

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL (SPECIAL)

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting
on 19 August 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

Present in County Buildings: Councillors Iain Campbell (Provost), Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Ian Cavana, Alec Clark, Ian Davis, Brian Connolly, Julie Dettbarn, Mark Dixon, Martin Dowe, Stephen Ferry, William Grant, Hugh Hunter, Martin Kilbride, Mary Kilpatrick, Alan Lamont, Craig Mackay, Brian McGinley, Bob Pollock, Cameron Ramsay, Philip Saxton, Gavin Scott, Bob Shields, Duncan Townson and George Weir.

Present Remotely: Councillors Kenneth Bell, Ian Cochrane, Chris Cullen and Lee Lyons.

Attending in County Buildings: M. Newall, Chief Executive; L. McRoberts, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education; J. Bradley, Director of Strategic Change and Communities; C. Caves, Chief Governance Officer; T. Baulk, Chief Financial Officer; C. Cox, Assistant Director – Planning and Development; A. Mutch, Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire; P. Bradley, Service Lead – Professional Design Services; K. Briggs, Service Lead – Legal and Licensing; G. Farrell, Service Lead – Organisational Development and Customer Services; T. Burns, Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer; C. Neillie, Solicitor; J. Hall, Co-ordinator (Planning Strategy); C. Robertson, Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies Officer; J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer; K. Hancox, Committee Services Officer; and R. Anderson, Committee Services Assistant.

Present Remotely: K. Braidwood, Director of Housing, Operations and Development; and K. Dalrymple, Assistant Director – Housing and Operations.

1. Provost.

The Provost

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live;
- (2) intimated that no apologies had been received.

2. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

The Chief Executive called the Sederunt for the meeting and having called the roll, confirmed that there were no declarations of interest by Members of the Council in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Following technical issues, Councillor Cochrane confirmed in the "chat box" that he had no Declarations of Interest.

Point of Order

Councillor McGinley raised a Point of Order on why this Special Meeting had been called as the agenda covered a full range of business and he was not aware of the reason for this meeting; and the Chief Executive advised that this meeting had been called to consider proposed changes to Panel appointments.

Councillor McGinley further commented that there were conditions within the Standing Orders for Meetings for calling a Special meeting of the Council, however, the Council was at risk of straying into ordinary business at these Special meetings; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that she was currently examining the frequency of Council meetings with a view to adding additional meetings to the schedule of meetings, following consultation with Members, to allow business to be conducted and to ensure that Special meetings would only be held to consider urgent business.

3. Appointments to Panels

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 13 August 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to make amendments to the membership of Panels.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined within the report with the exception of the proposed alteration to the position on the Licensing Board as follows:

“Council is asked to note that the composition of the Licensing Board was agreed by Council on 26 May 2022 to be made up of four Conservatives members , two SNP members and one Labour member and Council is now asked to agree that the composition of the Licensing Board is changed to be made up of four Conservatives, one SNP member, one Labour member and one Independent member and the Independents members are requested to nominate their representative to the Chief Executive in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 28.5.”

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) the Chief Governance Officer also being the Monitoring Officer; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that her title had previously been Head of Legal and Regulatory Services, however this had changed to Chief Governance Officer following a decision taken at a meeting of South Ayrshire Council and that she remained Monitoring Officer by statute; and the Chief Executive further advised that the titles of the Chief Financial Officer and Chief HR Officer had also been amended at that meeting of South Ayrshire Council and that the change of title of the Chief Governance Officer did not change her legal duties as Monitoring Officer;
- (2) the premise of the Motion, whether it was changing the number of Members on the Licensing Board or seeking to define what the positions were; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that, following a change in the numbers of SNP and Independent Councillors, this was a Motion to alter the composition of the Board. The Member then outlined his concerns that that this was not an equitable distribution of Licensing Board Members as this did not reflect the balance of the Council and the Chief Governance Officer advised that the apportionment of members had been altered to take account of the present number of Independent Councillors;
- (3) whether the Group Leaders had been consulted on the proposed changes to the membership of the Licensing Board and Councillor Dowey advised that he had consulted with the SNP Group Leader on this matter and following the outcome of this meeting, he had not consulted with the Labour Group; and Councillor Dettbarn further advised that she had met with Councillor Dowey on this matter and that she was happy with an Independent Member taking the position on the Licensing Board;

