

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL.

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting
on 11 December 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

Present in County Buildings: Councillors Iain Campbell (Provost), Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Ian Cavana, Alec Clark, Chris Cullen, Ian Davis, Brian Connolly, Julie Dettbarn, Stephen Ferry, William Grant, Wullie Hogg, Hugh Hunter, Martin Kilbride, Mary Kilpatrick, Alan Lamont, Brian McGinley, Bob Pollock, Cameron Ramsay, Philip Saxton, Bob Shields, Duncan Townson and George Weir.

Present Remotely: Councillors Kenneth Bell, Ian Cochrane, Lee Lyons and Craig Mackay.

Apologies: Councillors Martin Dowey and Gavin Scott.

Attending in County Buildings: S. Penman, Chief Executive; K. Braidwood, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development; J. Bradley, Director of Communities and Transformation; S. Mulholland, Director of Education; M. Inglis, Director of Health and Social Care; C. Caves, Chief Governance Officer; T. Baulk, Chief Financial Officer; W. Wesson, Chief HR Officer; C. Cox, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regulation; G. Hunter, Assistant Director – Communities; K. Anderson, Assistant Director - Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance; J. Tait, Service Lead – Thriving Communities; T. Burns, Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer; P. Bradley, Service Lead – Professional Design Services; L. Jarvie, Co-ordinator – Sustainability, Climate Change and Nature); J. Corrie, Head of Roads, Ayrshire Roads Alliance; B. McDonnell, Strategic Manager, Ayrshire Roads Alliance; J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; J. Chapman, Committee Services Officer; R. Anderson, Committee Services Assistant; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

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;
- (2) intimated that apologies had been received from Councillors Dowey and Scott; and
- (3) welcomed the Chief Executive, Stephen Penman to his first Council meeting.

2. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

The Chief Executive then called the roll and 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.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

(1) Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Council.

Provost Iain Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mary Kilpatrick, moved the [Minutes](#) of South Ayrshire Council of 6 November 2025 as a correct record.

The Council

Decided: to approve the Minutes of 6 November 2025 and authorise these minutes to be signed as a correct record.

(2) Minutes of previous meetings of Panels.

- (i) Appeals Panel of [10 September 2025](#)
- (ii) Audit and Governance Panel of [24 September 2025 \(Special\)](#), [1 October 2025](#) and [5 November 2025](#).
- (iii) Cabinet of [28 October 2025](#).
- (iv) Regulatory Panel – [Licensing of 30 October 2025](#).
- (v) Regulatory Panel – [Planning of 9 October 2025](#).
- (vi) Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of [1 October 2025 \(Special\)](#) and [21 October 2025](#).

4. South Ayrshire Council Annual Performance Report 2024/2025

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 19 November 2025 by the Chief Executive providing Members with South Ayrshire Council's Annual Performance Report 2024/2025.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance introduced the report and outlined that the report drew on a number of sources to present a balanced view of the Council's performance in an accessible and easy to read format with highlights of the report including strong school inspection reports, a successful Air Show, a number of external awards and accolades and 258 affordable homes delivered in 2024/25 which was a phenomenal number and testament to the partnership working across Council services.

Councillor Brian Connolly, seconded by Councillor Ian Davis, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to: congratulating officers involved in the good initiatives and awards highlighted within the report; that the number of affordable homes was pleasing, however, planning and development of these took a number of years and sat across various Administrations of the Council and it was important to put plans and processes in place to continue to provide these; and did the Chief Executive recognise that there was a need for the Council to improve its performance and proceed with change more quickly and how would he enact this; and the Chief Executive advised that all local authorities and public bodies required to move at pace; that this report set a context for good performance, however, it was also honest and frank regarding areas of challenge; that plans for affordable housing took years to come to fruition and it was essential that there was a solid basis to move forward; and that he would continue to seek improvement and focus on the delivery of themes within the Council Plan which were essential to the success of this authority.

The Council, having thanked the officers for the work undertaken on this matter,

Decided: to approve the content of the Annual Performance Report 2024/2025 attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

5. **South Ayrshire Council Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2025 to 2030)**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 19 November 2025 by the Chief Executive seeking approval of the updated Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2025-2030).

The Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance introduced the report and advised that it had been reported to Cabinet in November 2025 that carbon emissions had been reduced by over 50% in the last ten years and while this was to be celebrated, there was much more work to be undertaken in this regard; that the updated strategy set out four key strategic themes; and that a detailed action plan would be developed with the performance reported to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel annually.

Councillor Martin Kilbride, seconded by Councillor Bob Shields, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) this authority being more advanced than most local authorities with this challenging matter and thanking officers for their continuous hard work on this issue;
- (2) climate change seeming to have lost momentum with recent global conventions not being attended by some of the world's biggest countries; that some Scottish-wide targets had not been reached and how could this be brought to the forefront again and others be convinced to do likewise; and the Co-ordinator – Sustainability, Climate Change and Nature advised that there were multiple benefits across all areas from taking action to tackle climate change; that the Council required to be prepared for the changes it faced; and the Council required to undertake the approach as set out in the Strategy to ensure that every action took the people of South Ayrshire in the right direction;
- (3) whether a Sustainable Development Working Group was still ongoing as the partnership with other agencies had been invaluable; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance advised that this matter had been brought into focus through the Community Planning Partnership Board as climate change was a priority across a number of agencies and partners in South Ayrshire;
- (4) welcoming such a detailed report; concerns regarding the global lack of focus on climate change; that those impacted the most were those with the least in the world; and the importance of factual information when dealing with climate change;
- (5) Section 16 of the Strategy "key activity areas to 2030", could future documents include traffic management plans as this would impact air condition; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance advised that he would take this suggestion on board;
- (6) commending officers for the format of this report, especially the glossary; that in relation to Section 16 all consequences must be considered and that this should be reflected in the Integrated Impact Assessment; and
- (7) thanking the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance and his Team for their achievements; outlining that a lot of work was required to make this a success and he was sure this would continue.

The Council

Decided: to approve the strategy attached as Appendix One to the report.

6. 2026/27 Budget - Fees and Charges Uplift Proposals

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 5 December 2025 by the Chief Financial Officer seeking agreement on the level of change, either in percentage term or by value, to be applied to a variety of fees and charges levied by the Council for the 2026/27 financial year.

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report; advised that it had been agreed at the meeting of South Ayrshire Council of 6 November 2025 that the various proposed fees and charges uplifts be submitted to this meeting for consideration and approval; and outlined that the Appendix contained twenty four proposals for members' consideration.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Brian Connolly, moved that, given the number of proposals involved, this report be continued to a future meeting of South Ayrshire Council for consideration to allow Members to seek further information.

Following advice from the Chief Governance Officer and Chief Financial Officer regarding the appropriate Council meeting for this matter to be considered, the Chief Financial Officer advised that this matter would require to be dealt with prior to the budget setting Council meeting. The Chief Executive further advised that it was essential the levels of fees and charges were agreed prior to the budget setting as this report had material implications on decisions made when setting the budget, therefore, the Council meeting of 19 February 2025 would be the appropriate meeting for consideration of this matter.

Comments were made by Members in relation to:

- (1) an Elected Members' briefing should have been held on this matter to allow Members to examine the proposals but this had not taken place;
- (2) many of the items within the Integrated Impact Assessment showing a "negative impact", therefore, more detail and mitigations were required prior to decision making; and
- (3) the budget setting being a political process which reflected the political groups' values and commitment to the electorate, therefore, the proposals should be presented to each Group; and the Chief Executive advised that he would take this on board and that it was essential that all Members were presented with the same information and had the opportunity to ask questions of officers to reach a balanced budget.

The Council

Decided: to continue consideration of this matter to the meeting of South Ayrshire Council of 19 February 2025.

7. Community Councils – Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 14 November 2025 by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing Members with an update on the consultation; and seeking approval for Officers to consult on the final draft of the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils

The Service Lead – Thriving Communities introduced the report and outlined the background to this matter.

