

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL (SPECIAL)

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting
on 6 February 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

Present in County Buildings: Councillors Iain Campbell (Provost), Kenneth Bell, Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Ian Cavana, Alec Clark, Ian Davis, Brian Connolly, Chris Cullen, Julie Dettbarn, Mark Dixon, Martin Dowey, Stephen Ferry, 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 Ian Cochrane, Hugh Hunter and Lee Lyons.

Apology: Councillor William Grant.

Attending in County Buildings: M. Newall, Chief Executive; K. Braidwood, Director of Housing, Operations and Development; 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; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; A. Mutch, Service Lead – Sport, Leisure and Golf; H. Murphy, Acting Service Lead – Destination South Ayrshire; J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; J. Chapman, Committee Services Officer; R. Anderson, Committee Services Assistant; E. Moore, Clerical Assistant; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

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; and
- (2) intimated that an apology had been received from Councillor William Grant.

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.

3. Naming of Summer Event

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 28 January 2025 by the Director of Communities and Transformation seeking approval to agree the title of the 2025 Summer Event, previously known as The Holy Fair and Summer Family Fest.

The Director of Strategic Change and Communities introduced the report.

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

By way of Amendment, Councillor George Weir, seconded by Councillor Julie Dettbarn, moved:

"it is recommended that the Council agrees with the recommendation to name the event Summer fAYRe with Armed Forces Day and Pipes in the Park for this year's event, that public engagement be approved to determine whether the public wish to restore 'Holy Fair' as part of the event's name for future years and a decision on the event name for future years be taken, following the aforementioned public engagement, by the Council group previously established to consider this matter, with addition of the ward Councillors from Ayr."

Questions were raised by Members and comments made in relation to:

- (1) representations being received by Members from members of the public who were unhappy that the name Holy Fair had been dropped and who were reminding the Council of the importance of history and heritage; that this event was associated with Robert Burns; that Members should take the views of the public into account; that, although it was now too late to change the name back to Holy Fair for this year's event, a public consultation should be carried out for the naming of these future events; and that the Ward Councillors should have been invited to the meeting regarding the naming of this event;
- (2) that this event was not just about religion, it was also about having fun; that it had been tradition to call it the Holy Fair; and that the public should be consulted to ascertain if they wished to restore the name Holy Fair;
- (3) that it was a tradition to attend the Holy Fair in the Summer; that this event started with a religious connotation, however, had become a progressively inclusive event; that there was now only one Holy Fair left in Scotland due to the name being removed for the event in Ayr; that it was hoped that, following consultation with the public, the name Holy Fair would be restored; and that the link to Burns should be retained;
- (4) that the Ward Councillors should have been involved in the meetings regarding the naming of this event; that the recommendation in the report did not reflect the mandate given to that group in June 2024; and that the Leaders of all the Groups should have been present when the decision was made;

Point of Order

Councillor Martin Dowe raised a Point of Order that Councillor Duncan Townson, as Leader of the Labour Group had been invited to the Group, however could not be bothered to attend. The Member previously speaking then outlined that this was not a Point of Order and that he was disappointed to have been interrupted when he was speaking; and Councillor Townson advised that he could not attend on that date, had submitted his apologies and asked that Councillor Dowe retract his comment that he could not be bothered to attend. Provost commented that this was a fair comment from Councillor Townson and Councillor Dowe agreed to withdraw his statement.

- (5) that the membership of the Group had been agreed, therefore, a date should have been arranged when all members could attend; the recommendation in the report was around ensuring that the name of the event was inclusive of non-secular members and that this did not appear to have been taken on board; that consultation was important; and that the decision did not appear to have been taken, otherwise why was this report in front of Council. The Director of Communities and Transformation advised that a decision had been taken at the Group to put forward the name "Summer fAYRe with Armed Forces Day and Pipes in the Park" for Members to determine if they wished to progress with this name as there was a requirement for a lead-in time for promotional material and signage;
- (6) that, as a church-goer, he did not see where the church was involved in this fair as there was no religious involvement;
- (7) that minutes of the Group had been requested but no minutes had been taken so there was no note of what form the debate had taken, if every Member attending was in agreement with the suggested name or if any Member wished to retain the name Holy Fair;
- (8) that holy fairs in Scotland were traditionally presbyterian festivals for communion which was not what South Ayrshire's holy fair had been; that this was a name from Burns' time and Members were getting tied up with a name;
- (9) that this festival involved high profile local religious leaders; that it was important to listen to the views of the people of South Ayrshire and a public consultation was a reasonable way forward;
- (10) that Robert Burns wrote about the holy fair but the poem was a savage indictment of the political and religious set-up at that time; that Ayr within the name of the event was to promote tourism within South Ayrshire; that the inclusion of Ward Members at the meetings could have been proposed at the Council meeting when the decision was taken to establish this Group. ; that Councillor Townson could have sent a substitute to these meetings; that advertising as a community event was a positive way forward; and were the numbers of attendees affected when the name of this event changed last year; and the Director of Strategic Change and Communities advised that there was no drone footage of last year's event which was the means of estimating the number of attendees, however, more people attended last year than previous years; and that the proposed renaming of the event was not intended to take away any historical references and was not intended to be offensive but was to attract a wider audience;
- (11) that the decision taken at the Working Group meeting was the right choice at that time, however, numerous Members had now been contacted by members of the public; and Councillors represented the people of South Ayrshire, therefore the amendment was seeking to engage with the public and to include the Ward Members in future discussions;
- (12) that the name Holy Fair caused confusion, therefore, a name was chosen that suggested that this was a family festival;
- (13) in relation to paragraph 4.3 of the report regarding the Council applying for additional funding, would changing the name of the event achieve funding and was funding awarded last year; and the Director of Strategic Change and Communities advised that the incorporation of the Armed Forces Day achieved funding for the Council; that funding had also been granted last year for the "Armed Forces Day and Pipes in the Park"; and that this funding assisted with the running of the event; and

