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East Dunbartonshire Council

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COUNCIL THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

REFERENCE: EDC/016/23/AD

LEAD OFFICER: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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SUBJECT TITLE: EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE FORWARD IN PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE TO FINANCIAL PLANNING & TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Report to is present to Council an update on financial planning and further development of the transformative agenda to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities and the 2023/24 Budget.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council

- 2.1** Notes the high-level outputs for Scotland's Census 2022 – Population & Household Estimates (*Appendix 1*) and, that further data analysis will be released by National Records Scotland on a phased basis from Spring 2024;
- 2.2** Approves the revised Locality Plans for Auchinairn, Hillhead & Harestanes, Lennoxton and Twechar (*Appendix 2*) and subject to approval, notes the planned next steps for implementation;
- 2.3** Notes the update on the Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 (*Appendix 3*) and the forthcoming launch of the new "Household Support Payment";
- 2.4** Notes the financial planning and budget update, including commentary in relation to ongoing and potential future risks to financial sustainability. (*Appendix 4*);
- 2.5** Notes the update provided on "Closing the Gap – The Transformative Agenda", the outputs from the recent Budget Benchmarking Research 2023/24 (*Appendix 5*) and notes that a further update on current efficiency workstreams will be presented to Council at its meeting on 14 December 2023;
- 2.6** Notes the outputs of the recent Schools Audio Visual Estate Review and approves the implementation of an upgrade programme as specified under Option 2 (3.70 – 3.75) and notes that subject to approval, the cost of this programme (£1.62m) will be funded from the capital budget over 2024/25 and 2025/26;

- 2.7** Notes the planned Budget Consultation campaign for 2023/24 (*Appendix 6*) and notes that the outputs will be presented to a future Council meeting for consideration;
- 2.8** Notes that an updated Corporate Risk Register will be presented for Council's consideration at its next meeting on 14 December 2023; and
- 2.9** Notes that an updated Workforce Planning Strategy will be presented for Council's consideration at its next meeting on 14 December 2023.

ANN DAVIE
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

3.0 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1** In June 2022, Council agreed a revised approach to strategic planning and performance: “East Dunbartonshire Forward in Partnership” (Report: EPB/053/22/AD). “East Dunbartonshire Forward in Partnership” supports the delivery of the Council’s revised strategic priorities and outcomes, decision-making and the appropriate prioritisation of services and resources.
- 3.2** “East Dunbartonshire Forward in Partnership” places citizens and communities at the heart of decision-making. The strategic priorities for 2022 - 2027 are categorised within the following themes: Health & Well-being; Access to Services; Finance and Employment; and Community and Environment.
- 3.3** Against the most challenging financial backdrop, these strategic priorities shaped the development of the Council’s General Revenue Fund Budget setting process for 2023/24, which was subsequently agreed in February 2023. The agreed Budget and the transformative agenda that underpins it (EPB/023/23/AD), is based on a longer-term strategy to protect services to communities; to redesign service operations and deliver those services locally based on local needs; and, to respond to the financial gap over a 3-year period.
- 3.4** To address these challenges, and by developing an innovative transformative agenda, the Council will be required to demonstrate the effective use of skills and resources within strategic planning, decision-making and collaborative working. The Council has demonstrated learning from the last few years and has applied this to develop new ways of working, which will result in cost efficiency, cost avoidance and better access to services. Collaborative leadership is more important than ever as the Council continues to work with partners, communities, and citizens to support recovery from the impact of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis; and to improve local outcomes.
- 3.5** As reported to Council in June 2023 (EPB/089/23/AD), Officers have been developing a series of workstreams to ensure that Council can respond to the various challenges it faces. Those challenges not only relate to the financial and economic environment, but also to the additional demands placed on services due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and general increases on demands for our services, from residents, communities, and businesses. As advised in June 2023, the first element of this work was to review the strategic leadership of the Council, which subsequently has been implemented from July 2023. For ease of reference, this review, with a streamlined strategic leadership team resulted in a **£550,088** per annum reduction to the cost of the senior officer and its administrative support establishment.
- 3.6** The June 2023 Council Report included reference to the Accounts Commission’s Report published in May 2023: “Local government in Scotland: Overview 2023”. In setting the tone for the challenges ahead Council’s June 2023 Report highlighted commentary from the Accounts Commission that ‘*Councils have never faced such a challenging situation, with demand and workforce pressures deepening after the Covid-19 pandemic and funding forecast to reduce in real terms*’. They further recommended ‘*that radical change, achieved through greater collaboration, is urgently needed if Councils are to maintain services*’.
- 3.7** This Report and its Appendices provides the latest update of the development and delivery of the strategic transformative agenda.

