

PARTNERSHIPS PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held remotely on
17 November 2021 at 10.00am

Present: Councillors Hugh Hunter (Chair), Douglas Campbell, Ian Cavana, Siobhan Brown, Ian Davis and Arthur Spurling

Attending: K Carr, Assistant Director – Place; L Reid, Assistant Director – Place, W Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; J Bradley, Assistant Director – People, L Kerr, Co-ordinator (Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation), T Burns, Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer, K Markwick – Ayrshire Roads Alliance, Graeme Senior – Ayrshire Roads Alliance, B Kiloh – Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, J Binning – Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, A Nelson, Co-ordinator – Democratic Support, F Maher, Temporary Committee Services Officer, E Moore – Committee Services Administrator

1. Sederunt & Declaration of Interest

The Chair took the Sederunt and outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live. The Chair also advised that, with the agreement of the Panel, the electronic voting system would be utilised. The Panel so concurred.

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 the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021 (issued) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log and Work Programme

There was submitted an updated of the Action Log and Work Programme (issued) for this Panel. The Assistant Director – Place advised the Panel that the action item – Ayr Gaiety Partnership Performance Report had been updated with comments. The Work Programme had a number of emergency services reports that has been deferred to February 2022, due to the allocation of resources to COP26.

A Member asked if there was clear guidance available to anyone wishing to submit a Petition to the Council, the Service Lead – Democratic Governance responded that the Petition Protocol was on the Council's website. If a Petition was refused the Petitioner was advised of the reasons for refusal and also advised that a further Petition could be re-submitted at any time.

The Panel

Decided: to note the Action Log and Work Programme including the verbal update provided by the Assistant Director – Place.

4. Performance Review of Common Good Funds

There was submitted a report (issued) dated 10 November 2021 by the Assistant Director – Place providing an update to the Panel on the performance of the five Common Good Funds administered by the Council.

The Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer provided the Panel with a verbal overview of the report and appendix. Panel Members raised the following questions:

- 4.1 One Member enquired with regard to the properties suitable for lease ,how many were currently vacant and, was there a record of when these properties were last leased and how much they were leased for?

The Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised that there were currently 3 vacant premises in Ayr (all in the Sandgate), one of which had a closing date for offers, one was currently under offer and the other was currently on the market. Tenants/buyers were actively being sought for all three. It was also agreed that the requested information relating to leases would be provided in the form of a briefing note. The Service Lead also advised that it was important to note that market rates have fallen over the years and that the rental sum reflects the current market position.

- 4.2 A Member asked if any repairs or improvements were required in order to make the vacant premises more marketable and the Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer responded that currently funding sources were difficult to identify and that other funding streams were being investigated e.g. Historic Scotland.

- 4.3 One Member requested an update on Ayr Town Hall / Tourist Hub / Ayr Beachfront. The Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised of funding issues. He further advised that management arrangements required to be reviewed, both of which were being looked at.

- 4.4 A Member asked what the procedure was in relation to selling common good property and enquired if local employment and community benefits were considered. The Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised that procedure and policies were in place for the review of offers received from interested parties. After review, the offers were submitted to ELT for clearing, then Elected Members decide on the best value offer, considering a number of different factors.

- 4.5 A Member enquired if the funding allocated to Rozella House had all been used and was the building now wind and watertight. The response was that major repair work was still underway, with a completion date of December 2021. Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer agreed to provide Members with specific information relating to spend and/or any remaining funds.

- 4.6 With regard to the Freemans Hall, Prestwick a Member asked what efforts were being made with regards to funding and the possibility of re-instatement of the steeple. The response was that a meeting would be held on Friday 19 November 2021 where funding would be discussed. External funding would be required and

this could possibly be requested from Historic Scotland. The Chair requested feedback on progress.

- 4.7 A question was raised on the status of the proposed sale of the Darlington Church and the Service Lead – Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer advised the Panel that a report would be presented to the Special Leadership Panel on 30 November 2021.

