

PARTNERSHIPS PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr and remote
on 18 November 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: D., Director – Place; A. Nelson, Co-ordinator Democratic Support and D. Mulgrew, Assistant Committee Clerk.
- Attending remotely: K. Anderson, Service Lead - Corporate and Housing Policy; W. Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; A. Coia, Tourism Development Officer; P. Linton, General Manager – Quay Zone; C. Monaghan, Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities; I. McMeekin, Area Commander – Scottish Fire and Rescue.

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.

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.

1. Declarations of Interest.

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors’ Code of Conduct Councillor Hunter and Councillor Campbell declared an interest in Agenda Item 3 of this Minute as Councillor Hunter was a Ward Member for Prestwick and Councillor Campbell had previously been a member of the Leadership Panel.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The minutes of 9 September 2020 (issued) were submitted and approved.

3. **Petition relating to the Development of the Prestwick Business Improvement District**

Councillor Hunter vacated the position of Chair and left the meeting as did Councillor Campbell. Councillor Spurling took the position of Chair for this Agenda item.

The Chair invited the Service Lead – Democratic Governance to provide an update to the Panel relating to this item. The Service Lead – Democratic Governance advised that Members required to consider a procedural matter in relation to the Petition and that neither the Petition as such nor its merits would be discussed.

The Petition application was submitted to the Council earlier this year and it was due to be heard by the Partnerships Panel in April 2020, however the Council, at its meeting on 24 March 2020, cancelled all meetings until the end of August as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Lead Petitioner was advised of the cancellation of meetings and on 2 September 2020, the Council contacted the Lead Petitioner to advise that the Petition would be heard by this Panel on 18 November 2020. The Council contacted the Lead Petitioner again to confirm the arrangements for the meeting being held on 18 November 2020 and asked the Lead Petitioner to confirm whether he wished to proceed.

On 6 November 2020 the Lead Petitioner confirmed that the BID Committee wished to pursue the Petition but the BID Committee requested that the Petition be carried forward to the next meeting of this Panel when 'business would be much clearer with regard to the impact of Covid', he also quoted difficulties in setting up conference calls with the BID Committee members to discuss the Petition and stated that this had seriously affected the BID Petition preparations.

Officers had prepared a report and from the Council's perspective the Council was ready to deal with the Petition at today's Panel. The Council's Petition's Protocol stated that at least one Petitioner should attend the meeting to speak to the Petition otherwise the Petition would not be heard, the Petition would lapse and would not be considered further unless the Panel decided to carry it forward to the next meeting to provide a further opportunity for the Lead Petitioner to attend where this appeared to be merited in the circumstances.

The decision for the Panel was therefore to consider if the circumstances were such that it merited carrying forward the Petition to a further Partnerships Panel meeting.

Councillor Cavana moved that the Petition be carried forwarded to the next meeting of the Partnerships Panel, seconded by Councillor Ian Davis.

Decided: to agree that the Petition in relation to the development of the Prestwick Business Improvement District be carried forward to the next meeting of the Partnerships Panel scheduled to be held on 10 February 2021.

Councillor Spurling vacated the position of Chair.

Councillor Hunter resumed the position of Chair for the remainder of the Agenda and Councillor Campbell re-joined the meeting.

4. **Action Log and Work Programme.**

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

The Director – Place gave a verbal update on the Action Log and, with regard to Items 2 and 7, the information pertaining to Item 2 – Classification of Roads was now available and would be circulated to Members, with regard to Item 7 he advised that discussions were ongoing on how the potential repairs of cycle paths would be dealt with and agreed to provide Members with an update.

With regard to the work programme it was noted that there were no items scheduled for the meeting on 10 February 2021 however as a consequence of Item 3, the Petition relating to the development of the Prestwick Business Improvement District would be deferred to that meeting.

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the action log and work programme including the verbal update provided by the Director – Place; and
- (2) to note that the Petition relating to the development of the Prestwick Business Improvement District would be added to the work programme for the Panel scheduled to be held on 10 February 2021.

5. **Local Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10 November 2020 by the Assistant Director – People providing the Panel with information about 2019/20 and mid-year 20/21 performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in South Ayrshire.

