

## **PARTNERSHIPS PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 9 September 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Hugh Hunter (Chair).

Present remotely:

Councillors Douglas Campbell, Ian Cavana, Chris Cullen, Ian Davis and Arthur Spurling.

Attending: K. Carr, Assistant Director – Place Directorate; W. Carlaw, Service Lead - Democratic Governance; E. Wyllie, Committee Services Officer; and K. Hancox, Clerical Assistant.

Also attending:

Chief Superintendent F. Hussain; and Chief Inspector B. Anderson (Police Scotland).

Attending remotely:

Kevin Anderson, Corporate and Housing Policy; K. Braidwood, Interim Head of Service (Ayrshire Roads Alliance); J. Binning, Principal Transport Policy Officer; and A. Comrie, Senior Transport Planner (both SPT).

### **Opening Remarks.**

The Chair took the sederunt and confirmed that today's meeting was not open to the press and public, which was permissible under the COVID-19 legislation. He also confirmed to Members the procedures to conduct this meeting.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chair expressed his gratitude for the contribution and support from former Panel member Councillor Siobhian Brown. He then welcomed recently appointed Councillor Douglas Campbell to his first meeting of the Panel and commented that he looked forward to Councillor Campbell's input and experience at these scrutiny meetings.

### **1. Declarations of Interest.**

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting.**

The minutes of 12 February 2020 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

### 3. **Action Log and Work Programme.**

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

The Assistant Director – Place Directorate commented that there were no outstanding actions and that the work programme was currently up to date. In relation to the Petitions Update in respect of *Remediation - Tarbolton Moss Landfill Site* which was not being heard as a petition at this Panel as it did not meet the criteria, the Assistant Director referred to a recent Members’ briefing on this matter. He advised that clarity was being sought by the Council from the Scottish Government and SEPA over a number of issues including funding as well as seeking clarity on the precise actions that both organisations expected the Council to possibly take. The Assistant Director advised that an options paper, if appropriate, would be compiled and presented to members in due course.

The Panel

**Decided:** to note the action log and work programme including the verbal update provided by the Assistant Director – Place.

### 4. **Review of End-Year and Local Performance Report: Police Scotland.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 1 September 2020 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director – People providing information on the end-year performance for 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire.

The Chair welcomed Chief Superintendent Faroque Hussain to his first meeting of the Panel in his role as the Ayrshire Local Police Commander and also welcomed Chief Inspector Brian Anderson. Thereon, the Chief Superintendent thanked the Panel for the opportunity to present this report and referred to data pertaining to South Ayrshire Policing Priorities for 2017-2020 and including Police Scotland’s Policing Priorities for 2019-2020 reflected in the reporting period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Also included within the report was additional information on some diversionary work which had been undertaken by the Campus Police Officer at Carrick Academy during school year 2019/2020 up until the project was cut short by Covid 19.

Various questions were asked by Members of the Panel and responses provided as follows:-

- (1) in relation to incidences of domestic abuse and a potential rise in cases across the UK during Covid 19, the Chief Superintendent commented on the message during Covid 19 to stay at home and regrettably staying at home was not always the safest place for a number of individuals. He reported that it had been anticipated that a number of allegations relating to domestic abuse would have been made during the easing of lockdown but that this had not materialised. However, he added that partner agencies such as women’s aid and victim support have seen an increase in individuals coming forward. It was noted that a number of campaigns highlighted the support available and encouraged individuals to report incidents with this being an area continually monitored;