The Panel, having scrutinised the contents of the report

Decided:

- (1) to note the current governance and asset management arrangements under which all Common Good Funds operate as highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) to note the position with regard to Ayr Common Good, Prestwick Common Good, Troon Common Good, Girvan Common Good and Maybole Common Good and the consultation with the Ward Members as highlighted in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (3) to note the review and consultation that have taken place on Common Good assets and that the comments provided will form proposed next steps for consideration and approval by the Leadership Panel.

5. South Ayrshire Council and Visit Scotland

There was a report (issued) dated 10 November 2021 by the Assistant Director – People, providing the Partnerships Panel with an update on the activity undertaken by the Council with Visit Scotland.

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director – People who invited the Co-ordinator (Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation) to provide the Panel with an overview of the report.

Members commented as follows:

- 5.1 In light of Coronavirus and COP26, there was now more emphasis to have local, environmentally friendly holidays and enquired if this would be promoted? The Co-ordinator (Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation) advised that different ‘themed’ holidays were currently being looked at. Destination South Ayrshire included different methods of transport to South Ayrshire and the service was also working with local businesses and Biosphere to promote staying local / visiting South Ayrshire.
- 5.2 It was noted that the budget allocated was modest and the question was asked whether East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire Councils contributed a similar amount. The Service Lead advised that when there is a joint campaign, all three Councils contribute equal amounts. It was also advised that Visit Scotland had leveraged some good deals with marketing companies, which the Council benefited from.
- 5.3 A Member enquired with regard to the high uptake of caravan parking spaces at Ayr Beachfront, were other locations being considered? Ayrshire Roads Alliance commented that a report would be issued shortly on the success of this initiative. However, there were no other immediate plans to provide additional parking.

- 5.4 A Member asked how successful the Blue Bunnet Trail and Tamfest had been. The Co-ordinator (Destination, Promotion and Inclusive Participation intimated that there had been over 200,000 online views and feedback was that these activities had been well received. The Blue Bunnet Trail has recently been added to the App.
- 5.5 A Member enquired if the 2,800 room nights and £260,000 revenue was just for South Ayrshire. It was advised that this was a combined total for the three Ayrshire Councils. The Chair asked if this could be broken down by Local Authority.

The Panel, having scrutinised the contents of the report

Decided: noted the work undertaken with Visit Scotland over the past year and noted that future work would be informed by the Tourism and Events Strategy which was currently under development.

6. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) – Performance Report 2020/21

There was submitted a report (issued) dated 10 November by the Director – Place and Ayrshire Roads Alliance, outlining the work of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and the impact its services have on the public transport network in South Ayrshire and across the West of Scotland. It also provided the opportunity to identify any areas for further discussion or development of partnership activity.

The Assistant Director – Place introduced Kenneth Markwick from the Ayrshire Roads Alliance and invited him to give a brief overview.

Members commented as follows:

- 6.1 In relation to public transport infrastructure (bus and bus stop facilities) there was a need to encourage people to use public transport more frequently, however due to bus operators reducing services and changing routes this was deterring some members of the public from using this mode of transport due to unreliability. The Member asked if SPT had discussions with the bus operators regarding this? Bruce Kiloh (SPT) advised that discussions were continually ongoing between SPT and bus operators and it was acknowledged that this was a particularly challenging time in light of the pandemic. The creation of an Ayrshire Bus Partnership would bring Councils and bus operators together to find an improved method of networking. The rural communities were particularly challenging and there was also a review being conducted of MyBus to see how this service could be improved in the longer term.
- 6.2 A Member commented on the ad hoc 'park & ride' situation (Newton on Ayr being used as an example) where insufficient parking for commuters was causing 'pressure points' in the local area. The Ayrshire Roads Alliance were eager to hear of any 'pinch points' as and when they arise and would follow these up to see what improvements could be made in terms of additional car parking facilities.
- 6.3 A question was asked by a Member as to why there was no competition among bus operators in the area as this would benefit customers. In response, SPT advised that outside of London, the bus services are it was therefore a matter for commercial providers.

The Panel, having scrutinised the report

Decided: noted the content pertaining to the performance of SPT relating to their activities in South Ayrshire.

The meeting finished at 11:12 am