

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Strategic Change and Communities
to Cabinet
of 28 November 2023**

Subject: The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight 2023

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Cabinet regarding the delivery of The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight 2023.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1.1 notes the progress made by officers in the delivery of The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight 2023 (a full update report is outlined in [Appendix 1](#)); and
- 2.1.2 requests that officers bring an annual report to the Cabinet to provide an overview of delivery each year.

3. Background

- 3.1 In March 2022, the Leadership Panel approved the [Tourism and Events Strategy](#). The strategy is driven by a clear focus on eight key offers, one of which is events and festivals.
- 3.2 In March 2023 South Ayrshire Council agreed a budget which included funding to deliver The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight. We also attracted a range of sponsors who provided funding and in-kind support for the event.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 The International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight, was delivered successfully on Friday 8, Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September 2023. The event was well attended with around 240,000 visitors in total across the three days.
- 4.2 The cost to the Council to deliver the event was £364,000; £250,000 was allocated as part of the Council's budget setting process; £50,000 was carried forward from the previous financial year due to events being impacted by COVID restrictions; £20,000 was allocated from the Council's tourism marketing budget and £44,000 came from the contribution to significant events fund. Some costs were one offs and will not be incurred for future events.

- 4.3 The spend was higher than previously projected as external supplier costs have increased significantly since previous large scale events were delivered. However, the International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight delivered significant economic benefit to Ayr by attracting over 240,000 people into the area and it put South Ayrshire in the spotlight by highlighting the area as a destination of choice. A full economic impact assessment is underway to measure the impact of the event in terms of the local economy.
- 4.4 Officers are now identifying sponsors to raise funding for next year's event.
- 4.5 We recognise that there are areas for improvement, as set out in [Appendix 1](#), and officers are taking these into consideration as they plan for the 2024 event.
- 4.6 It is proposed that officers will bring an annual report to the Cabinet to provide an overview of delivery each year. The annual report will include the economic impact study from the previous year's event.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The delivery of the event has been accommodated within existing tourism and events resources. The total cost to the Council was £364,000 from across the following budgets: Ayr Show core budget: £250,000; carry forward from previous financial year: £50,000; tourism marketing budget: £20,000; and contribution to significant events fund: £44,000

In addition, the event generated a total income of £256,325; £150,000 from sponsorship and : £106,325 from trading.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

- 8.2.1 The risk associated with rejecting the recommendations is that the Council misses the opportunity to deliver The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 2: Live, Work, Learn: Work and Economy and Priority 3: Civic and Community Pride: Pride in South Ayrshire.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the content of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Alec Clark, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Culture and Rural Affairs, and Councillor Brian Connolly, Portfolio Holder for Sport and Leisure and the contents of this report reflects any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

- 14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of Strategic Change and Communities will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight event update is reported to the Cabinet	30 November 2024	Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire

Background Papers [Report to Cabinet of 1 November 2022 - Proposal to Deliver an Airshow in September 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027](#)

[General Services Revenue Budget 2023-24 and Capital Investment Programme 2023-24 to 2034-35 – Proposals of the Conservative and Independent Members – 1 March 2023](#)

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Delivery of The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight 2023 Update

1.1 Audience and Engagement

Around 240,000 people attended the Low Green and the surrounding area between Friday 8 - Sunday 10 September 2023.

The social media coverage produced by the Council's Communications Team during the event (Friday 8 – Sunday 10 September) and issued on the Council's channels resulted in the following:

- Total Social Media reach on corporate social media channels– **1,600,439**.
- Total hits on website – our communications pointed customers to the dedicated AyrShow website, resulting in **171,100** hits over the weekend.

This brings reach on corporate channels to **1,771,539** (this does not include reach where posts were shared by other services or organisations)

Additionally, there were a range of radio interviews regarding the Ayr Show, such as the BBC Radio Scotland interview (Friday 8 September). Figures indicate an average daily reach of **123, 857** on Radio Scotland.

1.2 Charity Partner – The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

The RAF Benevolent Fund's welfare purpose for the Ayr Show was to use the event to reach and inform the RAF Family in Ayrshire, the West of Scotland and Northern UK in order to increase support for those in need. With 2 new Fund case workers recruited in Scotland and a model for engagement that was devised with South Ayrshire Council, the Ayr Show has played a significant part in reaching the aim.