- (4) the name of the Councillor who had been nominated; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that members of parties were appointed to Panels/Boards initially and the parties were then contacted to provide the name of their appointee, in terms of Standing Order No. 28.5;
- (5) the resolution should none of the Independent Members wish to take up this appointment; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that the name of the Councillor taking up the position was advised to the Chief Executive following the meeting, as outlined in Standing Order No. 28.5; that where this nominee was an Independent Councillor, the appointed Councillor would be agreed by all of the Independent Councillors; and that, should there be no agreement by the Independent Members, this matter would be brought back before Council for a decision; and
- (6) seeking confirmation of the date of the change in the Chief Governance Officer's title; and the Chief Executive advised that he would supply the details of this in writing.

Point of Order

Councillor Mackay raised a Point of Order regarding the reason for this meeting being called as Members had been advised that the meeting was to consider amendments to Panel Membership, however, these changes were due to Councillor Grant's resignation from the SNP Group which was in July 2024 and the notice of meeting had been circulated on 5 June 2024; and the Chief Executive advised that the primary purpose for this special meeting was following intimation from the Administration of changes within the Administration in relation to Councillor Pollock being made Depute Leader of the Council so therefore, the meeting was regarding changes to appointments to Panels and also the make-up of the Administration.

The Chief Governance Officer advised that the Council would firstly vote on the Motion submitted by Councillor Dowey and seconded by Councillor Pollock and, should this Motion be carried, the proposed amendment to the membership of the Licensing Board would then fall.

In terms of Standing Order No. 19.9, there was no general agreement to the unopposed motion, therefore, the Panel moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion. Twenty one Members voted for the Motion, one Member voted against the Motion and six Members Abstained; and the Council approved the terms of the Motion submitted by Councillor Dowey and seconded by Councillor Pollock.

Following a request from a Member, it was agreed to vote on each proposed appointment in Appendix 1 to the report individually.

In relation to the alteration to the position of Depute Leader, in terms of Standing Order No. 19.9, there was no general agreement to the unopposed motion, therefore, the Panel moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion. The Chief Governance Officer advised that she would then undertake all of the remaining votes For or Against the Motion.

In relation to the alteration to the position of Depute Leader, seventeen Members voted for the Motion, one Member voted against the Motion and ten Members abstained.

In relation to the alteration to the position of Portfolio Holder for Education, seventeen Members voted for the Motion, one Member voted against the Motion and ten Members abstained.

In relation to the alteration to the position of Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care, eighteen Members voted for the Motion, three Members voted against the Motion and seven Members abstained.

In relation to the replacement of Councillor Lee Lyons with Councillor Bob Pollock on the Chief Officers Appointments/Appraisal Panel, twenty Members voted for the Motion, one Member voted against the Motion and seven Members abstained.

In relation to the replacement of Councillor Mary Kilpatrick with Councillor Lee Lyons on the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel, fifteen Members voted for the Motion, two Members voted against the Motion and eleven Members abstained.

In relation to the replacement of Councillor William Grant with Councillor Julie Dettbarn on the Chief Officers Appointments/Appraisal Panel, twenty five Members voted for the Motion, one Member voted against the Motion and two Members abstained.

The Council, therefore,

Decided:

- (a) to note the changes in the representatives nominated by the Conservative Group and the SNP Group as identified in Appendix 1 to the report, namely:
 - (i) that Councillor Bob Pollock replace Councillor Lee Lyons as Depute Leader of the Council;
 - (ii) that Councillor William Grant replace Councillor Stephen Ferry as Portfolio Holder for Education;
 - (iii) that Councillor Hugh Hunter replace Councillor Lee Lyons as Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care;
 - (iv) that Councillor Bob Pollock replace Councillor Lee Lyons on the Chief Officers Appointments/Appraisal Panel;
 - (v) that Councillor Lee Lyons replace Councillor Mary Kilpatrick on the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel;
 - (vi) that Councillor Julie Dettbarn replace Councillor William Grant on the Chief Officers Appointments/Appraisal Panel; and
 - (vii) that Councillor William Grant remain on the Licensing Board as an Independent Member; and
- (b) to request that officers make the required amendments to the list of Panels to reflect these changes.

