

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL.

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

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

Present Remotely: Councillors Kenneth Bell, Ian Cochrane, Chris Cullen, Julie Dettbarn, Stephen Ferry, Lee Lyons and George Weir.

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; K. Dalrymple, Assistant Director – Housing and Operations; W. Wesson, Chief HR Officer; T. Simpson, Service Lead – Corporate Accounting; D. Alexander, Service Lead – Procurement; M. Alexander, Service Lead – Housing Services; C. Iles, Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards; J. Hall, Co-ordinator (Planning Strategy); J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer; R. Anderson, Committee Services Assistant; E. Moore, Clerical Assistant; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Attending Remotely: G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; C. McGhee, Chief Internal Auditor; and T. Burns, Service Lead - Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer.

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 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.

3. **Minutes of previous meetings**

(1) **Minutes of Previous Meetings of the Council.**

The Chief Governance Officer referred to an amendment to the Minutes of [12 December 2024](#), namely that Councillor Stephen Ferry was present in County Hall and not remotely.

- (a) Provost Iain Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mary Kilpatrick, moved the Minutes of South Ayrshire Council of 12 December 2024 as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

The Council

Decided: to approve the Minutes of 12 December 2024 and authorise these minutes to be signed as a correct record, subject to the above amendment

- (b) Provost Iain Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mary Kilpatrick, moved the Minutes of South Ayrshire Council (Special) of [6 February 2025](#) as a correct record.

The Council

Decided: to approve the Minutes of 6 February 2025 and authorise these minutes to be signed as a correct record.

(2) **Minutes of previous meetings of Panels.**

The Minutes of the undernoted Panels were submitted for information:-

- (i) Audit and Governance Panel of [4 December 2024](#) and [29 January 2025](#).
- (ii) Cabinet of [26 November 2024](#) and [21 January 2025](#).
- (iii) Chief Officers' Appointments/Appraisal Panel of [24 April 2024](#).
- (iv) Local Review Body of [3 December 2024](#) and [28 January 2025](#).
- (v) Regulatory Panel – Licensing of [28 November 2024](#) and [23 January 2025](#).
- (vi) Regulatory Panel – Planning of [14 November 2024](#).
- (vii) Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of [19 November 2024](#).

Variation in Order of Business

In terms of Standing Order No. 13.3, Provost, seconded by Councillor William Grant, moved to vary the order of business to consider item 5 on the agenda "Framework for Managing Workforce Change" before item 4 entitled "Flexible Retirement".

In terms of Standing Order No. 19.9, there was no general agreement to the unopposed motion, therefore, the Council moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion. Twenty Members voted for the Motion, seven voted against the Motion and one Member abstained and the Council agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

4. **Framework for Managing Workforce Change.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 26 February 2025 by the Chief HR Officer seeking approval of revisions to the Framework for Managing Workforce Change.

The Chief HR Officer introduced the report and advised that it was proposed that the "No Compulsory Redundancy" pledge be removed and replaced with a new provision entitled "Alternative Employment" meaning that, if an employee was displaced, they would be offered, where possible, an alternative role comparable with their original position; that the pledge did not provide a guarantee against compulsory redundancies in future; that the redeployment processes had been streamlined; and that it was important to emphasise that the Council remained steadfast in its commitment to the underlying principles of the pledge with compulsory redundancy continuing to be regarded as a last resort.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) Compulsory Redundancies always being a last resort and that every measure would be taken to avoid this; and noting the additional provisions in the Policy on Alternative Employment;
- (2) why this Policy was being introduced at this time; and the Chief HR Officer advised that she had benchmarked with other local authorities and it had been felt that the terminology in terms of "no compulsory redundancy" was outdated, therefore the appropriate section in the framework had been updated with regards to Alternative Employment;
- (3) whether the Trade Unions were consulted on this matter and whether minutes of meetings were available; and the Chief HR Officer advised that the Trade Union consultation summary was attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and that a number of meetings had taken place with the Trade Unions, the last meeting being a Trade Union Liaison meeting in January 2025 where the Unions were afforded the opportunity to put forward any further comments for consideration;
- (4) the purpose of removing the no compulsory redundancy agreement; and the Chief HR Officer advised that the previous pledge had been a cumbersome process which could lead to concerns from employees regarding the delays in supporting them through the process if they were displaced; and that this revision was to streamline the process to ensure that employees were supported and to find them alternative work as soon as reasonably practicable;
- (5) whether the process of providing a similar job for employees who had been displaced would create a skill drain across the Council; and whether it was currently proving difficult to fill essential posts within the Council; and the Chief HR Officer advised that, in relation to redeployment, attempts were made to find a position with the least detriment to the employee in the first instance and that, where this could not be achieved, positions lower than the employee's current post were examined and that there was a salary preservation for the employee; and that it was currently proving difficult to fill Social Work, ICT and Finance posts, however, the next item on the agenda entitled "Flexible Retirement" would assist with some of these issues;