Scotland's Census 2022

- 3.8** In developing a longer-term strategy, it is important that the Council's revised approach recognises and considers any changes to the demographics across East Dunbartonshire. National Records Scotland (NRS) has recently published the first high-level outputs for Scotland's Census 2022.
- 3.9** Scotland's Census is the official count of every person and household in the country. There has been a Census every 10 years since 1801, except 1941. The 2021 Census in Scotland was moved to 2022 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 Census took place on 20 March 2022 and National Records of Scotland (NRS) has now published the first results.
- 3.10** The statistics released provide estimates of the total population (rounded) including a breakdown by five-year age groups at Scotland and local authority level, along with the total number of households. There are also figures showing the change in population since the last census in Scotland in 2011 – both at national and council level – as well as population density and household numbers. The full results, including for local authority area analysis, can be found on the Scotland's Census website: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-results/scotland-s-census-2022-rounded-population-estimates/>
- 3.11** At this stage, only a limited amount of data has been published at local authority level. No data for smaller areas is currently available, further data is scheduled for release throughout 2024. NRS will publish further results from the census from spring 2024 onwards. This will include detailed population data which supports community planning. In summer 2024, a series of topic data reports will be published providing new insights into the characteristics, including data on ethnicity, religion, the labour market, education, and housing. For the first time, it will also include information on armed forces veterans, sexual orientation and trans status or history.
- 3.12** Based on the information currently available, population and household estimates and initial analysis for East Dunbartonshire is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Locality Plan Development

- 3.13** Aligned to Council's strategic priorities, in June 2022 (EPB/053/22/AD), Council was provided with an update on the review and refresh of East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Locality Plans (formerly Place Plans).
- 3.14** Significant work has been undertaken since the last update to Council and the revised Locality Plans, for Auchinairn, Hillhead & Harestanes, Lennoxton and Twechar are attached in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.15** The purpose of a locality plan as set out in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, is described as *'local outcomes to which priority is to be given by the community planning partnership with a view to improvement the achievement of the outcomes in the locality; a description of the proposed improvement in the achievement of the outcomes and the period within which the proposed improvement is to be achieved'*;
- 3.16** The Act requires Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) to identify and consult 'appropriate' community groups and persons during the production of a locality plan. Further, it states, "*community bodies*", which in relation to a community planning

partnership, means bodies, whether or not formally constituted, established for purposes which consist of or include that of promoting or improving the interests of any communities (however described) resident or otherwise present in the area'. This definition is important as it clearly demonstrates that CPPs are not just required to engage with formal third sector and community-based organisations, but also the less formal, grassroots community groups.

3.17 East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership approved the proposal for the review of the locality plans (Place Plans) for Auchinairn 2019-2024; Hillhead and Harestanes 2018-2023; Lennoxton 2018-2023 and Twechar 2017- 2022.

3.18 The principles for reviewing the plans were that the priorities should:

- Only be able to be addressed through partnership working
- Tackle poverty and inequality

This provided the foundation for the review with the flexibility to apply a tailored approach based on local circumstances.

3.19 The CPP agreed the operational arrangements for processing issues, outcomes, and actions that are out with the scope of locality plans; and agreed the need for greater focus on actions that tackle poverty and inequality through partnership working. The initial stage involved a comprehensive stakeholder mapping and profiling exercise being carried out.

