

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director - People
to Partnerships Panel
of 6 February 2019**

Subject: Ayr Gaiety Performance Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Partnerships Panel to scrutinise the performance of the Ayr Gaiety Partnership (AGP).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Panel scrutinises the performance of the Ayr Gaiety Partnership in delivering the activities required as part of the agreement for Council funding.**

3. Background

- 3.1 On 22 March 2012, the Council agreed to support a partnership between the Council, AGP and the University of the West of Scotland. As part of this agreement and working to lever in other external funding, AGP were asked to deliver:

- the theatre as a community resource and a performance and display space for local arts organisations;
- a centre of excellence for education and training;
- links with UWS to deliver an education programme and re-enforcement of Ayr as a University town; and
- volunteering opportunities.

- 3.2 In December 2017, Council agreed a 3 year funding package for AGP:

- 2018/19 £125,000;
- 2019/20 £115,000; and
- 2020/21 £100,000.

- 3.3 In addition to this financial support, the Council agreed that it would offer a secured loan of £650,000 at a rate of 2.5% over 5 years.

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4. Proposals

4.1 Ayr Gaiety Partnership is an important partner in delivering the Council's strategic objectives to increase access to arts and culture in South Ayrshire. A summary of their activities is set out in [Appendix 1](#). Officers have been working with them on aligning their activities with the Council's strategic objectives.

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 There are no financial implications arising from this report since the financial package for the Gaiety has already been agreed by Council.

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 is a risk that rejecting the recommendations will mean that the Council misses the opportunity to scrutinise an external body that it provides funding to.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an equality impact assessment 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 matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council strategic objective of 'Make the Most of the Local Economy' and within that to the outcome 'Work with partners to improve and promote tourism opportunities and assets, to create a co-ordinated programme of events and activities'. The Gaiety have started to map their activities onto the Council's strategic outcomes and this is shown in [Appendix 1](#).

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian McGinley, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with local Members, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 28 November 2017 – [Support to Ayr Gaiety Partnership](#)**

Person to Contact **Claire Monaghan, Service Lead – Community Services and Facilities**
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone 01292 612757
E-mail claire.monaghan@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

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AGP – key achievements 2018-19

Aims

At the start of 2017-18 AGP refined its aims to focus on four interlocking and interdependent directions, which have remained the focus for AGP efforts over 2018-19:

Developing and promoting in Ayrshire the value and role of performing arts and artists, professional and amateur, local and national/international.

Engaging wider ranges and numbers of people in performing arts in ways that stimulate, challenge, and entertain.

Improving health and wellbeing through opportunities to engage in performing and other art forms for those who currently have few such opportunities.

Building employability and the local economy – directly through training, support and enterprise – and indirectly through playing a key role in the regeneration of Ayr and beyond.

Financial constraints

The year saw the start of a new three-year funding agreement with the Council for 2018-21. This involves a revenue investment by the Council of £125,000 over 2018-19, reducing to £115,000 and then £100,000. This compares with the previous five-year agreement for £150,000 a year and the 2017-18 one off sum of £100,000. The Council also agreed to provide a loan to replace one provided by Social Investment Scotland, but at a lower interest rate. In combination these two elements placed AGP in a reasonable position. However just before the start of 2018-19, Creative Scotland announced they would not be renewing their revenue support for AGP, which had amounted to £75,000 a year over the previous three years.

The combination of the one-year reduction in SAC funding followed by the loss of Creative Scotland funding have inevitably led to changes to plans and have placed a greater emphasis on sales income (already at around 85% of main theatre activity) and on fundraising. But the greater certainty provided by SAC funding has enabled AGP to rally after a difficult 2017-18.

