
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	21 September 2010
Report By:	Corporate Director Organisational Improvement and Resources	Report No:	POL/19/10/PW
Contact Officers:	Paul Wallace	Contact No:	01475 712700
Subject:	Responding to the Economic Downturn – Progress Report		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to provide an update on how the Council is seeking to manage the impact of the economic downturn at a corporate and service level.
- 1.2 The Report provides an update on progress with the Action Plan approved in May 2009 (Appendix 1) and the set of indicators approved in November 2009 which will help assess the impact of the downturn on the Council (Appendix 2).

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Policy and Resources Committee considered an initial report on 31 March 2009 which outlined the potential risks for the Council at a corporate and service level of the current economic downturn.
- 2.2 It was agreed that an Action Plan should be prepared which focused on maintaining investment programmes and services in the medium term; reviewing governance frameworks, policies and delivery arrangements where appropriate; and ensuring the Council can effectively manage through the economic downturn and prepare for the recovery.
- 2.3 A further report was submitted to Committee on 26 May 2009 which included an Action Plan developed by the Working Group who had reviewed relevant information from across the organisation.
- 2.4 The Working Group also developed a set of indicators to help assess the impact of the downturn on the Council which were approved by Committee on 17 November 2009.
- 2.5 The Working Group met on 5 August 2010 to monitor progress with the Action Plan (Appendix 1), to review and update the indicators (Appendix 2) and consider any other relevant issues with regard to the economic downturn prior to submitting this Report to Committee.
- 2.6 Having reviewed the Action Plan and indicators the Working Group are of the view that the position of the Council and the wider area remains largely unchanged since March 2010. Although there would appear to have been some positive developments in the national economy these have yet to have any tangible impact on either the Council or the communities of Inverclyde.
- 2.7 The primary concern of the Working Group remains the likely impact of a significant contraction in public sector resources and the consequences this will have for Inverclyde where there is a high level of dependence on public sector employment.
- 2.8 The Working Group recognised the extensive activity undertaken with regard to employability (specifically through FJF and FSF), and believe that this has helped to buffer any significant increase in JSA although there has been an increase in number of households in receipt of Council Tax Benefit

- 2.9 The Working Group also recognised that although the Council and partner agencies have been successful in attracting significant funding from external sources (FJF, ESF and ERDF) these are all scheduled to terminate in March 2011. A report seeking approval to submit further applications for European Funding to support employability activity was submitted to the Regeneration Committee.
- 2.10 Further action with regard to the local economy is being progressed on a partnership basis through the SOA Programme Board and the Outcome Delivery Groups focused on Economic Regeneration, Employability and Social Regeneration/Area Renewal.
- 2.11 The Working Group will continue to meet to review progress against the Action Plan and further updates on the indicators will be submitted to Committee in due course.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a. consider and comment on the progress made with regard to the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1; and
- b. note the current position with regard to the indicators set out in Appendix 2 which help assess the impact of the Economic Downturn on the Council and the area.

Paul Wallace
Corporate Director
Improvement and Performance

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Policy and Resources Committee considered an initial report on 31 March 2009 which outlined the potential risks for the Council at a corporate and service level of the current economic downturn.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed that an Action Plan should be prepared which focused on maintaining investment programmes and services in the medium term; reviewing governance frameworks, policies and delivery arrangements where appropriate; and ensuring the Council can effectively manage through the economic downturn and prepare for the recovery.
- 4.3 A further report was submitted to Committee on 26 May 2009 which included an Action Plan developed by the Working Group who had reviewed relevant information from across the organisation.
- 4.4 The Working Group has continued to meet on a regular basis to monitor progress against the Action Plan and consider any other relevant issues with regard to the economic downturn.
- 4.5 The Working Group also developed a set of indicators to help assess the impact of the downturn on the Council which were approved by Committee on 17 November 2009.
- 4.6 These indicators have been reviewed and updated by the Working Group and the current position is outlined in Appendix 2.
- 4.7 The Working Group will continue to meet to review progress against the Action Plan and further updates on the indicators will be submitted to Committee in due course.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct HR, Legal or Equalities issues arising from this Report - any financial implications arising from the Report will be managed from within existing resources.

6.0 CONSULTATION

Members of the Working Group and other relevant officers were consulted in the preparation of this Report.