4. Appointments to Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 13 August 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to make alterations to the list of representatives on the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendation as outlined in the report.

The Council, having considered any other amendments which may be required to COSLA representation,

Decided: to note the change in the representative nominated by the SNP Group as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report, namely that Councillor Julie Dettbarn replace Councillor William Grant as the representative on COSLA.

5. **Representation on Outside Bodies**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 13 August 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to make alterations to the list of Outside Bodies.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (1) Councillors being removed from various Outside Bodies and replaced by Officers with no justification or consultation and that Councillors would then be denied the opportunity to have political input; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that the Officers being included as representatives on Outside Bodies were in addition to the Councillors and not in place of;
- (2) the Officer appointment to the Energy Agency and why this was proposed as an Officer had not previously attended this body and this could be a conflict of interest; and the Chief Executive advised that he had previously attended the Energy Agency in his previous roles as Director and Head of Service and that he was confident that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development would not place himself in a situation where there would be a conflict of interest, he was merely attending in a supporting role to Elected Members; and the Chief Governance Officer further advised that it was proposed that Officers be appointed to outside bodies to report back on discussions at these meetings. A Member advised that he was a representative on the Energy Agency many years ago and a Council Officer had been a member of the Agency at that time which was very beneficial and he would be very supportive of an Officer being part of this organisation; and
- (3) a substitute for Councillor Dettbarn on the Community Justice Ayrshire Board not being necessary as the Vice-Chair was a representative from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.

In terms of Standing Order No. 19.9, there was no general agreement to the unopposed motion, therefore, the Panel moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion. Twenty seven Members voted for the Motion and one Member voted against the Motion; and the Council having considered any other amendments which may be required to representation on Outside Bodies,

Decided:

- (a) to approve inclusion of an officer representative or additional officer representative on the outside bodies identified in 4.1 of the report, namely:
 - (i) Clyde Marine Planning Partnership – Director of Housing, Operations and Development;

- (ii) Energy Agency – South Ayrshire - Director of Housing, Operations and Development;
 - (iii) South West Scotland Community Rail Partnership Limited - Director of Housing, Operations and Development;
 - (iv) Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee - Director of Housing, Operations and Development;
 - (v) Strathclyde Partnership for Transport - Director of Housing, Operations and Development; and
 - (vi) West of Scotland Road Safety Forum – Head of Roads, Ayrshire Roads Alliance; and
- (b) to note the changes in the representatives nominated by the Conservative Group and the SNP Group identified in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.5, respectively, namely:
- (i) Councillor William Grant to replace Councillor Stephen Ferry on the Bill Barr South Ayrshire Enterprise Award Trust (as Trustee); and
 - (ii) Councillor William Grant to replace Councillor Stephen Ferry as a Substitute on the Community Justice Ayrshire Board.

6. Representation on Working Groups

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 13 August 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to make alterations to the list of Working Groups.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) whether the Gypsy/Traveller Working Group had been disbanded and, if not, what was the membership of this Group; and the Chief Executive advised that he would provide this information in writing;
- (2) how often all of the Working Groups met and what they had achieved; and the Chief Executive advised that he would provide an update in writing on this matter; and
- (3) why Councillor Grant was replacing Councillor Ferry on the Trauma Informed Member/Officer Working Group; and Councillor Dowey advised that this was because the Portfolio Holder for Education sat on this Group and Councillor Grant had now been appointed to this position.