With regard to the mid-year 20/21 performance he went on to highlight that false alarms accounted for 60.8% of all demand, with fire related and special service activity accounting for 26.5% and 12.7% respectively.

He also advised the Panel that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had recently entered into a partnership with the Galloway Mountain Rescue Team; resulting in Ayr Community Fire Station becoming a Mountain Rescue base for one of their vehicles and response teams.

The Area Commander also intimated that Group Commander Paul Blackwood had recently been appointed to the role of Head of Competence, Assurance and Development within the Ayrshire LSO area. He also advised that within South Ayrshire there were stations classed as ‘on-call’ on a retained duty system at; Colmonell, Girvan, Maybole, Ayr and Troon. The Service had invested in this area and had now appointed a Rural Support Officer for the South Ayrshire area. The role of the Support Officer would be to support the maintenance of operational cover at these locations and work with partners to provide information on home safety to local residents and help in reducing down activity.

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

- (1) A Member had previously asked the Chief Executive to discuss with the Divisional Commander what help and support the Council could give to staff to encourage and support them in taking on the role of a retained fire fighter within the rural areas. The Area Commander intimated that it was evident, particularly during the pandemic, the importance of engaging with large employers such as the Council. The Service had altered some aspects of the delivery of their Service e.g. home working – less people would require to travel into the larger areas such as Ayr and allow fire fighters to spend more time within their local communities.

He further advised that the Fire and Rescue Service had an Action List of Employers and work would be undertaken on how the Fire and Rescue Service could engage with employers and subsequently engage with their staff and promote the opportunities and benefits that the Fire and Rescue Service could give to them and their local communities.

- (2) A Member enquired as to when the Rural Support Officer would start in post and the Area Commander intimated that he anticipated a start date of January 2021. He added that the Rural Support Officer would not be providing operational cover, but would be working with local communities to support those most at risk and to support young people. He also informed that the Fire and Rescue Service would be introducing a Bank Workers Scheme to support the staff working within rural areas and to increase the availability of their appliances
- (3) In respect of Galloway Mountain Rescue Team locating their team and their response vehicle at Ayr Fire Station, a Member asked for further detail. The Area Commander advised that Ayr Fire Station was very much a Community Station and that the Service were working with Police Scotland and the Ambulance Service in an effort to share resources. He informed the Panel that the Galloway Mountain Rescue Team was a charity that provided a service to the public, the Fire and Rescue Service was a public sector organisation and was in the position to offer the charity accommodation within Ayr Fire Station at no additional cost. He intimated that the Mountain Rescue Team's skills set would be added to the Fire and Rescue Service's Community Asset Register which would allow the Fire and Rescue Service to take a multi-agency approach to incidents and was delighted that the Fire and Rescue Service were in a position to assist the Galloway Mountain Rescue Team in relocating to Ayr.
- (4) With regard to page 5 of the South Ayrshire Performance Report – 1 April 2020 – 30 September 2020 a Member commented on the incidents per 10,000 and that Troon was high and enquired as to the reason for this. The Area Commander advised that the figure related to the demographic of the area being older and that the Service worked closely with the HSCP to provide additional support services in this area such as home fire safety visit.
- (5) A Member asked about the new Fire Regulations relating to smoke detectors that had been deferred until next year, and enquired about the impact this would have on the indicators detailed on page 5. The Member asked if there would be a publicity campaign to advise home owners about this legislation and changes to smoke detector and fire detector legislation. The Area Commander advised that the Fire and Rescue Service would be working with their partners to try and increase awareness of the changes.

He further advised that the Service had procured a supply of smoke detectors for installation in the homes of those most vulnerable however it was not a legislative requirement for the Service to do so. He advised that there would be a campaign over the next year and that the Service would work with the local authority to promote the forthcoming changes in legislation.