- (6) having a policy with no compulsory redundancies being important to staff as this provided job security and assisted with job retention and that the impact of the removal of this policy was worrying; and was this factored into this policy; and the Chief HR Officer advised that there were robust processes in place to support any employee who was displaced as a result of a service review or budget changes; that an employee assistance programme had been introduced to provide support to employees; and that the Trauma Informed Officer was developing a wellbeing strategy and the maximising attendance policy is being reviewed with a focus on Employee Wellbeing;
- (7) it being correct to refresh the scheme, however, in an organisation the size of South Ayrshire Council, there was sufficient turnover of staff to manage service redesign without compulsory redundancies and, as the Council moved into a major programme of transformation, it was imperative that the loyal and hardworking workforce remained motivated with employees not fearing for their livelihood as a result of this change; and it was hoped that this was not a regressive step; and the Chief HR Officer advised that the terminology in the current policy was outdated and could cause alarm to employees, therefore this change was from a supportive stance to provide security;
- (8) removing the no compulsory redundancy policy would put fear across the organisation as staff would believe jobs were at risk; and asking why this paper was brought forward; and Councillor Dowey advised that this was scaremongering by the Labour Group; that the no compulsory redundancy policy did not preclude anyone from being made redundant; that since the present administration was in power, no employees had been made redundant; that the proposed Labour Group budget had 7.5 FTE staff being made redundant; that the language used within the policy was being updated; and that the Council Tax raise was to protect staff; and the Chief HR Officer further advised that where reductions in staff were required, voluntary trawls would be carried out initially to ascertain where staff voluntarily wished to leave the authority; that criteria would only come in where there were compulsory redundancies; and that the policy was being revised to update the terminology and to make the policy more appropriate in terms of modern workforce practices going forward;

Point of Order

Councillor Ian Cavana raised a Point of Order that Councillor Dowey had made an unnecessary personal comment; and Councillor Dowey apologised.

- (9) that, in these difficult times, the Council should be adhering to the pledge; and the Chief HR Officer advised that since the pledge had been put in place in 2018 only five employees had gone through the process and, during that process, had opted to take voluntary early retirement, therefore no employees had been made redundant, they had chosen to leave;

- (10) that the staff who had left the authority voluntarily were not part of the compulsory redundancy policy; that the removal of the no compulsory redundancy policy removed a fundamental safeguard for staff and was altering the conditions of service; if there was no requirement for removing the pledge then this should not be done; that, with regard to consultation, the process should be robust, participative and developmental, however, it was apparent that the Trade Unions were outlining that they had not been fully consulted and they did not agree with the change; that changes to policies should be to the benefit of staff and the people of South Ayrshire, however, this change to policy was not necessary; that following the accusation that the proposed Labour Group budget had included making 7.5 FTE staff redundant, if any staff had been made redundant, it would have gone through the current process; that there were no tangible benefits to removing this pledge in the policy; that the Council should get back to its commitment to staff and convince staff that this was an organisation of choice as at the moment the Council was haemorrhaging staff as this authority was not seen as a good employer; and that staff required to be reassured that this Council was an organisation of choice and a good employer;

Point of Order

Councillor Dowe raised a point of order that Councillor McGinley stated that this authority was not a good employer and lost a large number of staff annually; and Provost agreed that these statements were not founded in fact as there was natural wastage in every organisation.

