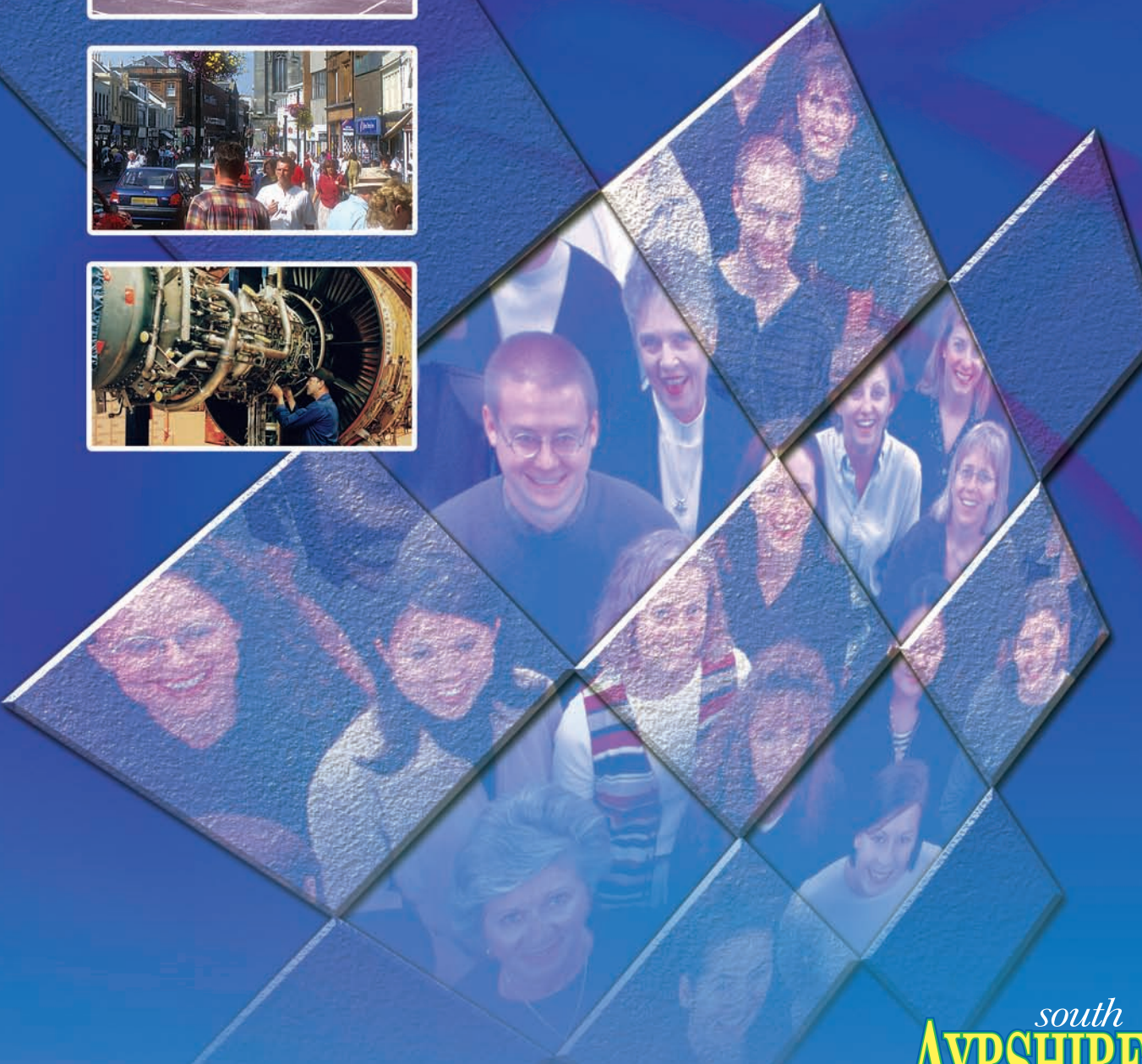


South Ayrshire Council's Vision for the Future

SECURING THE FUTURE

for South Ayrshire



"Our vision is
to establish
South Ayrshire
as the most
dynamic,
inclusive and
sustainable
community
in Scotland".