- (6) A Member asked for supplementary information relating to fire retardant bedding detailed in the report. The Area Commander advised that the Service had been working with colleagues within the HSCP in the Wallacetoun area. He advised that the Service managed to secure £1500, the Service then looked at the number of incidents relating to deliberate fire setting, fires within the home setting and also the ignition source. The Service could evidence that most of the accidental fires were cooking related and most of the fatalities were smoking related. The Service then identified that fire retardant bedding would be an aid in reducing the number of accidental fire incidents within the home. In addition to that the Service had assigned a local Support Officer to the community and one of the Watch Commanders now also regularly attended the community room within the primary school. The Member commended the work being done within the area.
- (7) With regard to page 4 of the report, a Member asked why there was such a variation in the Activity by Time of Day particularly between 7pm and 11pm. The Area Commander informed the Panel that in relation to anti-social behaviour and accidental fires, the variation was primarily due to the timescale being outwith school hours and when people generally started to prepare meals.
- (8) Relating to deliberate fire setting, a Member asked if there was an area within Ayr North that had a particularly high number of incidents. The Area Commander advised that he would provide the detail to the Member and further advised that the Service would continue to engage with schools and young people and promote their Youth Engagement Scheme. Another Member asked a question in relation to refuse fires which attributed to 42% of Secondary Fire Ratio by Activity Type and asked if that related to bonfires or whether, taking account of urban myths, the indicator related to wheelie bins being set on fire. The Area Commander suggested a meeting, outwith the Panel, with the Members who had raised these issues. The Area Commander also intimated that the Service was in the process of developing a Deliberate Fire Reduction Plan and would welcome the opportunity to present this to the Panel at a future date.
- (9) A Member also enquired as to the level of absenteeism within the Fire and Rescue Service during the period of the pandemic. The Area Commander intimated that it had peaked during the first wave of the pandemic and was starting to rise again. He further advised that processes had been put in place to mitigate risk and allow for the continued provision of service. He intimated that the Trace and Protect process had an impact which had resulted in some Watches having to isolate however the Service's Business Continuity Plans included measures to address such scenarios.
- (10) A Member raised a question relating to Home Fire Safety Visits and Home Fire Audits. The Member acknowledged that, during the pandemic, it would have been more difficult to undertake these and enquired what steps had the Service put in place to address any backlog. The Area Commander advised that information and advice would continue to be provided by other media – phone and virtual and that the Area Commander would be recruiting from the re-engagement list for members of staff to deal with any potential backlog, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.

The Chair thanked the Area Commander for the detailed and comprehensive report and the Panel, having scrutinised the 2019/20 annual performance report from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; and the 2020/21 mid-year performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire,

Decided:

- (1) to note the 2019/20 annual performance report from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;
- (2) to note the 2020/21 mid-year performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire; and
- (3) to request that Committee Services include the Scottish Fire and Rescue – Deliberate Fire Reduction Plan in the Work Programme 2021 for the Panel.

6. South Ayrshire Council and Visit Scotland

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10 November 2020 by the Assistant Director – People providing the Panel with an update on the activity undertaken by the Council with Visit Scotland.

The Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities provided a verbal overview of the report.

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

- (1) A Member intimated that the information provided did not provide clarity in terms of what level of service the Council received from Visit Scotland. The Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities intimated that the Council would be working on tourism and providing a strategic direction linking in with the culture of the area and that the Council needed to direct Visit Scotland to the Council's expectations in terms of service provision.
- (2) With regard to Appendix 2 and the Business Engagement Summary a Member raised the issue of social media influencers and asked if the Council had any indication of the number of people who had visited the area as a result of these influencers. The Tourism Development Officer informed the Panel that the Council had not, as yet, worked with social influencers, she further advised of a campaign that the Council had been about to embark on involving social influencers and blogs which would have been carried out in the Hearst Magazines which included Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, Red and Country Living on a pan Ayrshire basis.

This would have given the Council some feedback on social influencers however the campaign had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

She further advised that a campaign that was undertaken in collaboration with Visit Scotland and Expedia, which ran for 4 weeks, resulted in £132,000 of bookings in Ayrshire hotels as a result of that campaign.

