. To ensure the ongoing sustainability of services, local government has committed to a significant programme of sector led performance improvement and transformation. The Accounts Commission has emphasised that this burden of transformational change should not fall on local authorities alone given the need for wider public service reform.

3.8 INVERCLYDE COUNCIL'S LGBF PERFORMANCE 2023/24

- 3.9 The most recent LGBF refresh was carried out at the end of March 2025. At that point, new benchmarking data was available for a total of 94 of the 102 measures within the framework (excluding housing).
- 3.10 Inverclyde Council's LGBF performance data is presented by LGBF theme in Appendix 1. Benchmarking data for the family group and Scottish averages is also provided along with the national ranking. It is important to monitor performance over time as a measure can rank in a lower quartile, yet performance can be improving and vice versa.
- 3.11 Inverclyde's LGBF performance should be considered in the context of local pressures which mirror the key national messages in paragraph 3.7. This includes reduced financial resources to meet the needs of an ageing population; the cost-of-living crisis disproportionately affecting those

in our communities already experiencing high levels of poverty and deprivation and health outcomes that were already poorer than the Scottish average prior to the pandemic.

3.12 Of the 94 measures presented within this report:

- 32 (34%) measures have a ranking that falls in quartile one (1-8).
- 27 (29%) measures have a ranking that falls in quartile two (9-16).
- 19 (20%) measures have a ranking that falls in quartile three (17-24).
- 16 (17%) measures have a ranking that falls in quartile four (25-32).

In 2023/24, 63% of measures ranked in quartiles one and two combined, in comparison to 60% in 2022/23.

3.13 Performance changes between 2022/23 and 2023/24

When comparing the annual change in performance between 2022/23 and 2023/24:

- 52 measures showed improved performance (55%)
- 41 measures declined in performance (44%)
- There was no change in one measure (1%)

The performance analysis above refers to measures where lower costs have been achieved, or there is improved efficiency or increased satisfaction levels, as opposed to an improvement in national ranking. A Council's LGBF ranking can decrease despite performance improving or staying the same, due to other Councils performance improving at a greater rate in the same period.

3.14 With regard to public satisfaction measures, the Committee is asked to note that the National Benchmarking Overview Report 2023/24 highlights a national decline in levels of satisfaction with Council services amongst the public. This is true for all service areas, except for parks and open spaces, and more recently, refuse collection. Public expectations have not reduced despite the reduction in local government resources and increased demand due to demographic and other changes.

3.15 It should also be remembered when reviewing the satisfaction data that these trends are taken from the Scottish Household Survey and relate to satisfaction of the public at large, rather than for service users. Satisfaction rates for service users tend to be consistently higher than those reported by the general population.

3.16 Paragraphs 3.17 to 3.23 highlight performance changes of note, with the commentary focusing on the measures that have not previously been reported to this Committee.

3.17 **Children's Services**

The cost per primary and secondary school pupil decreased compared to the previous year, whilst the cost per per-school education place increased slightly. Inverclyde had the fourth highest cost per pre-school education place in Scotland.

The percentage of P1, P4 and P7 (combined) achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy improved slightly from 2022/23, however there was a slight decrease in numeracy. Literacy and numeracy performance remained higher than both the Scottish and family group average.

The percentage of funded early years which is graded good or better improved, rising from 93.5% in 2022/23 to 96.9% in 2023/24, moving Inverclyde's ranking up from 9 to 2.

The overall average pupil tariff score decreased slightly from 922 to 866 due to a decrease in average tariff score in quintiles one, four and five. There was however an increase in the average total tariff score however in quintile two and quintile three.

There was a narrowing in both the literacy and numeracy attainment gap (P1, P4 and P7 combined) between 2022/23 and 2023/24, resulting in improved national rankings, moving from 23 to 11 for literacy and from 11 to 8 for numeracy.

Data on the percentage of adults satisfied with schools shows a further decrease in local satisfaction levels, falling from 73.7% (2020/23) to 67.7 (2021/24). This is the first time that satisfaction levels with local schools in Inverclyde has fallen below the national average.

There was a slight improvement of 0.3% in school attendance rates (per 100 pupils), 90.6% compared to 90.3% in 2022/23. Inverclyde's school attendance rate was higher than the Scottish and family group average, ranking Inverclyde in the top quartile.

The school exclusion rate for children that are looked after (per 1,000) pupils is published in the LGBF every two years. Due to a time lag in the publication of this data, the latest reporting year in 2022/23. There was an increase in the school exclusion rate of looked after pupils (per 1,000 pupils) between 2020/21 and 2022/23, rising from 45.7 to 77.9. Inverclyde's national ranking was 19.

3.18 Corporate Services and Corporate Assets

Details of Inverclyde's performance for all but one of the Corporate Services and Corporate Asset measures was previously considered by this Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2024. Data for one measure, 'Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure' was not available at that time. There has been a small decrease in the percentage of total gross expenditure spent on support services, falling from 3.3% to 2.9%, which is lower than both the national and family group average and moved Inverclyde's national ranking from nine to four.

3.19 Adult Social Work

Home care costs per hour for people aged 65 and over in Inverclyde decreased slightly from £50.75 in 2022/23 to £50.23 in 2023/24. Despite lower costs, Inverclyde's national ranking moved from 27 to 28.

There was an increase in SDS spend on adults (as a percentage of the total adult social work spend) for the third year in a row, rising from 11.8% to 16.1%, its highest ever level, moving Inverclyde up in the national ranking to second in Scotland.

Inverclyde's rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days (per 1,000 discharges) continued to be one of the lowest in Scotland at 79.2. This is significantly lower than the Scottish average of 103.9 and the family group average of 103.5, placing Inverclyde in fifth position relative to all local authorities.

3.20 Culture and Leisure

Resident satisfaction with parks and open spaces increased between 2020/23 and 2021/24 from 88% to 90%, the second highest satisfaction score in Scotland. Conversely, there was a decrease in levels of satisfaction with libraries, museum and leisure facilities over the same period, however satisfaction levels across all three areas was higher than the family group average.

Inverclyde's cost per attendance at sport facilities, cost per visit to the museum and cost of parks and open spaces (per 1000 population), were all lower in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, whilst the cost per library visit increased from £3.09 to £6.71. This increase is attributable to a large drop in 'virtual visit' numbers between 2022/23 to 2023/24 because of a change in the way Facebook statistics are collated. Another contributory factor is the non-renewal of the Ancestry subscription, which previously accounted for a relatively high number of virtual visits.

3.21 Environmental Services and Climate Change

There is a two-year time lag with all the climate change measures, which means that 2022/23 data is the most recently published. There was a decrease in CO₂ emissions across all five Climate Change measures and except for CO₂ emissions from natural gas per capita, Inverclyde's performance ranked in the top quartile of all Scottish Councils. Inverclyde's performance is also better than the average family group performance for all five climate change measures.