By deploying the model across 13 Local Authorities in Scotland, the Fund's enquiry rate increased by 99% in 2023 Q1 (when the overall UK increase was 28%). This developed further and at the moment the busiest fund case worker across the UK is the one in the West of Scotland. There has been an increase in support provided in the West of Scotland and there are recent examples of support being provided to RAF veterans and their families who made contact with the Fund at the Ayr Show. We believe, as does the RAF Benevolent Fund, that the increase, which is likely to continue, is a direct benefit of the Fund being the Council's Charity Partner.

1.3 Flying Display Programme

The flying display programme was developed in partnership with our strategic partner, theSKYLAB, and Flying Display Director Les Garside-Beattie OBE (Group Captain Retired). In addition to securing military air displays and civilian aircraft, flying safety, logistics and legislative aspects were put in place to deliver the programme, as noted in [Annex 1](#).

1.4 The Festival Village

In addition to the flying display programme, there was a festival village at the Low Green with a wide range of activities, as detailed in [Annex 1](#), many of which were free for families to participate.

1.5 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was a key focus for the Ayr Show. TheSKYLAB, delivered a week-long set of activities at Prestwick Airport in the run up to the Ayr Show, which enabled pupils to understand what a STEM career at Prestwick aerospace hub would look like. In an innovative approach, all aerospace companies worked collaboratively to generate a set of workshops that represented how important STEM is in the work they do, what they do with it and how pupils could do the same.

The initiative was then moved to the STEM Marquee for the festival weekend, which included a featured STEM display from the flying programme - the Gravity Industries Jet Suit demonstration. The STEM Marquee was delivered in partnership with all aerospace companies, as listed in [Annex 1](#).

1.6 Sponsors and Supporters

We worked with a wide range of sponsors, supporters, partners and suppliers and they provided invaluable support in making The International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight possible. These are also detailed in [Annex 1](#).

1.7 Planning Group Partners

Logistics and safety are paramount in holding an event of this scale. A wide range of agencies and organisations assisted with this through a range of planning groups. Partners are listed in [Annex 1](#).

1.8 Volunteers

100+ volunteers gave up their time to help run this event by assisting across a variety of roles throughout the weekend. There will be ongoing opportunities throughout the year for the volunteers to network, develop their skills and become involved in other SAC events, including future International Ayr Shows.

1.9 SAC Staff

Staff from many of our services were involved in organising the event, led by the Destination South Ayrshire team. All services went 'the extra mile' to ensure a superb experience for all our visitors and participants.

1.10 Health and Safety

There were 122 medical referrals during the event (Fri – 21, Sat - 81, Sun -20) which were reported to St. Andrews First Aid with the majority being minor in nature. Of these referrals, 23 were dealt with by the Scottish Ambulance Service who provided examination and treatment.

Of the 23, four required further hospital treatment. Three of which were health related and not linked to the event. The remaining incident occurred within the Fair Ground area which had its own Public Entertainment Licence in place. The incident was reported to the Health and Safety Executive for consideration.

1.11 Economic Impact

We are currently gathering and collating economic impact data from audiences and local businesses from across South Ayrshire, and a full report will be produced. However, anecdotal feedback has shown that many local businesses exceeded previous sales records over the weekend.

1.12 Areas for Improvement

This was the first year that the Council organised an Ayr Show; it was a non-ticketed, free, outdoor event which meant that demand management planning was challenging. The attendance was double the projected numbers and this impacted on provisions such as traffic management measures, car parking and toilets.

Debriefs have been conducted with our planning partners, and feedback from attendees has also been reviewed. There are a number of areas for improvement for future events and a high level summary is included below:

- Car Parking and Traffic Management:

There will be a requirement for increased and improved car parking provision and traffic management measures to support the flow of traffic – particularly at the Whitletts roundabout, and greater enforcement of parking restrictions within local communities. The traffic and transport sub-group will continue to meet regularly to develop robust plans for the next Ayr Show in 2024.

- Toilet Provision

For future events there will be increased toilet provision at the Low Green, but also extending out across the shore front, and we will also review the number of toilets required within the car parking infrastructure. Toilet supervision will be increased – feedback highlighted that some cubicles and men’s urinals were not used fully as people did not know they were available and people were waiting unnecessarily for a smaller number of toilets.

