

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes of hybrid webcast meeting on
18 November 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present
in County
Buildings: Councillors Philip Saxton (Chair), Gavin Scott and George Weir.
- Attending
Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane, Stephen Ferry, Lee Lyons and Brian McGinley.
- Apology: Councillor Kenneth Bell.
- Attending
in County
Buildings: M. Inglis, Director of Health and Social Care; K. Anderson, Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance; C. Cox, Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regulation; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; A. Mutch – Service Lead – Sport and Leisure, S. McCardie, Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability; J. Tait, Service Lead – Thriving Communities; C. Carroll, Service Lead – Housing Strategy and Regeneration; D. Mackintosh, Co-ordinator – Litigation; D. McVey, Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information); R. Queen, Team Leader (Information Governance); J. McClure, Committee Services Officer and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.
- Attending
Remotely: T. Simpson, Service Lead- Corporate Accounting; F. Ross, Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services; N. Gemmell, Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits; D. Yuille, Service Lead – Special Property Projects; T. Burns, Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer; C. McGhee, Chief Internal Auditor; and S. Tyeson, Senior Manager – Planning and Performance.
- In
Attendance: Chief Superintendent S. Chow, Chief Inspector S. McGrath, Sergeant C. Forbes and Sergeant S. Johnston, Police Scotland; and Area Commander K. Murphy, Scottish Fire and Rescue.

Chair's Remarks.

The Chair

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting;
- (2) outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live; and
- (3) proposed that items 7 and 8 be heard before item 4 on the agenda. The Panel so concurred.

1. Sederunt and 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 meetings.

The Minutes of 1 October 2025 (Special) ([issued](#)) and 21 October 2025 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme.

There was submitted an update of the Action Log and Work Programme ([issued](#)) for this Panel.

The Assistant Director - Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance stated that there were no outstanding actions and the Work Programme was up-to-date.

Following a question from a Member regarding the responses to questions in the Action Log, the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance advised that these were not normally attached to the Panel papers or minute, however he would raise this with Committee Services as he agreed that the public were hearing the question but not receiving the answer as the responses were emailed to Members.

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the current position with regard to the Action Log; and
- (2) to note the current status of the Work Programme.

Variation in Order of Business

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 13(2), the Panel agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

4. Subject: Local Performance Report: Police Scotland.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 27 October 2025 by the Chief Executive providing information on the quarter two performance (2025/2026) of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire.

Chief Superintendent Chow provided the Panel with an overview of the work undertaken by Police Scotland between 1 April and 30 September 2025 including the introduction of the use of body worn video (BWV) which was being rolled out across Police Scotland and was scheduled to go live in South Ayrshire at the start of 2026; the new digital evidence collection programme which would allow more efficient use of officer time; and operation moonbeam which had been in place for Bonfire Night.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) the local custody centres; and Chief Superintendent Chow advised that there were currently custody centres in Kilmarnock and Saltcoats which were supported by Criminal Justice Support Division, however these centres were not open 24/7; and that occasionally when there was no local available custody centre due to resource demands, prisoners may require to be taken to Glasgow;
- (2) it being some time since policing was centralised in Scotland and whether there were plans to review this arrangement; and the Chief Superintendent advised that Police Scotland came into being in 2013; that, at present, the target operating model was being examined through Policing Our Communities and that the model operated at Stirling and Falkirk was being looked at for introduction across the rest of the force; and that engagement would be carried out in South Ayrshire in Summer 2026 on how this would look in Ayrshire in terms of response policing and local policing teams;
- (3) the welfare of officers and did Police Scotland recognise the effect of continuous exposure to stressful situations on officers on the frontline and provide support for them; and the Chief Superintendent advised that the health and welfare of officers was paramount and a focus across Police Scotland in terms of the Chief Constable's Vision 2030 supporting officers and their wellbeing; that there had been an increase in police assaults, however the introduction of BWV should reduce these assaults and have a positive effect on the wellbeing of officers;
- (4) the instances of wilful fire raising and whether this was a significant issue for Police Scotland; and the Chief Superintendent advised that any cases of wilful fire raising that came to the attention of the Police were investigated by the Criminal Investigation Department; and that there had been a recent decrease in cases in the area and figures could be included in future reports;
- (5) whether the Chief Superintendent was confident she had ample resources to keep the people of South Ayrshire safe; and the Chief Superintendent advised that she was extremely confident that officers could respond to any crimes and that, although these were challenging times, she could call on additional resources from national units should she require to;
- (6) were additional resources being provided prior to the festive season to deal with shoplifting; and the Chief Superintendent advised that support was being provided to local retailers to reduce shoplifting. Chief Inspector McGrath further advised that over the festive period officers would be visible in the community visiting major retailers, distributing leaflets and offering advice on how to mitigate the risk of shoplifting; and
- (7) 101 calls; and the Chief Superintendent advised that there can be a longer response time to these at times depending on service demands, however, calls were risk assessed and those that were higher risk would be responded to more urgently.