Summary of the year

Working with the Council, UWS, Ayrshire College and many rural communities, AGP has succeeded in providing a steadily growing range of activity, with key highlights being:

Ticket sales approaching 65,000 despite a more restricted programme in the theatre;

Around 2,000 attendances at over 50 performances in 12 rural venues from Ballantrae to Mossblown;

Introducing ‘tiered’ pricing to make some ticket prices easier to afford;

Dementia friendly events for around 60 people in the studio each month;

Engaging over 1,000 young people in theatre and technical theatre related activities – in schools, youth groups and at the theatre;

Working with the National Theatre of Scotland to deliver a show developed for and by around 20 young people in collaboration with a Belgian Theatre Group (*Wildlife FM*) and Danny Boyle’s *Pages of the Sea* on Ayr beach involving around 1,500 people;

Launching a new Heritage website and digitized archive, along with an exhibition at Rozelle in collaboration with SAC;

Launching a new ‘Young Company’ of 16-25 year old performers, now numbering around 25 young people – with performances already lined up at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow as well as at the Gaiety, following one in late 2018 at Edinburgh’s Traverse Theatre;

Delivering as a key partner the most successful Tamfest to date, bringing thousands of people into the Town Centre;

Providing opportunities to over 200 volunteers, including volunteers with support needs and who would otherwise face loneliness and isolation;

Delivering technical theatre education and training opportunities to over 100 young people from Primary school age to Masters level students;

Increasing our support to ensure access to the theatre and our wider activities for all – with increased numbers of BSL signed performances, audio described performances for the first time, and a range of training and support for our Front of House volunteers to support patrons with differing needs;

Building collaboration with the newly reorganized SAC cultural services, with several strands of joint planning underway;

Regular national media features helping to put Ayr on the map;

Non SAC income of around £1,200,000 over the year; and

Estimated economic impact on the Town of around £1,800,000 a year;

Plans for 2019-20

Fundraising will be an increasing focus for the coming year – not only to underpin the main theatre, but also to secure more resources for our work with young people and with older people with dementia and their carers. On the assumption that these plans are modestly successful, priorities for the coming year include:

Securing an increase in audiences of around 5% for our more ‘commercial programme’;

Securing funding and backing to reintroduce popular drama;

Maintaining our rural touring programme;

Producing our first ‘in house’ panto with increased focus on quality in every aspect;

Growing our programme of work with young people, including our Young Company, and our collaborations with Ayrshire College and schools;


Working with YTAG and SAC to deliver the 2019 National Festival of Youth Theatre.


Continuing to increase the accessibility of everything we do; and

Collaborating with SAC and others such as Ayr Arts Guild on cultural planning and activity to help increase cultural opportunities and the health of Ayr Town Centre.


The table overpage summarizes AGP plans in the context of the six Council priorities.


	<p>Effective Leadership that Promotes Fairness</p>
<p><i>Engaging stakeholders, empowering staff, supporting communities</i></p>	

	<p>Reduce Poverty and Disadvantage</p>
<p><i>Targeting children, looked after children & families, re. support, health, income, housing, best start in life, raising attainment and employability.</i></p> <p>Drama work with looked after and care leavers</p> <p>Focus on education work with schools in target areas</p> <p>Technical education project & volunteering</p>	

	<p>Health and Care Systems that meet People's Needs</p>
<p><i>Targeting children and those in most need, corporate parenting, careers, rural communities and helping older people to be active and socialise.</i></p> <p>Dementia friendly main house, performances, in care homes</p> <p>Rural Touring Network</p> <p>Major focus on all types of accessibility to activities and events</p>	

	<p>Make the most of the Local Economy</p>
<p><i>Ayrshire Growth Deal, Ayr Renaissance, supporting business, training and employment, maximising impact of procurement, attracting investment, promoting and improving tourism opportunities.</i></p> <p>Main house programme - £1.8million economic impact (40 jobs, footfall, tourism)</p>	

	<p>Increase the Profile and Reputation of South Ayrshire and the Council</p>
<p><i>Improving communication, improving customer satisfaction, engaging to take forward place-making</i></p> <p>International and national artists and companies to Ayr</p> <p>National level events (NFYT, FutureProof, Pages of the Sea)</p>	

	<p>Enhanced Environment through Social, Cultural and Economic Activities</p>
<p><i>Supporting sustainable communities by improved infrastructure, best use of facilities, promoting the area, maximising the impact of events.</i></p> <p>250+ performances in Ayr & villages</p> <p>1,000+ young people engaged in cultural activities</p> <p>Tamfest and other events</p> <p>UWS/Ayrshire College/Schools technical education project</p> <p>Heritage project</p> <p>200+ volunteers engaged in cultural activity</p>	