The net cost of waste collection in Inverclyde continued to be one of the lowest in Scotland in 2023/24, with a national ranking of fourth place, the same as in 2022/23. Waste collection costs decreased for the second year running, decreasing from £57.11 to £54.51, moving Inverclyde's ranking from 22 to 20.

The net cost of street cleaning increased, from £18,645 in 2022/23 to £21,856 in 2023/24 and was higher than the national and family group average for the sixth year in a row.

Satisfaction levels with refuse collection in Inverclyde remained amongst the highest in Scotland, with a national ranking of two. 90% of residents were satisfied with refuse collection services in 2021/24. Inverclyde ranks in the top 5 performing Councils for this measure since the LGBF baseline year 2010/14.

Satisfaction with street cleaning increased for the third year in a row, rising from 67.7% (2020/23) to 70% (2021/24), placing Inverclyde in fourth position nationally.

The percentage of total household waste that was recycled in 2023/24 remained at 47%. This was the 14th highest recycling rate in Scotland.

3.22 Economic Development

There was a decrease in the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated/funded employability programmes in 2023/24, falling from 35.9% to 24.2%. Despite this, Inverclyde's performance ranked sixth in Scotland and was higher than the Scottish and family group average, 12.1% and 20.1% respectively. Inverclyde's performance for this measure has been consistently better than both the family group and Scottish average every year since the LGBF baseline year 2012/13.

There was decrease in the level of investment in economic development and tourism per 1,000 population, down from £252,314 in 2022/23 to £212,409, however Inverclyde's expenditure was more than twice the family group average and significantly higher than the Scottish average, £118,765. This increase in investment resulted in a small change in Inverclyde's ranking from three to four.

3.23 Financial Sustainability

The Financial Sustainability section comprises of four measures with two of the four indicators ranking in the top two quartiles in 2022/23.

The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream (general fund) is one of the Prudential Indicators published by Councils during the budget setting process. In Inverclyde the percentage fell from 9.7% to 0.4% which resulted in a change in national rank from 31 to 1.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to review Inverclyde Council's LGBF performance 2023/24 and note the areas of high performance and identify any performance concerns arising from the latest data.
- 4.2 Details of performance for the remaining LGBF measures not currently available will be shared with Elected Members following national publication.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

5.5 Strategic

This latest benchmarking data demonstrates that Inverclyde Council continues to be a high performing Council. This supports the delivery of the following Council Plan Theme of Performance: 'High quality, innovative services are provided, giving value for money'.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
CHN1	Cost per primary school pupil	£7,587	£7,132	£7,110	£7,213	£7,221	26	14	14
CHN2	Cost per secondary school pupil	£9,219	£9,249	£9,073	£8,957	£8,913	23	20	19
CHN3	Cost per pre-school education place	£13,057	£14,887	£14,900	£11,659	£13,576	25	28	29
CHN4	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5	69%	67%	64%	67%	64%	12	11	20
CHN5	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6	40%	35%	34%	39%	34%	10	14	23
CHN6	Percentage of pupils from 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5	58%	58%	52%	50%	50%	5	4	6
CHN7	Percentage of pupils from 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6	26%	22%	20%	23%	22%	4	8	12
CHN10	Percentage of adults satisfied with Schools	(2019/22) 76.7%	(2020/23) 73.7%	(2021/24) 67.7%	70.7%	70.1%	(2019/22) 16	2020/23 21	(2021/24) 27
CHN11	Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations	94%	96.4%	95.4%	95.6%	95.7%	29	9	21
CHN12a	Overall average total tariff	1022	861	862	917	829	9	22	20
CHN12b	Average total tariff SIMD quintile 1	810	690	682	658	660	3	8	7
CHN12c	Average total tariff SIMD quintile 2	970	717	829	762	795	5	20	6
CHN12d	Average total tariff SIMD quintile 3	1,224	982	1,017	889	917	2	8	5
CHN12e	Average total tariff SIMD quintile 4	1,249	1,191	1,169	1049	1067	5	4	5
CHN12f	Average total tariff SIMD quintile 5	1,335	1,218	1,076	1260	1151	10	15	23
CNH13a	% of P1, P4 and P7 achieving expected CFE level in literacy	73.7%	76.4%	76.5%	74%	73%	9	9	11
CNH13b	% of P1, P4 and P7 achieving expected CFE level in numeracy	80.2%	83.3%	81.7%	80.3%	78.9%	10	6	11



 Performance ranks in first national quartile
  Performance ranks in the second national quartile
  Performance ranks in the third national quartile
  Performance ranks in fourth national quartile


APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING


Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
CHN14a	Literacy attainment gap (P1, P4 and P7 combined) pp gap between most and least deprived	20.6%	24.9%	19%	20.2%	17.1%	9	23	11
CNH14b:	Numeracy attainment gap (P1, P4 and P7 combined) pp gap between most and least deprived	17.3%	16.3%	15.8%	17.4%	15%	11	11	8
CHN18	Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good/better	83.33%	93.5%	96.9%	89.8%	91.6%	31	9	2
CNH19a:	School attendance rate (per 100 pupils)	(2020/21) 92.3%	90.3%	90.6%	90.3%	89.4%	16	19	16
CHN19b	School Attendance Rate (per 100 Looked After Pupils) Biennial data	2020/21 84.9%	2022/23 82.2%	-	2022/23 84.4%	2022/23 81.5%	2020/21 29	2022/23 27	-
CHN20b	School Exclusion Rate (per 1,000 Looked After Pupils) Biennial data	2020/21 45.7	77.9	-	96.9	100.2	2020/21 4	19	-
CHN21	% of Participation Rate 16–19-year-olds	93.8%	92.6%	93.5%	92.7%	92.3%	8	20	16
CHN24:	% of Children Living in Poverty	24.4%	26.1%	July 2025	21.8%	27.2%	21	22	-

CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
C&L1	Cost per attendance at sports facilities	£3.06	£2.77	£2.38	£4.35	£4.80	6	6	7
C&L2	Cost per library visit	£2.76	£3.09	£6.71	£2.38	£2.99	10	14	29
C&L3	Cost of museums per visit	£4.51	£4.54	£1.78	£3.50	£4.41	14	15	8
C&L4	Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population	£29,716	£34,434	£30,448	£23,376	£22,167	25	28	26

 Performance ranks in first national quartile
  Performance ranks in the second national quartile

 Performance ranks in the third national quartile

 Performance ranks in fourth national quartile

APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
C&L05a	Percentage of adults satisfied with Libraries	(2019/22) 74.3%	(2020/23) 70%	(2021/24) 67.7%	(2021/24) 67%	(2021/24) 61.6%	(2019/22) 17	(2020/23) 20	2021/24 21
C&L05b	Percentage of adults satisfied with Parks and Open Spaces	(2019/22) 87.0%	(2020/23) 88.3%	(2021/24) 90%	(2021/24) 85%	(2021/24) 86.1%	(2019/22) 19	(2020/23) 11	(2021/24) 2
C&L05c	Percentage of adults satisfied with Museums and Galleries	(2019/22) 59.7%	(2020/23) 63%	(2021/24) 61.7%	(2021/24) 69.3%	(2021/24) 58%	(2019/22) 25	(2020/23) 20	(2021/24) 20
C&L05d	Percentage of adults satisfied with Leisure Facilities	(2019/22) 77.0%	(2020/23) 75.7%	(2021/24) 73%	(2021/24) 67%	(2021/24) 61.7%	(2019/22) 7	(2020/23) 9	(2021/24) 8

