

**South Ayrshire Council**  
**Report by Chief HR Officer**  
**to Joint Consultative Committee**  
**of 1 April 2025**

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**Subject:        Organisational Development Update - 2025**

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**1.        Purpose**

- 1.1        The purpose of this report is to provide the JCC with information on the key work undertaken by Organisational Development (OD) during the period October 2024 to March 2025.

**2.        Recommendation**

- 2.        It is recommended that the JCC notes the contents of this report.**

**3.        Key Organisational Development Activity – October 2024 to March 2025**

**3.1        *Career Pathways***

- 3.1.1        To support Service Leads with Workforce Planning, OD facilitated dedicated Career Pathways Sessions for their Service Area, working towards the Corporate Workforce Planning action deadline of December 2024. These sessions focused on four key areas (Entry Points, Opportunities, Skills and Planning). Each session was followed up with a summary report which included internal actions for the service as well actions that required further Directorate and Corporate consideration.

- 3.1.2        Throughout 2024, OD engaged with each Service Lead individually to offer them the opportunity of a facilitated session, of which 17 Service Leads took this opportunity up. The services which sessions took place with are as follows: Thriving Communities, Localities Social Work, Information and Advice Hub, Organisational Development, Customer Services, Risk and Safety, Education Support Services, Facilities Management, Professional Design Services, Neighbourhood Services, Trading Standards and Environmental Health, Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud, HR and Payroll, Legal and Licensing, Planning and Building Standards, Property Maintenance, and Procurement.

- 3.1.3        Going forward this will be reviewed as part of the Council's Corporate Workforce Plan.

3.2/

## 3.2 ***Reward and Recognition***

3.2.1 OD coordinates a range of activities and initiatives to recognise employee and team achievements:

- **The Outstanding People Awards (TOPA)**, which is an initiative recognising and celebrating Council employees who go above and beyond in their everyday work. The awards ceremony is scheduled to take place at Ayr Town Hall on Wednesday 26 November 2025. The nominations process will open in mid-April.
- **Long Service Recognition** – An afternoon tea took place in County Hall on Friday 1 November 2024 to recognise current employees who reached the 35 years' continuous public service milestone in 2024. 38 employees were recognised, with 23 attending the event with a guest of their choice, where they were presented with an award by the Provost. The ceremony was also attended by the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council, and other members of ELT.

Currently options for the next Long Service recognition event are being considered by HR/CLT. This may include consideration of an afternoon tea for those employees who reached between 36-39 years' service last year.

As in previous years, employees who will achieve the 40 years' continuous public service mark in 2025 will be invited to the TOPA ceremony in November 2025 to recognise this achievement.

3.2.2 Nominations for the APSE Service Awards 2025 are currently open, with internal submissions closing on Friday 21 March.

3.2.3 Nominations for the Scottish Public Service Awards (SPSA) closed in October 2024. OD received nine nominations across six categories, with two submissions going forward as finalists.

3.2.4 The SPSA ceremony took place in Edinburgh on Tuesday 10 December, with the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership winning The Community Engagement Award for their 'Working For Wallacetown' submission, and Thriving Communities' Employability team's 'Tailored Jobs' submission placing as a runner up in The Championing Diversity and Inclusion Award category.

3.2.5 OD also co-ordinates nominations for the COSLA Excellence Awards. The nomination process for the 2025 awards is yet to be announced by COSLA.

## 3.3 ***Corporate Learning and Development***

3.3.1 OD developed a Learning and Development brochure in 2024 which outlined OD's offer for employees, teams and supervisors. In February 2025, OD further developed the offer by moving the PDF brochure onto a series of [SharePoint pages](#) hosted on the OD site, to make the information more accessible to all employees. As part of this, OD also reviewed the training offer by updating course content and descriptors and adding

additional courses where there was demand. OD will continue to utilise the Council's internal communications channels to promote the offer, including Viva Engage and the Corporate Weekly Bulletin to ensure that as many employees as possible have the opportunity to participate in internal Learning and Development.

3.3.2 In line with this offer, OD have provided face-to-face training and development to 46 individuals since October 2024. Key pieces of work delivered include:

- Individual Interview Skills sessions with a variety of services. This training is aimed at individually developing an employee's confidence and skills when attending a competency-based Council interview. Since October 2024 this course has been delivered across five sessions with five individuals, including some on the re-deployment list, in the following services: Property Maintenance; Sport and Leisure; Economy and Regeneration; The Information and Advice Hub; and Directorate Support. There are also multiple requests for upcoming Interview Skills training from employees in Housing and Sport and Leisure.
- Two COAST update sessions for managers within the HSCP. These sessions provided managers with a high-level refresher of the key functions of COAST, with an emphasis on Manager's ScoreCard, which should be used to manage and record their employees' learning and development activities.
- The Supervisor Development programme is currently in progress with a group of Supervisors from Housing Services. OD are also in the process of finalising arrangements to deliver the programme to staff in both the HSCP, following their recent admin/business support review, and the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (AVJB). OD have also had requests to deliver the programme for individual employees, this will be arranged once there is enough individuals registered to form a cohort.
- Facilitation of two MBTI sessions, focusing on improving teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.
- Team development within the HSCP Planning and Performance team, including facilitated feedback sessions with members of the team, and creation of a bespoke Action Plan based on the feedback to drive positive changes. This has been developed in collaboration with management.