Appendix 1

Responding to the Economic Downturn – Action Plan Maintaining Investment Programmes and Services in the Medium Term

Potential Risk	Mitigating Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Update
Downturn has negative impact on ability of Council to deliver key investment programmes such as SEMP, Key Leisure Sites or commitments to Riverside Inverclyde.	The detailed funding models for these key investment programmes are incorporated in the Financial Strategy.	CMT/Chief Financial Officer	Six Monthly	Financial Strategy and key funding models are monitored and updated on an ongoing basis.
Downturn has a negative impact on income streams such as Council Tax, NDR, Commercial/Industrial Rents and income from Planning Fees undermining the agreed Budget and affecting service delivery.	<p>These income streams have been recognised by the CMT as an important element of the Budget and are monitored on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Any significant issues will be flagged up in the regular monitoring reports submitted to Committee.</p>	CMT/Chief Financial Officer	Monthly	<p>These income streams are monitored on an ongoing basis through the budget monitoring process and reviewed monthly by CMT.</p> <p>Any issues are flagged up in regular monitoring reports to Committee.</p> <p>Council Tax Collection 2009/10 was 93.7%, this was a 0.4% increase on 2008/09.</p> <p>Planning Fee income is projected to fall short of budget by approx £130k in 2010/11.</p>

Appendix 1

<p>Downturn generates increased costs at a corporate and service level and reduces the ability of the Council to dispose of assets.</p>	<p>Robust budget monitoring on an ongoing basis coupled with a focus on identifying and securing further.</p> <p>Council recognised issues regarding disposal of assets and made provision in 2009/2011 Budget to sustain Capital Programme in lieu of capital receipts.</p>	<p>CMT/DMTs</p> <p>Corporate Director Regeneration and Environment/ Chief Financial Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing through CPIG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Phasing for sale of capital assets delayed until 2012/13 at the earliest – SEMP and AMP adjusted to take account of this delay.</p>
<p>Downturn creates increased demand for services in the short term, e.g. Economic and Social Regeneration, in the short term.</p>	<p>Reports have been submitted to Regeneration Committee outlining additional activity been undertaken by Economic and Social Regeneration to support local businesses and allocating additional resources.</p>	<p>Head of Regeneration and Planning</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Increased demand for employability activities funded from FJF / FSF.</p> <p>Report to be submitted on current position of local labour market to Regeneration Committee in September 2010.</p>
<p>Downturn impacts in the medium term on services such as Education or Social Care where, in addition to changes in demand driven by demographic change and policy pressures, there is likely to be an increase in demand for advice, mental health and addiction services.</p>	<p>Demand trends monitored on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Corporate Directors/DMTs</p>	<p>Ongoing – issues will be flagged up to CMT and the relevant Committee.</p>	<p>Information on demand for free school meals and debt advice has been incorporated into indicators developed by Working Group.</p>

Appendix 1

<p>Downturn negatively impacts on funding available to the Council.</p>	<p>Develop coherent, corporate approach to charging and income generation.</p> <p>Maximise external funding from sources such as the Town Centre Regeneration Fund or the various Lottery Funds to supplement existing resources and support the delivery of agreed outcomes.</p>	<p>Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>Corporate Director Education and Communities/ External Funding Group</p>	<p>Agreed in 2009/11 Budget.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Council participating in benchmarking exercise around charging set up by Clyde Valley Review.</p> <p>External Funding Group to identify opportunities to secure funding from external sources and take overview of all external funding bids.</p>
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Appendix 1

Responding to the Economic Downturn – Action Plan Reviewing governance frameworks, policies and delivery arrangements

Potential Risk	Mitigating Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Update
Downturn could impact negatively on relationships with key suppliers resulting in problems of supply chain sustainability, contract disputes and need to renegotiate contracts.	Services need to review position with regard to key suppliers and assess terms and conditions of contracts.	DMTs	September 2009	Completed
	Review approach to resolution of disputes with suppliers to ensure position of Council is protected.	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	September 2009	Ongoing
Downturn could impact on policies or programmes currently in place to replace or upgrade plant or equipment.	ICT already reviewing existing refresh programmes to extend lifecycle of existing asset base.	Head of Customer Services and Business Transformation	September 2009	Revised 2010/14 Capital Programme approved in February 2010.
	Fleet and plant will be addressed as part of fleet management review.	Corporate Director Regeneration and Environment	Report submitted to Special P&R Committee in June 2009	Report approved and most vehicles procured.
Downturn could generate need for amendment of existing, or creation of new, policies and processes on interaction with local businesses.	Review policies and processes currently in place with regard to interaction with local businesses to establish need for change.	DMTs	September 2009	No issues flagged up. Business Employment Programme introduced July 2010.