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
ECON 1	Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated/ funded employability programmes	35.31%	35.9%	24.2%	12.1%	20.1%	7	1	6
ECON 2	Cost per planning application	£7,224.00	£8,416.00	£6,189.00	£6,679	£6,134	29	28	13
ECON 3	Average time per business & industry planning application (weeks)	13.6w	13.8w	9.7w	10.7w	11.1w	23	22	11
ECON 4	Proportion of procurement spent on local enterprises	21.4%	24%	22.9%	30.7%	20.9%	22	21	22
ECON 5	Number of business gateway start-ups, per 10,000 population	28.8	24.9	19.8	13.6	15.1	3	5	11
ECON 6	Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 population	£149,099	£252,314	£212,409	£118,765	£80,141	11	3	4



APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
ECON 7	Proportion of people earning less than the living wage	20.3%	-	14.9%	10.2%	11.4%	21	21	16
ECON 8	Proportion of properties receiving Superfast Broadband	97.1%	97.4%	97.6%	95.9%	97.2%	11	17	17
ECON 9	Town Centre Vacancy Rates	9.2%	7.6%	4.9%	12.3%	11.2%	13	9	3
ECON 11	Gross Value Added per capita	£14,931	£14,410	£14,873	£30,669	£21,201	30	31	30
ECON 12a	Claimant count as % of working age population	5.3%	3.9%	3.6%	3.1%	3.8%	26	27	25
ECON 12b	Claimant count as % of 16-24 year old population	6.3%	4.9%	4.9%	3.4%	4.5%	28	28	28

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
ENV1a	Net cost of waste collection per premise	£60.46	£57.11	£54.51	£78.72	£75.72	8	4	4
ENV2a	Net cost of waste disposal per premise	£111.95	£117.43	£108.58	£104.38	£99.01	16	22	20
ENV3a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	£22,787	£18,645	£21,856	£15,961	£16,072	28	23	27
ENV3c	Street Cleanliness Score	85.1%	83.9%	94.1%	92.1%	90%	29	31	12
ENV4a	Cost of roads per kilometre	£24,710	£26,202	£30,231	£13,788	£18,745	29	29	30
ENV4b	% A Class Roads which should be considered for treatment	(2020/22) 16.7%	(2021/23) 16.0%	(2022/24) 17.4%	(2022/24) 28.9%	(2022/24) 24%	(2020/22) 2	(2021/23) 4	(2022/24) 3
ENV4c	% B Class Roads which should be considered for treatment	(2020/22) 30.4%	(2021/23) 26.9%	(2022/24) 28.1%	(2022/24) 32.5%	(2022/24) 28.1%	(2020/22) 20	(2021/23) 14	(2022/24) 16

 Performance ranks in first national quartile
  Performance ranks in the second national quartile
  Performance ranks in the third national quartile
  Performance ranks in fourth national quartile

APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
ENV4d	% C Class Roads which should be considered for treatment	(2020/22) 36.4%	(2021/23) 36.7%	(2022/24) 41.5%	(2022/24) 33.4%	(2022/24) 32.7%	(2020/22) 24	(2021/23) 24	(2022/24) 27
ENV4e	% U Class Roads which should be considered for treatment	(2018/22) 33.5%	(2019/23) 31.7%	(2020/24) 33.3%	(2020/24) 36.2%	(2020/24) 35.3%	(2018/22) 14	(2019/23) 12	(2020/24) 15
ENV 5	Cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health	£122,383	£27,563	£23,644	£22,804	£19,161	32	24	19
ENV5a	Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizen Advice per 1000	£3,718	£3,988	£3,804	£7,266	£6,774	6	5	5
ENV5b	Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population.	£118,665	£23,576	£19,839	£15,538	£12,387	32	27	24
ENV6	Percentage of total household waste arising that is recycled	48.5%	46.8%	46.9%	43.5%	49%	12	16	14
ENV07a	Satisfaction with Refuse Collection	(2019/22) 92.3%	(2020/23) 91.3%	(2021/24) 90%	78.3%	82.7%	(2019/22) 1	(2020/23) 2	(2021/24) 2
ENV07b	Satisfaction with Street Cleaning	(2019/22) 67.0%	(2020/23) 67.7%	(2021/24) 70%	58%	55.8%	(2019/22) 9	(2020/23) 5	(2021/24) 4


FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES


Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
FINSUS 1	Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue	23.67%	17%	20.8%	23.9%	24.9%	16	27	18
FINSUS 2	Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	2.3%	3.5%	2%	2.3%	1.6%	21	7	25
FINSUS 3	Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream- General Fund	10.16%	9.7%	0.4%	5.8%	4.1%	31	32	1
FINSUS 5	Actual outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure	99.4%	98%	100.4%	99.6%	99.7%	14	18	9


 Performance ranks in first national quartile
  Performance ranks in the second national quartile
  Performance ranks in the third national quartile
  Performance ranks in fourth national quartile


APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING**CORPORATE SERVICES AND CORPORATE ASSETS**

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
CORP1	Support services as a % of total gross expenditure	3.2%	3.3%	2.9%	4.1%	4.3%	8	9	4
CORP0 3b	% of highest paid 5% of employees who are women	60.1%	59.5%	59.7%	59.8%	61.2%	11	14	15
CORP0 3c	Gender pay gap	6.6%	4.4%	4.2%	2.0%	1.8%	29	23	28
CORP0 4	Cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax	£9.89	£12.27	£11.66	£5.89	£7.06	27	29	27
CORP0 6a	Sickness absence days (teacher)	4.4d	6.8d	6.7d	7.6 days	7.7days	2	15	7
CORP0 6b	Sickness absence days (non-teacher)	8.8d	11.3d	13.2d	13.9 days	15.1 days	2	6	12
CORP0 7	% of Income due from Council Tax Received by end of the year	95.7%	95.9%	94.7%	95.5%	94.2%	20	21	23
CORP0 8	% Invoices Sampled that were paid within 30 days	94.2%	95.1%	95%	93.1%	92.4%	10	4	13
CORP0 9	Proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund crisis grant decisions within 1 day	99.8%	100%	99.8%	94%	91.9%	2	1	4
CORP0 10	Proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant decisions within 15 days	99.5%	99.5%	100%	83.3%	90%	4	3	1
CORP0 11	Proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund budget spent	112.9%	108.6%	99.2%	128.9%	112.2%	13	21	27
CORP0 12	Proportion of Discretionary Housing Payment funding spent	89.2%	97.6%	98%	101%	101.4%	16	10	17
CORP ASSET1	% of operational buildings suitable for current use	92.4%	94.1%	94%	85.5%	89.8%	7	7	8
CORP ASSET2	% of operational buildings in satisfactory condition	92.6%	93.3%	93.4%	89.8%	91.5%	14	10	10

