

Report To: Policy and Resources Committee **Date:** 15 November 2016

Report By: Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources and Communications **Report No:** HR/30/16/GB

Contact Officer: George Barbour, Corporate Communications Manager **Contact No:** 712385

Subject: Budget Consultation and Communications Plan

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present proposals regarding consultation and communications on the Council's budget.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council budget consultation and communications plan sets out proposals to consult with residents, community organisations and a range of other stakeholders to inform the budget process.
- 2.2 The consultation will aim to deliver a consistent approach to branding and messaging with the budget consultation launching on 16 November 2016 and ending on 9 January 2017.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves:
- The consultation objectives, audiences, key mechanisms, questionnaire and timescales outlined in this report.

Steven McNab
Head of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Communications

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council has delivered successful budget consultation and engagement process which launched in 2014 and in 2015.
- 4.2 The Members' Budget Working Group (MBWG) confirmed that they do not wish to take any further savings beyond the proposals contained in Appendix 1 of the 'budget strategy report 2017/20' this side of the May 2017 Local Government elections. There is however a clear wish that officers undertake a consultation exercise and that this be concluded well in advance of the purdah period for the local elections.
- 4.3 The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has recommended that to ensure that the consultation feedback is received by the current Council as part of the 2017 budget report, then the consultation will need to commence prior to the Christmas period. It is therefore proposed that the consultation is launched on 16 November 2016 and closes on 9 January 2017.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the consultation and communications timeline for the budget consultation. Below are the overall objectives of the consultation campaign, the key audiences targeted and the key mechanisms used.
- 5.2 In the absence of detailed budget savings proposals, it is considered inappropriate to use the budget simulator which has proven successful in the 2014 and 2015 budget consultation exercises. An online 'survey monkey' will be developed, with more detail on the questions presented to the October Members' Budget Working Group meeting.
- 5.3 The overall objectives of the consultation 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 determining the Council's priority based budget.
 - To seek feedback on the services Inverclyde Council needs to protect or reduce, as well as local people's views on charging for services.
- 5.4 The key audiences for the Council's budget consultation and communications plan are:
 - Community.
 - Council staff and trade unions.
 - Partners and the business community.
- 5.5 Appendix 1 highlights the timescales and key milestones for the Council's budget consultation. Below are listed the key communication and consultation mechanisms:
 - Consistent branding of all consultation and communications activity using the consultation message: 'Your Council, Your Say'.
 - Double page feature published in InView newspaper and distributed to every household in Inverclyde.
 - Members of the Citizens' Panel who have provided an email address (around 500).
 - People who participated in a survey about last year's Budget Consultation exercise and agreed that they could be contacted about future Council consultations on the Budget and other topics (around 100, provided the permissions are not time-barred).
 - Online survey monkey questionnaire.
 - Updates from the Chief Executive to Council employees and ICON updates.

- Consultation details shared with partners and representatives of the business community.
- Staff cascade and briefings where required.
- Dedicated budget consultation website pages set up at 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 briefings where required.

5.6 Appendix 2 includes a copy of a questionnaire designed to elicit feedback from stakeholders for informing future budget decisions. The questionnaire will be published as an online survey and the results will be presented to councillors in February 2017.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications - One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
			£4,000		Additional funding required to support consultation and examination of survey results.

Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

6.2 Human Resources

N/A

6.3 Legal

N/A

6.4 Equalities

Council material including InView newspaper can be made available in other languages on request.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES (see attached appendix)

NO -

6.5 Repopulation

N/A

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 N/A

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A

Appendix 1

Budget Consultation Timeline

Date	Mechanism/stage
November 2016	Consultation launched: -Press release issued -Social media and online promotion begins -Dedicated website pages launched at the council's consultation web pages: www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay
	Survey monkey online questionnaire published
	Survey Monkey questionnaire emailed to the Citizens' Panel
	Chief Executive update emailed to employees, published on ICON
	December 2016
Chief Executive update emailed to employees, published on ICON	
Press release issued highlighting half way point in budget consultation	
January 2017	Chief Executive update emailed to employees, published on ICON
	Press release issued highlighting the final week of the budget consultation
	Consultation closes -Press release issued -Social media and online promotion ends
w/b 16 January 2016	Analysis of budget consultation feedback
February 2016	Report back to the Council

Colour key:

■	External communication and engagement
■	Staff/internal communications

Appendix 2

Budget Consultation Questionnaire:

Inverclyde Council

Budget Consultation 2017/18

Thank you for your interest in Inverclyde Council's Budget Consultation exercise.