Our Shared Vision for South Ayrshire

"Our vision is to establish South Ayrshire as the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland".

South Ayrshire has a wonderful environment that sets it apart from other parts of Scotland and makes it a most desirable place to live in, work in and visit.

As a Council we want to build on these advantages to achieve a significant improvement in the quality of life of everyone living and working in South Ayrshire.

We will achieve this by:

- involving the community, voluntary organisations and local businesses in everything we do
- continually reviewing and improving council services
- working closely with key partner organisations
- making the most productive use of available resources

This document focuses on two prime issues:

- What do we want to achieve?
- How do we get there?

As a Council, we are committed to making a real impact. We recognise that we are here to serve the community and everyone in South Ayrshire has a part to play in realising this vision.



Hugh Hunter
Conservative Group Leader



Douglas Campbell
Labour Group Leader



Nan McFarlane
SNP Group Leader

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About the Document

In June 1997 the Council published its vision for the future in "A Vision of 2020". However, a lot has changed since then.

In "Securing the Future for South Ayrshire" we aim to set our sights beyond today's issues and to set out our strategic goals in a way that will inform our own decision-making and help us meet the challenges identified in the South Ayrshire Community Plan, "A Better Future Together".

This document lays out:

- the opportunities and challenges that we face
- our vision for South Ayrshire
- the priorities for the Council



Our values and guiding principles

In everything that we do, we will:

- listen and take account of what we hear
- be honest, transparent and courageous in our dealings
- proactively work in partnership
- promote equality by tackling discrimination and disadvantage
- strive for excellence
- build a sustainable future for the area

Our organising themes

Our priorities are organised around four themes, centred on establishing the area as being:

- prosperous, learning and achieving
- healthy, safe and caring
- clean, attractive and sustainable
- ambitious, forward-looking and responsive

We believe that we are strongest when we work together with other public agencies and across departments within the Council.

Prosperous, Learning and Achieving

Our Strengths

The last decade has seen wages grow and the economic output of South Ayrshire increase by over 40% mainly due to the strong aerospace industry around Prestwick Airport, the growth in tourism which brings in £200 million a year, and the expansion in the retail and public sectors. This is a testament to the quality of our education system and its workforce. In South Ayrshire

- school examination results are better than the Scottish average
- the proportion of school leavers going straight into higher education is above the Scottish average
- its graduates are more successful in finding work immediately after leaving college or university than those from elsewhere in the UK

The Challenges

We believe that the challenges for the future are to:

Develop new business opportunities

Over recent years manufacturing employment in South Ayrshire has fallen, resulting in an overall decline in job opportunities. Securing existing jobs will, therefore, be important, as will attracting new industries, such as finance and tourism. Integral to this are the re-development of our town centres and improvements in transport links.

Attract and retain a skilled workforce

The population of working age is expected to fall in the next 20 years, so we must attract and retain families by providing homes and good public services. To do this we must address the shortage of affordable housing in the area, both to buy and to rent.

Develop new skills

To provide the right environment for new business opportunities, we will ensure that there is a local workforce with the right skills. To provide such skills we will require a more joined-up approach to education in schools and local colleges and universities.

Raise educational attainment and close the opportunity gap

At the moment 14% of 16-19 year olds in South Ayrshire are currently not in education, employment or training. To reduce this figure we must concentrate on improving the educational attainment of the lowest achievers to help them into employment, education or training.