Councillor McGinley outlined that when a Point of Order was raised by a Member, the Standing Order Number it related it should be provided; and Provost advised that this would be requested from every Member.

- (11) that, in response to the points made at item (10) above, the Chief HR Officer outlined her disappointment if the Trade Unions were stating that they had insufficient consultation on this matter as she prided herself on the partnership working with Trade Union colleague and ample consultation had been carried out; and that, in terms of altering the terminology, the process was also being streamlined;
- (12) how consultation was carried out with the Trade Unions; and the Chief HR Officer advised that the proposals were presented to the Unions and they were asked for their comments on these and, as a result of their comments, amendments and updates had been made;

Point of Order

Councillor McGinley raised a Point of Order regarding Councillor Dowe requesting to speak when he had already made comments; Councillor Dowe advised that he was posing a question; and Provost advised that Members could raise as many questions as they wished.

- (13) whether the five staff members who had left the employment of the Council voluntarily when the no compulsory redundancy pledge was in place would have been made redundant at that time; and the Chief HR Officer advised that they would have been if it had not been possible to find an alternative position for them;
- (14) whether the position had changed or if the position remained the same under the pledge; and the Chief HR Officer confirmed that the position had not changed; and
- (15) that the amendments and the rationale for these were outlined within the report; that numerous protections for staff were still in place; and that consultation had been carried out and subsequent amendments made following feedback.

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

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

Twelve Members voted for the Amendment, fifteen for the Motion and one Member abstained. The Motion was accordingly declared to be carried and the Council

Decided:

- (a) to approve the removal of the No Compulsory Redundancy Pledge; and
- (b) to approve the Framework for Managing Workforce Changes (as contained in Appendix 1 to the report).

5. **Flexible Retirement**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 26 February 2025 by the Chief HR Officer seeking approval to implement the new Flexible Retirement Policy.

The Chief HR Officer introduced the report and advised that the proposed policy sought to provide local government employees with a structured and equitable opportunity similar to the scheme for teachers to transition into retirement; that the policy would also facilitate effective succession planning particularly for positions requiring specialised skills and expertise that were challenging to replace such as professional, technical and hard to recruit positions by funding a trainee.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) thanking the Chief HR Officer for the briefings to all groups on the three HR papers on the agenda; welcoming the re-introduction of this Policy; and advising that succession planning required to be considered when considering flexible retirement; and
- (2) that the re-introduction of this policy was a fundamental change; that the posts required to be directly related to a saving by the deletion of part of the post which took away the rights of the individual in terms of what best suited them, which was a poor development; and that employees coming to the end of their working life would be prevented from taking flexible retirement if there was no financial saving to the Council; and the Chief HR Officer advised that the implementation of this policy was not about a financial saving but was to support the Council in being able to recruit into positions which were currently difficult to recruit and to retain expertise in these particular specialist posts and allow the employee to transition into retirement whilst retaining their skills and expertise to train future employees and save the Council money as there would be no requirement to recruit externally as the succession pipeline would be in place and there would be no time delays when the employee retired.

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. Seventeen Members voted for the Motion and eleven voted against the Motion and the Council

Decided: to approve the re-introduction of the Flexible Retirement Policy (as contained in Appendix 1 to the report).

6. **Employee Retirement Framework.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 26 February 2025 by the Chief HR Officer seeking approval for the proposed application of discretionary provisions in respect of Flexible Retirement and Compensatory Added Years plus the consequential change to the Council's Employee Retirement Framework.

