

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL

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

Present
in County
Buildings: Councillors Philip Saxton (Chair), Chris Cullen, Gavin Scott and George Weir.

Present
Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane and Mark Dixon.

Apologies: Councillors Kenneth Bell and Lee Lyons

Attending
in County
Buildings: J. Bradley, Director of Communities and Transformation; K. Braidwood, Director of Housing, Operations and Development; M. Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services; K. Anderson, Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance; C. Cox, Assistant Director – Planning and Development; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; P. Bradley, Service Lead – Professional Design Services; T. Burns, Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer; W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; S. McCardie, Service Lead – Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability; A. Mutch, Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire; M. Scott, Service Lead – Economy and Regeneration; D. McVey, Co-ordinator – Registration, Records and Information; R. Jamieson, Co-ordinator – Asset Management; R. Queen, Team Leader – Information and Governance; R. Higgins, Chief Superintendent – Police Scotland; S. Dougan, Chief Inspector – Police Scotland; K. Hancox, Committee Services Officer; and E. Moore, Clerical Assistant.

Attending
Remotely: M. Alexander, Service Lead – Housing Services; F. Ross, Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services; and M. Towle, Co-ordinator – Benefits.

Chair's Remarks.

The Chair

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting; and
- (2) outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live.

1. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

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

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The Minutes of 22 October 2024 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme.

There was submitted an update of the Action Log and Work Programme ([issued](#)) for this Panel.

Having heard the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance speak in relation to the Action Log and Work Programme,

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to agree the current position with regard to the Action Log; and
- (2) to otherwise note the current status of the Work Programme.

4. Local Performance Report: Police Scotland.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2024 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education providing Members with information about the mid-year performance (quarter two) of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire for 2024/25.

Chief Superintendent Raymond Higgins advised that he would be leaving his current position, and that Suzanne Chow would take up the role from 25 November 2024.

Following questions and comments from Members including

- (1) requesting information in relation to road safety in regard to speeding and how reports of speeding were logged, the Chief Superintendent advised that all reports were reviewed and logged and that would then be reflected in the patrol plan when necessary;
- (2) seeking clarification regarding the incidents recorded and if they were counted in multiple categories within the Summary Report in Appendix 1, the Chief Superintendent advised that this was correct;
- (3) why there had been a decrease in warrants executed, the Chief Superintendent advised that reasons could include intelligence reports, cycles, evidence required and demand;
- (4) what age range was represented in the antisocial behaviour figure under youths, the Chief Superintendent confirmed that the term youths represented those under eighteen years old;
- (5) what action had been taken to deal with increased shoplifting incidents, the Chief Inspector advised that work ongoing included the use of the intelligence network throughout Ayrshire, locality teams supporting retailers, researching

trends and confirmed there would be an increased police presence over the festive period;

- (6) if the number of police officers employed had decreased, the Chief Superintendent advised that although they had recently lost officers with significant experience due to changes in pension legislation, they were currently working to upskill new staff. They were fortunate regarding their youth volunteers, and their excellent special constables. There had been no change in the overarching figures and there had been a reduction in absences; it had also been noted that Police Scotland were looking to recruit additional volunteer Special Constables;

Councillor Dixon joined the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

- (7) if officers were affected by an overtime ban, the Chief Superintendent advised that the Police Federation were in dispute in relation to the pay settlement and that officers within South Ayrshire had not seen the impact of this;
- (8) what the impact had been from early police intervention in schools, the Chief Superintendent advised that there had been positive benefits seen from campus police officers working with youths;
- (9) information in relation to the ongoing issues with the 101 non-emergency contact number, the Chief Superintendent advised that there was a focus currently to improve the service and that work had been ongoing locally and nationally to improve communication with the public;
- (10) the impact of the anti-terrorism bollards installed in Ayr, the Chief Superintendent advised that the equipment was to act as a deterrent and showed that proactive measures were in place to prevent incidents; and
- (11) in relation to the figures for Fraud under Acquisitive Crime remaining the same and what Other Thefts included, the Chief Superintendent advised that it was a coincidence the Fraud figures were the same and that an example of Other Thefts could be fuel theft.

An update was provided to Members by the Chief Inspector in relation to the Golf Open at Troon. It was advised that the event had been successfully policed and they had prevented protestors. It was noted that there had been a few minor arrests and there had been a thorough de-brief with partners on what went well and future planning.