Sergeant C. Forbes and Sergeant S. Johnston gave a presentation to the Panel on the introduction of Body Worn Video; how this system would operate; why this was being introduced; and the benefits of this.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to:

- (a) concerns for police officers that they would forget to activate their camera if an incident occurred; and Sergeant Forbes advised that the operating procedures were clear on when an officer should operate their camera; that the thirty second pre-record existed to capture spontaneous incidents; that the pre-record could be extended if this was found to be necessary; and officers could forget to put their camera on, however, training would be provided to allow them to adjust to using their camera; and
- (b) the BWVs protecting the officers and members of the public.

The Panel, having thanked the officers for their attendance and for keeping the people of South Ayrshire safe,

Decided: to scrutinise the quarter two (2025/2026) performance report of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire and provided feedback to the Divisional Commander.

5. Subject: Local Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 27 October 2025 by the Chief Executive providing information on the quarter two performance (2025/2026) of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in South Ayrshire.

Area Commander Murphy provided the Panel with an overview of the work undertaken by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in South Ayrshire for quarter two (2025/26) including the introduction of a new reporting app and partner referral network and advised that this was a positive report.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to:

- (1) welcoming the new report format; and seeking more detailed information on deliberate fires in Ayr West; and Area Commander Murphy advised that he would provide further information on this in the next report to this Panel;
- (2) the timeframe for attending emergency fires; and Area Commander Murphy advised that this was dependent on a number of factors including how many incidents were occurring at the same time, the availability of stations, etc, however he would provide detailed analysis in the next Fire and Rescue report to this Panel;
- (3) whether the Area Commander was satisfied that he had sufficient resources to keep the people of South Ayrshire safe; and he advised that he was extremely happy with the resources in South Ayrshire, that there was currently a service delivery review being undertaken with none of the options involving South Ayrshire which was pleasing;

- (4) whether rural areas were adequately covered and were the retained firefighters up-to-speed; and the Area Commander advised that these on-call duty officers were permanent employees who responded to a pager when required; and that recruitment had been impacted for various reasons, however, a recruitment calendar was in place and steps had also been taken to upskill those officers who had been in post for some time; and
- (5) were there ample shared resources, eg larger ladders; and the Area Commander advised that the appliances with particular ladder heights were shared between fire stations and he was comfortable that he had all the resources that were required.

The Panel, having thanked the officers for their attendance and for keeping the people of South Ayrshire safe

Decided: that the Panel scrutinise the quarter two (2025/2026) performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire and provided feedback to the Local Senior Officer.

6. Complaints – Scrutiny Update Period: 1 April to 30 September 2025.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2025 by the Chief Governance Officer providing Members with statistical complaints performance information for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2025 and comparing performance to the same reporting period in 2024, which reflected the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), as well as information on how the Council improved its services following Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints.

