

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Communities and Transformation
to Cabinet
of 25 November 2025**

Subject: Place Based Investment Programme 2025/26

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the allocation of Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) monies from the Scottish Government allocation for 2025/26.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1.1 agrees an allocation of £376.6k from the Place Based Investment Programme to upgrade audio visual and production equipment in Ayr Town Hall and the Troon Walker and Concert Halls to enhance income generation opportunities and support town centre regeneration activities through increased footfall;

2.2.2 agrees an allocation of £73,466 to be made available for community projects;

2.2.3 agrees an allocation of £30,911 to dismantle, relocate and reassemble the 'Poet and Scholar' sculpture located outside the Grain Exchange on Ayr High Street, to become part of the Rozelle sculpture park; and

2.2.4 agrees that the Director of Communities and Transformation be given delegated authority to reprofile any PBIP monies based on final costs and supporting deliverable projects.

3. Background

Place Based Investment Programme

- 3.1 The Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) is intended to link and align place-based initiatives and establish a coherent local framework designed to implement the Place Principle. The PBIP is an overall (Scotland wide) investment of £325m capital funding to support community led regeneration and town centre revitalisation and seeks to build on the work of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) and Town Centre Action Plan initiatives.

3.2 The funding is for local authorities to allocate, collaborating with local communities, along with business and the third and public sectors, to support shared local plans and aspirations. Projects and proposals must demonstrate they meet the main objectives of the programme:

- to link and align place-based initiatives and establish a coherent local framework to implement the Place Principle;
- to support place policy ambitions such as town centre revitalisation, community led regeneration, 20-minute neighbourhoods and community wealth building;
- to ensure that all place-based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities; and
- to accelerate ambitions for net zero, wellbeing and inclusive economic development, tackling inequality and disadvantage, community involvement and ownership.

3.3 South Ayrshire's allocation of the PBIP fund for financial year 2025-2026 is £481,000.

Ayr and Troon Town Hall Facilities

3.4 Town Hall facilities at Troon and Ayr are flagship venues within South Ayrshire's cultural portfolio, hosting hundreds of events annually. These halls serve as vital hubs for community engagement, generating approximately £150k in hire income each year. The venues host a wide variety of community events, including concerts, fundraising events, weddings and civil ceremonies, markets and exhibitions, dances and dance shows, exercise classes, festivals, awards ceremonies and meetings of local groups and clubs.

3.5 The venues have operated as 'receiving' venues, taking bookings from promoters and community groups. Ambitions are to also become 'programming' venues, operating and promoting our own shows, booking artists and events to keep a wide range of activity coming to our town centres, as well as driving income to support the venues.

3.6 Recent venue assessments identified outdated audio-visual systems as a key barrier to modern event delivery. Issues include inconsistent sound quality and limited lighting capabilities, which have led to the venues being overlooked by professional promoters. The poor specification makes the venues difficult and expensive to use compared to many similar venues around Scotland. At present many event organisers and promoters wishing to use the venues need to hire in sound and light equipment to meet the artists' specifications, which is costly and time-consuming. Investment in equipment will enhance the technical capabilities of these key community venues, enabling them to host a broader range of events, from local community gatherings to professional performances, as well as creating opportunities for South Ayrshire Council to promote its own events to generate income.

3.7 Many South Ayrshire residents travel to Glasgow and beyond to attend concerts. A more comprehensive programme of events will make it more attractive to stay in the area and attend a local venue, with subsequent boosts to hospitality businesses

in the town centres and supply chain businesses like catering and transport. A strong line-up of events will also attract visitors into the area and encourage overnight stays, boosting tourism spend.

- 3.8 A wider programme of events, including South Ayrshire Council's own promoted events, will lead to job creation through expanded event staffing requirements.
- 3.9 The Troon improvements support the key themes of Vision Troon 2030 which, following extensive consultation, identified establishing and promoting new events, encouraging more visitors, improving facilities, and creating an arts and culture landscape as priorities.
- 3.10 Ayr's Town Centre Framework identifies developing the Evening Economy and cultural offer as a key opportunity, promoting leisure and entertainment activities in a town centre with broad appeal and these proposals support those objectives.