3.3.3 We evaluate all training and have received positive feedback from attendees at training and awareness sessions, with an average satisfaction rating of 4.6 out of 5, and 95% of attendees confirming their knowledge and/or confidence in the subject has increased as a result.

3.3.4 Since October 2024, OD have designed, developed, updated and deployed 13 COAST modules. OD are currently working with the following services to develop bespoke modules: Education – 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)'; Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability – 'Integrated Impact Assessment'; Procurement – 'Standing Orders Relating to Contracts'; and Thriving Communities – 'Thriving Communities' Induction'.

- 3.3.5 In line with corporate changes regarding the approach to Prevent, OD have worked with the HSCP to create various resources which ensure that the Council is appropriately briefing all relevant employees on the importance of Prevent. This has included creation of an information page on The Core highlighting key Prevent resources and key contacts within the HSCP. OD have also developed a COAST module which signposts employees to the Government website to complete Prevent online training and advertised launch of the module via corporate communication channels. The Prevent module went live on COAST on Monday 3 March and has been completed by 1073 employees as of 17 March and has received very positive anonymous feedback.
- 3.3.6 In line with the significant statutory amendment to the Equality Act 2010 which puts a duty on employers to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment, OD has collaborated with HR to develop a COAST module specifically covering these updates. The content is currently in a final draft form and is being reviewed by HR. As part of this project, OD also undertook a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities to establish what external and internal training they are planning to offer in relation to the amendment, as well as details around Sexual Harassment Risk Assessments which will be used by HR to inform South Ayrshire's approach.
- 3.3.7 Of the 212 online COAST modules available, there have been 13,175 course completions since October 2024. The top 5 courses completed during this period were: SAC: Cyber Security Essentials 2024, SAC: Child Protection – Employee Guide, SAC: Prevent, SAC: Trauma Informed Practice and SAC: Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.
- 3.3.8 OD have provided over 220 hours of COAST support to services since October 2024. Tasks can include creating/managing accounts, assisting managers/services with reporting on stats, creation of courses and upkeep, demonstrations of procedures, updating Course information on Course Booking System, Updating e-learning modules, Manager ScoreCard guidance, archiving Leavers from the Leavers Report, and ensuring that procedures are being followed/actioned correctly by services.
- 3.3.9 OD are also responsible for the organisation and administration of a variety of First Aid Courses. 13 courses have taken place since 1 October 2024, with 131 employees attending and passing these courses, from various Council services. A further eight courses are set to take place up until the end of May 2025, with the remainder of the year yet to be scheduled. OD are responsible for liaising with Venue and Training providers to arrange suitable course dates, attendance marking, recharges to Services for attendance and certificate distribution which are all performed via Coast and Oracle Fusion. This service allows employees that require first aid to successfully gain the qualification.
- 3.3.10 OD have developed a new [SharePoint page](#) offering useful information and guidance for Employees and Managers on available Course Types, Booking and Cancellation Guidelines, Named/Paid First Aider Information and Costs.

### 3.4 ***Leadership and Management Development***

- 3.4.1 Following the completion of a pilot exercise with employees new to the role of co-ordinator, a review of the existing Leadership Development Programme is currently being undertaken by OD.
- 3.4.2 Options for moving the programme forward have been included in an ELT Report for further consideration.

### 3.5 ***Employee Engagement***

- 3.5.1 The Transformation Board recently approved a project proposal to review the Council's Corporate Induction process. As part of this, OD:
  - Reviewed and updated the Corporate Welcome pages on [The Core](#);
  - Reviewed and updated the Corporate Induction checklist for managers – this is currently being reviewed by HR for final approval;
  - Carried out a benchmarking exercise to identify what other local authorities offer in terms of corporate induction;
  - Will be reaching out to Service Leads to arrange facilitated sessions to gather feedback on suggested changes and improvements to Corporate Induction; and
  - Are keen to explore Trade Union input into this project.
- 3.5.2 In 2024, OD held a range of facilitated engagement sessions with employees, supervisors, and Co-ordinators from a range of services and job roles (including frontline and operational).
- 3.5.3 The feedback from these focus groups, combined with benchmarking results from other local authorities, has been used to develop a new and revised draft PDR process.
- 3.5.4 The proposed process is made up of three (light touch) stages which focus on single-page completion and routine check-ins at an individual and team level.
- 3.5.5 The proposed revised PDR process also outlines the full performance development cycle, detailing what managers are expected to complete at each stage of the process.
- 3.5.6 The proposed content is currently awaiting final approval.

### 3.6 ***Transformation Service***

- 3.6.1 The two Graduate Interns who reported to the Workforce Co-ordinator, who has recently returned to OD, have carried out a range of activities across various services since October 2024, supporting frontline, operational and office-based employees to build skills and confidence in digital processes.

- 3.6.2 Support provided includes the basics of M365 applications, to more advanced uses such as creating Microsoft Excel dashboards and PowerPoint videos. Sessions have been delivered both face-to-face and online, either 1-to-1 or in small groups and have been tailored to the needs of the service/individual. The Interns have hosted 67 sessions since October 2024, supporting approximately 150 employees, with a large amount of positive feedback received.
- 3.6.3 One Intern has moved on to the Corporate Planning and Improvement Service, and the other Intern will return to their substantive role in April. There is currently a paper with ELT to use external funding to secure a new two year Intern who would focus on Digital and Data. ELT will also confirm structurally where the Intern will sit.

**Background Papers**    **None**

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