Having scrutinised the performance report of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire, the Panel

Decided: to note the performance report of Police Scotland and to provide feedback to the Area Commander.

5. Council Plan (2023-2028): Second Year: Quarter Two Update (2024/25).

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2024 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education advising Members on progress that had been made during the second year of the new Council Plan.

A Member of the Panel enquired about the action to “Collaboratively develop and deliver Place Plans and other Place-based Strategies for town centres” which was shown at 50% progress and when it would be determined as complete. The Service Lead – Economy and Regeneration advised that it would be hard to monitor the percentage; as place plans were informed by communities, however, confirmed that work had been ongoing across various departments, including Thriving Communities and Planning.

Having heard a Member of the Panel request if there would be a business case produced and when there would be a consultation on the redevelopment of the two priority golf courses, Darley and Belleisle, the Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire confirmed that a business case would be developed to identify any commercial opportunities and that it would later be presented to Council.

Following a query from a Member of the Panel in relation to the work ongoing at the Citadel Leisure Centre, the Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire provided an overview of all work underway and advised that the contractors were now on site with internal work starting in March 2025 and that the expected completion date was mid 2026. (I have noted that initial works would start in March 2025 – please check)

Further questions and comments from Members included –

- (1) a request for an update regarding the progress of the action “Work to procure a site and licence for the treatment of all SAC green/garden waste” and the Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services advised that the site was being evaluated in order to finalise the business case;
- (2) if the progress of the housing developments at Riverside New Build and Mainholm New Build had been on schedule and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that the Mainholm New Build Housing Development was on track for completion in February 2025, however, the Riverside New Build Housing Development had been delayed to September 2025;
- (3) regarding the stakeholder involvement and if Elected Members were included in relation to the action “Develop a Data Strategy for the Council” and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance advised there would be a Members' Briefing to provide further information;
- (4) if the funding for the Shop Front Improvement Project included the cost of consultants, the Assistant Director – Communities advised that the funding would be for developing shops and not consultancy fees;
- (5) what projects were included in the action to “Deliver place-based investment fund (PBIF) Capital projects” and the Assistant Director – Communities advised that he would report back after discussion with the Service Lead – Economy and Regeneration and that the PBIF had been discontinued by the Scottish Government for 2025;
- (6) information on the projects included in the action “Delivery of the General Services Capital Programme for 2024/25 and future years” and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services provided an update on the Capital Programme and advised that a report on period six would be provided and advised that there were many projects both at tender stage and under development;
- (7) information on the action to “Plan and deliver Troon Early Years Centre” and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that the work on Troon Early

Years Centre was underway, and that the expected completion date was towards the end of 2025;

- (8) clarification on the action “Maybole Regeneration Project” in regard to whether Maybole Castle was a privately owned building and what the cost of modifications and repairs was and the Assistant Director – Communities advised that Maybole Castle had been owned by Cassillis Estate and that work had currently stopped until approval had been received from Cabinet and stakeholders; and that he would report back on the costs; and
- (9) when a report would be available in relation to the action “Review and make recommendations on the current Roads Operating Model” and the Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that there was a 10 year review of Ayrshire Roads Alliance underway and the report would be submitted to the Joint Committee and Council meetings for consideration.

The Panel

Decided: to note the Second Year: Quarter Two (2024/25) progress of the Council Plan (2023-2028) attached as Appendix 1.

6. Complaints – Scrutiny Update – Period: 1 April to 30 September 2024

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer providing Members with complaints performance information for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2024 and compared performance to the same reporting period in 2023. The report reflected the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and included information on how services had improved following Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints.

Having heard a Member of the Panel seek information on the parking strategy for the Ayr Show – Festival of Flight, the Director of Communities and Transformation advised that improvements had been made including the use of a parking management company for the car parks, alterations to the traffic management plan, and Transport Scotland remained within the Multi-Agency Control Centre for the duration of the day.

A Member of the Panel expressed concerns in relation to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Improvement Case regarding the delay of several years for a kinship carer and the Head of Children’s Health, Care and Justice Service explained that this had been a complex situation with the child’s best interests considered and apologies were made to the family for the failings.