3.20 The Partnership agreed a structured approach to gathering input, addressing concerns, and taking action. The approach "*We asked, You said, We heard, We are doing*" was implemented promoting transparency, inclusivity and responsiveness. This additional step '*We heard*', allowed opportunity to communicate back to stakeholders, what was heard from them. Demonstrating importantly that their input was genuinely considered and valued.

3.21 Consultation ran from 4 December 2021 until 3 April 2022. Individuals and groups could participate through a range of mediums, including surveys, telephone, the 'blether box' workshops, and could also participate in activity-based events. Further, street survey work and pop-up stations were facilitated in our priority data zones.

3.22 In total, 643 people participated in the consultation. 599 individual surveys were returned and 4 'blether box' workshop events were hosted, supporting 44 individuals to participate, and 20 people participated in activity-based engagement events.

3.23 All four communities identified similar high-level themes:

- Health & Well-being
- Access to Services
- Finance and Employment
- Community and Environment

Auchinairn, Hillhead & Harestanes, and Lennoxton communities identified the high-level theme of Children and Young Peoples' Health and Well-being.

3.24 The Partnership developed detailed Action Plans to support the delivery of the identified local priorities. These contain measures that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time-bound) and will help to illustrate how local

delivery is improving outcomes, by demonstrating the cumulative impact of partnership working to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities.

3.25 The next steps for implementation of the Plans includes:

- Creation of Frontline Workers Forums: Aligning with the Locality approach, officers will establish front line workers forums to serve as vital platforms where front line colleagues come together to share first-hand insights. These forums empower frontline workers to voice concerns, propose solutions and collaboratively contribute to the effective implementation of the Locality Plans.
- Locality (Community) Forums: Amplifying Community Voice and Locality Plan Impact then establishment of locality forums within each of the locality areas. These will align with established community forums, where appropriate, for example, Twechar Tenants and Residents Association. These forums will be open to representatives from organised community organisation, third sector organisations, businesses, and community planning partners. The forums will provide a space where communities engage in meaningful dialogue, ensuring that the community's diverse perspective shape the trajectory of the locality plans. By promoting inclusive discussions and collaborative decision-making, Locality Forums will strengthen the alignment of locality plans with the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.
- An Engagement Strategy will be launched to inform residents and community organisations about the revised Plans, emphasising their involvement in the implementation process.
- Collaborative Partnership with community planning partners, businesses, communities, and all relevant stakeholders to maximise the collective impact.
- A robust progress monitoring and evaluation framework will be established to track the progress of the implementation, enabling timely adjustments if required.
- Regular updates available to communities and keeping residents informed, on progress and achievement of the implementation

Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 & Household Support Payment

3.26 The Council's Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 was launched in April 2023. An overview of progress on its implementation since the last update in June 2023, is detailed in **Appendix 3**. Further progress reports will continue to be provided to Council throughout the course of 2023/24.

3.27 Additionally, as part of the updated Programme, Council agreed to the introduction of a "Household Support Payment. It was agreed that the Household Support Payment should be available to up to 1,000 low-income households not on means tested benefits and that a one-off payment of £150 should be made to eligible households from October 2023.

3.28 Officers have looked at various factors to determine a process which will provide support to the intended households whilst providing a robust framework for validating applications, to ensure the best use of public funds and to ensure that the scheme reaches the targeted households.

3.29 There are two constraints in the design process that must be noted before examining the thresholds for the claims.

1. The Council does not have access to HMRC data and therefore no knowledge of household incomes within the authority. This makes it difficult to estimate the number of households that are eligible for any given threshold.
2. The Council does not have access to a system which will allow checks on applications beyond the information supplied by the applicant. For example, there is no way to determine how many bank accounts applicants may have and therefore exceed the income or savings limit.