Councillor Brian Connolly, seconded by Councillor Chris Cullen, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) there being no Community Council in Ayr North and it being beneficial to the people of the area to have this re-established;
- (2) encouraging Ayr North residents to submit their views and comments on the area and on the re-establishment of a Community Council;
- (3) commending officers for their work on this good piece of work which had updated very old guidance;
- (4) welcoming this document and welcoming that the Focus Group to consider the results of the survey had been established with eight members of various Community Councils across South Ayrshire;
- (5) the consultation process and had it alleviated the concerns of Community Council Members; and the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that the importance of consultation had been recognised when updating a document such as this; that the feedback of the Focus Group was very important along with face to face drop-ins across towns and the online feedback with all comments documented and shared; that explanations had been provided to those who had made suggestions which could not be implemented; that a further consultation was required in February 2026 to seek further comments; and that the engagement process had proved very positive;
- (6) it being pleasing to note that the quorum of Community Councils had been reduced, however, it was concerning that the number of Community Councils in South Ayrshire appeared to be declining; and it was hoped that this document encouraged people to be a part of their local Community Council and be a voice for their community; and the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that there had been a decline in interest in Community Councils and to promote these, events had been hosted in County Buildings to have more people involved, especially younger people;
- (7) the final consultation taking place between 15 December 2025 and 18 January 2026 which was the festive period when Community Councils did not meet; and the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that the Scheme required to be in place by April 2026 prior to the Community Council elections, therefore the final consultation required to take place at this time; and that a robust consultation had been carried out to date, therefore, it was not expected that there would be many more comments;
- (8) commending the work undertaken by the Service Lead – Thriving Communities and his team; and asking if the Focus Group could assist in setting up Community Councils in those areas where there was no Community Council; and the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that a Community Council Association had been established without the involvement of Council Officers; and that, once the Scheme had been established, the Focus Group could examine the establishment of a Community Council in North Ayr, however, although there was no Community Council in North Ayr, there was good community engagement in this area;
- (9) as the consultation was taking place over the festive period, could this be acknowledged when the consultation was issued and the Community Councils be asked to consult with its members prior to the deadline; and the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that the consultation would be issued through the Council's Communications Team, via a press article and a letter to all Community Councils and, should there be any significant comments from the consultation, the report could be deferred, if necessary;

- (10) whether briefings could be held for Community Council Members on the Scheme of Delegation; and the Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that funding had been secured through the Transformational Change Team to launch an online platform in 2026 which would provide opportunities for training for Community Council Members across a range of areas, including the Scheme of Delegation;
- (11) future review of the Scheme of Delegation; and Service Lead – Thriving Communities advised that a comment from a Community Council member had stated that the Scheme was being reviewed too frequently, therefore he would liaise with officers and the Focus Group regarding the timescale for future reviews, however, should a Community Council wish to make an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, a report could be presented to Cabinet for approval; and
- (12) that this review of the Scheme of Delegation was a step forward and had been very well received by Community Councils.

The Council

Decided:

- (a) to note the findings from stage 2 of the consultation as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) to approve the draft Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils following stage 2 of the consultation as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (c) to approve for Officers to commence the final part of the consultation and the approaches set out in the Consultation Mandate as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report; and
- (d) to agree for Officers to present the final draft for approval at Council on 19 February 2026.

8. Asset Management Plan Update

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 24 November 2025 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development updating Members on the progress of the Council's Asset Management Plan (Land and Buildings).

The Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regulation introduced the report and advised that this report was seeking agreement for the submission of a revised Asset Management Plan to Council in February 2026; outlined the three advantages of the revised Plan; and confirmed that the draft of this Plan would involve full Elected Member engagement prior to submission to Council.

Councillor Martin Kilbride, seconded by Councillor Bob Shields, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

The Council, having welcomed the submission of this Plan in February 2026,

Decided: to agree that a revised Asset Management Plan (Land and Buildings) be submitted to Council in February 2026 for the reasons outlined in Section 4.

9. **Ayr Parking Strategy (2025)**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 4 December 2025 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development presenting the Ayr Parking Strategy (2025), outlining proposals to modernise Ayr's on and off-street parking arrangements through revised residents' permit schemes, rationalised pay and display (P&D) systems, and an approach to implementing new charges and digital permit systems.

Councillor Alec Clark, seconded by Councillor Brian Connolly, moved that consideration of this matter be continued to the meeting of South Ayrshire Council of 19 February 2026 to allow all information to be collated and considered prior to that meeting.

Twenty two Members voted for the Motion, three Members against the Motion and one Member Abstained and the Council

Decided: that consideration of this matter be continued to the meeting of South Ayrshire Council of 19 February 2026 to allow all information to be collated and considered prior to that meeting.