Appendix 1

<p>Downturn could impact on approach adopted by Council to procurement.</p>	<p>Strategic Procurement Framework (SPF) to P&R Committee on 26 May 2009.</p> <p>Adopt new approach to advertising contacts through national portal and Council Website.</p>	<p>Chief Financial Officer</p>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>SPF approved and updated – June 2010.</p> <p>Being addressed through pilot project evaluating benefits of national portal and .Council Website.</p> <p>Proposals with regard to Draft Standing Orders to be considered through SPF.</p>
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Appendix 1

Responding to the Economic Downturn – Action Plan

Effectively managing through the economic downturn and prepare for the recovery

Potential Risk	Mitigating Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Update
Council does not manage impacts of downturn effectively.	<p>CMT will consider action plan at monthly budget meeting and identify any remedial action required.</p> <p>Working Group will continue to meet on a regular basis to consider issues and advise CMT and Members.</p>	<p>Corporate Management Team</p> <p>Working Group</p>	<p>Monthly</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CMT addresses any relevant issues as part of monthly meeting.</p> <p>Working Group has met regularly from March 09 to review progress on action plan.</p>
Council does not plan effectively for the recovery.	<p>Working Group to develop relevant indicators from across organisation to track impact of downturn and identify opportunities to take positive action.</p> <p>Working Group will continue to meet on a regular basis to consider issues and advise CMT and Members.</p>	Working Group	Ongoing	<p>Indicators were reported to P&R Committee in November 2009.</p> <p>Position at 1/7/10 covered in Appendix 2.</p>

Economic Downturn – Recovery Indicators

<u>Measure</u>	<u>What it tells us about any recovery</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Position as at 01/04/09</u>	<u>Position as at 01/07/09</u>	<u>Position as at 01/10/09</u>	<u>Position as at 01/01/10</u>	<u>Position as at 01/07/10</u>
1/ Retail Price Index Inflation	Increasing RPI would indicate increasing demands for goods, housing, staffing & therefore recovery.	A Puckrin	-0.4%	-1.6%	-1.4%	+2.4%	+5.1%
2/ Building Inflation 'All In tender Price Index' (TPI) from Building Cost Information Service (* = forecast)	Increasing TPI would indicate increasing demand in construction sector.	J Lynch Index % Increase pa	216 (-12.6)	219 (-11.0)	211 (-12.4)	211 (-5.0)	210 (-4.1)*
3/ Job Seekers Allowance • Claimant Numbers	Reduction could indicate recovery.	S Jamieson	2679	3031	2708	2269	2400
4/ Households in receipt of Council Tax Benefit:- • Number • %	Links to JSA measure above Reductions indicate recovery.	F Borthwick	10322 26.4%	10633 27.1%	11197 28.4%	11052 28.1%	11429 29.05%
5/Number of Children eligible for Free School Meals	A reduction in the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals could mean fewer families in receipt of qualifying benefits. Figures show number of pupils eligible to receive FSM out of total pupil population.	W Bain	1,225/ 10,900 (11.2%)	1,230/ 9,338 (13.2%)	1,473/ 10,943 (13.5%)	1,494/ 10,774 (13.9%)	1,521/ 9,124 (16.7%)
6/ Property Enquiries	Higher numbers of enquiries would indicate increased economic activity.	S Jamieson	7 in Qtr	7 in Qtr	8 in Qtr	20in Qtr	17 in Qtr

<u>Measure</u>	<u>What it tells us about any recovery</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Position as at 01/04/09</u>	<u>Position as at 01/07/09</u>	<u>Position as at 01/10/09</u>	<u>Position as at 01/01/10</u>	<u>Position as at 01/07/10</u>
7/ Building Warrants Processed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major • Minor 	Increases in warrants could indicate increased economic activity.	S Jamieson	Major: 13 (£79,798) Minor: 119 (£25,164)	Major: 12 (£38,383) Minor: 142 (£30,095)	Major: 15 (£50,072) Minor: 152 (£29,606)	Major: 13 (£32,353) Minor: 117 (£29,670)	Major: 19 (£38,117) Minor: 110 (£25,543)
8/ Average number of Job Applications per externally advertised vacancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade C/D • Grade E/H • Grade I/O 	Increased numbers of individuals applying for jobs indicates fewer jobs available.	A Moore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 27 • 27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 • 26 • 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 • 37 • 66 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 • 30 • 45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 • 15 • 20
9/ Financial & Debt Advice Referrals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers 	Total number of referrals and new cases for Money Advice and Debt Advice Total number of clients seeking benefits advice * reflects shift to Employment Support Allowance (ESA).	B Billings	460 190	510 355	483 321	300 333	147 638*