The Chief HR Officer introduced the report and advised that the Employee Retirement Framework detailed the discretionary provision of the local government pension scheme as exercised by the Council; that the scheme offered Councils the option to allow pension fund members aged 55 and over the right to access their pension benefits while continuing in employment; that this provision was linked to the Flexible Retirement Policy discussed and agreed at Item (5) of this Minute; that the Local Government Pension Scheme also permitted Councils to exercise discretion in awarding compensatory added years to employees retiring on the grounds of redundancy; that the options available to employees under the Council's current scheme were outlined in 3.4 of the report; highlighting that compensatory added years amounts constituted a continuing financial commitment to the Council presently at £2m pa; that in response to the substantial financial challenges and to reduce ongoing annual expenditure it was proposed that the compensatory added years be discontinued and be replaced solely with a severance payment of up to 30 weeks which was currently within the provision; that the Council's current payback period for severance costs where savings offset expenses was capped at two years; and that it was known that the Strathclyde Pension Fund strain on the fund costs was rising and, in light of these increases, it was proposed that the Council's payback period be extended to three years.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Comments were made and questions raised in relation to:

- (1) this policy would remove the choice from employees leaving the organisation by not giving them the option to take a cash settlement or the pension provisions; that the opportunity to plan for retirement was being removed from staff and they were being stopped from attaining the most appropriate termination conditions; and that this gave the impression that the pension was a benefit but it was part of employees' conditions of service; and the Chief HR Officer advised that, on examining these proposals, benchmarking had been carried out across other local authorities and it was found that most other authorities had removed the compensatory added years for financial reasons and others who still had these were currently reviewing this; and that experience showed that those employees who had left this organisation through voluntary early retirement over the past few years had taken the severance payment rather than the compensatory added years;
- (2) whether the Trade Unions were in favour of these proposals; and the Chief HR Officer advised that the Trade Unions had raised concerns regarding the removal of the compensatory added years and that it had been explained that these proposals were for financial reasons to reduce the ongoing financial commitment to the Council; and that although the Unions were not in favour of some of the proposals, they understood the rationale behind the proposals; and
- (3) paragraph 3.2 of the report regarding the provision of allowing pension fund members aged 55 and over to access their pension benefits while remaining in employment provided they reduced their working hours by at least 20% and whether this would reduce the payment employees would receive if they reduced their hours; and the Chief HR Officer advised that employees would receive payment of their pension accrued until the date of their flexible retirement and then would receive their salary for continuing to work, therefore, would receive pension benefits and options accrued at that date.

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. Sixteen Members voted for the Motion, eleven Members voted against the Motion and one Member abstained and the Council

Decided:

- (a) to approve the application of discretionary provisions;
- (b) to approve the consequential revision to the Employee Retirement Framework (as contained in Appendix 1 to the report); and
- (c) to approve the Council's payback period to be extended to three years.

7. Standing Orders Relating to Meetings.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 27 February 2025 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to amend the Standing Orders Relating to Meetings following review.

The Chief Governance Officer introduced the report and advised that, due to members' concerns following briefings on this report, paragraph 4.4 of the report "inclusion of provision for withdrawal of agenda items" was being removed and was not now being considered.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report subject to the deletion of paragraph 4.4.

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

- (1) whether it was within the Standing Orders that all business should be conducted through the Provost/Chair or whether this was just good practice; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that she would hold a members' briefing on the provisions of the Standing Orders, however, Provost took all of the decisions at the Council and all business should be directed through him/her;
- (2) welcoming the removal of the Standing Order regarding the withdrawal of agenda items; and that all business should be conducted through the Provost or Chair; and
- (3) agreeing that all business should be conducted through the Provost or Chair as good manners were imperative during a meeting.

The Council

Decided: that the Council approve the revised Standing Orders Relating to Meetings (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) with effect from 7 March 2025, with the exception of paragraph 4.4 of the report.