3.30 The first part of the development process was to determine the household incomes limits for means tested benefits. The main means tested benefit for households is Universal Credit which varies depending on the claimants' personal circumstances and income. The DWP will calculate the 'Maximum UC' the claimant could be entitled to using a variety of factors including housing composition, specific situations such as carer, disabled child, and Housing Costs.

3.31 Once this is calculated then the DWP deduct 55p in every pound (Net wage) for the claimant earns above the applicable 'work allowance'. The following table shows the upper limit when UC entitlement would be nil for 6 different households which have Housing Costs entitlement.

Household	Max net monthly earnings before entitlement to UC is nil	Estimated max gross annual salary before entitlement to UC is nil*
Single, under 25-year-old, £300 eligible housing costs, no extra elements	£1,072 net	£13,000 gross
Single, over 25-year-old, £300 eligible housing costs, no extra elements	£1,214 net	£15,500 gross
Single, over 25, Limited Capability for Work (pre-April 2017) and £300 housing costs	£1,860 net	£26,900 gross
Couple, over 25, no children, no extra elements, £500 eligible housing costs	£1,959 net	£28,650 gross
Single parent, over 25, with one child born before April 2017, no other elements and £500 eligible housing costs.	£2,528 net	£38,700 gross
Couple aged over 25, with 2 children born before April 2017, no other elements and £500 eligible housing costs.	£3,403 net	£54,800 gross
* Assumes one earner per family with basic tax code i.e. no deductions other than tax and NI.		

3.32 While this sets out the maximum that households can receive for means tested benefits, it is also important to determine what is classed as a low income.

3.33 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2022 | JRF](#)) sets out a Minimum Income Standard (MIS) for the UK in 2022. It has determined that a single person needs to earn £25,500 a year to reach a minimum acceptable standard of living in April 2022. A couple with two children needs to earn

£43,400 between them. There are numerous household compositions, and it is impossible to account for every combination. MIS applies to households that comprise a single adult or a couple, with or without dependent children. It covers most such households, with its level adjusted to reflect their composition.

3.34 The two standards are different, for example, a single person becomes ineligible for UC at £15,500 (over 25) but the MIS is £25,500. For a couple with two children UC ceases at £54,800 but the MIS is £43,400.

3.35 To this end officers have determined the earning and saving limits for Council's Household Support Payment are set as follows:

Household	Household Income	Maximum Savings*
Single Person	£17,500	£800
Couple no children	£25,000	£1,200
Family with Children	£30,000	£800 (1 adult) £1,200 (2 or more adults)

**The maximum savings are in line with the provision of Scottish Welfare Grants.*

3.36 As well as the income limits as set above, the following rules will apply to the scheme:

1. Applicants must have a Council Tax Liability in East Dunbartonshire as at 1 September 2023.
2. Applicants must not be in receipt of any of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Tax Credit, Employment Support Allowance Income related, Job Seekers Allowance Income Based, Income Support, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction.
3. Applicants will be required to complete an online form through the Council website and return it with documentary evidence of their income and savings.
4. All applications will be checked by Officers and further information may be requested to complete the application process.
5. If the claim is successful, applicants will receive a one-off payment of £150 direct to their bank account from October 2023.
6. Household support payments will be made on a first come first served basis until the funds are exhausted.

3.37 Based on the above, the Household Support Programme will be publicly launched in the coming weeks and will be supported with a communications plan. As with the other supports within the Cost of Living Support Programme, regular updates on its progress will be presented to future Council meetings.

Financial Planning Update

3.38 In accordance with established practice and to ensure transparent governance, the Chief Finance Officer has provided a financial update, **Appendix 4**, which provides further information on the financial challenges as they continue to emerge. This

further refines the forecasts set in February 2023 as the Council agreed its Budgets for the year(s) ahead and following the previous update to Council in June 2023.

3.39 This work will include the ongoing consideration of strategic planning and performance processes and ultimately the affordability of current plans. The Council continues to operate within a difficult and uncertain strategic context and faces longer-term financial pressures including a lack of certainty and flexibility over long-term funding as well as the prospect of major internal service reforms. This Appendix also provides an update on the ongoing work within the newly signed Verity House Agreement and the Fiscal Framework between UK, Scottish and Local Government.

