

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL.

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting
on 1 May 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

Present in County Buildings: Councillors Iain Campbell (Provost), Kenneth Bell, Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Ian Cavana, Alec Clark, Brian Connolly, Ian Davis, Julie Dettbarn, Mark Dixon, Stephen Ferry, William Grant, Hugh Hunter, Mary Kilpatrick, Alan Lamont, Craig Mackay, Brian McGinley, Bob Pollock, Cameron Ramsay, Philip Saxton, Bob Shields, Duncan Townson; and George Weir.

Present Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane, Chris Cullen, Martin Dowey, Martin Kilbride, Lee Lyons and Gavin Scott.

Attending in County Buildings: M. Newall, Chief Executive; C. Caves, Chief Governance Officer; T. Baulk, Chief Financial Officer; J. Bradley, Director of Strategic Change and Communities; C. Cox, Assistant Director – Planning and Development; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; K. Anderson, Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance; L. Reid, Assistant Director – Transformation; T. Simpson, Service Lead – Corporate Accounting; T. Burns, Service Lead - Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer; R. Jamieson, Co-ordinator (Asset Management); J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer; J. Chapman, Committee Services Officer; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Attending Remotely: C. McGhee, Chief Internal Auditor.

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.

Adjournment

The time being 10.05 a.m., the Council adjourned due to technical difficulties.

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 10.15 a.m.

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.

Point of Order

Councillor Duncan Townson raised a point of order regarding a Member who had joined the meeting remotely still experiencing connectivity issues following the adjournment to rectify these issues and that the meeting should now commence; and the Chief Governance Officer advised that the Member was in the meeting remotely but was unable to unmute his microphone, however he could advise of his attendance in the meeting by telephone.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

(1) Minutes of Previous Meetings of the Council.

- (a) Provost Iain Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mary Kilpatrick, moved the [Minutes](#) of South Ayrshire Council of 27 February 2025 as a correct record.

The Council

Decided: to approve the Minutes of 27 February 2025 and authorise these minutes to be signed as a correct record.

- (b) Provost Iain Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mary Kilpatrick, moved the [Minutes](#) of South Ayrshire Council of 5 March 2025 as a correct record.

The Council

Decided: to approve the Minutes of 5 March 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 [26 February 2025](#)
- (ii) Cabinet of [18 February 2025](#)
- (iii) Regulatory Panel – Licensing of [6 February 2025 \(Special\)](#) and [20 February 2025](#)
- (iv) Regulatory Panel – Planning of [11 December 2024](#), [6 February 2025](#) and [5 March 2025](#).
- (v) Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of [14 January 2025](#) and [11 March 2025](#).

Point of Order

Councillor Duncan Townson raised a point of order seeking clarification on whether Councillor Martin Dowey was currently Leader of South Ayrshire Council; and Provost advised that, to the best of his knowledge Councillor Dowey was Leader of the Council at this time.

Vote of No Confidence

Councillor Duncan Townson, seconded by Councillor Brian McGinley then advised that, in terms of Standing Order No. 21.1(5), they wished to suspend Standing Orders to Move a Vote of No Confidence in respect of Councillor Martin Dowey as Leader of the Council.

The Chief Governance Officer then outlined the procedure for considering this matter and advised that, as this was a procedural matter, there would be no discussion, that the Council would proceed immediately to the vote; and that a two thirds majority was required to then proceed to consider the Motion.

A Member requested a Roll Call Vote and the Chief Governance Officer took the vote by calling the roll to Agree or Disagree to Suspend Standing Orders as follows:-

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

Fourteen Members voted to agree to Suspend Standing Orders, thirteen Members voted not to agree to this and one Member abstained, therefore, as the two thirds majority had not been achieved, the Council could not proceed with this Motion.

4. Appointments to Panel.

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

- (1) that Councillor Brian Connolly replace Councillor Bob Pollock as the Depute Leader of the Council, as requested by the Conservative Group and Independent Members on the Cabinet; and
- (2) that Councillor Mark Dixon replace Councillor Lee Lyons on the South Ayrshire Integration Joint Board, as requested by the Conservative Group and Independent Members on Cabinet.

The Chief Governance Officer introduced the report.

Councillor Kenneth Bell, seconded by Councillor Ian Davis, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

By way of an Amendment to item (1) above, Councillor Julie Dettbarn, seconded by Councillor Duncan Townson, moved that the current Depute Leader, Councillor Bob Pollock be retained in the interests of stability as this was not the time to change the Depute Leader and Members and employees could rely on his experience to get through this difficult time for the Council.

Following the summing up, various Members intimated that they had not had the opportunity to raise questions or make comments and, following advice from the Chief Governance Officer, Provost then accepted questions and comments.