The Council, having considered any other amendments which may be required to representation on Working Groups,

Decided:

- (a) to note the changes in the representatives nominated by the Conservative Group and the SNP Group as outlined in paragraphs 4.2 and 44 of the report, namely:
 - (i) that Councillor William Grant replace Councillor Stephen Ferry on the Trauma Informed Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (ii) that Councillor Julie Dettbarn replace Councillor William Grant on the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee;

- (iii) that Councillor Julie Dettbarn replace Councillor William Grant on the Best Value Member/Officer Working Group; and
 - (iv) that Councillor Julie Dettbarn replace Councillor William Grant on the Community Wealth Building Member/Officer Working Group;
- (b) to approve the proposed changes to the officer representation, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report, namely:
- (i) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development be added to the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee;
 - (ii) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development be added to the Active Travel Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (iii) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development be added to the Best Value Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (iv) that the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education be added to the Community Planning Board;
 - (v) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the External Funding Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (vi) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the Financial Inclusion Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (vii) that the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education be added to the Financial Inclusion Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (viii) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the Gypsy/Traveller Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (ix) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the Planning Liaison Group;
 - (x) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the Significant Capital Projects Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (xi) that the Assistant Director – Transformation be added to the Significant Capital Projects Member/Officer Working Group;
 - (xii) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the Sounding Board for Ayr Town Centre;
 - (xiii) that the Director of Communities and Transformation be added to the Sustainable Development Member/Officer Working Group; and
 - (xiv) that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development replace the Chief Executive on the Station Hotel Member/Officer Working Group.

7. **Scheme of Delegation**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 13 August 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to amend the Scheme of Delegation following review.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) paragraph 4.1.4 of the report regarding the recommendation to grant delegated powers to Planning Officers to set planning conditions on planning applications as applications submitted to the Regulatory Panel (Planning) presently had conditions outlined; and the Assistant Director – Planning and Development advised that the proposed delegation was specifically for other delegated planning applications which were not submitted to Regulatory Panel for consideration;

- (2) whether it was felt that the line of responsibility was appropriate and officers had suitable delegations in relation to Ayrshire Roads Alliance as it had been difficult to engage with officers at times; and the Chief Executive advised that the Director of Housing, Operations and Development had held the position of Head of Roads, ARA for ten years and, as a result, he was the appropriate officer to be the Council's representative on the ARA;
- (3) the addition of paragraph HOD04 as a delegated power to officers to agree the terms of Section 75 legal agreements and what the current arrangement was; and the Assistant Director – Planning and Development advised that this paragraph was being included for clarity and that, where planning applications involving Section 75 agreements were submitted to Regulatory Panel (Planning), it was usual for the headline terms of the Section 75 agreement to be included within the report and the drafting negotiations of Section 75 agreements then took place under delegated powers; and
- (4) the amendment to paragraph 4.1.2 as officers presently had delegated powers for this; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that this paragraph had been added to clarify that officers had delegated powers for the management of Girvan Harbour as this was not reflected in the current wording within the Scheme of Delegation.

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (a) concerns regarding paragraph 4.1.10 of the report in relation to “the granting of delegated powers to officers to suspend taxi or private hire drivers licences with immediate effect where they had failed to complete mandatory training, in breach of their licence” as there were various reasons for Taxi Drivers and Private Hire Drivers not completing this training and there could be legal claims should the Panel not consider these; and the Service Lead – Legal and Licensing advised that this was a proposal to streamline the Regulatory Panel (Licensing) where various licence holders had been cited to attend the Panel for not attending and passing the mandatory training course within six months of being granted their licence following various reminders from the Licensing Team but any licence holder in discussion with the Licensing Team regarding this training would still be submitted to Panel for consideration, however, this was a decision for Members on whether they wished this paragraph included within the Scheme of Delegation; and
- (b) paragraph 4.1.10 and that this paragraph should be removed from the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation as there could be genuine reasons why a driver has not completed the mandatory training and they should have the opportunity to be heard by the Panel; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that, with the approval of the Mover and Seconder of the Motion, she would remove this paragraph from the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation for this matter to be discussed further with Members. Councillors Dowey and Pollock agreed to accept this alteration within their Motion.

In terms of Standing Order No. 19.9, there was no general agreement to the unopposed motion, therefore, the Panel moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion and twenty eight Members voted for the Motion.