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

- (1) Appendix 4 "Service Improvement Case Studies", what learning experience had been taken from these cases; and the Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) advised that, on receipt of stage 2 appeals, ways were examined to improve the service and measures implemented. The Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards further advised that, in relation to the Planning matter, learning points were always taken from complaints received, however on this occasion the Planning complaint was an ICT matter; and
- (2) welcoming the non-mandatory reporting indicators and the seeking input from customers on their satisfaction of the process, all of which was very useful; and the Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) advised that a random selection of customers were contacted to request that they complete the survey.

The Panel

Decided:

- (a) to scrutinise the contents of this report; and
- (b) to request a further report to a future meeting of this Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026.

7. FOISA/ EIR Annual Report 2024/25

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2025 by the Chief Governance Officer updating Members on the Council's response times and the volume of requests made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs) by subject matter and type of requester during the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

The Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) introduced the report and referred to a typographical error in Appendix 2, page 10 when the Health and Social Care Partnership's responses being issued within the timescales had increased to 82% from 64%.

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

- (1) the large number of FOIs from other Local Authorities and whether these figures could be reduced by direct contact between authorities; and the Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) advised that these FOIs had been received from local authorities across the whole of the UK, therefore, there was no trend and that, where possible any applicant of an FOI was provided with a link to publicly available information, however, on these instances noted, this was not possible;
- (2) if this authority published as much information as possible to decrease the number of FOIs; and the Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) advised that the Scottish Information Commissioner requests that all public bodies be proactive and make information as accessible as possible and that, where a trend appeared, she worked with that Service to request that they publish this information to reduce the amount of FOIs;
- (3) the statutory timescales and which category FOIs from Elected Members came under; and the Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) advised that the timescale for dealing with FOI requests was twenty working days from receipt of the FOI; and that FOIs from Councillors would come under Local Authorities if they submitted the request from their local authority email address or as a member of the public if they used their personal email address; and
- (4) whilst it was desirable that the Council made information more accessible to the public, had a survey been conducted to establish if information was readily available on the Council's website; and the Co-ordinator (Registration, Records and Information) advised that she would contact colleagues in ICT to ascertain if they had plans to enhance the search facility on the website.

The Panel

Decided:

- (a) to scrutinise the contents of this report; and
- (b) to request a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's FOISA/ EIR performance during the period 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

8. Council Plan (2023-2028): Quarter 2 Update (Year 3 - 2025/2026).

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 7 November 2025 by the Chief Executive advising Members on progress that has been made during the third year of the Council Plan.

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

- (1) "GB-CP 02 Work to procure a site and licence for the treatment of all SAC green/garden waste"; and the Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services outlined that the Council was in the process of reviewing this matter to reduce costs, maximise income and ensure security of service;
- (2) "PDS-CP 08 Demolition of Hourstons extension, Arran Mall and leading development options"; and the Service Lead – Special Property Projects advised that the whole project was on track for completion by end of September 2026, however the demolition of Arran Mall had been delayed until following the festive season to ensure there was no disruption to neighbouring properties; that he was in the process of procuring a demolition contractor for Hourstons and it was hoped this demolition would proceed following the demolition of Arran Mall; and that consultants were being appointed to provide development options which would then be submitted to Council in March 2026 for consideration;
- (3) "E&R-CP 03 Deliver the £1.4 million South Ayrshire elements of the DSIT funded 5G Innovation Regions Project" and the Assistant Director – Communities provided an update on this matter; outlined who benefited from this project and the works that had been carried out in relation to this;
- (4) whether the plans for Ayr Town Centre included the Station Hotel and train station; and the Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regulation advised that the Council was continuing to work with Network Rail and other partners with a view to redeveloping the site of the Station Hotel, however, the hotel was not in the ownership of the Council; and that a Members' briefing would be held in the near future updating Members on the plans for Ayr Town Centre;
- (5) Troon Leisure Centre and options for those who attended the gym or swimming pool; and the Service Lead – Sport, Leisure and Golf outlined the programme of works for the Centre and advised that three options had been presented to those people who utilised the gym and swimming pool, namely relocation, freeze their membership or cancel their membership;
- (6) whether transport was offered for the use of an alternative swimming pool whilst Troon Leisure Centre was closed as Members wished to ensure that children continued to have the opportunity to learn to swim; and the Service Lead – Sport, Leisure and Golf advised that the relevant schools had been contacted and offered options and that he was working with colleagues in Education to ensure that schools continued to have a swimming programme; and
- (7) paragraph 4.3 of the report and why the dates had been amended; and the Service Lead – Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability outlined the various reasons for these amended dates.