The Council will set its budget for 2017/18 on 16 February 2017. We would like to hear your opinions on a number of aspects of the Council's budget. Your answers to the questions in this survey will help the Council to make decisions about its budget for 2017/18 and also for the next few years.

The main questionnaire only contains 10 questions and should not take long to fill in. The closing date for completing the survey is **Monday, 9 January 2017**.

As you may be aware, Inverclyde Council, like many other public sector organisations, is facing a very difficult and challenging financial situation. As a result of reductions in Government funding and increasing demand for certain services, the Council needs to make substantial savings over the next three years. A number of recent events have further increased the uncertainty around public finances and the potential impact on the Council's budget; these include the outcome of the European Referendum and how the Scottish Government will use its new tax raising powers.

The current estimate indicates that Inverclyde Council will need to make savings of £22.5 million during the period 2017/20. Given the scale and pace of the savings required, the Council will have no option but to reduce spending in some areas of service delivery. This means that some front-line services currently delivered to Inverclyde residents will either be reduced or stopped altogether. The reason that front-line services are the main focus of potential savings is because those services cost the most money to deliver. The areas covered in this consultation are a representative sample of the choices about budget savings which the Council will face in the coming months and years.

Your views and opinions on the budget savings are integral to the decision-making process and will be carefully considered by the Council before final decisions are made about the budget.

The results of this questionnaire will be available to view on the Council's website from 9 February 2017. To view the papers for this meeting and for other Council committees, visit:  [Inverclyde Council committees and meetings](#).

To find out more about the Council's budget for 2017/18, visit  [Your Council, your say](#).

You can also view the Council's Financial Strategy 2016/24 here:  [Meeting of Inverclyde Council](#) (agenda item 2).

Q1

There are services the Council currently provides on a discretionary basis; many of these are listed below, together with the annual cost of providing those services. Please tell us whether or not you think the Council should continue to provide the following services, either at the current level or at a reduced level, or whether you think the service should cease altogether.

Service and annual cost of service	Do not change the service	Reduce the service	Stop the service	I do not have an view on this
Breakfast clubs in schools <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.15 million				
School clothing grants <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.21 million				
Grants to voluntary organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.3 million				
Public space CCTV <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.19 million				
Subsidised team sports for under 19 year olds <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.16 million				
Physical regeneration including a payment to Riverside Inverclyde <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.34 million				
Support for businesses, for example, marketing support and business grants <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.21 million				
Support for getting people into work and job retention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £2.53 million				
Public conveniences <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £0.17 million				

Q2

A number of services are currently provided by the Council at a more enhanced level than we are required to. Please tell us whether you think the Council should continue to provide the following services at the current level or whether service delivery should be at a reduced level.

Service and total annual cost of service	Current service provision	Reduced service provision	I do not have a view on this
Primary and secondary school teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none">£37 million			
School cleaning and catering <ul style="list-style-type: none">£4.2 million			
School transport <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.3 million			
Library services <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.1 million			
Community Wardens <ul style="list-style-type: none">£0.71 million			
Community learning and development <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.3 million			
Sports and leisure facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.35 million			
Community centres and halls <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.06 million			
Roads and lighting maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.1 million			
Refuse collection and disposal <ul style="list-style-type: none">£4.7 million			
Grounds maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.9 million			
Street cleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.5 million			
Customer Service Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none">£0.64 million			
Children and families' social work services <ul style="list-style-type: none">£10.37 million			
Adult mental health services <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.23 million			
Older persons' care at home services <ul style="list-style-type: none">£9 million			

Learning disability services • £6.48 million			
Physical and sensory disability services • £2.07 million			
Addictions services • £1.04 million			

Q3

The Council currently charges for some services. Please tell us if you think we should keep prices for the following services the same or increase charges.