The Council

Decided: to approve the revised Scheme of Delegation (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) with the exception of paragraph 4.1.10, with effect from 20 August 2024; namely:

- (i) an amendment to Directorate names and officer delegations/ job titles as a result of the management structure approved by the Council on 6 March 2024;
- (ii) the addition of paragraph ARA20 as a delegated power to officers for the management of Girvan harbour;
- (iii) the addition of paragraph ED25.1 relating to processing applications for licensing of short term lets and clarifying the process for rejection/ return of incomplete or incompetent applications;
- (iv) the addition of paragraph HOD03 as a delegated power to officers to set conditions relating to planning permissions;
- (v) the addition of paragraph HOD04 as a delegated power to officers to agree the terms of s75 legal agreements;
- (vi) an amendment to paragraph HOD24 (changing to HOD26) to include a delegated power to officers to approve the commencement of public consultations for public access exemption orders where the period of the Order proposed is 6 or more days. This is the initial stage in the process and once such a public consultation has been carried out, a report would still require to be submitted to the Regulatory Panel (Planning), for a decision on the Order itself;
- (vii) the addition of paragraph HOD78 to give delegated powers to officers to declare land and property surplus to requirements where the value of the land/ property is valued at less than £100,000;
- (viii) an amendment to paragraph HOD77 (changing to HOD80) to give delegated powers to officers for a wider range of lets and licences, and to clarify that this includes renewal of same; and
- (ix) the addition of paragraph HOD95 to include a delegated power for management of the roads operation as client of Ayrshire Roads Alliance.

Adjournment

The time being 11.20 a.m., the Council adjourned for ten minutes.

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 11.30 a.m.

8. South Ayrshire Charitable Trust

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 9 August 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer providing an annual update on the South Ayrshire Charitable Trust and seeking approval to amend the Trust Business Plan for the 2024/25 financial year.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) the limitation on grants and on donations; and the Solicitor advised that limits were placed on grants, however, donations could be made with the remaining funds in any particular Trust;

- (2) when the Trustees would be able to access the £13,000 of restricted funds for Girvan; and the Chief Financial Officer advised that this had proved challenging due to third parties not responding to correspondence, however, his officers were striving to conclude this matter; and
- (3) whether the funds were managed by a local broker or by various agencies; and the Chief Financial Officer advised that he did not have that information at present, however, he had been advised that the funding was managed by 'investment houses';

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (a) no limitation being placed on donations and the limit being at the discretion of the Trustees; and the Service Lead – Legal and Licensing advised that she would examine the wording within the Business Plan;
- (b) this being a very worthwhile Trust and that further monies should be set aside for this Trust in future budgets;
- (c) the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) being a good opportunity to outline the good work undertaken with this Trust and should have been more detailed;
- (d) that Elected Members were aware of the people and groups within their Ward requiring these monies which had been very well received; and that Members required to ensure that local funds were made available in future for those most in need, either by replenishing this fund or by re-establishing a Community Grants Fund;
- (e) that sitting on these Committees of Trustees was enjoyable and fulfilling helping those most in need; and
- (f) that, should this Trust continue, monies would require to be found from other areas.

The Council, as Trustees of South Ayrshire Charitable Trust, having thanked the officers involved in this Trust for the work undertaken,

Decided:

- (i) to note the summary of grant funding made by the trust during 2023/24 as detailed in [Appendix 1](#); and
- (ii) to approve the business plan for the running of the trust for the year 2024/25 as detailed in [Appendix 2](#).

9. Communications Review

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 9 August 2024 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing Council with a review of activities undertaken by the Communications Team; and seeking approval for revised staffing arrangements to prevent service failure and ensure the continued effective delivery of the service in light of growing demand.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

A question was raised by a Member in relation to the proposed structure and whether, rather than adding one level 10 post to the structure, that two graduate interns could be employed to utilise their skills; and the Chief Executive advised that this was an operational matter and he was pleased that the Director had brought forward these proposals to allow the Team to sustain their output and make any further improvements.