 Performance ranks in first national quartile

 Performance ranks in the second national quartile

 Performance ranks in the third national quartile

 Performance ranks in fourth national quartile

APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING**ADULT SOCIAL WORK**

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
SW01	Home care costs per hour for people aged 65 or over	£44.86	£50.75	£50.23	£33.61	£47.60	30	27	28
SW02	SDS spend: Direct Payments + Managed Personalised Budgets spend on adults 18+ as a percentage of total social work spend	7.8%	11.8%	16.1%	9%	10.4%	10	4	2
SW03a	% of people aged 65 or over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	59.4%	58.3%	66.5%	62.6%	64.2%	20	25	9
SW04b	% of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in maintaining or improving their quality of life	79.6%	-	73.6%	69.8%	69.4%	12	-	10
SW04c	% of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible	82.9%	-	75.9%	72.4%	72.9%	7	-	13
SW04d	% of adults supported at home who agree that they had a say in how their help, care or support was provided	66.7%	-	67.8%	59.6%	62.5%	25	-	6
SW04e	% of carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role	28.7%	-	31.9%	31.2%	32%	21	-	15
SW05	Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over	£599	£846	£707	£723	£724	9	27	14
SW06	Rate of Readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges	90.6	76	79.2	103.9	103.5	8	4	5
SW07	% of adult care services graded good or better	85.1%	80%	80.6%	77%	81.1%	6	11	16



APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE BY QUARTILE RANKING

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
SW08	Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged per 1,000 population	286	435	514	841	875	6	7	10

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Ref	Title	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Scotland	Family Group	2021/22 ranking	2022/23 ranking	2023/24 Ranking
CLIM01	CO ₂ emissions area wide per capita	4.06t	3.6t	dna	(2021/22) 4.81t	(2022/23) 5.24t	9	4	dna
CLIM02	CO ₂ emissions per capita (within scope of LA)	4.15t	3.7t	dna	(2022/23) 4.27t	(2022/23) 4.12t	11	7	dna
CLIM03	CO ₂ emissions from transport per capita per 1000 population	37.7t	14.79t	dna	(2022/23) 27.83t	(2022/23) 19.26t	29	4	dna
CLIM04	CO ₂ emissions from electricity per capita per 1000 population	37.25t	30.97t	dna	(2022/23) 43.72t	(2022/23) 37.39t	5	3	dna
CLIM05	CO ₂ emissions from natural gas per capita per 1000 population	67.86t	61.52t	dna	(2022/23) 57.57t	(2022/23) 63.59t	22	19	dna

n.b. Climate change measures are subject to a two-year data lag from date of publication.



Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Head of OD, Policy & Communications	Report No:	HR/09/25
Contact Officer:	Barbara McQuarrie	Contact No:	01475 712845
Subject:	Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay)		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Policy & Resources Committee of the implications of the new Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act which came into force on Sunday, 6th April 2025 and seek endorsement of an enhancement to its provisions by approving the removal of the qualifying service/ minimum pay requirement for the Statutory Pay element.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Policy & Resources:

- a) note the content of the new Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act which came into force on Sunday, 6th April 2025 and;
- b) agree to enhance the provision by removing the eligibility criteria in respect of the qualifying pay/minimum pay elements.

Morna Rae
Head of OD, Policy & Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act which came into force on Sunday, 6th April 2025, and means eligible parents will be able to receive neonatal care leave and pay, for children born on, or after, 6 April 2025. This is designed to help parents spend more time with their baby and bond with them, be better involved in their care, and to reduce the financial pressures that often force parents to return to work sooner than they are ready. A long stay in neonatal care can mean that statutory parental leave is used up before the baby has come home from the hospital or before a parent is ready to return to work.
- 3.2 Neonatal Care Leave is an entitlement to time away from work in addition to other parental leave (Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave). Neonatal Care Pay refers to pay that parents/carers who fulfil certain employment requirements will receive from their employer during their Neonatal Care Leave.
- 3.3 Parents qualify for Neonatal Care Leave and Pay if all of the following apply:
1. the baby was born on or after 6 April 2025
 2. live in England, Wales or Scotland
 3. the baby spends at least 7 continuous days receiving neonatal care that starts within 28 days from their birth
 4. parent is an employee
 5. parent has been working for the same employer for at least 26 weeks
 6. parent earns an average of at least £125 per week
- 3.4 If points 1, 2, 3 and 4 above apply, but the parent does not meet either point 5 or 6 they are still entitled to take Neonatal Care Leave but will not qualify for Neonatal Care Pay under the statutory scheme.
- 3.5 Neonatal Care Pay is paid at the same statutory flat rate as other Statutory Parental Pay, including Maternity and Paternity pay (£187.18 per week from 6 April 2025) or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.
- 3.6 For every 7 continuous days the baby is receiving neonatal care, which starts within 28 days from their birth, the parent can take a week of Neonatal Care Leave from work. The maximum amount of leave available is 12 weeks and it must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby's birth.
- 3.7 For this entitlement, parents are the mother or birthing parent, and father, or non-birthing parent(s). This includes adopters, the intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement, the partner who lives with and is in a committed family relationship with the mother/birthing parent or adopter, who will take responsibility for the upbringing of the baby and surrogate birth mother (if they retain or regain responsibility for the child).
- 3.8 Definition of Neonatal care is as detailed in the regulations and includes:
- a) medical care received in a hospital ("hospital" means -any institution for the reception and treatment of persons suffering from illness, and any maternity home, including clinics and out-patient departments maintained in connection with any such institution or home.
 - b) medical care received in any other place that meets the following criteria—
 - (i) the child was an inpatient in hospital and the care is received upon that child leaving hospital;
 - (ii) the care is under the direction of a consultant; and
 - (iii) the care includes ongoing monitoring by, and visits to the child from, healthcare professionals arranged by the hospital referred to in paragraph (i); and

c) palliative or end-of-life care.

3.9 In line with these statutory requirements related procedures have been put in place for Inverclyde Council employees and employee communications issued.

3.10 In addition to minimum statutory requirements Inverclyde Council frequently offers more generous provisions in relation to employment rights in order to best support our employees and be an employer of choice. It is therefore proposed that the eligibility criteria relating to the qualifying service and pay are removed (i.e. parent has been working for the same employer for at least 26 weeks and parent earns an average of at least £125 per week). This means that subject to the other criteria outlined in this report then the pay and leave would be available from day 1 of employment and whatever the level of employee earnings.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that Policy & Resources Committee:

a) note the content of the new Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act which came into force on Sunday, 6th April 2025 and;

b) agree to enhance the provision by removing the eligibility criteria in respect of the qualifying pay/minimum pay elements.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

5.2 Finance

We note that any costs associated with the enhancement and implementation are contained within the services.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

This report helps fulfil our statutory obligations as an employer.