Note: The following list comprises only those areas where the Council currently raises in excess of £50,000 of income per year.

Service and annual cost of service	Charge the same	Increase charges by up to 10%	Increase charges by more than 10%	I do not have a view on this
School meals • £0.94 million				
Pre-5 care - extra hours • £0.19 million				
School lets • £0.2 million				
Daily parking charges • £0.06 million				
Burials • £0.28 million				
Cremations • £0.55 million				

Q4

The Council does not currently charge for the following services. Please tell us whether you think the service should remain free for service users or whether the Council should introduce a charge for this service in the future.

Service	Continue with free service	Introduce a charge	I do not have a view on this
Swimming for under 16 year olds			
Swimming for over 60 year olds			
Older persons' community alarms			
Additional wheeled bins			
Primary school music tuition			
Physical aids and equipment to support people to live independently at home, for example, hand rails			
Are there any other services that the Council provides which you think we should charge for? <i>Please state.</i>			

Q5

Are there any other services provided to local residents which are not included in Questions 1-4 that you think the Council should reduce or stop providing? *Please state.*

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Q6

Council Tax

Current Government Policy is to allow increases in Council Tax to a capped maximum of 3% per year. A 3% increase in Council Tax would generate £810,000 of income each year for Inverclyde Council which would reduce the amount of cuts required. An increase of 3% would add between £24 (Band A) and £88 (Band H) per year to the Council Tax Bill for a property in Inverclyde.

Do you agree that in the current financial environment there should be an increase in Council Tax in Inverclyde?

Yes	
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No	
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If Yes, please state how much you think the Council Tax should be increased by.

1%	
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2%	
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3%	
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Other amount. <i>Please state.</i>	
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Q7

We would now like to ask you about the Council's role as a service provider.

Inverclyde Council, like other councils across Scotland, does not directly deliver all the services it provides for people in the local area.

Examples of alternative ways in which services can be delivered include:

- shared services with one or more council
- an arm's length external organisation, for example, the Inverclyde Leisure Trust
- delivered by the private sector
- services are delivered in partnership with community groups or charitable organisations.

Q7a

Do you think it is acceptable for Inverclyde Council not to deliver some services directly?

This is an acceptable option to me	This may be acceptable but I have reservations	This is not an acceptable option to me

Q7b

If it would save money, do you think the Council should increase the number of services it does not deliver directly?

Yes	
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No	
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Q7c

If the Council were to increase the services it does not directly deliver, what are your views on the following delivery models?

Method of service delivery	This is an acceptable option to me	This may be acceptable but I have reservations	This is not an acceptable option to me	I do not have an view on this
Shared services with one or more council				
An arm's length external organisation, for example, the Inverclyde Leisure Trust				
Services are delivered by the private sector				
Services are delivered in partnership with community groups or charitable organisations.				

Q8

The Council is the single biggest employer in Inverclyde and alternative service delivery options may have an impact on local jobs. How important an issue should this be for the Council when considering alternative service models?

Very important	Fairly important	Neither/nor	Not important	Not at all important

Q9

Do you have any other comments about the Council's budget? *Please state.*

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Q10

Are you happy to be contacted via e-mail about future Council consultations on the budget and other topics?

Yes	
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No	
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If Yes, please provide your e-mail address below.

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Profile questions about you

So that we can best respond to the needs of different local residents, we would now like to ask you questions that will help the Council to ensure it treats everyone fairly and equitably. If you are not comfortable answering any of these questions, please do not feel obliged to do so.

Q1

Are you?

Male	
Female	

Q2

What age are you?

16-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-54	
55-64	
65-74	
75+	

Q3

What is your employment status?

Employed full-time	
Employed part-time	
Government training scheme	
Looking after home or family	
Not working due to long term illness	
Retired	
Self-employed	
Student	
Unemployed	

Q4

What type of property do you stay in?

Live with relatives	
Own your home	
Rent from a housing association	
Rent from a private landlord	
Other. <i>Please state.</i>	

Q5

Where do you live in Inverclyde? *Please provide your postcode.*

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.