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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>30 September 2014</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/118/14/PC/GB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>George Barbour, Corporate Communications Manager</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712835</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Budget Consultation and Communication Plan</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Committee agree the consultation and communication plan for the budget proposals for 2015/17 as part of the 2015/2018 Budget Strategy.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council carried out budget consultation for the first time in Autumn 2012 to inform the 2013/16 budget. The consultation consisted of three key elements. Members of the Citizens' Panel were sent a postal questionnaire and the same questionnaire was published on the Council's website in order to obtain feedback from members of the public. In addition, a budget briefing session was held with Community Councils.

Limited feedback was obtained from these methods and it was agreed by the CMT and Policy and Resources Committee in February 2013 that the Council would develop a more comprehensive approach to consulting members of the public when setting the 2015/18 budget.

- 2.2 The council budget consultation and communications plan sets out proposals to consult with, staff, residents, community organisations and a range of other stakeholders to inform the budget process.
- 2.3 The communications plan will aim to deliver a consistent approach to branding and messaging, and combine utilising existing mechanisms with new online ones to encourage more residents and groups to take part in the budget consultation.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 contains a budget timeline that outlines:
- The key consultation processes involved in developing and setting the budget.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves:
- The consultation objectives, audiences, key mechanisms and timescales outlined in this report.
  - The timescales for undertaking the consultation contained within Appendix 1.
  - The consultation and community presentations are conducted in a non-political basis by Council officers and that elected members do not attend.

**Patricia Cassidy**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Council carried out budget consultation for the first time in Autumn 2012 to inform the 2013/16 budget. The consultation consisted of three key elements. Members of the Citizens' Panel were sent a postal questionnaire and the same questionnaire was published on the Council's website in order to obtain feedback from members of the public. In addition, a budget briefing session was held with Community Councils.

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## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the consultation and communications timeline. Below are the overall objectives of the consultation campaign, the key audiences targeted and the key mechanisms used.

- 5.2 The overall objectives of the consultation and communications strategy are:

- To ensure a high level of engagement across all audiences in setting the council's budget.
- To demonstrate clearly to the local community that Inverclyde Council and its elected members welcome and are actively listening to the views of its key audiences.
- To give all audiences the opportunity to be involved, influence and to have a say in the Council's budget setting process.

- 5.3 The key audiences for the Council's budget consultation and communications plan are:

- Community including members of the Youth Parliament, Parent Councils and other community organisations
- Council staff and trade unions
- Politicians (internal and external)
- Public sector partners, voluntary sector and community organisations
- Business sector/Industry stakeholders

- 5.4 Appendix 1 highlights the timescales for the Council's budget consultation and communications plan with each mechanism highlighted. Below are listed the key communication and consultation mechanisms:

- Consistent branding of all consultation and communications activity using the message: Inverclyde: your services, your say;
- A budget options document highlighting the issues affecting Inverclyde and the options being consulted on printed and distributed to community groups, public sector partners and business representatives and published online;
- Powerpoint templates for use by Chief Executive, CMT and heads of service in external presentations and internal updates to employees;
- Non-political community presentations encouraging community councils and groups to take part in the consultation;
- Business breakfast event(s) with representatives of the business community;
- Citizens' panel survey;
- Online survey created in Survey Monkey;
- Presentation to Inverclyde Alliance Board.
- Printed survey available in libraries and customer service centres;
- Staff cascade and briefings;
- ICON updates;
- Dedicated budget consultation website pages set up

at [www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay);

- Social media engagement through Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #Inverclydeyoursay to encourage residents to get involved in the consultation;
- Press releases and media briefing;
- One-to-one briefings offered to external politicians (MP and MSPs) on the budget options and consultation.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Finance

The cost of carrying out a Citizens' Panel survey will be met from the existing budget. However it will cost 4 x £850 for four focus groups with members of the Citizens' Panel which cannot be met within the existing budget. The cost of communications activity will be met by existing budgets. There will be additional costs of £4,750 to advertise community events, print copies of the questionnaire and some promotional posters to be made available at libraries and customer service centres. A total budget of £8,150 will be required.

#### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Budget Development	Communications	2014/2015	£13,000		Funded from Budget Development Ear Marked Reserves

### 6.2 Personnel

N/A

### 6.3 Legal

N/A

### 6.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

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YES (see attached appendix)

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NO -

### 6.5 Repopulation

N/A

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 N/A

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A

	Sep-14				October 14					Nov-14				Dec-14				Jan-15					Feb-15				Mar-15				
	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	
Directorate Savings Proposals Developed and Presented to CMT																															
Savings Proposals Refined by CMT																															
Joint Budget Group Meetings																															
All Member Briefings (pre consultation and post consultation)										06-Nov																					
Formal engagement with members																															
Policy and Resources Committee				30-Sep						07-Nov		18-Nov											03-Feb								
Draft budget options prepared																															
Budget options document printed and published online																															
Budget options document sent to key stakeholders and community groups																															
Branding developed and comms material drafted (incl templates)																															
Cascade information to staff on the options document and budget consultation																															
Consultation results presentation & briefing to ECMT for cascade to staff.																															
Cascade information to staff on the results of the budget consultation																															
Community and stakeholder consultation events with CMT																															
Update to community groups and stakeholders on results of consultation																															
Business sector breakfast events																															
Presentation to Inverclyde Alliance board																															
Carry out focus groups																															
Dedicated website pages published at www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay																															
External survey - Survey Monkey questions developed																															
External survey - Survey Monkey survey launched																															
External survey - Printed survey available in libraries and customer service centres																															
External survey - printed edition uploaded to survey monkey edition																															
Four page budget special published in Inview newspaper and delivered to households																															
Media budget consultation briefing																															
Press release issued																															
Social media promotion																															
Feedback published on consultation results 'you said, we did'																															
Budget set by Inverclyde Council																															