5.4 Human Resources

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

5.5 Strategic

This report supports delivery of the Council Plan outcome *Our employees are supported and developed.*

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Head of OD, Policy & Communications	Report No:	HR/11/25
Contact Officer:	Morna Rae	Contact No:	01475 712845
Subject:	Addition to Flexible Working Policy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 Inverclyde Council has a Flexible Working Policy and Flexible Working Procedures. These outline the range of options available to employees such as Job share, Term-Time Working, Compressed Hours and Hybrid Working.
- 1.3 The 2023/24 Best Value audit includes a recommendation that the Flexible Working Policy includes reference to informal flexible working arrangements.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that in order to meet the audit recommendation the Policy & Resources Committee agree the additional wording to be added to the Flexible Working Policy and Flexible Working Procedures.

Morna Rae
Head of OD, Policy & Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The 2023/24 Best Value audit includes the following recommendations with a deadline of June 2025:

1. an overall assessment of the impact of the new flexible arrangements (hybrid working) on service quality and outcomes, to provide greater insight into the achievement of the intended objectives, should be carried out, and
2. the documentation of the Council's expectations in relation to informal flexible working arrangements.

3.2 The first recommendation has been progressed in conjunction with the Improvement Service and the related report is available on this meeting agenda at item 7.

3.3 In relation to the second point wording has been added to the Flexible Working Policy and Flexible Working Procedures as outlined in Appendix 1. This explains the approach to informal flexible working arrangements. This has been consulted upon with trade union colleagues.

3.4 The Flexible Working Policy and Flexible Working Procedures were last updated in September 2023 and are scheduled for a full review in 2026. At this stage it is suggested that only the additional section on informal flexible working is added with the full review to follow in 2026.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee agree the additional wording to be added to the Flexible Working Policy and Flexible Working Procedures.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal or risk issues arising from this report

5.4 Human Resources

Additional information on the arrangements for informal flexible working will support effective management practices.

5.5 Strategic

This report supports delivery of the Council Plan outcome *Our employees are supported and developed.*

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Trade Unions have been consulted and are supportive.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

ADDITIONAL SECTION IN THE FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

13. INFORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

- 13.1 Notwithstanding the requirements as noted above there may be occasions when it is reasonable to permit informal flexible working arrangements over a short period. This should be discussed in advance by the manager and employee and be for a specific reason and for a specified period. Please see the related procedure document for examples and additional guidance.

ADDITIONAL SECTION IN THE FLEXIBLE WORKING PROCEDURES

Informal Flexible Working Arrangements

Notwithstanding the requirements as noted above there may be occasions when it is reasonable to permit informal flexible working arrangements over a short period. This should be discussed in advance by the manager and employee and be for a specific reason and for a specified period.

Informal flexible working arrangements are agreements between an employee and their manager that don't require a formal contractual change. These agreements are usually made on an ad-hoc basis. They differ from statutory flexible working requests, which have a formal process and legal framework. A record should be kept of the agreement.

They can be used for temporary or occasional needs, such as an agreement for the employee to start and finish later for a relatively brief period of time to accommodate a temporary change of circumstances or a few hours of working from home. It is envisaged that this would be for a few days or weeks at most.

In considering informal requests for temporary flexible working arrangements line managers should consider the following:

- the impact of the requested change on the operational functioning of the service,
- how the workload can be managed without an undue impact on other employees and
- how long the flexibility should be in place.

When considering the request, the manager should take into account related health and safety and information security considerations as outlined elsewhere in this procedure.

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Morna Rae, Head of OD, Policy & Communications	Report No:	HR/10/25
Contact Officer:	Barbara McQuarrie	Contact No:	01475 712845
Subject:	Amended Flexible Retirement Scheme		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 Inverclyde Council has a Flexible Retirement Scheme which allows employees aged 55 or over to make a request to reduce the number of hours they work or to reduce their grade and partially/fully withdraw their pension benefits.
- 1.3 Due to a change implemented by Strathclyde Pension Fund (SPF) an increased number of employees are incurring strain on the fund costs when applying for flexible retirement. This report proposes amendments to the existing scheme to allow these costs to be borne by the employee and a streamlined approval process put in place.
- 1.4 Flexible Retirement is an attractive employee benefit as well as a useful tool for employee retention and succession planning. We would therefore propose a change in Inverclyde Council's arrangements for flexible retirement to avoid a blanket refusal of requests due to relatively minor costs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is proposed that:

Where there is a strain on the fund of up to £2000 this will be paid by the Council and thereafter recovered from the employee through payroll (subject to the employee's agreement). This will be over a maximum period of 24 months. An agreement will be made with the employee to this effect. Costs in excess of £2000 cannot be met via this arrangement.

Morna Rae
Head of OD, Policy & Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Pension Fund describes flexible retirement as involving a reduction in employees' hours/grade and partial/full withdrawal of pension benefits while still being able to continue in employment. Only Local Government employees, aged 55 and over with at least two years pension membership can apply for flexible retirement. For flexible retirement to be considered the reduction in hours/salary should normally be at least 20% but no more than 50% of the current hours/salary. Approval from the employer is required.
- 3.2 Inverclyde Council has a related Flexible Retirement Scheme as approved by the Policy and Resources Committee which describes how this operates locally. Approval of flexible retirement where there is no strain cost is required from the relevant Head of Service and then by the Head of OD, HR & Communications.
- 3.3 There may be a strain on fund cost when an employee leaves the fund early, as the pension fund will be in receipt of less contributions than expected because contributions are not being made to the normal retirement age and it is potentially paying out a pension for a longer period. Various criteria are used to calculate strain on fund such as age, length of service, gender, normal retiral age, and actual retiral age. The full cost of early retirement is fully or partially offset by any reductions due on the member benefits. Where those reductions don't fully offset the early retirement cost the balance is invoiced to the scheme employer. There is no other option for how this cost is paid.
- 3.4 Following the SPF 2023 triennial valuation, where their actuaries reviewed the existing factors used to calculate the employer strain cost, they advised that the expectation was it would give rise to an increased strain cost. They anticipated these factors will be implemented for any retirements with a retirement date from 1st October 2024. Since October 2024 we have received a number of flexible working applications with a strain on fund cost (currently amounts of approximately £500-£1600). Those applications were initially refused as value for money could not be shown. Several employees, supported by their union, have recently requested to pay the SPF the cost of strain on fund. There is no mechanism for them to do this directly. In agreement with trade unions these applications are on hold pending approval of the proposed changes. The SPF are currently looking at creating a calculator to assist planning, where it would show future dates relating to flexible retirement a point where cost is £0.

This is a national issue. The issue of flexible retirement was discussed at 28 January 2025 Heads of HR meeting with many Councils providing feedback that they are seeing increased numbers of employees whose flexible retirement would attract a strain on the fund cost.