Councillor Lee Lyons left the meeting at this point.

8. **Appointments to Panel.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 25 February 2025 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval to make alterations to the membership of Panels.

The Chief Governance Officer introduced the report.

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

The Council, having considered any other amendments which might be required to membership of Panels

Decided:

- (1) to note that Councillor Brian McGinley would replace Councillor Philip Saxton as the Labour member on the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel; and
- (2) to request that officers make the required amendments to the list of Panels to reflect these changes.

9. **Revised Schedule of Meetings.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 27 February 2025 by the Chief Governance Officer seeking approval of revisions to the timetables of Council and Panel meetings for the period April 2025 to June 2026.

The Chief Governance Officer introduced the report and advised that this report was submitted for Members' consideration as a result of comments made by Members regarding the requirement for additional Council meetings due to the length of agendas of recent Council meetings resulting in meetings continuing beyond 2.00 p.m.

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

Comments were made and questions raised in relation to:

- (1) whether a scheduled meeting would be cancelled should there be little or no business for the agenda; and Provost confirmed that this would be the case;
- (2) welcoming the increase in Council meetings as it would lead to shorter agendas and meetings;
- (3) welcoming the revised schedule of meetings and more regular Council meetings as it allowed members to respond better to topical issues.

The Council

Decided: that the Council approve revisions to the timetables of Council and Panel meetings for the period April 2025 to June 2026.

Adjournment

The time being 11.05 a.m., the Council adjourned.

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 11.20 a.m.

10. Procurement Strategy Update 2025/26.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 25 February 2025 by the Chief Financial Officer seeking approval of minor updates to the Council's Procurement Strategy covering 2025 - 2026.

The Service Lead – Procurement introduced the report and advised that the Council was obliged by the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to prepare a strategy; that the updated Strategy would be submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the Council's website; and that only minor updates had been required this year to ensure a continued integrated approach in achieving best value and in delivering services.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) the work on community benefits outlined within the strategy and how it would be beneficial for all Members to receive a briefing on this, particularly in relation to local businesses and local benefits; and the Service Lead – Procurement advised that he would provide a detailed briefing on the complete process including additions to the Strategy in the last few years;
- (2) welcoming the use of more local suppliers;
- (3) how could local communities access the community benefits; and the Service Lead - Procurement advised that a portal had been established on the Council website and contact had been made with each community group advising them of this; and that an overwhelming response had been received from community groups on this.

The Council, having thanked the Service Lead – Procurement and his Team for their work on this matter,

Decided: that the Council approve the updated Procurement Strategy for 2025 - 2026 attached as Appendix 1.

11. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2025/26.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 25 February 2025 by the Chief Financial Officer seeking approval of the proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for financial year 2025/26

The Service Lead – Corporate Accounting introduced the report and advised that the Strategy set the framework within which the Council's treasury function would operate for the year and set out the planned activities that the Council would undertake; that the Strategy at Appendix 1 to the report set out the basis for the Council's decision making in relation to managing cashflow and ensuring that appropriate funding was in place for agreed capital investment plans.

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

The Council, having thanked the Chief Financial Officer, his officers and advisers for the work undertaken on this Strategy,

Decided: that the Council approve the draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2025/26 (attached as Appendix 1).

12. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Mid-Year Report 2024/25.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 25 February 2025 by the Chief Financial Officer providing Members with a mid-year treasury management update for the financial year 2024/25.

The Service Lead – Corporate Finance introduced the report and advised that this report had been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code and Practice on Treasury Management and was one of a series of reports compiled for consideration at Council and Audit and Governance Panel throughout the year.

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

The Council, having thanked the Members of the Audit and Governance Panel for scrutinising this report,

Decided: that the Council approve the contents of this report.

13. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Capital Budget 2025/26 to 2029/30

There was submitted a joint report ([issued](#)) of 27 February 2025 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development and Chief Financial Officer seeking approval of the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget for 2025/26 and the proposed 5-year Capital Budget for 2025/26 – 2029/30.