- (3) A Member asked if there had been work undertaken by Visit Scotland into markets such as the Asian market particularly in East Asia. The Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities agreed that the Council required to consider all markets and that work had been done relating to the Chinese market, partly led by the Provost. The Tourism Development Officer intimated that Visit Scotland and the Scottish Tourism Alliance advised that, for the next 18 months, the planned market would be different from that anticipated, as the expectation was that it would be local, involving those requiring to travel for a couple of hours at the most.
- (4) A Member raised a question relating to a learning journey to Finland and asked what was learned from that trip. The Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities advised that she would provide further information relating to this by way of a Briefing Note.
- (5) A Member noted that there was a budget of £15,000 allocated to work with Visit Scotland on promoting South Ayrshire and enquired if the Council did any promotional work themselves. The Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities advised that part of the work being undertaken at the moment was being considered in terms of the Ayrshire Growth Deal and how the Council would draw the strands of this work together. Visit Scotland was an important partner for the Council but not its only marketing opportunity.
- (6) A Member also enquired about the possibility of cruise ships coming back, forward planning relating to this and keeping passengers in the area. The Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities intimated that work was done relating to this e.g. a Day on the Golf Course together with whisky tasting, promoting a visit to Culzean, promoting Ayr beach etc. She noted that the passengers from cruise ships were day visitors and, whilst important, they did not create hotel night stays.

The Panel, having scrutinised the work undertaken by Visit Scotland over the past year,

Decided: to note that future work would be informed by the Tourism and Events Interim Strategy which was under development.

7. The Quay Zone Performance Report

There was submitted a report (issued) of 10 November 2020 by the Assistant Director - People outlining the work of the South Carrick Community Leisure in its management of the Quay Zone (TQZ) Community Leisure Centre for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The General Manager provided the Panel with a comprehensive verbal report highlighting the impact that Covid-19 had on TQZ. Various questions were asked by Members of the Panel and responses provided as follows:

- (1) A Member commended the work undertaken to date on the development of TQZ. The Member further commented on the considerable VAT payments made and enquired whether discussion had taken place with the Council's Treasury Team. The General Manager intimated that it was a complicated process and any assistance/advice received would be greatly appreciated. The Member suggested that the Panel may wish to include, within the recommendations, a request for the Council's Treasury Team to liaise with the SCCL regarding VAT advice.
- (2) On page 4 it detailed a payment of £75,000 relating to construction and a Member sought clarity on this figure. The General Manager informed the Panel that this related to financial year 2019/20 and final construction work relating to the building of TQZ, these funds were due to the Council for onward payment to Morrison Construction.
- (3) A Member asked a question with regard to how the SCCL communicated with Wind Farms regarding finance. The General Manager advised the Panel that financial agreements with Wind Farms had been put in place before TQZ opened and further advised that the two principal Wind Farms that currently supported TQZ were the Assel Valley Wind Farm and the Tralorg Wind Farm.
- (4) A Member raised a question relating to equipment costs and enquired if this was a one off payment (£20,945) or would this cost be an ongoing cost. The General Manager advised that this related to the purchase of a sound system and some gym equipment and that these items would become part of the assets of the SCCL and would depreciate in line with the depreciation process.
- (5) A Member commented on the figures detailed on page 6 of the report which provided measurements against several different criterion.
- (6) The figures for 2017/2018 were approximate but the figures for 2019/2020 were more specific and the Member enquired if there had been a change in how the different criterion had been measured to give more precise figures. The General Manager advised that the criterion had not changed but the SCCL had invested in IT and in particular software that would allow for the production of more accurate management reports.
- (7) A Member asked a question about building defects and asked if all defects had been resolved including the tiles and laminate issues. The General Manager confirmed that all defects had been resolved.
- (8) A Member asked a question about the income and endowments from charitable activity which was marked as £645,00 and expenditure in raising funds £409,000 and asked for some context around these figures. The General Manager intimated that the charitable activities, £645,000, was the work actually undertaken at TQZ to raise money for paid services i.e. Gym Membership, Room Hire, Café etc. The £409,000 related to the cost of actually running TQZ i.e. staff wages, running costs and the costs associated with the operation of the facility.

The Member intimated that it would be helpful to extract the Council's contribution and detail it separately. The General Manager advised there was a specific format for the accounts but agreed to liaise with the accountants to establish if this information could be extracted from the accounts separately.

The Panel, having scrutinised the performance of the South Carrick Community Leisure – Quay Zone Performance Update 2019/20

Decided: to make recommendation to the Leadership Panel that following scrutiny of the South Carrick Community Leisure – Quay Zone Performance Update 2019/20 at this meeting, the Council's Treasury Team be requested to engage with the Quay Zone to provide VAT advice as appropriate.

The meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.