- 3.5 Flexible Retirement is an attractive employee benefit as well as a useful tool for employee retention and succession planning. We would therefore propose a change in Inverclyde Council's arrangements for flexible retirement to avoid a blanket refusal of requests due to relatively minor costs.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that

Where there is a strain on the fund of up to £2000 this will be paid by the Council and thereafter recovered from the employee through payroll (subject to the employee's agreement). This will be over a maximum period of 24 months. An agreement will be made with the employee to this effect. Costs in excess of £2000 cannot be met via this arrangement.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	x	
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

5.2 Finance

These proposals would mean that strain on the fund costs will be paid initially by the Council. They will subsequently be recovered from employees through payroll.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

If the employee leaves before they have repaid the full amount, then the remaining amount would be recoup from the final salary. If this was insufficient to cover the costs, then we would seek to recover this. This risk is anticipated to be low due to 1. capping the amount at £2000 and 2. the small number of applications that we anticipate this will affect.

5.4 Human Resources

Trade Unions have been consulted and are supportive of the proposed change .

5.5 Strategic

This report supports delivery of the Council Plan outcome *Our employees are supported and developed,*

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

x	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
	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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
x	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Trade Unions have been consulted and are supported

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	3 June 2025
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/033/25/VP
Contact Officer:	Vicky Pollock	Contact No:	01475 712180
Subject:	Information Classification Policy Update		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of an updated version of the Council's Information Classification Policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the updated Information Classification Policy appended to this report in Appendix 2.

Lynsey Brown
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council is committed to managing its information assets in a secure and appropriate manner and the Council's suite of Information Governance policies and guidance outline the principles and practices for managing all information assets. Information classification is an important part of this information governance framework.
- 3.2 The Policy presents a common approach to information classification in line with national guidance and, together with the accompanying Information Classification: Policy Implementation Guide, provides direction to all services to use and assist them in establishing effective information classification practices.
- 3.3 There are several reasons why the classification of information is important, including:
- Protection of personal and/or confidential information from unauthorised access or disclosure.
 - Supporting routine disclosure and active dissemination of relevant information to the public.
 - Facilitating information sharing with other services or external partners and agencies.
 - Ensuring legal compliance in a number of areas, including the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.
- 3.4 Overall, the implementation of this Policy and associated systems across the Council is well established and has resulted in a more systematic and organised approach to information classification within the Council.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Review of the Council's Information Classification Policy

The Council's Information Classification Policy was last updated and approved in September 2017. The Policy has been reviewed and updated.

The policy remains fit for purpose and the classifications referred to in the policy still reflect national guidance. As such, only minor changes are recommended as a result of this review. The Policy has also been updated to reflect the Council's new policy template. A table which summarises the proposed changes to the Policy is set out at Appendix 1, with the revised Policy set out at Appendix 2 for Committee's consideration.

The operational Information Classification: Policy Implementation Guide has also been reviewed and updated and will be made available separately to staff and on ICON.

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 (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

The Council's Information Classification Policy assists the Council in ensuring compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements as set out in Paragraph 3.3 of this report.

5.4 Human Resources

The Information Classification Policy places responsibilities on staff in conjunction with the Employee Code of Conduct in compliance with information governance, data protection and IT security responsibilities.

5.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications directly arising from this report.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant, an EqIA is required and is available on the Council's website.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. This Policy does not require an Equality Impact Assessment as there is no evidence to indicate that its contents could affect individuals differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Protected Characteristics.

(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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Information Governance Steering Group and the Corporate Management Team have been consulted on the updated Information Classification Policy.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO INFORMATION CLASSIFICATION POLICY – APRIL 2025

PAGE	TITLE	SECTION	PROPOSED CHANGE
Throughout	n/a	n/a	Use of new policy template
5	Introduction and Purpose	3.1	Amendment to definition of Unauthorised Disclosure
6	Introduction and Purpose - What does this policy not apply to?	3.1.1	Updates to legislation
7	Classification System (Official)	3.2.1	Updated name of Retention and Disposal Policy
7	Classification System (Official-Sensitive)	3.2.2	Amended to replace specific systems with generic system types
8	Classification System(Official-Sensitive)	3.2.2	Update to definition of Special Category Data and Criminal Offence information
9	Degree of Risk	3.4	Amended to replace specific systems with generic system types
10	Changes in Classification and Retention of Data	3.5	Updated name of Retention and Disposal Policy
10	Information Asset Management	3.7	Amended to replace specific system with generic system type
13	Governance Arrangements – Responsibilities	3.12.1	Updated officer title
13	Governance Arrangements – Other Relevant Policies/Council Documents	3.12.2	Updated Policies/Council Documents

Information Classification Policy

Version No 2.0

Produced by:

Information Governance Team
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
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PA15 1LX

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This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request.

Document Control

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	Corporate Group	Service
Information Classification Policy	Information Governance Steering Group	Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

Change History		
Version	Date	Comments
1.0	August 2013	Draft Policy Approved
1.0	April 2015	Revised
1.1	August 2015	Final Version
1.2	August 2017	Revised to more simplified version to accommodate separate user guide
2.0	April 2025	Updated to new policy format, review and update of policy.

Distribution
Corporate Directors, Heads of Service, ICON, Information Governance Steering Group

Policy Review		
Updating Frequency	Next Review Date	Responsible Officer
3 years	June 2028	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

Policy Review and Approval			
Name	Action	Date	Communication
Policy & Resources Committee			ICON; IGSG;

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Executive Summary

Inverclyde Council is committed to managing its information assets in a secure and appropriate manner. This Policy sets out the basis by which information will be classified to make sure its sensitivity, integrity and availability is maintained throughout its life, particularly in terms of when it is communicated or transmitted. All information must be classified and marked to show how sensitive it is. This classified marking then decides what level of protection must be applied to the information.

1.2 Background

This Policy and the associated Policy Implementation Guide presents a common approach to information classification and guidance for all services to use and assist them in establishing effective classification practices.

There are several reasons why the classification of information is important including:

- Protection of personal and/or confidential information from unauthorised access or disclosure.
- Supporting routine disclosure and active dissemination of relevant information to the public.
- Facilitating information sharing with other services or external partners/agencies.
- Ensuring legal compliance in a number of areas including the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

1.3 Strategic Context

There are no strategic implications arising from this Policy.

1.4 Links to Legislation

This Policy considers relevant legislation and regulatory requirements including the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

1.5 Links to Corporate Groups

This Policy is linked to the work of the Information Governance Steering Group.

2 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all information assets (including both paper and electronic documents) created or used within Inverclyde Council, but it is especially relevant and important for employees who deal with sensitive information concerning members of the public, employees or Council services.

3 POLICY CONTENT

3.1 Introduction and Purpose

Information has varying degrees of sensitivity and criticality. Security classification of information is therefore required to ensure that the information processed within Inverclyde Council/HSCP receives the appropriate level of protection.

Every document generated has some value, and that value will depend on the views of the originator rather than the recipient, therefore the originator of a document must provide the classification and must agree or initiate any subsequent up or down grading.