10. **Review of Capital Estimates: General Services Capital Investment Programme 2025/26 to 2036/37**

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 5 December 2025 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development seeking approval to update the General Services Capital Investment Programme for financial years 2025/26 through to 2036/37, as a result of a combination of (a) re-profiling of budgets between financial years; and (b) budget reductions to projects, which if approved, would lead to reduced debt charges to the Council and reduce the pressure on revenue budgets.

The Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development introduced the report.

Councillor Ian Davis, seconded by Councillor Brian Connolly, moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

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

- (1) thanking officers for their work on this review conducted under the challenges as outlined in the report; and outlining that opportunities for reprofiling and to reduce the capital lines were being examined which would reduce the Council's debt charges in future years;
- (2) the £236 in the "2025 Proposed Revised Budget" for public conveniences; and the Service Lead – Professional Design Services advised that this was the remaining budget from a completed programme of works; and that a meeting was planned in January 2026 with Facilities Management to examine existing public conveniences and that a feasibility study would then be undertaken;
- (3) how many projects within the document being agreed at this meeting were dependent on receiving external funding to support the work progressing; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that any project supported by capital funding would be reprofiled in terms of whether capital funding was received or not; and that ongoing updates through the capital programme would be reported to Council;

- (4) requesting that the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development provide in writing costings should all non-essential capital projects be cancelled to allow Members to examine options; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that essential and non-essential projects would require to be defined prior to any decision being taken as there were a number of projects in the Capital Programme that were essential to protect the Council's assets in terms of the school estate and housing estate;
- (5) the Scheme of Assistance within the Health and Social Care Investment Budget and whether it had been overspent in the past; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education advised this budget line been under-utilised for the last few years and careful consideration had been given to making any adjustment to it, however, the overall adjustment was £1.5m over twelve years and this would continue to be monitored, amended and re-profiled to meet demand as necessary;
- (6) the Equalities Act Budget being reduced by 25% and could the Council meet its obligations with these cuts; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education advised that this budget had been considered as under-utilised and it was re-profiled and adjusted accordingly;
- (7) the Ayrshire Roads Alliance Reconstruction and Improvement budget which was £2.5m for the next five years and, given the rising costs of materials, it was expected that this would rise year upon year; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education advised that this was a historically allocated figure, however, any additional capital investment would be welcomed;
- (8) the Ayrshire Roads Alliance Reconstruction and Improvement budget and whether this authority was matching the partner authority with funding; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that the partner authority had invested more capital through their roads network, however, that amount had been reduced significantly in the last few years; and
- (9) that the report to South Ayrshire Council on 18 September 2025 had reported a substantial reprofiling of capital which in turn outlined a large reduction in debt charges; and that this was further reprofiling to reduce the debt charges for future years to protect the General Services budget.

The Council

Decided:

- (a) to approve the adjustments detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 attached to the report;
- (b) to approve the revised General Services Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2036/37 as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report; and
- (c) to note the associated overall reduced debt charge implications of £6,677,084 for the period of the twelve year programme, as detailed in Appendix 5 of the report and specifically the £442,545 reduction in the planned debt charge budget for 2026/27.

11. **Formal Questions.**

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 26.2, there was submitted [Formal Questions and Responses](#) from Councillors Ian Cavana and Craig Mackay.

Councillor Cavana raised a supplementary question as follows: "as the current paternity leave is one week full pay and one week statutory paternity pay, this does not go far enough, therefore, could the Council policy be amended"; and the Chief HR Officer advised that when this authority set its policies, benchmarking was carried out with other Councils across Scotland; and that she would examine this and come back to Members with recommendations.

Councillor Mackay commented on the derelict site at the Station Hotel and raised a supplementary question as follows: "should the Council be more proactive in lobbying the Scottish Government regarding legislation to assist with vacant and derelict sites"; and the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development advised that the Station Hotel site was owned by Network Rail which was a private company and that this authority would provide support to develop the site, however, had no direct involvement at this time. The Chief Governance Officer further advised that the Council had no ownership responsibility as the Station Hotel was owned by Mr Ung and Network Rail.

Provost

Provost thanked everyone in attendance for their contribution and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting ended at 11.25 a.m.