- (14) that the Council supported Burns events, however, there was no mention of Ayr Holy Fair in any Burns poems; the change of name of this event was to broaden and enhance the attraction; and more people than ever attended the event last year as people saw a summer fair as a family day out.

Following an electronic vote, twelve Members voted for the Amendment and fifteen Members for the Motion which was accordingly declared carried; and the Council

Decided: to name the event "*Summer fAYRe with Armed Forces Day and Pipes in the Park*".

Point of Order

A Point of Order was raised by Councillor Julie Dettbarn regarding the voting procedure undertaken for this item; and the Service Lead – Democratic Governance advised that Members had the opportunity to vote for the Motion, for the Amendment or to Abstain and that the Motion was carried which was the recommendation within the report. Councillor Dettbarn advised that it had not been clear how Members should vote and the Service Lead – Democratic Governance outlined the process which was undertaken. Councillor Lyons advised that the vote for those joining remotely was different to those in the County Hall and was confusing. Provost advised that the vote had now concluded and the decision stood.

Point of Order

Councillor Chris Cullen raised a Point of Order that the Amendment should be voted on first and the Service Lead – Democratic Governance advised that the vote had taken place as outlined in Standing Orders and in line with Council practice

4. Review of Capital Estimates: General Services Capital Investment Programme 2024/25 to 2035/36

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 31 January 2025 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development seeking approval to update the General Services Capital Investment Programme for financial years 2024/25 through to 2035/36, as a result of a combination of (a) re-profiling of budgets between financial years; (b) budget reductions in projects; and (c) budget increases in projects, which would lead to reduced debt charges to the Council and reduce pressure on revenue budgets.

The Director of Housing, Operations and Development introduced the report.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Martin Dowey , moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Comments were made by Members and questions were raised in relation to:

- (1) requesting that this report be deferred to enable an Elected Members' briefing to be carried out;

- (2) why the 2024/25 Capital Funding for "Prestwick Pool - AHU and water storage project - Net Zero Implementation" had increased; why the funding for "Prestwick Regeneration/Heritage works" had increased; why the funding for the Business Plan associated with Belleisle Driving Range had been provided when a Business Case was still awaited and the result of the consultation was not available; and the Chief Financial Officer advised that this matter could be deferred and included as part of the budget setting process on 27 February 2025 should the Director be able to carry out a briefing prior to that meeting, however, this report was before Council to set the scene prior to the budget setting; and that going forward the Council required to remove resources from the Capital Investment Programme and these proposals were put forward for Members' consideration; and the Director of Housing, Operations and Development further advised that he would be happy to carry out a briefing for Members on the reprofiling of the Capital Programme and that it was always prudent to carry out a reprofiling of the Capital Programme during its lifetime;
- (3) that it would have been prudent to incorporate this report into the budget setting process; and the Chief Financial Officer advised that this report was before Members in advance of the budget setting meeting on 27 February 2025 to simplify the process during the budget setting; that this was a mid-year review to identify changes to the programme during the year rather than at the budget setting meeting;
- (4) that this was a very helpful report in terms of identifying the profiling and the potential savings, however, it was prudent to defer this report due to the implications in terms of formulating the budget going forward and it was important to reprofile the Capital Programme, therefore deferring this report would allow Members to understand the implications around the recommendations;
- (5) that Members required more time to analyse these figures as these were large sums of public money, therefore, this report should be deferred;
- (6) that these matters had been discussed at the Budget Working Group and, had all Members attended who had been invited, they would have had a greater understanding of this report; and that reports submitted to meetings of South Ayrshire Council should be read in advance by all Members;
- (7) the reprofiling and how many of the projects did not have business cases; and the Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that he would require to ascertain this from the Officers who worked with him on these projects, however, he would expect that they all had business cases, however, if any did not, he would manage this;
- (8) that the Citadel did not have a business case which was another reason for deferring this report to enable Members to scrutinise it; and the Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that there was a business case for the Citadel which would shortly be submitted to a meeting of Cabinet or Council for consideration; and
- (9) that this was an important paper outlining the financial position the Council faced going forward; that the level of rates paid by the Council was substantial and it was important that these levels were reduced; and that Members had a week to scrutinise this paper and question the appropriate officers, therefore deferring this report was not necessary.