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

- (a) there being a strong, successful and stable administration over the past three years with the Conservative Group working well with various Independent Members and that, following discussions it had been decided to put forward a proposal that an Independent Member be Depute Leader; and that Councillor Connolly was one of the most experienced Members of the Council;
- (b) that matters within the Council were being aired publicly in newspapers across the country and that any decisions being made by the current administration should be put on hold until matters were resolved with the Leader of the Council; and that he would not be supporting this Motion to enable the status quo to remain and provide stability to ensure that the Council's reputation was not further damaged;
- (c) that, as a Conservative member elected by constituents, he was in a difficult position as he did not agree with the behaviour of other members of the Conservative Group and was disappointed that the Conservative Party at national level had not intervened; that he agreed that Councillor Connolly was a man of integrity with many years of experience as an Elected Member and would be happy to work with him moving forward and agreed that an Independent Member as Depute Leader was beneficial, however, the status quo should remain for continuity and to restore the public's faith in the Council and the faith of officers; that a functioning Council was required with all Members working collegiately and that a position should be offered on Cabinet with voting rights to the two opposition parties; that he had lost faith in Councillor Dowey as a Leader of the Council but had not lost faith in the administration; that, if Councillor Dowey stepped aside as Leader, whoever was Depute Leader would then become de facto Leader and that Member would then require to request a Special Council meeting to appoint a Leader and Depute Leader;

- (d) whether the Conservative Group retained full confidence in Councillor Dowey as Leader of the Council following the serious allegations being investigated; and Councillor Lamont, as Group Whip advised that he could not answer that question on group matters at this time;
- (e) that, in terms of the current situation, the best outcome would be having a new Depute Leader and that Councillor Connolly had been an Elected Member since 2007, worked with various Administrations since 2012 and was a man of character and trust who would bring stability to the position;
- (f) that it had been said that the Administration was great, however, Councillor Pollock had replaced Councillor Lyons as Depute Leader only nine months ago;

Point of Order

Councillor Bell raised a point of order that he had been misquoted.

Provost then reminded all Members that they were here to serve the public, that people were viewing this meeting online, that Members should respect each other and, should behaviour not improve at this meeting, he would suspend the meeting.

- (g) that he had the utmost respect for Councillor Connolly, however, a change of direction was required; that he had constantly raised concerns over the last two or three years on how the Council was operating, however the Administration had not learned or changed; that the current Leader's position was untenable and that it was a matter of concern that he had not yet resigned; that this was not about individuals but was about trust and being able to represent the people of South Ayrshire and the best person being nominated for the post of Depute Leader to have a cogent and respectable Administration; and that discussions were required going forward to ensure that the Administration had integrity, commanded respect and got the job done;
- (h) that, in terms of Standing Order No. 20.4(4) Councillor Pollock wished to speak again by way of personal explanation; and he advised that, should he be appointed Depute Leader and, on consideration of the appointment of Leader and Depute Leader at a future Council meeting, should there be a Member proposed who was better placed to replace him, he would happily stand down;

Move to Vote

In terms of Standing Order No. 21.1(2), Councillor Hugh Hunter, seconded by Councillor Alec Clark, moved that the question be now put. The Chief Governance Officer then took the vote and seventeen Members voted to move to the vote, nine Members voted against this and two Members abstained and the Council

Decided: to now move to the vote.

Following a request for a roll-call vote, the Chief Governance Officer then called the roll For or Against the Motion, firstly in relation to the removal of Councillor Bob Pollock from the role of Depute Leader of the Council and outlined that this decision required a majority of the Members in attendance:

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	Abstain

Adjournment

Due to the use of inappropriate language during this roll-call the Council was adjourned at 10.45 a.m.

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 11.00 a.m.

Hugh Hunter	For
Martin Kilbride	For
Alan Lamont	For
Lee Lyons	For
Craig Mackay	Against
Brian McGinley	Against
Bob Pollock	Against
Cameron Ramsay	Against
Philip Saxton	Against
Gavin Scott	For
Bob Shields	For
Duncan Townson	Against
George Weir	Against

Fourteen Members voted For the Motion, thirteen Members voted against the Motion and one Member abstained and the Council

Decided: to agree that Councillor Bob Pollock be removed as Depute Leader of the Council.

The Chief Governance Officer then advised that the second part of this decision required to be taken, namely the Motion by Councillor Kenneth Bell and seconded by Councillor Ian Davis that Councillor Brian Connolly be appointed to the post of Deputy Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

Adjournment

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

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 11.20 a.m.

Valedictory

Provost then made a statement outlining that he had been disgusted by the behaviour of certain individuals at today's Council meeting; that he had the misfortune of working with some despicable individuals within the Council and that he was glad this had occurred towards the end of his life or he would have a skewed view of humanity; that he could no longer tolerate those individuals with egos greater than their ability; that he entered politics to serve the people of South Ayrshire and was disgusted by the back stabbing and certain individuals using twisted means to attain positions of power; and that he was hereby resigning as Provost of South Ayrshire but would remain as a Councillor until the next local election; and as his last act as Provost he suspended this meeting until further notice.

The meeting ended at 11.25 a.m.