“Closing the Gap – the Transformative Agenda”

- 3.40** Work has continued to consider changes to the way in which Council delivers its priority services to the people, communities, and businesses within East Dunbartonshire. This has been a priority focus for the new Strategic Leadership Team and its Executive Officers’ Service teams. In addition, a suite of management actions resulting in cost reduction, cost avoidance and the prohibition of non-essential spend has been in place since April 2023.
- 3.41** One element of the work identified in paragraph 3.40 has been to review current vacancies across all services of the Council. Following consideration by the Policy & Resources Sub-Committee, a number of employees have been approved to leave the Council through either Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy or Voluntary Redundancy. It is important to note that the cost of release through early retirement and voluntary redundancy is funded from the Cost of Change Reserves Fund and therefore those salary costs previously incurred, represent a reduction to the current employee cost-base from the date of agreed release.
- 3.42** Whilst this work is ongoing (and will continue throughout the course of this and the next financial year), at the date of writing this Report, this has resulted in a headcount reduction of **31 FTE** (either through the release of displaced employees or through vacancy deletion, where work can be reallocated or absorbed within other roles).
- 3.43** In addition to the previously reported **£550,088** per annum reduction to the cost of the senior officer and its administrative support establishment (referenced above at 3.5), this will contribute an additional cost reduction of **£1,131,941** per annum to the current Council establishment. In total, this brings current employee costs down by **£1,682,029** per annum (based on current pay rates).
- 3.44** Officers are also working through a line-by-line budget review of all areas of operational spend. The process of “Operational Budget Challenge” across all Executive portfolios and through to specific service areas is ongoing. This will include cost avoidance, cost reduction, legitimate cost allocation to capital; a fundamental review of the East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Cultural Trust Management Fee and appropriate cost allocation the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 3.45** As part of the transformative strategy, Council Officers will, in conjunction with officers in the HSCP, review the overall HSCP funding and expenditure with a view to agreeing an appropriate, proportionate efficiency contributions from the HSCP budget towards the Council’s financial gap. This will involve a forensic line-by-line analysis of demand versus supply and cost of provision.

- 3.46** The extent to which increased provisions for the HSCP are fully funded within the settlement to Councils remains an area of active consideration and subject to much discussion at national level. There is the potential that such allocations reduce the core funding for the Council where additional provision is not made within Council's settlement and the Council seeks to comply with the requirements of the financial order.
- 3.47** For East Dunbartonshire, given the financial challenges faced and the changes in the demographic profile, it is critically important to understand the true cost of service demand on the services provided by the HSCP, particularly those which relate to social care and social services; and, to understand the opportunities yet to be realised from the transformation of HSCP services. In partnership with the senior management team of the HSCP, the Council's Strategic Leadership Team will carry out this review over the coming months.
- 3.48** In 2010, the Council engaged the Services of KPMG to consider the historic treatment of VAT in relation to the pre-Trust provision of sports and leisure services. On the 3 March 2023 the HMRC issued a Policy Paper noting that litigation (based on a "test" case) had concluded with the courts agreeing that local authorities' leisure services are provided under a statutory framework and can be treated as non-business for VAT purposes. This means that those previously provided Council sporting services are a non-business activity for VAT purposes and therefore not subject to VAT.
- 3.49** The HMRC has accepted that the Court's decision - this means that the tax incurred by the Council prior to the establishment of the Trust had been paid incorrectly by the Council for many years.
- 3.50** Work is ongoing to finalise the claim which has recently been revised, following additional Council diligence, to approximately **£1.2m**. This figure is prior to the application of interest, charges, and the resolution of a finite number of issues and therefore, may change.
- 3.51** As work develops and as further clarifications are confirmed, including the application of interest etc, further updates will be provided. However, it is important that this is yet to be confirmed and will be a one-off contribution to the financial gap.
- 3.52** On the 31 August 2023 the Audit & Risk Committee considered the Council's Draft Financial Statements for 2022/23. The Accounts reflected that the net assets of the Council had increased by £214.657m to £602.235m. Whilst there were a number of underlying movements in the balance sheet this positive movement was largely driven by the reduction in long-term liabilities. Specifically, this can be accounted for by the movement in the local government pension scheme which moved from a net liability to a net asset during the course of the year. For the Council, the prior year liability of £87.095m reduced to the extent that an asset of £157.154m was recorded at the year-end.
- 3.53** The Draft Financial Statements also note that the Local Government Pension Scheme, operating as Strathclyde Pension Fund, is administered by Glasgow City Council in accordance with the required pension regulations. On 13 September 2023 the Pension Fund Committee met to discuss the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at the 31 March 2023 and to:

