

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes of hybrid webcast meeting on
1 October 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Present
Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane and Lee Lyons.

Apologies: Councillors Kenneth Bell and Brian McGinley.

Attending
in County
Buildings: K. Anderson, Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; K. Dalrymple, Assistant Director – Housing and Operations; C. Cox, Assistant Director – Planning and Development; M. Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice; S. McCardie, Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability; C. Iles, Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards; J. Tait, Service Lead – Thriving Communities; G. Cockburn, Service Lead – Education Support Services; T. Burns, Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer; F. Ross, Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services; A. Mutch, Service Lead – Sport, Leisure and Golf; M. Alexander, Service Lead – Housing Services; B. Sanderson, Service Lead – Human Resources; D. McIntosh, Solicitor; L. Jarvie, Co-ordinator, Sustainability, Climate Change and Nature; F. MacDonald, Co-ordinator (Culture); A. Valenti, Quality Improvement Manager; S. Marshall, Community Health and Care Services; J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Attending
Remotely: T. Simpson, Service Lead – Corporate Accounting; D. Alexander, Service Lead – Procurement; M. Houston, Service Lead – Trading Standards and Environmental Health; and F. Anderson, Co-ordinator (Culture and Tourism).

Chair's Remarks.

The Chair

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting;
- (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 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. **Local Government Benchmarking Framework – Overview of 2023/2024**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 28 August 2025 by the Chief Executive updating Panel on the publication of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data for 2023/2024 and for the Panel to consider where scrutiny of this information could help drive improvement.

The Service Lead – Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability introduced the report; outlined the background to the LGBF and referred to the themes presented within the report and the areas for comparison.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) good practice principles and whether this authority engaged with other authorities or operated within its own silo; and the Service Lead – Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability advised that services considered data within their family groups and were encouraged to contact other Councils to share information and best practice;
- (2) the "percentages of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year" and how officers ensured people received the discount they were entitled to; and the Service Lead – Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability advised that she would forward this question to the relevant officer and request that she provide a written response;
- (3) the various red indicators for "adult social care" and whether this was a true reflection; and the Senior Manager – Localities advised that the red indicators related to performance from several years ago and that future benchmarking should outline the improvements which had taken place;
- (4) how much of the £6.12m reserves were utilised for the Station Hotel and if any monies were recouped from the Scottish Government or Scotrail; and the Service Lead – Corporate Accounting advised that he would provide a specific figure relating to the Station Hotel but outlined that all parties concerned had contributed except the owner of the Station Hotel; that funding in the region of £2.9m had been provided from the Scottish Government's Bellwin Scheme to help fund the works to ensure the building was safe; and that he would provide figures in writing following the meeting on how much was spent of the reserves;
- (5) the year on year performance marked as stable, was this in comparison to the previous year; and the Service Lead – Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability advised that it was;
- (6) the meaning of "actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure"; and the Service Lead – Corporate Accounting advised that this related to how much money had been spent against the Council's budget;
- (7) the large spend on tourism; and the Assistant Director – Communities advised that the Council invested in tourism through the large events held in South Ayrshire and also provided a level of grant funding to community groups and businesses through Destination South Ayrshire;

- (8) could a comparison be provided for family groups for the overall year on year performance; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance advised that family groups changed depending on the topic being discussed, therefore it was more difficult to achieve this information;
- (9) the percentage of Council procurement spend in local enterprise being substantial over 2023/24; and the Service Lead – Procurement referred to all of the businesses included in this figure. It was then requested that this detail be included in future reports;
- (10) the data regarding child protection interventions; and the Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice advised that he was proud of the work undertaken in this area; that the team were committed to The Promise in South Ayrshire to keep children safe within families whilst working with partners; and outlined the work undertaken in relation to children on the Child Protection Register, interventions with children and families and children in more than one placement move;
- (11) Business Gateway start-ups and the graph indicating a reduction in these, however, the narrative indicated an increase; and the Assistant Director – Communities advised that there was a lead-in time for people starting a business and that the 2023/24 figures were reflective of people starting a business in the 2022 period; and he outlined the significant successful work which had been undertaken in relation to the Station Hotel fire, for example, grant funding to local retailers; and that the LGBF indicators did not reflect the full range of works carried out by Thriving Communities. The Service Lead – Thriving Communities further advised that, in terms of vacancy rates, his Team had carried out an audit of Town Centres in 2025 and had trends over five years; that there were clusters within the Hourstons and Kyle Centre sites which did not give a true reflection of the Town Centre in Ayr; and that there were also audits of Troon Town Centre and Newmarket Street, Ayr where the team had been working with the traders in these areas;
- (12) the waste disposal costs; and the Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services advised that the costs had increased as the contract had to be renegotiated and that this was at a higher cost for the first two years and would decrease thereafter;
- (13) the Heathfield recycling premises; and the Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services advised that the cost of disposal was based on residual waste as a significant amount of the waste through Heathfield was recycle that the Council could gain money from;
- (14) the percentage of Council houses that were energy efficient; and the Service Lead - Housing Services outlined the reporting mechanism for whether properties met the Scottish Housing Quality standard;
- (15) the properties that did not meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard; and the Service Lead – Housing Services advised that these properties would require an exemption or abeyance on why they could not meet the standard; and that some options required to be balanced with affordability for tenants, eg for certain types of heating; and
- (16) the percentage of properties being used for homeless accommodation; and the Service Lead – Housing Services advised that he would obtain this information and provide this in writing.

The Panel, having thanked officers for this informative and useful report which highlighted good practice in the Council,

Decided:

- (a) to note the overall year on year performance highlighted in section 4.1 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) to note the new process for LGBF scrutiny highlighted in section 4.4; and
- (c) to note the accompanying themed data packs (part one and part two) for more extensive scrutiny (attached as Appendices 2 and 3 to the report).

The meeting ended at 2.35 p.m.