Given this responsibility, many originators will opt for the safe choice and give all but the most innocuous documents the highest security classification. This practice leads to the debasement of the system. To reduce this risk a clear policy of document classification has been set up and all levels of staff made fully aware of the risks to the organisation of not applying the classification system intelligently.

The purpose of this Classification Policy is to provide the method of how to classify information and protect against the risk of unauthorised disclosure. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Information Classification: Policy Implementation Guide which provides examples of data types and classification as well as guidance on how to label, store, transmit and destroy information after it has been appropriately classified.

Unauthorised disclosure refers to the disclosure of information to individuals (e.g. a family member, journalist or another employee), entities (e.g. an outside company) or systems (e.g. a social media platform) that are not permitted to receive it. This can either be accidental or deliberate.

Information handled within a Classification Policy is shared/processed on a need to know basis and this Policy covers:

- The classification of information and appropriate marking or labelling to show the information has been classed as "Official". This should ensure the recipients know how to employ appropriate protection methods.
- The protection of information in an appropriate, practical and cost effective way that is proportionate to the business risk of disclosure.

- The requirements of the Council's email system which has been configured to meet the UK Government's Secure Email Blueprint. This ensures that all emails sent by the Council/HSCP are secure by default.

3.1.1 What does this policy not apply to?

This policy does not apply to assessing whether information or data constitutes information which is exempt from disclosure by legislation. This includes assessments made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation or the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Where it is determined that an exemption is available and such exempt information is being transmitted, for example, internally by email, the email generated should be classified as Official or Official Sensitive and officers should follow the rules for handling and transmitting Official/Official Sensitive information contained within this Policy.

3.2 Classification System

The following level is to be adopted and implemented throughout Inverclyde Council/HSCP. Please note that it is for the originator to determine the correct protective marking. If this has not been done at the time the information was captured it should be done at the time the information is extracted, processed or otherwise handled. A "harm test" should be carried out to consider how sensitive the information is, the likely impact should the data be compromised or a deliberate or accidental unauthorised disclosure be made and whether the harm is hypothetical or more likely to occur than not.

Further guidance on classification including key questions is provided at Sections 3.4 and 3.6.

3.2.1 OFFICIAL

This classification applies to the majority of information that is created or processed by the Council/HSCP. This includes routine business operations and services, some of which could have damaging consequences if lost, stolen or published in the media, but are not subject to a heightened risk profile.

This classification applies to information the disclosure of which could:

- Cause distress to individuals;
- Breach proper undertakings to maintain the confidence of third party information and intellectual property;
- Breach statutory restrictions on the disclosure of information;
- Cause financial loss or facilitate improper gain or advantage; or

- Disadvantage the Council/HSCP in policy or commercial negotiations with others.

Almost all information which is processed by the Council/HSCP lies within one Government classification of OFFICIAL. A sub-category with the OFFICIAL classification is OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE.

Information with the OFFICIAL classification must be labelled, numbered and accounted for with copies being distributed only to those with a specific need to know. It should never be copied without the originator's permission and must be kept in secure conditions.

All OFFICIAL documents must be controlled and destroyed in line with Inverclyde Council's Records Retention and Disposal Policy. Computer files must also be protected by password controls.

In very limited circumstances, specific sensitivity considerations may warrant additional controls to reinforce the 'need to know' for access to certain information. Such information should be classed as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. This will apply to information previously referred to as "Private and Confidential" that is intended for the recipient only. OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information requires elevated protection levels.

3.2.2 OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

An OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE caveat should be applied where the 'need to know' must be most rigorously enforced, particularly where information may be being shared outside of a routine or well understood business process. For example, where the loss or compromise of information could have severely damaging consequences for an individual or group of individuals – there is a clear and justifiable requirement to reinforce the 'need to know principle' particularly rigorously across the organisation. The threshold for marking information OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE should be kept quite high. It is not intended that because an OFFICIAL document or data contains personal information it should be routinely marked OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE, it should meet the criteria set out in this paragraph.

As examples, this marking should be applied:

- to highly sensitive information that originates from the Customer Management, UK and Scottish Government Social Security, Finance Management, Social Care and Social Work Case Management, Education Management & Information and VISOR systems where disclosure could cause substantial distress to individuals;
- where it is mandated that the data can only be sent over a secure intranet connection (the Council's email system has been configured to meet the UK Government's Secure Email Blueprint. This ensures that all emails are secure by default).
- where disclosure could compromise or make it more difficult to maintain the operational effectiveness, internal stability or security of the Council/HSCP or undermine the proper management of the Council/HSCP;

- to personal and special category information as defined by data protection law relating to an identifiable individual. Special category information consists of:
 - a) racial or ethnic origin
 - b) political opinions
 - c) religious or philosophical beliefs
 - d) trade union membership
 - e) health information
 - f) sex life or sexual orientation
 - g) genetic information
 - h) biometric information (where used for identification purposes)
- to information relating to criminal convictions or proceedings and criminal outcomes and sentences
- to information relating to offences (including alleged offences)
- to information formerly classified as “RESTRICTED” or “PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL” information;
- to highly confidential information;
- to commercially sensitive information; and
- to security information.

The Senior Information Risk Owner and Information Asset Owners need to make their own judgements about the value and sensitivity of the information that they manage and decide the instances where it is appropriate to use the OFFICIAL SENSITIVE caveat.

3.2.3 NO CLASSIFICATION

This applies to information that does not fall within an OFFICIAL or OFFICIAL SENSITIVE marking and is not subject to any specific marking or handling requirements. This information can be disclosed or disseminated without any restriction on content, audience and time of publication.

3.3 Classification Labelling

Classification labelling applies to all forms of information both hard copy (paper) and electronic data including e-mail originated within Inverclyde Council/HSCP. All magnetic media, which includes floppy disks, CD ROMs, hard drives, removable hard drives etc. must be labelled commensurate with their contents.

Please refer to the Information Classification: Policy Implementation Guide for examples of data types and classification as well as guidance on how to label, store, transmit and destroy information after it has been classified.

3.4 Degree of Risk

Classified information is protectively marked so that people know how to apply the appropriate security protection. The classification is dependent upon the impact or damage likely to occur if the information was leaked or disclosed to the wrong people.

The table below shows examples of the degree of risk afforded to the unauthorised disclosure of the above classification levels

Classification	Risk
Official - Sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is applied to highly sensitive information from the Customer Management, UK and Scottish Government Social Security, Finance Management, Social Care and Social Work Case Management, Education Management & Information and VISOR systems and all due care should be taken to protect this information by officers. Information whose unauthorised disclosure (even within Inverclyde Council/HSCP) would cause serious damage to the interests of the Council/HSCP. It would normally inflict harm by virtue of serious financial loss, severe loss of profitability or opportunity, grave embarrassment or loss of reputation.
Official or Official - Sensitive caveat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When handling the personal data of individual(s).
Official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For use on document/information that is contractual or information that may harm the commercial interests of the Council/HSCP or a third party Should be used for draft policies etc. and other information that may harm the management of the Council/HSCP or third parties should it be released
No classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are documents generated and used daily for routine communication and require no special handling requirements.