Having scrutinised the contents of the report, the Panel

Decided: to request a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council’s complaints performance during the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

7. FOISA/EIR Annual Report 2023/24.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2024 by the Chief Governance Officer updating Members on the Council’s response times and the volume of requests made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and the

Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs) by subject matter and type of requester during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

A Member of the Panel requested information regarding FOIs received by MSPs/MPs and queried that if these came in a different format to an official FOI would this help to reduce the number of FOI requests; and the Co-ordinator – Registration, Records and Information advised that these enquiries often requested statistical information and that receiving these requests in the FOI format provided valuable timescales.

Having heard a Member of the Panel enquire as to how information was provided to the public and if improving this would reduce FOI requests, the Co-ordinator – Registration, Records and Information advised that requests increased regardless of information provided to the public domain, however, noted that the searchability could be improved and that this was being investigated.

Having scrutinised the contents of the report, the Panel

Decided: to request a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's FOISA/EIR performance during the period 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025.

8. **Business Support – Refreshed Ambition Programme Update.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2024 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Panel with an update on the delivery of the revised Ambition Programme, approved by Cabinet on 28 November 2023.

Following a query from a Member of the Panel in relation to the Ambition Programme Budget Summary and the overspend shown for this, the Assistant Director – Communities advised that the funds had been allocated as required and that the funds would require to be realigned from elsewhere in the Ambition Programme. A Member further enquired as to what the sum would amount to for rebalancing the overspend and the Assistant Director - Communities advised that a report containing the information regarding the budget would be provided.

A Member of the Panel requested information in relation to the 117 businesses that were seeking support to start in business, and how many of these received the support sought; and the Assistant Director – Communities advised that five businesses had started through the Ambition Programme and that many other businesses had been sign-posted on to other funding areas. It was also noted that there was an overlap between the Business Support Ambition Programme and the Business Gateway; and that it would be beneficial to merge these reports together in future.

The Panel

Decided: to note the progress of the revised Ambition Programme since its relaunch in April 2024.

9. **Common Good Fund Update.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2024 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development providing the Panel with an update on the Common Good Funds for Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Girvan and Maybole.

A Member of the Panel expressed concerns regarding the rent received through the Common Good Fund in relation to the Ayr Show – Festival of Flight and the Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised that the rent had increased from 2023 to 2024 due to a larger space used and that the rent had been independently valued. The Director of Communities and Transformation further advised that the rent costs assisted with keeping the event free to attend and sub-letting the ground did not generate direct profit for the Council.

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the current financial position of Ayr Common Good Fund, Prestwick Common Good Fund, Troon Common Good Fund, Maybole Common Good Fund and Girvan Common Good Fund as highlighted in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to note the long-term trend in Common Good Funds (Appendix 2); and
- (3) to note that, in response to (1) and (2), and as per Leadership Panel of 8 March 2022, Asset Management would submit a report to Council in December 2024 containing a long-term strategic review of all assets held within the Common Good Funds and proposals to place the Common Good Funds on a more sustainable footing in the medium to longer term.

10. **Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (ARES).**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 12 November 2024 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Panel with an update on the progress of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (ARES) and resourcing of the year two ARES action plan; and advising on changes to the regional economic development structure.

A Member of the Panel requested information on what work had been delivered involving the three authorities (East, South and North Ayrshire) and the Assistant Director – Communities advised that partners and authorities reflected Ayrshire working collaboratively, for example - jobs supported within the Aerospace Sector by South Ayrshire Council were beneficial to the wider region. This was also the case for life sciences in North Ayrshire and manufacturing in East Ayrshire Council areas. It was advised that a report would be provided in the future to highlight ARES progress.

Having heard a Member of the Panel seek information on how the ARES related to the Ayrshire Growth Deal, the Assistant Director – Communities advised that the Ayrshire Growth Deal aimed to drive economic growth which had been beneficial to the wider Ayrshire.

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the progress of the Regional Economic Strategy Year 1 Delivery Plan;
- (2) to note the one-year shared regional resource to support the delivery of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy priorities through a Year 2 Delivery Plan;
- (3) to note the successful State of the Regional Economy event which showcased regional working to businessmen and stakeholders; and
- (4) to note the financial commitment required to further develop and deliver year two ARES actions from within the Council's Economy and Regeneration operational budget.

The meeting ended at 12.00 p.m.