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (1) commending the report and the work of the Communications staff members; outlining that it was a priority to impart information to the public to highlight the good work carried out by the Council within communities; and advising that it was important to challenge false posts on social media and provide the proper information;
- (2) the challenges faced by the Communications Team and that Option 2 within the recommendation of the report would greatly assist the Team to meet those challenges; and that senior officers should be liaising with the Team and advising them of any decisions made to enable them to advise staff and the public;
- (3) that the Communications Team in an organisation was a key element and this Council's Team understood the Council, were committed to the Council and understood their roles; and
- (4) that, as social media was evolving so quickly, it would be advantageous to have a graduate intern or modern apprentice within the Team to be more reactive to issues, to reach a bigger audience and to enable succession planning; and the Service Lead – Organisational Development and Customer Services advised that funding had been sourced to appoint a Digital Graduate Intern for a period of 23 months and a Modern Apprentice would also be joining the Communications Team and that both appointments would support workforce planning.

The Council

Decided:

- (a) to note the review of activities and service trends ([Appendices 1 to 3](#));
- (b) having considered the staffing options provided, to agree option (2) - to create 1x level 10 Communications Officer post (£53,600) funded from an employee engagement budget in Organisational Development (OD) and 1 x level 7 Assistant Communications Officer (£39,500) post funded by deleting 1 x vacant Level 7 OD Assistant post, as required to prevent service failure and ensure the continued delivery of the service; and
- (c) to approve minor edits to the Managing Work Related Social Media guidance detailed at [Appendix 4](#) in line with Internal Audit recommendations.

10. Golf South Ayrshire – Golf Development Centre at Belleisle Golf Course

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 9 August 2024 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing an update on the design proposals for a Golf Development Centre to provide an enhanced practice area at Belleisle Golf Course as part of the approved Golf Course Improvements.

Councillor Brian Connolly, seconded by Councillor Alec Clark, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) what high profile tournaments were being considered within South Ayrshire; and the Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire advised that high profile tournaments and events were being discussed with Scottish Golf and the Royal & Ancient (R&A) about and that these were set out within the Golf Strategy;
- (2) why the term Golf Development Centre was being used and not Golf Academy; and the Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire advised that this was a Sports Scotland recognised term;
- (3) whether the Council was in danger of over provision on their golf courses; and the Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire advised that this would require to be considered by Elected Members and by way of public engagement sessions with Golf Clubs;
- (4) whether any holes would be used for a practice area; and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that there would be some changes to Belleisle Golf Course as part of the development of the course and that there would probably be changes to hole one, however, this would remain an eighteen hole course;
- (5) Belleisle House being an important landmark within the course and could an update be given on efforts to bring it back into use; and the Chief Executive advised that it was currently being advertised for sale and any expressions of interest would then determine its future use;
- (6) whether Sports Scotland had offered funding for this initiative; and the Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire advised that he had been in discussion with Sports Scotland and also with Scottish Golf, the governing body for Golf; and that Sports Scotland were reviewing facility funding and there was an opportunity to apply for additional funding;
- (7) the Equality Impact Assessment and what initiatives were being taken forward to make courses more accessible to those in low income areas; and the Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire advised that, as part of the wider golf strategy this was being addressed and he would submit a report in due course on proposals on how to develop this;
- (8) whether the Golf Development Centre would be state of the art; and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that this would be a high specification facility with a robot golf ball retriever and digital scoreboard;
- (9) whether there would be a social element to this Centre for groups to practice and then have food and drinks; and the Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire advised that having catering at the clubhouse was something the Council was looking to provide;
- (10) the current status of this development and whether planning permission was being sought in the near future; and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that this matter was not currently ready to go to tender or for planning permission but would shortly be submitted to Members to examine the initial proposals and where the Centre would be sited on the golf course; and that planning permission would be sought towards the end of this year;

- (11) the process for the consultation and timescales for this; and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that no dates had been agreed as yet for the consultation, however, once the outcome of this report was known, this could be planned; and
- (12) the terms of the consultation; and the Director – Communities and Transformation advised that the Council required to have plans prior to consultation on the appearance of the Centre, where it would be situated, if any holes would be closed, etc and that this would be an extensive consultation with members of golf clubs, those who play on South Ayrshire golf courses and also the wider community in South Ayrshire to ascertain what would encourage them to start playing golf.