Prosperous, Learning and Achieving

Our priorities

In the light of these strengths and challenges, the Council believes that the priorities are to:

➔ *Increase the opportunities for business development and promote inward investment*

- Help stimulate the local economy
- Increase the employment opportunities in the area and attract new businesses by making it easier to set them up
- Seek out new development funding
- Promote the growth of a more broadly based tourism sector centred around South Ayrshire's golfing, cultural and natural heritage



➔ *Develop our town centres and strengthen links with central Scotland, Ireland and Europe*

- Make South Ayrshire an attractive place to live in and visit
- Re-develop our town centres and improve transport links
- Work with local partners, neighbouring Councils and the Scottish Executive to improve rail and ferry service and improve access to the motorway network
- Develop Prestwick Airport and the ports of Ayr, Girvan and Troon

➔ *Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing*

- Increase the availability of housing as a way of attracting people and businesses to South Ayrshire
- Work with developers to increase the availability of affordable homes
- Work with housing associations and private landlords to increase both the supply and quality of rented housing

➔ *Improve the quality and continuity of education and training*

- Stimulate and sustain lifelong learning and personal development
- Look in a rounded way at the needs of learners and respond accordingly
- Provide a positive learning environment that motivates young people
- Support learners, particularly at the transitions between stages
- Reduce inequalities and raise educational attainment



Healthy, Safe and Caring

Our Strengths

Compared to many other parts of Scotland, those who live in South Ayrshire generally enjoy:

- longer life expectancy
- lower levels of crime
- greater public safety

However, these benefits are not shared equally and it is one of the Council's guiding principles that everyone has the same opportunity and enjoys the best quality of life possible.

The Challenges

The challenge for the future is to make this commitment a reality by:

Supporting low-income households

Significant pockets of low incomes and unemployment exist in parts of Ayr, Maybole and Girvan. In these areas the proportion of lone parents and households where neither parent is in work are higher than usual. Consequently these communities suffer from higher than average unemployment, poor health and crime. We need to help these communities to regenerate themselves.

Providing everyone with the best possible health and care services

Repeated surveys have shown that the ease with which health and care services can be accessed and the quality of them are at the very top of people's concerns. For older people these concerns are particularly important. So we need to improve the quality and accessibility of health and care services provided to older people.

Supporting vulnerable children and young people

Despite South Ayrshire's affluence, many young people and their families are in need of support, including homeless or unemployed young adults without educational qualifications, young people whose lives are blighted by alcohol and drugs and those who suffer from learning disabilities or mental illness. We need to provide support to all of these vulnerable young people

Increasing public safety

Although the crime rate in South Ayrshire is low, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime continue to be a concern for those living in the area. We must continue initiatives to tackle the problems. Similarly, we must try to reduce accidents in the home and especially on the roads, where fatal accidents continue to be a too regular occurrence.

Healthy, Safe and Caring

Our priorities

After considering the strengths and challenges, we believe that the priorities are to:



Tackle poverty and help create employment opportunities

- Reduce the number of school leavers failing to enter employment, education or training
- With the help of our partners, maintain programmes of personal development and access to employment for those who are most vulnerable and those dependent on benefits
- Promote employment opportunities through social enterprises and the public sector



Improve the quality and accessibility of health and care services

- Improve the quality and availability of health and social care services along with our partners
- Put in place a programme to place a range of agencies from the health, local authority and voluntary sector services in the same location and encourage joint working among them
- Ensure that the needs of older people have a particular priority



Integrate and develop services for children and young people

- Ensure that all our young people fulfil their potential by working with our partners to implement the actions in the 'Integrated Children's Service Plan'
- Provide the educational, health and social care that each individual child needs
- Have a particular regard for the most vulnerable young people by focusing on early intervention in schools, the community and their families



Make South Ayrshire an even safer place to live work and play

- Work with partners to tackle the underlying causes of crime and anti-social behaviour, including poverty, alcohol misuse and drug addiction
- Strive to make South Ayrshire a safer place by preventing accidents at home and on the road, through road safety measures and the raising of road safety awareness



Clean, Attractive and Sustainable

Our Strengths

Sustained economic growth and the quality of life are linked to the state of the environment and South Ayrshire starts with a number of advantages including:

- the diversity of its natural and cultural heritage, including its coasts, countryside, woodlands and historic buildings
- strong environmental awareness, reflected in one of the best waste recycling rates in Scotland
- its image as a 'rural' area within easy commuting distance of Glasgow

The Challenges

The challenges for the future are, therefore, to:

Maintain a clean and attractive environment

The fact that South Ayrshire is close to Glasgow, but retains its 'rural' image, makes it a magnet for new housing. Given this, it is important to ensure that as the area develops and prospers, new homes, shops, businesses and roads are built in an environmentally sympathetic way. As a community, we also need to play our part in reducing the impacts of climate change by being more aware of the consequences of our decisions with regard to transport, waste and energy use in our homes and offices.