Community Project Funding

- 3.11 The South Ayrshire Council Plan 2023-2028 sets key areas of focus over the next 5 years. Plan priorities provide a common framework, aimed at promoting a shared understanding that encourages services and partners to work collaboratively to achieve improved outcomes and wellbeing for our communities. This funding will allow a number of projects to be undertaken to advance these key areas of focus. Projects presented for consideration will be assessed against PBIP objectives, risk, and deliverability.

Statue Relocation

- 3.12 The 'Poet and Scholar' sculpture by Scottish artist Doug Cocker is located on Ayr High Street, close to the Grain Exchange. Elected to the Royal Scottish Academy in 1984, Doug Cocker has been commissioned to make numerous public artworks, and regularly exhibits new work in major galleries. His most recent exhibition was 'Threads,' at Dovecot in Edinburgh in Summer 2025. In its current setting, Poet and Scholar is obscured by trees and bus shelters.
- 3.13 Rozelle Park has ambitions to become a sculpture park for all ages and interests, adding to the day out offer for all. With Ronald Rae's stones sculptures, the Story Stroll, and the Remembrance Woodland, Rozelle Park is a place to experience culture in both the house and grounds. Relocating Poet and Scholar to Rozelle offers an opportunity for exhibition programming with this well-respected artist and RSA Academician. Museums & Galleries have a strong relationship with the RSA, with Rozelle House having been the launch venue of the still touring William Gillies: Modernism and Nation exhibition (Spring 2024) and an upcoming exhibition in Summer 2026 at Rozelle House featuring the work of Frances Walker and Ade Adesina. In 2023, Rozelle House hosted a Ronald Rae exhibition, linking the sculptures in the park to the exhibition in the house.
- 3.14 Siting Poet and Scholar in Rozelle Park affords an opportunity to work with the RSA to develop a Doug Cocker exhibition, and further increase the cultural offer for residents and visitors to South Ayrshire.
- 3.15 Removal of the sculpture from Ayr High Street will improve public realm space in the town centre in the area around the Grain Exchange, a notable pinch-point on the corner of the High Street between the shops and buildings.

4. Detail

Ayr and Troon Town Hall Facilities

- 4.1 Equipment proposed includes line-array speakers for clear audio, digital mixing consoles, LED lighting rigs, upgrades to hanging points for technical equipment and a safety barrier to protect audiences during busy events.
- 4.2 Investment in suitable, industry-standard equipment would constitute:
- 4.2.1 £376.6k to upgrade the audio visual and production equipment in Ayr Town Hall and Troon Walker and Concert Halls. The budget will be split between the two venues, depending on the specific requirements of each, which are currently based on estimated costs, however the overall cost will sit within the funding allocation (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- 4.2.2 On 18th September 2025 South Ayrshire Council approved a proposal for £1.65m from the Capital Investment Programme for Troon Regeneration. This proposal included £1m for works to the Municipal Buildings, which was recommended by officers following an options appraisal which considered a number of projects and themes. PBIP investment in production equipment at Troon will enhance the improvements being made under this proposal.
- 4.2.3 It is worth noting that this investment will bring the council's two flagship venues into line with work done in Maybole. Maybole upgrades were delivered with a cocktail of funding from the Council, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Community Project Funding

- 4.3 It is proposed that £73,466 of the PBIP allocation be made available to groups, organisations, and businesses with proposals for projects of between £20,000-£25,000. Officers will use the 'Your Area, Your Voice, Your Choice' online platform and a panel of officers would make recommendations to the Director of Communities for approval.
- 4.4 There will be a standard application process in place to administer the fund. The criteria will be in line with Place Based Principles to ensure that all place-based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities and accelerate our ambitions for place, 20-minute neighbourhoods, town centre action, community led regeneration and community wealth building. It is worth noting that the 'Your Area, Your Voice, Your Choice' platform is also used to support the distribution of UKSPF and Coastal Communities funding to these groups as part of South Ayrshire Council's ongoing role within the community to drive investment into local priorities. A programme of Destination South Ayrshire Grants supports community groups with delivery of events and initiatives.

