

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Strategic Change and Communities
to Cabinet
of 20 June 2023**

**Subject: Partnership Agreement - Voluntary Action South
Ayrshire (VASA)**

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for officers to progress the proposed partnership agreement with VASA between 2023 – 2028.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the proposed partnership agreement between South Ayrshire Council and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA).

3. Background

3.1 Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) is the local Third Sector Interface and is recognised by Scottish Government and South Ayrshire Council as fulfilling a key role in ensuring the continued development of a robust Third Sector in South Ayrshire.

3.2 The primary purpose of VASA is focused on four key interface functions:

- Volunteering development;
- Social Enterprise development;
- Supporting and developing a strong 3rd sector; and
- Building a strong 3rd sector relationship with Community Planning.

3.3 Locally VASA and South Ayrshire Council have developed strong partnerships and relationships, and this collaborative approach was strengthened during the Covid-19 humanitarian response where both organisations supported communities across South Ayrshire.

3.4 Harnessing the strong and effective partnership work during Covid-19 SAC officers have maintained a strong partnership approach to addressing key challenges in our communities alongside VASA. This includes supporting the cost-of-living crisis, identifying local funding opportunities and promoting and celebrating volunteer development in South Ayrshire.

3.5 VASA are represented at both local and strategic decision making groups and are recognised as a key member of the Community Learning and Development Partnership and Community Planning Partnership.

3.6 Despite the positive work there is no formal partnership agreement in place that outlines both SAC and VASA roles, responsibilities and expectations while working together.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approve for officers to sign the partnership agreement ([Appendix 1](#)) between SAC and VASA during the period of the new SAC Plan 2023-2028.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

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 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals within this report have been assessed through the EQIA scoping process and there are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts in agreeing the proposals, therefore an EQIA 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 or 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 above recommendations relate to Priority 2 Live, Work, Learn and Priority 3 Civic and Community Pride of the Council Plan.

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Martin Dowey, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Strategic, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of Strategic Change and Communities 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:

Implementation	Due date	Managed by
Progress partnership agreement	30 June 2023	Service Lead – Thriving Communities

Background Papers None

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Date: 12 June 2023

**Suggested Draft for
South Ayrshire Third Sector and South Ayrshire Council
Partnership Agreement**

It is hoped that this Agreement contributes to the positive growing relationship between South Ayrshire Council and the Third Sector in South Ayrshire, and displays a shared vision and clear ways of working that will further strengthen the partnership, demonstrating collaborative, co-produced and joined-up working; supporting communities together.

It recognises and validates the Scottish Government mandated role of the Third Sector Interface (VASA), and the national commitment to including the Third Sector in the Strategic Planning of South Ayrshire Council. It sets out a structure for joint working, bringing localism within communities, and embedding the power of partnership working for the benefit of South Ayrshire's people.

South Ayrshire Council and the Third Sector (which includes community groups, voluntary organisations, faith groups, charities and social enterprises) have different approaches, different cultures, and face different challenges. South Ayrshire Council's Strategic Plan aspires to support people to live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, and resilient. Therefore, there is a shared interest between these two organisations, in the wellbeing and sustainable development and empowerment of the people in South Ayrshire.

The Third Sector (as represented by VASA – the Third Sector Interface) should therefore be recognised and appreciated as an equal partner for their commitment and contribution to our communities. By building effective relationships with South Ayrshire Council, we are pledging to strengthen the communities of South Ayrshire Council as a whole, bringing greater collaboration and delivering real benefits to the people of South Ayrshire.

Ultimately, both partners prioritise the wellbeing of the South Ayrshire community. Partners should recognise the value in the different roles played by South Ayrshire Council and the Third Sector and that there is also a right for Third Sector organisations to disagree, debate and challenge decisions.

The Third Sector Interface (VASA) will collaborate effectively to ensure that Third Sector of South Ayrshire has the opportunity and the means to participate in and engage in discussions that harness the voice of communities. South Ayrshire Council will also work with VASA locally to ensure a collaborative approach to commissioning services where possible, in partnership with the community and the people we support. They also agree that Third Sector organisations have the opportunity to work continuously to improve and enhance relationships that build strong trust and confidence that their voice is actively listened to and reflected. The two partners in this agreement intend to invest in the voice of the people and the relationships built between Third Sector services and the communities they serve.

By working together, pledging to a shared commitment will mean that:

South Ayrshire Third Sector Interface and South Ayrshire Council have recognised the need to embrace joined-up working that promotes equality and human rights, inspires community empowerment, and enables the people of South Ayrshire to flourish. Both partners acknowledge the need for a shared vision to bring localism within communities, and for embedding the power of partnership working for the benefit of our communities and its people. A shared vision to encourage and support partnership working is in the interest of South Ayrshire communities.

Our Partnership Agreement is:

- To work jointly with a shared ambition that reflects the vision and objectives of the South Ayrshire Strategic Plan together, to develop communities that support its people to live well and thrive
- To recognise the need for accountability, honesty and transparency
- To value the Third Sector, recognising their independence, worth and connection to local communities
- To provide support that helps safeguards the Third Sector's sustainability and allows growth
- To work in partnership conveying knowledge and intelligence and commit to respectful joint working practices, avoiding duplication where possible
- To direct resources and assets in ways that ensure best practice and impact on local need and aspirations
- To ensure our joint work will encourage and commit to promoting equalities and respect human rights
- To ensure South Ayrshire's people benefit from partnership working across Local Authority and Third Sector services
- To share data and intelligence to support appropriate and effective commissioning and targeting of service

It is to be expected that South Ayrshire Council will:

- Recognise the Third Sector Interface (VASA) as the point of contact between themselves and the Third Sector
- Recognise the Third Sector and their delivery of services as a key contributor and valued asset to an effective, inclusive economy
- Engage with the Third Sector and include the Third Sector in planning and decision making, demonstrating collaborative, co-produced, and equal working practices

It is to be expected that the Third Sector Interface (VASA) will:

- Engage with, support and advocate for South Ayrshire's Third Sector with South Ayrshire statutory partners
- Support and develop the Third Sector, bringing opportunity to participate in meetings, engage with, and represent their views in the interest of the communities they serve
- Listen to and engage with the views of elected members, and appropriate Council senior officers

Signed by:
On behalf of the TSI (VASA)

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On behalf of South Ayrshire Council