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (a) welcoming the investment, however, noting that season ticket holders would be at a disadvantage by the Council holding tournaments;
- (b) discussions with the R&A had included the “bounce effect” which was visible within an area for up to three years when a high profile tournament had taken place; that the R&A were of the view that this authority was well situated to benefit from a longer term bounce effect due to the other good private golf courses and the good public courses; and that, by hosting The Open, Royal Troon was on a global stage which attracted thousands of visitors to the area;
- (c) it was concerning that Point 4 within the Equality Impact Assessment regarding “Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or Groups” was marked as “low impact”;
- (d) concerns that a lot of money was being spent on a particular initiative with no rationale, sustainability or consultation around this matter; that players had outlined their concerns around there being no clear picture of how the Council wished to use the facilities for the benefit of the people of South Ayrshire; that there had been discussion around visitors, attractions and competitions, however there were a number of courses in South Ayrshire with an older population and reducing number of young people starting to play golf which was concerning for sustainability; that there had been no cogent communications strategy; and that the long-term strategy for golf in South Ayrshire was missing from this report; and the Director – Communities and Transformation advised that the Golf Strategy had been approved in 2022 which set out the aims of the Council and that, in order for the Council to deliver a sustainable facility for the people of South Ayrshire, income required to be generated and if the Council did not invest in courses, the quality of them decreased and the courses would lose members and visitors and income then reduced; that there was an ageing population utilising the courses and, in order to encourage young people and also more females to take up golf, the appropriate practice facilities required to be provided; and that having the facilities provided an opportunity for young people who would not normally access golf through Active Schools to play this sport;
- (e) comments within the report being illegible; and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that she would take this on board for future reports;
- (f) the Council requiring to provide facilities of excellence like this proposal to allow the younger generation to reach their full potential; and

- (g) the Chief Executive of Scottish Golf praising the Council's public facilities; that there were requirements to become a Golf Development Centre and these facilities qualified; that only one hole on the golf course would be affected by this development which would mean minimal disruption and the course would not require to close; that bunkers and greens would be brought up to modern standards; and that, in relation to "over provision", Belleisle would not become the focus of tournaments, however this facility would give the Council the opportunity to bid for these tournaments and there were golf courses nearby for players to utilise during any of these tournaments, should the Council be fortunate enough to be successful in hosting any.

In terms of Standing Order No. 19.9, there was no general agreement to the unopposed motion, therefore, the Panel moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion and twenty Members voted for the Motion, seven voted against the Motion and one Member abstained.

The Council

Decided:

- (i) to note the progress on the development of design proposals and estimated costs for a Golf Development Centre at Belleisle Golf Course, Ayr;
- (ii) to approve officers progressing designs and submitting a planning application; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the content of the report and support the approaches and activities set out in the report.

Councillor Kilpatrick left the meeting at this point.

11. Proposed Ward Capital Projects – Update 2023 to 2025 and Approval of New Capital Projects 2024 to 2026

The Chief Executive advised that, following concerns from Members on the content of this report, it would be prudent to defer consideration of this report to a future meeting of South Ayrshire Council to allow officers to consider these concerns and submit a revised report.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved that consideration of this report be continued to a future meeting of South Ayrshire Council.

The Council

Decided: to continue consideration of this report to a future meeting of South Ayrshire Council.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive, as Returning Officer referred to the recent appointment of two new MPs for the South Ayrshire area, namely Alan Gemmell for Central Ayrshire; and Elaine Stewart for Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock.