Statue Relocation

- 4.5 It is proposed that £30,911 of the PBIP allocation is used to dismantle, relocate, and reassemble the Poet and Scholar sculpture in the new location of Rozelle Park, together with restoration works. Common Good implications of installing the sculpture in Rozelle Park are being evaluated. In the event of any unforeseen

barriers to the movement of the sculpture, allocated spend will be moved to the Community Project funding.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 Relocating the sculpture to Rozelle may have some legal implications with regards to Common Good and Legal are currently exploring the options under Common Good legislation.

5.2 The recommendations in this report are consistent with procurement requirements and all works will be procured following procurement requirements.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 PBIP funding will be allocated as per the proposals in this paper.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations are that projects will not be delivered and that the South Ayrshire Council PBIP allocation must be returned to Government.

8.2.2 Rejecting the recommendations may impact on the reputation of the Council.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 The proposal is in relation to day-to-day operations or maintenance of existing assets therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy, or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy, or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priorities 1, 2 and 3 of the Council Plan: Spaces and Places/ Moving around and the environment (Outcome 1), Live, Work, Learn (Outcome 2) and Civic and Community Pride (Outcome 3).

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council Yes No

13.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council's transformation priority area(s): our assets and will deliver cashable/ qualitative/ quantitative benefits.

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report. The improvements to the Troon Walker and Concert Halls and Ayr Town Hall have derived from user feedback provided direct to staff operating the facility.

14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Alec Clark, Depute Council Leader and Policy Lead for Commercial/ Operational Services, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

15. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of Communities and Transformation will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Implementation of PBIP projects and initiatives	31 March 2026	Assistant Director - Communities

Background Papers [Capital Investment Programme - Troon Regeneration](#)

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Troon and Ayr Venue Proposals PBIP

Objectives

- 1 – Increase income and usage
- 2 – Improve public and staff safety
- 3 – Make the venues more attractive to professional promoters and more flexible for community activities
- 4 – Greater efficiency
- 5 – Clearer information/specification for users and staff
- 6 – Enable SAC to run/promote its own events

South Ayrshire Council's mid-size venue properties could be developed to attract a wider range of events and generate income. Ayr Town Hall and Troon Concert Hall are already used occasionally by professional promoters but have issues that make them difficult and expensive to use compared to many similar venues around Scotland.

SUMMARY SOLUTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 – Install professional sound systems in Troon and Ayr Town halls
- 2 – Install professional lighting systems in Troon and Ayr Town halls
- 3 – Provision of a footplate barrier at Troon & Ayr Town halls (note storage requirements)
- 4 – Detailed and accurate venue specifications and layout options for third parties
- 5 – Improvements to communication and control systems within the venues

Outline Budget

Propose specification of the same equipment at both venues to make it easier for staff training and operation.

Sound	Professional specification that is attractive to concert and event promoters. Line array systems for clear audio, digital mixing desks
	£85k per venue
Lighting	LED and 'intelligent' lighting fixtures. This will mean lower power consumption, less working at height and more flexibility. Specification will augment what is already installed with new cabling, rigging improvements, new control equipment and excellent quality moving heads.
	£40k per venue
Safety Barriers	Footplate barrier allows stewards access to the full length of the front of stage area and provides protection for the audience.
	£10k per venue
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving stage access for equipment • Certifying and repairing hanging points for truss • Improved venue security via communication and control systems to comply with requirements of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) • Contingency
	£53.3k per venue