

Agenda Item No. 2**PARTNERSHIPS PANEL**

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting held on
21 September 2022 at 10.05 am.

Present: Councillors Philip Saxton (Chair), Mark Dixon and Hugh Hunter.

Present

Remotely: Councillors Kenneth Bell and Ian Cochrane.

Apology: Councillor Mary Kilpatrick.

Attending: W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; L. Kerr, Co-ordinator (Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation); K. Braidwood, Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance; and J. Wyatt, Chief Executive, Gaiety Theatre.

Attending

Remotely: B. Kiloh, Head of Policy and Planning, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

1. Sederunt & 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. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 28 June 2022 (issued) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme

The Service Lead – Democratic Governance provided an update on the status of the [Action Log and Work Programme](#) and advised that

- (1) in relation to item 1 on the Action Plan, VisitScotland was still awaiting feedback from Expedia to identify spend in South Ayrshire;
- (2) in relation to item 2 on the Action Plan, that the rising costs of bitumen, steel and cement were outlined in the Log; and
- (3) the Active Travel Strategy would be considered by Panel by June 2023 at the latest.

Following a comment from a Panel Member that item 1 on the Action Log had now been outstanding since November 2021, the Service Lead – Democratic Governance advised that she would follow this up with the relevant officer to seek a resolution to this matter.

Decided: to note the Action Log and Work Programme.

4. Ayr Gaiety Performance Report

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 7 September 2022 by the Assistant Director – People inviting Panel Members to scrutinise the performance of the Ayr Gaiety Partnership (AGP).

The Co-ordinator (Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation) provided the Panel with an overview of the partnership between the Council, AGP and the University of the West of Scotland; and the measures that the AGP had been asked to deliver as part of this agreement.

The Chief Executive, Gaiety Theatre further advised of the progress made by the Gaiety in the last few years; provided a summary of the works undertaken to secure funding which provided support for local organisations and those in need; outlined the recent and forthcoming productions at the Gaiety including the use of the Studio; and referred to the work undertaken with members of the local community while ensuring the focus was on Council priorities.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:-

- (1) as the AGP had been asked to deliver a centre of excellence for education and training, how the success of this was measured; and the Chief Executive, Ayr Gaiety advised that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic he had worked closely with the University of the West of Scotland and Ayrshire College to compile a significant programme of training and that he worked with a number of schools to bring performances to the stage and for school pupils to learn about the theatre industry; and that he was aiming to set up a training centre in stage technical skills;
- (2) whether the works with people with dementia also included those people residing in Prestwick; and the Chief Executive, Gaiety Theatre advised that less work was undertaken in Prestwick than other areas, however, he was looking at ensuring there was a balance of work throughout the Council areas; and that the next report to Panel would outline what works had been undertaken in each area;
- (3) whether the interim funding for Ayrshire Women's Hub was external funding that he had gained for this Charity; and the Chief Executive, Ayr Gaiety advised that he worked with a range of individuals to complete an application for emergency funding from the Scottish Government; that this had been successful and £40,000 had been granted over three rounds of funding with some of these monies being allocated to secure new premises for the Ayrshire Women's Hub;
- (4) the new programme of support for local professional and amateur theatre-makers; and the Chief Executive, Ayr Gaiety advised that during the Covid-19 pandemic many theatre-makers had left the industry and there was now a shortage of technical staff including sound engineers, lighting engineers, scenery makers, etc; and that he was providing support to local theatre-makers in a range of ways to offer them a route into the theatre industry;
- (5) how works undertaken in Wallacetown were progressing; and the Chief Executive, Ayr Gaiety advised that the Theatre had carried out a lot of work in Wallacetown alongside the Communities Team and the Violence Reduction Unit; and that a play had recently been produced with recovering addicts which had been very successful;

- (6) whether any UK theatres operated with no funding; and the Chief Executive, Gaiety Theatre advised that most of the major theatres in cities operated without receiving funding as they had large enough audiences to operate on a wholly commercial basis; and
- (7) the financial outlook for the Gaiety Theatre; and the Chief Executive, Gaiety Theatre advised that the next year would be challenging due to a number of uncertainties; that the grant requested from the Council was the same as was granted in 2012, therefore, monies would be restricted; that support from Central Government was anticipated to assist with rising energy bills, however, should this not be forthcoming or should audience numbers not be as anticipated, this would prove very challenging for the Theatre.

The Panel, having considered the performance of the Ayr Gaiety Partnership in delivering the activities and having commended this report,

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

5. **Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) – Performance Report 2021/22**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 7 September 2022 by the Director – Place outlining the work of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and the impact its services had on the public transport network in South Ayrshire and across the West of Scotland; and providing the opportunity to identify any areas for further discussion or development of partnership activity.

The Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance advised that the SPT was the Regional Transport Partnership for the West of Scotland; referred to the responsibilities of the SPT; and outlined the partners that the SPT worked with.

The Head of Policy and Planning, SPT further advised that the report entitled ‘Delivering for South Ayrshire’ which was available on the SPT website contained operational information and details of the work carried out over the last five years in South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire; that public transport passenger numbers had been low due to the impact of the pandemic, however, were now rising especially in rural areas; and that the free bus travel for under 22s would be heavily promoted in the next few weeks to encourage young people to sign up.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:-

- (1) a proposed travel hub in Ayr town centre incorporating the train station and bus station; and the Head of Policy and Planning, SPT advised that Ayr bus station was operated by Stagecoach and he was unsure of their plans, however, SPT and ARA had a good working relationship with Stagecoach, Scotrail and Network Rail and that he would raise this matter with these companies to discuss the possibility of integrating both Stations;

- (2) school transport and rural transport; and the Head of Policy and Planning, SPT advised that, although bus passenger numbers had risen recently, they were still 15% less than pre-covid and bus operators were finding this challenging and some operators were struggling to continue to operate, despite support from local authorities and other agencies;
- (3) the reduction in the number of express buses from Ayr to Glasgow; and the Head of Policy and Planning, SPT advised that he was aware of the cuts in this service; that it was proving difficult for Stagecoach to find a sustainable model; that this was the type of issue he would like to see a partnership approach to with the bus operator and the local authority discussing this; and that he would liaise with colleagues in Bus Operations to arrange these discussions;
- (4) the grant allocations to South Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Council; and the Head of Policy and Planning, SPT advised that funding varied depending on the particular projects being funded; and that bus infrastructure facilities in South Ayrshire could be revisited and “park and ride” re-examined following discussions between Councillors and officers; and
- (5) the recent decision by Stagecoach to close Kilmarnock Bus Station in the evenings and whether this had resulted in Risk Assessments being carried out at Bus Stations; and the Head of Policy and Planning, SPT advised that anti-social behaviour was a problem throughout the West of Scotland and that colleagues at Kilmarnock Bus Station had faced major challenges with anti-social behaviour and that he would liaise with them and report back to Panel with more detail.

Having scrutinised the performance of SPT relating to their activities in South Ayrshire during 2021/22, the Panel

Decided: to note the contents of the report and the summary of SPT’s involvement in South Ayrshire, as contained within the ‘Delivering for South Ayrshire’ report prepared by SPT.

The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.