Promote civic pride

The area's future rests on remaining an attractive place to live in, as well as visit. As such, we must maintain the richness and diversity of public open spaces. We also need to create a positive image for our towns and villages by maintaining and enhancing the local landscape and by generating wider economic benefit through improved visitor attractions.

Ensure rural communities benefit from economic growth

Trying to ensure that the rural parts of South Ayrshire share in the area's economic growth is a major issue. It is important that rural areas share in the benefits of economic growth, in terms of employment, housing, public transport and access to services. In particular, as public and retail services migrate to urban areas, it is vital to ensure that rural communities are not disadvantaged in terms of access to these services.

Support sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities

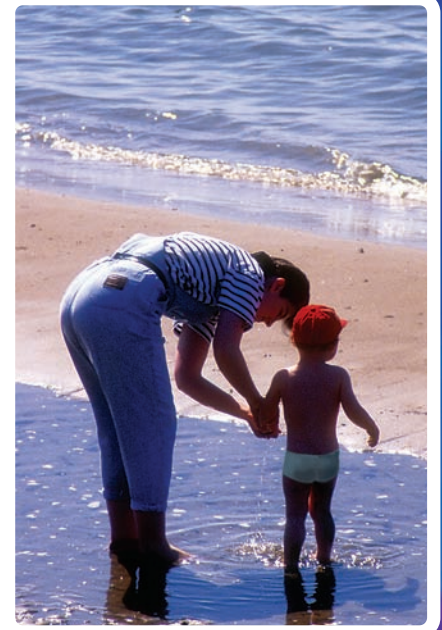
How well people rate their neighbourhood as a place to live is influenced by the provision of sporting, leisure and cultural facilities. South Ayrshire has a rich provision of activity centres, outdoor games pitches, swimming pools and theatres and the Council must find appropriate ways to support these facilities.

Clean, Attractive and Sustainable

Our priorities

After considering the strengths and challenges, the Council believes that the priorities are to:

- ➔ ***Conserve and enhance our natural and built heritage***
 - Conserve and enhance South Ayrshire's distinct cultural and historic identities
 - Maintain the diverse character and special qualities of its landscapes, woodlands, monuments and buildings
- ➔ ***Adapt to the impacts of climate change and become more sustainable***
 - Prepare a climate change action plan and work with local and national partners, as well as the local community, to deliver an effective strategy, including awareness raising and supporting lifestyle changes
 - Actively plan for the impacts of climate change, especially the effects in relation to flood risk and biodiversity
 - Manage the Council's own energy consumption
 - Encourage people and businesses to recycle more and reduce the waste that they generate
 - Develop a more sustainable approach to planning new developments, including minimising air and water pollution
 - Encourage greater access to the countryside
- ➔ ***Promote civic pride***
 - Ensure our streets and beaches are clean
 - Ensure well-kept open spaces and buildings
 - Develop a strong sense of identity and responsibility among communities in the area
 - Increase the involvement of local communities in the management of their areas
- ➔ ***Support and develop sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities***
 - Find appropriate ways of supporting sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities in South Ayrshire and ensure that such facilities are accessible by all
- ➔ ***Improve the viability of rural communities***
 - Sustain our rural communities by ensuring they can continue to access employment opportunities, public services and retail and community facilities
 - Work with local and national agencies to maintain access to key services and to improve public transport in rural areas



Ambitious, Forward-looking and Responsive

Our Strengths

The key to success in delivering the Council's vision is a recognition that we must work with other public agencies to provide more responsive, joined-up and efficient services. We have already begun taking the necessary steps to realise this ambition.