The Panel

Decided: to note the Quarter 2 progress (Year 3) of the Council Plan (2023-2028) attached as Appendix 1.

9. Local Housing Strategy (2024-2029) Year 1 Annual Progress Report.

There was submitted a joint report ([issued](#)) of 5 November 2025 by the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance and Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development advising members on progress made during the first year of the Local Housing Strategy (2024-2029).

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy and Regeneration introduced the report and referred to a typographical error on page 11 of the report which should read under "2024/25 Achievement" that the Council had "326 adaptations approved".

Comments were made and questions raised in relation to:

- (1) whether the images on the Annual Report were of South Ayrshire homes; and the Service Lead – Housing, Strategy and Regeneration advised that these were stock images, however, these would be replaced with images of South Ayrshire homes prior to publication;
- (2) homelessness being a growing concern and that Members had been contacted by people regarding their dissatisfaction with their accommodation and considering making themselves homeless to force the Council to rehouse them;
- (3) the homelessness figures within the Homelessness Prevention Summary; and the Service Lead – Housing, Strategy and Regeneration advised that he would provide exact up-to-date figures in writing following this meeting;
- (4) a future programme of new homes; and the Service Lead – Housing, Strategy and Regeneration advised that in 2024/25 the Council delivered against target and exceeded the target; and that a report would be submitted to Cabinet in the near future on the Revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan for the next five years; and
- (5) a review of the Allocations Policy; and the Service Lead – Housing, Strategy and Regeneration advised that this was presently being worked on and would feature in the 2026 progress report.

The Panel, having thanked the Service Lead – Housing Strategy and Regeneration for this very useful report and for the achievements of him and his staff,

Decided: to note the Year 1 progress from April 2024 to March 2025 of the Local Housing Strategy (2024-2029) attached as appendix one.

10. **Performance Reporting for Planning and Building Standards Service.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 10 November 2025 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development providing an update on statutory key performance indicators of the Planning and Building Standards Service in the period 2022/23- 2025/26 (to period 6).

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

- (1) the workload of the Planning and Building Standards Services; and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that there was a constant workload to be managed outwith planning applications and building warrants for the service to manage as best they could;
- (2) the Income Received as outlined in Table 5 of Appendix 2 and whether this was reinvested; and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that large planning applications could take several years to determine; and that the income was utilised within the service and was not reinvested back into Council monies;
- (3) permitted developments and whether information was readily available to members of the public; and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that the Scottish Government guidance was available on the Council website and on the Scottish Government website where members of the public could be directed to and assisted if required;
- (4) recruitment and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that recruiting staff was very challenging for both Planning and Building Standards; that he was keen to "grow our own" by employing staff already within the authority as there was a dearth of qualified people; and that he was promoting the Council on public forums to encourage people to apply for posts; and
- (5) applicants not having experience; and the Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards advised that some posts did not require qualifications, only a certain level of knowledge or background and that the Council would then pay for the post holder to undertake the appropriate University qualification if required.

The Panel

Decided:

- (a) to note the performance of the Planning and Building Standards Services for the period April 2022 to September 2025 relative to the Key Performance Indicators;
- (b) to note the performance of the Planning and Building standards Service for the twelve month period September 2024 to September 2025 relative to the Key Performance Indicators; and
- (c) to agree that a report on these Key Performance Indicators be presented to this Panel on an annual basis.

The meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.