The Service Lead – Housing Services introduced the report and referred to the background to these Budgets and the proposals, as outlined in the report.

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

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

- (1) these proposals maintaining and improving the housing stock across South Ayrshire; and the extensive consultation with tenants regarding the rental charges;

- (2) the importance of this provision for the people of South Ayrshire; that the Council's relationship with tenants was very good and officers had worked hard in maintaining this and ensuring that residents bought into the Council's philosophy of decent homes for a decent rent; and that the housing officers worked diligently to assist people to access affordable housing;
- (3) that 'Structural and Environment' within Appendix 2 of the report was double the amount this year as opposed to other years going forward and what was the reason for this; and the Service Lead – Housing Services advised that the works within that budget covered external works including roof replacement, rendering and supporting energy efficient programmes and that some projects would be carried forward into the next financial year so the budget outlined in the report took account of projects which would be completed early next year and the costs covered out of next year's budget;
- (4) whether footpaths would be upgraded through the capital budget; and the Service Lead – Housing Services advised that £2.051m had been allocated in the 2025/26 budget for environmental improvements and that this included footpaths;
- (5) whether the term of the kitchen refit programme could be extended as tenants had advised some Members that their kitchen was being replaced and it was still in good condition; and the Service Lead – Housing Services advised that, in the previous review of the HRA Business Plan the Council had been working towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and that, following 2015 the Council had extensive consultation with tenants and the Business Plan had been built on the premise of fifteen and thirty year cyclical replacement kitchens, therefore they were replaced every fifteen years; that as part of the Capital Programme it was being found that some tenants did not want the upheaval of works being carried out, therefore, there was a higher rate of omissions, however, this could be re-examined as part of the next review of the Business Plan next year; and
- (6) whether information on new builds could also include the numbers of housing association new builds; and the Service Lead – Housing Services advised that he would liaise with the Service Lead – Housing Strategy and Regeneration and would provide this information to Members.

The Council, having thanked the Service Lead – Housing Services and his staff for their work in assisting the people of South Ayrshire

Decided:

- (a) to note the decision taken by South Ayrshire Council on 17 January 2024 which approved a 4.5% increase each year for the three year period from 2024/25 – 2026/27 for council house rents, and for other rents and charges recovered through the HRA (including:- lock-up rents, garage site rents, garden maintenance charges, communal heating and amenity charges) and that tenants had already been notified of their 2025/26 rental charge in accordance with the statutory requirements; and
- (b) to approve the proposed 2025/26 HRA Revenue Budget outlined in section 4.3 of the report and Appendix 1 and the proposed 5 year capital budget as outlined in section 4.4 of the report and Appendix 2.

14. **Development Plan Scheme 2025 and LDP2 Delivery Programme 2025.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 25 February 2025 by the Director of Housing, Operations and Development seeking approval to publish and consult on the Development Plan Scheme 2025 for Local Development Plan 3; and to publish to the updated Delivery Programme 2025 for Local Development Plan 2.

The Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards introduced the report and advised that the first meeting of the LDP3 Member/Officer Working Group had now taken place which was a very positive meeting and was well attended.

Councillor Bob Pollock, seconded by Councillor Alan Lamont, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) whether the timescales for LDP3 could be met; and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that the processes for the LDP3 were very resource intensive and that certain stages were set out in legislation; that this was challenging for all planning authorities in terms of meeting the timescales as there was a national shortage of Planners, however, him and his team would endeavour to meet all timescales; that there was a portal on the Council's website for members of the public to view the work undertaken to date; and that the Scottish Government had set a deadline of May 2028 for this matter, however many Councils had now stated that they would not be able to meet this deadline, therefore, the Scottish Government was now reviewing this deadline;
- (2) the wording within the report regarding potential sites for Gypsy/Travellers being inappropriate; and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that the phraseology used in the report was the standard wording used for all potential development sites, however, he would take note of the Members' concerns; and
- (3) the significant changes brought in under the LDP3 process which were very resource intensive, particularly with the level of public engagement required; that the public engagement was welcomed as the Plan was for the whole of South Ayrshire; that the wording regarding the potential sites for Gypsy/Travellers could be addressed by a preface highlighting that this was similar to all planning applications; and that the public should be encouraged to access the portal as a source of information and a means of contributing feedback.

