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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 November 2014</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/121/14/PC</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 the Committee agree the consultation and communication plan for the budget proposals for 2015/17 for the proposed options as agreed at agenda item 12 as part of the 2015/2017 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 for the 2015/2018 Budget Strategy was approved at the special meeting of the Committee on 30 September 2014. The 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 plan has been updated and is outlined in section 5. The aim is to deliver a consistent approach to branding and messaging, and utilising existing mechanisms with new online tools to encourage more residents and groups to take part in the budget consultation.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 contains a budget time line that outlines the key consultation processes involved in developing the budget proposals.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the consultation programme and timeline outlined in section 5 and appendix 1 of this report.

**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 updated 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 individuals, 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 planning partners and 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 the 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 and focus groups;
- Online budget simulator tool ;
- 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 allocation of £13,000 to meet the costs of the consultation exercise was agreed at the Policy and Resources Committee on 30 September 2014.

#### 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 Human Resources

N/A

### 6.3 Legal

N/A

### 6.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES (see attached appendix)

NO -

### 6.5 Repopulation

N/A

## 7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Corporate Management Team has had discussion with Trades Unions via the Joint Budget group which will continue as the budget is developed.

## 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)																														
Formal engagement with members																														
Policy and Resources Committee																														
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 <a href="http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay">www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay</a>																														
Develop content for online budget simulator																														
Online budget simulator launched																														
External survey - Printed survey available in libraries and customer service centres																														
Results from online budget simulator analysed																														
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																														

INVICTAD:  
Report Issued

INVICTAD:  
01 Dec - Kilmacolm  
04 Dec - Greenock

INVICTAD:  
09 Dec - Gourock  
10 Dec - Wemyss Bay / Inverkip

30-Sep

07-Nov

18-Nov

03-Feb

14 Dec

19/10 Dec

09-Dec

19-Feb