- (2) in respect of road traffic casualties and an increase in the number of children seriously injured from 2 during 2018/19 to 5 during 2019/20 and was this attributable to any particular area, the Chief Inspector indicated that this data had been investigated and there was not any particular area involved. He added that often a child might be retained in hospital overnight for observation as a precautionary measure which was then categorised as a serious injury even though the child might have had a minor injury. He also commented that there were no particular issues around schools and Officers carried out high profile visits to schools. The Chief Inspector reported that this data would continue to be monitored with resources in place in order to keep children safe from injury;
- (3) a question was asked around housebreaking data for Ayr North which had seen a reduction in cases from the previous year and on the detention of perpetrators. The Chief Inspector advised that the reduction of cases to 72 was still too many and outlined the efforts of locality policing to gather intelligence and identify those within communities that were carrying out these crimes. He added that following arrest it was then for the Courts to decide if the perpetrators should be remanded in custody. He advised of the dedicated resources for this type of crime to make every effort to find those responsible and bring them to court. The Chief Superintendent reported that due to the issues around housebreaking within Ayr North, he had carried out a foot patrol and commented on reducing poverty and increasing opportunity in that particular area and the challenges involved;
- (4) in terms of the data pertaining to sexual crimes recorded as 'non-contact' which meant they were committed online and whether there had been an increase in this type of crime especially due to Covid 19, the Chief Superintendent reported that there was a national increase being seen in this type of online offence across the organisation which also related to stalking, entrapment, extortion and fraud. He commented on investment and resources and the availability of subject matter expertise to enable tracking down these individuals to bring them to justice;
- (5) in relation to domestic abuse and crimes of a sexual nature, a question was asked about the conviction rates. The Chief Inspector advised that he would discuss this point with colleagues to ascertain the data and report his findings to Panel members although bearing in mind that once a matter was reported then the Procurator Fiscal would decide on the course of action required therefore it might not always lead to a conviction but another type of disposal or other form of engagement with the accused; and
- (6) a question was asked in respect of complaints about the police and the number of on duty allegations particularly in relation to the irregularity of procedure and the Chief Inspector outlined the process involved in complaint handling which rested with himself and which took in to account the nature of the allegation and the officers involved. Following investigation by an Inspector assigned by the Chief Inspector, the findings would be reported to him and he would take a view if the complaint was upheld or not. The Chief Inspector would then write to the complainer advising of the findings and outcome. In terms of the irregularity of procedure, the Chief Inspector explained that this was a common complaint raised by the public over a procedure or how an incident was dealt with. He added that when an officer visited the complainer and discussed the procedures and processes this often led to the complaint being withdrawn as the complainant had a clearer understanding of the rationale behind the reasons for investigation; or the Chief Inspector found that the complaint was not upheld. However, this still needed to be recorded as a complaint. It was noted that on this basis, the Chief Inspector was not overly concerned with the numbers involved.

The Chair referred to the report on the diversionary work at Carrick Academy and that this type of reporting was useful as it highlighted the impact of the work being done. In this regard, he wished to record the Panel's gratitude for PC McGinlay's work at Carrick Academy. On behalf of the Panel, the Chair also thanked both officers for the good work being undertaken by them and their staff.

The Panel, having scrutinised the 2019/20 end-year performance of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire and having provided feedback

**Decided:** to note the report.

## 5. **Ayrshire Roads Alliance Service Plan 2020/21 and Performance Report 2019/20.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 1 September 2020 by the Director – Place presenting the Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) Service Plan for 2020/21 and the Performance Report for 2019/20.

The Chair welcomed Mr Braidwood, Interim Head of Service (ARA) who joined the meeting remotely. Thereon, the Interim Head highlighted various parts of the Service Plan 2020/21 and the performance report 2019/20 as outlined within the appendices of the report.