12. Local Development Plan 3 Governance Arrangements

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 12 August 2024 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development recommending arrangements for a Member/Officer Working Group (MOWG) to oversee the preparation of LDP3 and providing an update on the engagement arrangements for LDP3.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Following discussion and questions from Members in relation to the Planning Liaison Group, with the agreement of the Mover and Seconder who had sought assurances that a delay in considering this report would not have a significant impact on the progress of the LDP3, it was proposed that consideration of this report be continued to a future Council meeting and that the Chief Governance Officer write to the Group Leaders and the Independents seeking the representatives for each of the Groups; and the Council

Decided: to continue consideration of this report to a future meeting of South Ayrshire Council to examine the proposed remits of the Planning Liaison Group and the LDP MOWG; and that the Chief Governance Officer write to the Group Leaders and the Independents for representatives on each of these Groups.

13. South Ayrshire Council Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) 2024 - 2029

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 9 August 2024 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development seeking approval for the publication of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) 2024 – 2029, including Delivery Plan objectives, and Co-ordination group Terms of Reference.

Councillor Martin Kilbride, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (1) commending the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies Officer for his work on this matter; and requesting that he provide an Elected Members Briefing on this Strategy;
- (2) these being admirable goals within the report, however, it would be a long-term project;
- (3) if a Members' Briefing was carried out, the work of the Energy Agency should be highlighted as they presently had a long-term survey running which was the first authoritative study linking heat improvements and energy efficiency in the home to health benefits; and the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies Officer advised that there had been significant consultation feedback from the NHS regarding the links between fuel poverty and health and equalities; and that he had worked closely with the Energy Agency and was monitoring the outcome of its research which was very conclusive and built a business case around supporting better insulation in homes for health and wellbeing as well as financial savings; and

- (4) this report mapping out what the Council required to do; that fuel poverty had been ignored for too long; that this was an important area which would be complicated and expensive; that there was no “one size fits all” as there were many different needs and demands especially in relation to rural poverty; and that it was important that the Council played its role appropriately.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (a) the composition of the Member/Officer Working Group (MOWG); and the Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised that establishment of this Group was agreed by Cabinet on 16 January 2024 and that the Officers had been appointed to the Group, however, Elected Members were still to be nominated;
- (b) whether the appointment of Elected Members to this Group would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council; and the Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised that was not a decision making Group but to keep Members abreast of the delivery of the actions and he would be happy to report back on the membership of Elected Members;
- (c) whether the Council would continue to monitor the renewables market; and the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies Officer advised that the MOWG would take hydrogen developments into consideration; that this was a rapidly changing area and biomass was unlikely to be a technical solution; and that one of the main priorities in the strategy was the reduction in fuel poverty; and
- (d) whether this matter should be reported to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel by way of a report for scrutiny; and the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies Officer advised that report tracking would expand and diversify as the high level action plan was in place and, if appropriate, this could be reported to a Panel of the Council. The Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer further advised that this was the commencement of a complicated, highly ambitious piece of work which would impact people’s lives; that this would be discussed initially at the MOWG to ascertain which actions could be delivered based on the funding and technology available and, once comfortable that these actions were deliverable, they would be put on pentana and submitted to a Panel, if appropriate.

The Council

Decided:

- (i) to approve the publication of the South Ayrshire Council LHEES Strategy (**Appendix 1**);
- (ii) to approve the LHEES Coordination group Terms of Reference (**Appendix 2**) to support delivery plan actions; and
- (iii) to agree that a members’ briefing be arranged; and to note that there would be an annual report on progress to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel.

14. Formal Questions.

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 26.2, there were submitted [Formal Questions](#) from Councillors Townson and Mackay, along with the responses, which were made available to all Members.

Councillor Townson raised supplementary questions in relation to:-

- (1) the timescale between Members being informed of the security barriers being installed and the barriers being put in place; and the Director of Communities and Transformation advised that Members were advised on 28 June 2024 by way of the Elected Members' Information Note and the barriers were installed on 10 July 2024; and
- (2) what was the current terror threat in Ayr; and the Chief Executive advised that the current terror threat for Ayr was substantial.

Councillor Mackay thanked the Director of Housing, Operations and Development for the detailed response to his questions; and referred to the mindless vandalism of public conveniences which deprived people of these facilities and used monies from an already stretched budget for repairs.

15. Closing Remarks.

The Provost thanked all in attendance for their contribution.

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.