- note the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 31st March 2023;
- approve the proposed Funding Strategy; and
- approve the draft Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) for consultation with appropriate interested parties.

3.54 The Report sets out the preliminary results of the valuation resulting from underlying movements in investments returns, inflation, salary increases, life expectancy and discount rates. Underlying movements have had a positive impact on the preliminary valuation with the value of the fund increasing to an overall funding level of 147% and representing a surplus of £8.902bn.

3.55 The proposed strategy considered a number of options to manage this surplus including retention, de-risking, increasing prudence and variation in the contribution rates. Each of these is evaluated within the Report including proposals for the reduction of employer contribution rates at:

- 6.5% (of pensionable payroll) from 1st April 2024
- 6.5% (of pensionable payroll) from 1st April 2025
- 17.5% (of pensionable payroll) from 1st April 2026

3.56 At the time of writing, the Council has yet to receive formal notification whether the Report was agreed by the Committee however a reduction in employers' contributions from April 2024 will have a material bearing on the overall payroll costs for the Council. Given the proximity of the Pension Committee to this meeting of the Council, the need for detailed work to be undertaken, and clarity about wider aspects of the Report yet to be confirmed, it is not reasonable to provide an early indication of the sums involved.

3.57 Any such variation does not change or otherwise undermine the strategic approach adopted by Council. It validates the approach taken by Council to take a longer-term approach to planning and deferring the need to make significant cuts until such time as is necessary. These aims were specified to protect those most effected by the current cost-of-living crisis.

3.58 It is especially important to note that the longer-term rate attributable to employers' contributions is 17.5% in 2026 is likely to be sustained thereafter. It is vital therefore that any short-term variation continues to support Council plans as part of moving to a financially sustainable model for service delivery and within Council's existing plans.

3.59 As referenced in the last SPPF Report to Council in June 2023 (EPB/089/23/AD), Officers have conducted a comprehensive benchmarking exercise across all Scottish local authorities to understand the range of budget reduction and/or income generation actions or considerations taken in response to their financial challenges.

3.60 This work also supports potential opportunities for collaboration. This work was conducted as a desk-top exercise, based on research in June 2023. All information was obtained from council websites, as such differing levels of information were available for each local authority. As all information is publicly available on Council websites, **Appendix 5** seeks to summarise the key trends on savings proposals and income generation and provides a full list of all the findings. It is important to note that all options detailed in this exercise were not necessarily actioned.

- 3.61** Officers are prioritising other development work in relation to operational cost reduction and cost avoidance and will continue to review operational cost assumptions based on Scottish and UK national strategies and economic indicators.
- 3.62** Additionally, Officers will continue to review and develop alternative policy options, which can be determined locally. A series of policy options will be developed and presented to Council for consideration from December 2023 onwards, to inform the General Revenue Fund Budget challenges.