3.5 Changes in Classification and Retention of Data

Classification of data can change in relation to the circumstances in which the data originated. An example might be classified budgetary information or information relating to redundancy information which may be Official-Sensitive during origination and formulation. Once this information has been released into the public domain it would require downgrading to No Classification.

The classification of data therefore requires regular review. Departmental managers shall implement local procedures to review the classification of data within their respective areas of control.

Electronic and hardcopy data should not be retained longer than the periods recommended within Inverclyde Council's Records Retention and Disposal Policy.

3.6 Classification Guidelines

The classification of the data is the responsibility of the originator. The following guidelines are provided to assist the originator in deciding the appropriate classification level for the data. Classification of data is dependent upon:

- The degree of risk to Inverclyde Council/HSCP should the data be disclosed or passed to unauthorised personnel.
- The content of the data.
- The intended audience of the data.

The originator should ask the following questions before assigning a classification:

- Do I need to protect this information?
- How much protection is required?
- Is this information classified?
- Do I need to limit access to this information?
- What would happen if this data were disclosed to a third party?

Care must be taken not to over classify data. Work on the premise of who needs to know. For example, when dealing with personal data ask the question, if this data were about me who should see it and how should it be protected? Any originator who has problems with the classification of data should consult their line manager.

3.7 Information Asset Management

An information asset is information that is valuable to the Council/HSCP's business, and will often be a collection of business files, for example the information held on the Social Care and Social Work Case management system and any supporting files and documents would collectively be an information asset regardless of the format e.g. paper, electronic or microfilm. To assess whether something is an information asset consider whether:

- It has value to the Council/HSCP
- It would cost money to re-acquire
- There would be legal, reputational or financial repercussions if it could not be produced on request
- It would affect operational efficiency if it cannot be accessed easily
- There are risks associated with its loss, inaccuracy or inappropriate disclosure

Information Asset Owners are responsible for assigning a Classification to the assets they own, ensuring that the Classification category is recorded on the Information Asset Register, and where possible ensure that the information produced or created from databases or using reporting software is protectively marked.

3.8 Anonymised and Non Personal Data

Wherever practicable, or required, personal data will be anonymised before being shared. For example, the Council/HSCP may require to share employee information with potential bidders when re-tendering a service, to enable such bidders to assess any employee costs under the Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) Regulations. Only anonymised employee information should be provided to such potential bidders. If required, officers should seek guidance from Legal Services on how to anonymise personal data before proceeding.

The specific rules which relate to the sharing of personal data do not automatically apply to anonymised and non-personal data. However, non-personal information may have conditions attached to its use. These can include any contractual restrictions or restrictions on re-use which may be imposed by the initial suppliers of such data. These include copyright or intellectual property rights or the indication of sensitivity or confidentiality, express or implied of the data which might mean that its release needs to be restricted. Where data has been supplied with a Protective Marking by another public sector body, the Council/HSCP is usually obliged to maintain that marking in any permitted re-use of the data.

The potential impact of these restrictions must be considered before deciding on the release of non-personal data. This should not be interpreted as a general way of blocking the release of otherwise unrestricted information.

3.9 Working with Security Classifications

When working with information assets, the following points need to be considered:

- Applying too high a marking can inhibit sharing and lead to unnecessary and expensive protective controls. This may mean that applying the handling/management restrictions could impede legitimate uses of the information;

- Applying too low a marking may result in inappropriate controls and potentially put sensitive assets at greater risk of compromise and lead to information not being adequately protected.
- The current information lifecycle (draft – finalised documents) – Information classification should be driven by an evaluation of the risk associated with unauthorised disclosure at each stage of a document's life cycle.
- Information contained within draft and/or early concept documents often has a higher degree of sensitivity, notably when there is a free and frank exchange of information, for the purposes of deliberation and decision making. Once a document has been finalised and is ready for distribution to its intended audience (perhaps by a committee or a management team following approval) the sensitivity of the information may have reduced, requiring a lower level of classification.
- Sensitive material published on intranet sites must also be clearly marked.
- Review the classification applied to similar documents/records that have been classified recently (within the last 12 – 18 months) – this can act as a good initial Guide.

Please refer to the Information Classification: Policy Implementation Guide for examples of data types and classification as well as guidance on how to label, store, transmit and destroy information after it has been classified.

3.10 Photocopying and Printing

Any employee having access to a photocopying machine can, in a matter of moments, copy any document to hand. Attention is drawn to the need to ensure confidentiality of all documents when they are copied.

When you print material, please ensure that it is collected immediately and that you collect all of the material. Secure printing should be used when printing classified documents.

3.11 Unified Classification Markings

Many organisations already have an information security programme in place that ensures consistent identification and protection of Official material. However, assumptions cannot be made about how our trading partners may protect our information. Few organisations follow a common approach to sharing information securely. Exactly how information is classified and protected will vary from company to company, or even from department to department but steps should be taken so far as possible to ensure the level of protection is the same. For example, by contractually obliging our contractors, suppliers etc. to comply with this policy to the extent they are dealing with and/or generating Council/HSCP information.

In addition, adoption of this scheme by Inverclyde Partnership Organisations will provide current best practice guidance and interoperability on a common approach to appropriate marking and protection of information.

3.12 Governance Arrangements

3.12.1 Responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for the information they handle. The Head of Legal, Democratic Digital and Customer Services has overall responsibility for updating this document and providing advice on its implementation.

3.12.2 Other Relevant Policies/Council Documents

- Information Governance and Management Framework
- Acceptable Use of Information Systems Policy
- Records Retention and Disposal Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- A quick guide to Information Security
- Data Breach Management Protocol
- Clear Desk Guidelines
- Information Sharing Protocol
- ICT Guide on Password Protection and Encryption
- USB Device Procedures

3.12.3 Training and Awareness Requirements

All users who have access to information that must be sent over the Council's email system will be trained in information security and protective marking, sharing and disclosing information before being allowed access to the system. This training will cover classification of documents.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to everyone who handles, or processes, Inverclyde Council/HSCP information, including, but not limited to, employees, Elected Members and third party contractors.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Communication of the Policy

This Policy, along with the associated Policy Implementation Guide, will be available on ICON (the Council intranet).

6 RISK

6.1 Legislative Risk

This Policy takes into account various legislative requirements, including the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2022, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

For the avoidance of doubt and in the event of a conflict between legislation, policy or best practice guidelines, legislation must take priority. This also applies to any future legislation which may be enacted.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 Consultation and Engagement

This Policy was updated in consultation with the Corporate Management Team and the Information Governance Steering Group.

7.2 Equality Impact Assessment

This Policy does not require an Equality Impact Assessment as there is no evidence to indicate that its contents could affect individuals differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Protected Characteristics.