Adjournment

The time being 10.55 a.m., the Council adjourned to allow the terms of an Amendment to be put to writing.

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 11.15 a.m.

By way of Amendment, Councillor Philip Saxton, seconded by Councillor Brian McGinley, moved "that this item be deferred until the next full Council, for inclusion within the budget being set on 27 February 2025 to enable a briefing to be carried out by relevant officers to elected members prior to full Council".

Following an electronic vote, eleven Members voted for the Amendment and sixteen Members for the Motion which was accordingly declared carried; and the Council

Decided: having thanked the Director of Housing, Operations and Development and his officers for their work on this report,

- (a) to approve the adjustments detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 attached to the report;
- (b) to approve the revised General Services Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2035/36 as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report; and
- (c) to note the associated debt charge implications as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

5. Formal Questions

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

Councillor Weir raised supplementary questions in relation to:-

- (1) the budget overview aspect in his first question and the anticipated budget being the same for both years, was this assuming no service reduction; and the Director of Communities and Transformation advised that this was budget in relation to the Citadel and it was not anticipated that there would be any changes in 2025/26; and that certain facilities would be under renovation, however, there would be no change to running costs; and
- (2) whether recent storm damage would impact the available services; and the Director of Communities and Transformation advised that it would not.

Exclusion of press and public.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved that the remaining items of business on the agenda be considered in private.

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 the Council

Decided: to agree to consider the remaining items of business in private.

The Council resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

6. Proposed Extension to Quayzone, Girvan

There was submitted a report (Members Only) of 31 January 2025 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development seeking approval for the procurement and delivery of an extension to the Quay Zone, Girvan subject to formal written agreement being concluded with the tenants to enter into a Minute of Variation of Lease to include the extension, once completed.

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development introduced the report.

Councillor Alec Clark, seconded by Councillor Martin Kilbride, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

The Council, following full discussion and questions,

Decided:

- (1) to approve the procurement and delivery of an extension to the Girvan Quay Zone, with an estimated cost of £1.5m, to be planned and delivered alongside the reinstatement works being undertaken due to storm damage, subject to planning consent and building warrant being obtained and formal written agreement being concluded in terms of paragraph 2.1.2 below; and
- (2) to grant authority to the Chief Governance Officer to conclude a formal written agreement with South Carrick Community Leisure SCIO to enter into a Minute of Variation of the Lease to include the additional area shown outlined red on the plan forming Appendix 1, on the basis of the Heads of Terms contained within the Addendum (confidential) to this report.

7. Ayrshire Growth Deal – the Prestwick Proposition

There was submitted a report (Members only) of 29 January 2025 by the Director of Communities and Transformation seeking approval to take a revised Ayrshire Growth Deal 'Prestwick Proposition' forward through a change management process with related costs.

The Assistant Director – Communities introduced the report.

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

Following a full discussion and questions a Member requested that regular updates on this matter be submitted to the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel and the Chief Executive agreed to this.

A Member requested a roll-call vote and the Chief Governance Officer took the vote For or Against the Motion by calling the roll as follows:-

Iain Campbell	For
Mary Kilpatrick	For
Kenneth Bell	For
Laura Brennan-Whitefield	For
Ian Cavana	For
Alec Clark	For
Ian Cochrane	For
Brian Connolly	For
Chris Cullen	For
Ian Davis	For
Julie Dettbarn	For
Mark Dixon	For
Martin Dowey	For
Stephen Ferry	For
Hugh Hunter	For
Martin Kilbride	For
Alan Lamont	For
Lee Lyons	For
Craig Mackay	For
Brian McGinley	For
Bob Pollock	For
Cameron Ramsay	For
Philip Saxton	For
Gavin Scott	For
Bob Shields	For
Duncan Townson	For
George Weir	For

Twenty seven Members voted for the Motion and, therefore, the Council

Decided:

- (1) to note the intention to support the development of commercial space through the development of business cases focused on the acquisition of strategic land assets and enabling infrastructure activities;
- (2) to approve the commencement of detailed work to support economic analysis, costings for the acquisition of land and development projects with aerospace companies for inclusion in an Outline Business Case (OBC);
- (3) to approve the reallocation of AGD funding to support this increased investment in the Roads Infrastructure and Commercial Build projects referred to above; and
- (4) that regular updates on this matter be submitted to the Services and Partnerships Performance Panel.

8. Closing Remarks.

The Provost thanked all in attendance for their contribution.

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.