School Audio Visual Estate Review

- 3.63** As part of this year's budget, Officers were remitted to carry out a review of the audio-visual resources within schools.
- 3.64** ICT has now concluded the review of the School Audio Visual Estate focussed on the delivery of the classroom curriculum. The school estate has had interactive panel whiteboards installed in the classrooms since the 6 PPP schools were completed in 2007.
- 3.65** Initially interactive whiteboards were installed in classrooms with a projector connected to a desktop which allowed the Teacher to mark on the board and control the computer from the whiteboard. Although the model changed, the technology remained very similar until recently when the whiteboards were replaced with touchscreen displays which range from 65 to 85 inches.
- 3.66** Schools which have benefited from the newer technology includes Lairdsland Primary, Holy Trinity and Woodland View. These schools have either had the screens wall mounted or installed on independent rise fall stands which allow for movement around the class or school.
- 3.67** Boclair Academy have an innovative setup with 75" screens at the front of the class and a smaller 50" screen at the rear of the class which mirrors the main screen allowing a greater visibility for pupils and flexibility in setting up the class furniture.

Current Situation

- 3.68** ICT have surveyed the schools across the estate to determine the current situation for the displays in the schools. There are currently 506 Interactive Whiteboards (IWB) in the Secondary estate and 96 in the Primary Estate. In examining the estate, there are a number of schools with little or no provision of IWBS. The following primaries have no screens:
- St Machans
 - Mosshead
 - Hillhead
 - Torrance
- 3.69** The survey estimates that 46 screens would be required to kit out each school with an average of 10 screens per school. Some of the projectors which power the IWB use bulbs which contain mercury. These bulbs are no longer manufactured and will become increasingly difficult to obtain.

Table 1: Breakdown of Interactive Whiteboards

	Interactive Whiteboards and Projectors	Additional Screens Required
Secondary	506	
Primary	96	46
Total	602	46

Options

3.70 Two options to upgrade the school AV estate have been considered.

Option 1

- replace all current projectors with modern projectors to remove the bulb issue. This would mean the replacement of 602 projectors at a cost of **£250,000**. However, the IWB is an older technology and will become difficult to repair. The projectors have an ongoing maintenance cost as the bulbs need replaced after a number of hours use.

Option 2

- replace all IWBs with modern screens which would remove the projectors and the ongoing costs associated with them. The costs for these are based on providing rise fall platforms in the primary schools and wall mounting in secondary schools as secondary schools are more likely to be able to take the weight of the devices as they were prepared with the IWB being wall mounted.
- It will cost **£250,000** to replace those in primary schools and **£1,250,000** to replace in secondary schools with a single screen at the front of the class. To provide additional screens in the primary school with no screens will cost **£120,000**.

Table 2: Cost of Options.

	Option 1	Option 2
Secondary	£ 210,000.00	£ 1,250,000.00
Primary	£ 40,000.00	£ 250,000.00
Additional Screens	n/a	£ 120,000.00
Grand Total	£ 250,000.00	£ 1,620,000.00

Indicative Timescales

- 3.71** Suppliers can typically replace 5 screens per day in a single school, this would equate to 120 to 130 days. This is dependent on empty classrooms and therefore is best suited to school holidays rather than during term time. Installations would be required across at least 2 financial years to meet a target of replacing the IWB across the estate.
- 3.72** Over the course of the next few years there are plans to build new schools and refurbish others, the number of IWB for these schools are currently included in this

survey although it is recognised that it is more appropriate that those schools are updated in their new premises.

Recommendation

- 3.73** It is recommended that **Option 2** is pursued to modernise the estate by replacing the IWB with modern screens across the estate over financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 3.74** If agreed, the upgrade programme, to commence from April 2024, will be developed and will prioritise those schools with no or fewer than average AV resources.
- 3.75** Whilst there is currently no financial allocation specifically for upgrading the School Audio Visual Estate within the current Capital Programme for 2023/24, 2045/25 or 2025/26, this can be funded from the capital budget.