Various questions were asked by Members of the Panel and responses provided as follows:-

- (1) in relation to the level of bids to SPT for various projects that SPT could assist the Council with as well as general concerns over the amount of funding made by the Council and how this was being re-invested within South Ayrshire over a period of time, in terms of projects, the Interim Head of Service advised that ARA had submitted bids to SPT and that two of these bids had been successful. In relation to the overall allocation to SPT, the Interim Head of Service advised that this would be better addressed in the next agenda item;
- (2) in respect of the position of the transferring of staff to various locations across Kilmarnock and Ayr, the Interim Head of Service advised that due to Covid 19, a number of staff were currently working from home with operational staff working out of the depots as normal. He indicated that he was relocating from his Kilmarnock base to County Buildings as of next week with other staff moving to Ayr Town Hall with IT issues being resolved. It was noted that Parking Attendants were now based at the Citadel and that staff from the service were no longer based in Burns House, Ayr;
- (3) a question was asked in relation to the impact of Covid 19 on the repairs and maintenance programmes and the Interim Head of Service commented that works had been suspended at the start of lockdown and restarted in June 2020 with resurfacing and potholing being carried out as well as general repairs. He added that during lockdown, the service was still responding to certain emergencies;
- (4) in relation to the APSE average for 2015/16 as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report and whether there were more recent figures to compare South Ayrshire to, it was noted that the service reported annually in the capital programme on the national average across Scotland;

- (5) in terms of the percentage of the different classes of roads that should be considered for maintenance, a question was asked whether figures were available for other similar Scottish local authorities so that performance could be compared as well as providing an opportunity to learn from their approaches in certain areas. The Interim Head of Service advised that there were figures available for comparison from other local authorities as this service was part of a family group. It was noted that these figures would be provided to members of the Panel;
- (6) a question was asked in respect of road classifications and whether there was a noticeable difference with the condition of roads in areas of mixed zoning or traffic types such as residential roads within industrial areas impacted by passing HGV traffic. The Interim Head of Service advised that A class and B class roads were targeted within the capital programme since these were highly used roads. He added that additional surveys were carried out on residential streets and industrial areas for inclusion within the capital programme bearing in mind that Class A and B roads were the priority;
- (7) in relation to an update on the trialling of plastic material for road resurfacing, it was noted that a consultant had been appointed by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland to undertake an in-depth analysis of this work and that all authorities who had participated in these trials were providing details to the consultant with this report also being supported by Transport Scotland; and
- (8) a question was asked in relation to absence monitoring and the average days lost per employee and the Interim Head of Service advised that the service had been above average in terms of absence but attendance has significantly improved during Covid 19 with this attendance level being maintained.

The Panel, having considered the report and thanked the Interim Head of Service for his input

**Decided:** to note

- (a) the Ayrshire Roads Alliance Service Plan for 2020/21 contained in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) that regular progress updates would be provided to the Ayrshire Shared Services Joint Committee; and
- (c) the performance reports for 2019/20 as detailed within Appendix 2 of the report.

## **6. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport – Performance Report**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 1 September 2020 by the Director – Place outlining the work of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and the impact its services had on the public transport network in South Ayrshire and across the west of Scotland and providing an opportunity to identify any areas for further discussion or development of partnership activity.

The Chair welcomed Mr Binning, Principal Transport Policy Officer and Mr Comrie, Senior Transport Planner, both joining the meeting remotely. The Interim Head of Service (ARA) commented on the report and then handed over to the Principal Transport Policy Officer who provided an overview of transport outcomes and gave an update on services as well as the level of investment relating to South Ayrshire in conjunction with partners.

The Principal Transport Policy Officer also advised of the ongoing impact of Covid 19 on services during lockdown and the easing of lockdown as well as social distancing measures. He provided details of emergency funding support being provided from government bodies to assist with the situation.