The Council, having thanked the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards and his staff for the work undertaken on this Plan,

Decided:

- (a) to approve the Development Plan Scheme 2025 (Appendix 1) for publication, and consultation, including the proposed Participation Scheme for public and stakeholder consultation; and
- (b) to approve the Delivery Programme 2025 for Local Development Plan 2 (Appendix 2).

15. **Notice of Motion**

In accordance with Council Standing Order No. 18, a Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Laura Brennan-Whitefield and seconded by Councillor Julie Dettbarn, as follows:

"South Ayrshire Council believes that commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of gender-based violence which is caused and perpetuated by gender inequality in society and is therefore harmful to all involved.

We reject in the strongest terms that CSE, including prostitution, is a valid form of work which should be legalised and regulated.

We advocate that those involved require appropriate support to reduce the harm they have experienced and increase their options for exiting CSE.

We will seek to provide appropriate support to all those involved to mitigate harm and provide alternatives for those who want to exit commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution. We will achieve this through working with existing mainstream and specialist services to raise the awareness of CSE and provide employees with the necessary skills to support women involved.

Any work undertaken by South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (SAVAWP) recognises that any form of commercial sexual exploitation is an abuse of women's and girls' rights which impacts their safety, health, and wellbeing.

SAVAWP takes a gendered approach to addressing the harms caused by commercial sexual exploitation, recognising victims are overwhelmingly women and girls, while those benefiting or profiting from commercial sexual exploitation are overwhelmingly men. We will undertake a trauma informed approach when supporting women in engaged in CSE."

A full debate took place regarding the terms of the Motion and questions were raised which were responded to by the Service Lead – Corporate Accounting and Councillor Brennan-Whitefield.

Councillor Brian McGinley proposed an addition to the Notice of Motion that "officers review the existing services provided by the Council and bring a report back to Council for consideration" and Councillors Brennan-Whitefield and Dettbarn, as the Mover and Seconded of the Motion agreed to accept this into the terms of 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. Twenty five Members voted for the Motion and two Members voted against the Motion and the Council

Decided: to agree the Notice of Motion as outlined on the agenda with the addition of "that officers review the existing services provided by the Council and bring a report back to Council for consideration".

16. **Formal Questions.**

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 26.2, there were submitted [Formal Questions](#) from Councillor Philip Saxton.

Exclusion of press and public.

Councillor Martin Dowey, seconded by Councillor Bob Pollock, moved that the remaining item 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 Council moved to a vote undertaken for or against the Motion. Twenty five Members voted for the Motion and two Members voted against the Motion and the Council

Decided: to agree to consider the following item 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 item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraphs 6, 9 and 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

17. Affordable Housing Proposals, Riverside Place, Ayr

There was submitted a report (Members only) of 25 February 2025 advising of the conclusion of negotiations for the removal of the telecommunications mast from Block 1 Riverside Place, Ayr and the timescales associated with the removal of the mast.

The Assistant Director – Housing and Operations introduced the report.

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

Following a full discussion and questions responded to by the Assistant Director – Housing and Operations and the Chief Governance Officer, the Council

Decided: to note the content of the report and the conclusion of negotiations.

18. Consideration of Disclosure of the above Confidential Reports.

The Council

Decided: to authorise the disclosure of this report under Standing Order 32.4 subject to redaction of commercially sensitive information:

- Affordable Housing Proposals, Riverside Place, Ayr

Provost

Provost thanked everyone in attendance for their contribution.

The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.