Budget & Priorities: Community Engagement

- 3.76** Officers are currently developing a further budget engagement campaign ahead of the 2024/25 Budget, due to be agreed in February 2024.
- 3.77** Building on the most recent engagement exercise in late 2022, which was undertaken in the context of COVID-19 recovery and the cost-of-living crisis, this next community budget engagement exercise will seek views on Council priorities, cost-of-living support and fees and charges.
- 3.78** Planning for the 2024/25 budget and priority engagement campaign is well underway and it will launch in October 2023 with findings analysed to be able to report to Council in December 2023.
- 3.79** The engagement activity will serve to both inform our residents of the latest budget forecasts for the Council area and to seek views to inform budget proposals through a range of consultation and engagement activity.
- 3.80** To ensure the consultation reaches a wide and representative range of people who live and work in the area, officers will work with community planning partners, third sector organisations and community outreach networks to support participation from across the diverse population that makes up East Dunbartonshire.
- 3.81** **Appendix 6** provides further information on the consultation and engagement campaign, including the planned timeline.

Corporate Risk Register 2023/25

- 3.82** The Council fundamentally reviewed its approach to the development of its Corporate Risk Register in November 2022 (EPB/142/22/AD). The Corporate Risk Register 2022 detailed an assessment of risks across the six external influences: Political; Economic; Social; Technological; Legal; and, Environmental (encompassing health and wellbeing of our communities).
- 3.83** Given the ongoing challenges, as articulated in this Report and its Appendices; Reports on this Council's Agenda and previous reports to Council, it is appropriate that the Corporate Risk Register is reviewed timeously. An updated Corporate Risk Register will be presented to Council at its meeting in December 2023.

Workforce Planning Strategy

- 3.84** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's Workforce Planning Strategy 2018 – 2021 was not refreshed as planned. Given the consequential impact of the pandemic and the challenging economic climate, which has affected the labour market and the availability of the Council's future skill requirements, it is important that the Workforce Strategy is updated, to reflect the future shape of the organisation.
- 3.85** An updated Workforce Planning Strategy will be presented to Council at its meeting in December 2023.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

The implications for the Council are as undernoted.

- 4.1** Frontline Service to Customers – The Cost of Living Support Programme will support a broad range of East Dunbartonshire residents.
- 4.2** Workforce (including any significant resource implications) – The transformative agenda will continue to consider a range of workforce matters including the design of services, the size and shape of the workforce and the way in which roles are performed and configured. All and any potential changes will be discussed with the recognised trades unions in accordance with the Partnership at work Framework and changes will continue to be achieved through voluntary means, wherever possible, as previously committed by Council.
- 4.3** Legal Implications – None
- 4.4** Financial Implications – As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.
- 4.5** Procurement – None
- 4.6** ICT – As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.
- 4.7** Corporate Assets – As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.
- 4.8** Equalities Implications – The Council has a standard approach to equalities impact assessment and seeks to comply with guidance on “Making Fair Financial Decisions” from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This approach supports that objective.
- 4.9** Corporate Parenting - None
- 4.10** Other - None

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risks and control measures relating to this Report are as follows:-

- 5.1** The Report and its Appendices is designed to mitigate risk in relation to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and financial sustainability.

6.0 IMPACT

6.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH & RECOVERY - None

6.2 EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS - As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.

6.3 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE - As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.

6.4 SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES - As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.

6.5 ADULT HEALTH & WELLBEING - As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.

6.6 OLDER ADULTS, VULNERABLE PEOPLE & CARERS - As set out in the body of the Report and its Appendices.

6.7 CLIMATE CHANGE - None

6.8 STATUTORY DUTY - None

7.0 POLICY CHECKLIST

7.1 This Report has been assessed against the Policy Development Checklist and has been classified as being an operational report and not a new policy or change to an existing policy document.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 Scotland's Census 2022 – Population & Household Estimates

8.2 Appendix 2 Locality Plans for Auchinairn, Hillhead & Harestanes, Lennoxton and Twechar

8.3 Appendix 3 Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24

8.4 Appendix 4 Financial Planning & Budget Update 2023/24

8.5 Appendix 5 Budget Benchmarking Research 2023/24

8.6 Appendix 6 Budget Consultation 2023/24