Thereon, various questions were asked by Members of the Panel and responses provided as follows:-

- (1) in relation to an earlier question posed at the previous item on the agenda in that whether the amount of funding made by the Council was being re-invested within South Ayrshire over a period of time, the Principal Transport Policy Officer advised of work done last year as a similar question had been raised then. He commented that this work looked at the respective investment levels across the three Ayrshire councils and he suggested that this could be looked at again. It was noted that this was a frequently asked question by all partner councils although it was never a straightforward money in / money out arrangement. The Principal Transport Policy Officer further commented on two elements such as the revenue support received by SPT from each of the partner councils which was reinvested into local services such as MyBus. It was noted that he would provide figures to members of the Panel on this. He also reported on the capital investment aspect which was received from the Scottish Government and which enabled Councils to make bids to SPT for various projects with these bids being determined by the SPT Partnership Board consisting of council representation. It was noted that further details on this process would be submitted to Members of the Panel for their information following discussion between the Interim Head of Service (ARA) and the Principal Transport Policy Officer (SPT);
- (2) a question was asked in relation to guidance being issued to drivers on the use of face coverings as a result of Covid 19 and the Principal Transport Policy Officer commented on the promotion of the Thistle Card which had been amended to include passenger face covering exemptions. He advised that bus operators did not wish to appear unduly heavy handed in their response to situations although some drivers might have been a bit over zealous with their reaction on some occasions. On a similar note, some passengers have been unhappy that other passengers have not been using face coverings. It was noted that a supportive approach had been adopted where possible. The Principal Transport Policy Officer indicated that he would look at what guidance had been issued by bus operators and ScotRail and arrange for these documents to be circulated to Members of the Panel for their interest;
- (3) in relation to social distancing measures on school transport, the Principal Transport Policy Officer advised that the Head of Bus Operations had indicated that school transport was running smoothly with good observance to social distancing and that there had been a good response from pupils, drivers and school staff;
- (4) a question was asked in respect of the bidding process to SPT and what happened to rejected proposals and the Principal Transport Policy Officer provided a detailed explanation of the process for proposals to the capital programme. It was noted that information on this process would be circulated to Members of the Panel;

- (5) in respect of encouraging people to use public transport what actions were being taken by various bodies in conjunction with SPT to improve links and networks across Strathclyde and the Principal Transport Policy Officer advised of work currently being done on the new Regional Transport Strategy. It was noted that the development of the Strategy was a statutory requirement for SPT and involved issues such as land use, town centres and partnership working. He added that the Transport Scotland Act would be critical to this and guidance on the specifics of the Act were currently awaited;
- (6) in terms of the capital investment for active transport proposals, a question was asked about investment on established cycle routes to ensure that these were maintained. The Principal Transport Policy Officer commented on the capital investment for new active travel routes and on revenue requirements for existing networks and the challenges faced by Councils for the maintenance of these. The Senior Transport Planner commented on such issues for networks that were now many years old and required upgrading and maintenance and that the standards set by Sustrans were demanding. It was noted that the Interim Head of Roads would discuss repairs and the upgrading of existing cycle infrastructures with the Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer and report the findings to Members of the Panel in due course;
- (7) a question was asked in relation to the monitoring of school transport, for example, safety issues around pupils standing on the top level of a double decker bus to travel from their home to school and the Senior Transport Planner commented on a report that had been submitted to SPT's Operation Committee in August 2020. This report indicated that inspections were made regularly on supported services and on school services and which looked at the operational and the mechanical fitness of the buses. It was noted that any identified issues during an inspection would be highlighted to bus operators for them to address and rectify; and
- (8) in relation to the requirement for a new bus route to meet local need such as a change in location of GP services from one village to another and also to take account of new housing developments with a potential increase in passengers, a question was asked whether these situations were monitored. The Senior Transport Planner commented that when new housing developments were proposed and approved for planning then a developer contribution to the transport network would be generated by the development. As part of the planning consent, a service could be provided for a finite period of time and after that time expired, the service could either be self-sustaining and, if not, would then be assessed by SPT to see if a level of subsidy was required to continue running the service. In terms of difficulties for patients to travel to relocated GP practices then perhaps this would be a matter for the NHS to discuss in partnership with local communities and other relevant bodies.

The Panel, having scrutinised the performance of SPT in relation to its activities within South Ayrshire and thanked officers for their attendance and input

**Decided:** to note the activities within South Ayrshire.

The meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.