- Resident Engagement

We worked with This is EventoS to support community engagement for the Ayr Show. Prior to the event, over 3,000 information letters were sent to residents, two community engagement meetings were held and there was a resident information section on the Ayr Show website with a dedicated email address and phone number.

Due to planning timescales, engagement with residents was limited and we would like to improve this moving forward. Two community engagement meetings have been scheduled for November 2023 and this will be the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with residents as we plan for the International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight 2024.

Flying Display Programme

Friday 8 September 2023

- Gravity Industries
- The Calidus Autogyro
- RAF Black Jack Typhoon
- Airborne Pyrotechnics
- A Special Night Glow

Saturday 9 September 2023

- Gravity Industries
- Team raven and the gazelle squadron flypast
- Team RaVen
- The BAC Strikemaster Pair
- RAF Chinook
- OV-10B Bronco Demo Team
- Battle of Britain Memorial Flight
- Red Devils
- The Calidus Autogyro
- Airborne Pyrotechnics
- The Gazelle Squadron
- The Starlings
- SE5A WW1 Biplane
- Rolls-Royce Heritage Flight
- RAF Black Jack Typhoon
- The Red Arrows

Festival Village Activities

- RAF Benevolent Fund Merchandise Selling Point
- Heritage Centre Vintage Vehicles
- Trade Area
- Cinema
- Army Village
- Veterans Meet and Greet
- Royal Observer Corps
- RAF Village including simulator
- Royal Navy Village
- Children's Creative Zone
- VIP Bar & Bleacher Seating Area
- Food vendors
- Face Painting
- Team Extreme Sports Display Area
- Team Extreme Public Ramp
- Funfair
- Photography Area

- Accessible Viewing Platforms
- Just Dive Scuba Experience
- Classic Cars Exhibition
- Destination South Ayrshire Information Stand
- RAF Benevolent Fund Welfare Area
- Healing Centre
- Food and Drink Village
- Tragic O'Hara's Aviation Art
- Classic Cars Exhibition

Sponsors Trade Village including:

- Arnold Clark Kia
- Ayrshire College
- BAE Systems
- Collins Aerospace
- Curtiss-Wright SurfaceTechnologies
- hub South West Scotland
- JST Services (Scotland) Ltd

Sunday Only

- Beach sports and water activities

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Partners

- BAE Systems
- Chevron
- Collins Aerospace
- GE Caledonian
- Glasgow Science Centre
- Gravity Industries
- Institute of Physics
- Mangata
- NATS
- Prestwick Spaceport
- Ryanair/PAM
- Spirit AeroSystems
- Strathaven Balloon Festival
- theSKYLAB
- Woodward

Sponsors and Supporters

- Arnold Clark Kia
- Ashleigh (Scotland)Limited
- Associated British Ports
- Ayr Racecourse
- Ayrshire College
- Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra

- Ayrshire Magazine
- BAE Systems
- Cash for Kids – West of Scotland
- Charles Scott & Partners
- Citygate Construction Ltd
- Collins Aerospace
- Curtiss-Wright Surface Technologies
- Direct Healthcare Group
- Heads of Ayr Farm Park
- hub South West Scotland
- James Frew Ltd
- JST Services (Scotland) Ltd
- MCW (Scotland) Ltd
- Minuteman Press Ayr
- O'Neil Gas Services Ltd
- Prestwick Sailing Club
- Regency Facilities Management
- Richardson & Starling
- Spirit AeroSystems
- Stagecoach
- Thistle Cabs

Planning Group Partners

- AMD Photography
- Amey
- Apex Traffic Management
- Associated British Ports Ayr
- Ayrshire Civil Contingencies Team
- Ayrshire Roads Alliance
- Ayr Show Health & Safety and Site team
- British Transport Police
- Flying Display Director: Les Garside-Beattie OBE (Group Captain Retired) and his team
- G4S
- Glasgow Prestwick Airport
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- Police Scotland
- RAF Benevolent Fund
- Scotrail
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Scottish Passenger Transport
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Stagecoach
- The SKYLAB
- This is EventoS
- Traffic Scotland