- Through community planning in South Ayrshire we have developed forums for organising joint working by the main public sector organisations, providing the opportunity to deliver better and more coordinated services.
- We are committed to continuous improvement and to directing efficiency gains into the maintenance and development of front-line services.
- We have put in place a sound system for monitoring our success in delivering the commitments that form part of this vision.

The Challenges

The challenges facing the Council, in terms of service delivery in the future, are that we need to:

Focus on performance

As a Council we are being challenged by the Scottish Government to improve continuously all that we do. As part of this challenge we are seeking out the opportunities for achieving efficiencies that release resources into front-line services. This means working across departments within the Council and with our partners to share or redesign services to deliver better outcomes for users and make the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources.

Establish our priorities

The area's future rests on remaining an attractive place to live in, as well as visit. We need to show how we have prioritised our efforts to make best use of scarce resources and, with our partners, demonstrate that our actions are delivering positive service improvements.

Engage local communities

We need to ensure that local communities are involved in determining the priorities to which ourselves and our partners are committed. To achieve this we have to improve our communication with all of those living and working in the area. In serving our customers and citizens we must improve and modernise access to the Council and its services.

Ambitious, Forward-looking and Responsive

Our priorities

After consideration of the strengths and challenges, the Council believes that the priorities are:

➔ *Improve our efficiency and effectiveness*

- Be more forward-looking in our thinking and develop clear long-term plans that cover both the provision of council services and their sustainable funding
- Review and challenge the way that services are provided and examine alternative ways of delivering them
- Make best use of all our resources



➔ *Strengthen sound governance and improve the scrutiny arrangements*

- Continuously review our performance and identify opportunities for improvement
- Maintain sound management, public reporting and scrutiny arrangements in all that we do
- Be accountable for all that we do

➔ *Improve community leadership and partnership working*

- Work with the Scottish Government, our local partners and neighbouring councils to deliver better and more joined-up services
- Exercise leadership of the Community Planning process, ensuring community engagement in the identification of local priorities and developing the ability of local communities to be involved in the planning and delivery of services
- Develop shared services with other public sector bodies and identify how we can jointly best meet our shared performance targets

➔ *Improve our customer focus*

- Promote an ethos among our staff that they are here to serve the community
- Ensure that Council staff receive the appropriate training and understand their role in the wider picture of delivering Council services
- Improve access and standards of service
- Consult and listen to the community
- Respond to concerns and complaints speedily and effectively



In Summary

At the beginning of this document we identified South Ayrshire Council's vision as:

"... to establish South Ayrshire as the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland".

We have identified priorities within four themes to help break down this ambition into a more manageable and achievable task.

PROSPEROUS, LEARNING AND ACHIEVING

- Increase the opportunities for business development and promote inward investment
- Develop our town centres and strengthen links with central Scotland, Ireland and Europe
- Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing
- Improve the quality and continuity of education and training

HEALTHY, SAFE AND CARING

- Tackle poverty and help create employment opportunities
- Improve the quality and accessibility of health and care services
- Integrate and develop services for children and young people
- Make South Ayrshire an even safer place to live work and play

CLEAN, ATTRACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

- Conserve and enhance our natural and built heritage
- Adapt to the impacts of climate change and become more sustainable
- Promote civic pride
- Support and develop sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities
- Improve the viability of rural communities

AMBITIOUS, FORWARD-LOOKING AND RESPONSIVE

- Improve our efficiency and effectiveness
- Strengthen sound governance and improve the scrutiny arrangements
- Improve community leadership and partnership working
- Improve our customer focus

Of course, even these priorities are wide-ranging, but they establish a framework within which the Council can formulate its detailed policies, strategies and departmental action plans. It will be the foundation for the Council's planning, budgeting and performance management.

Contacting Us

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