

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

KA LEISURE BOARD MINUTES

Meeting	KA Leisure Board Meeting
Date/Venue	25th September 2025 – 10am Irvine Townhouse, 66 High Street, Irvine KA12 0AZ
Present:	<p>Directors</p> <p>Councillor John Sweeney (Chairperson) Councillor Jean McClung Lorraine Tulloch Ross Glover Anne Todd</p> <p>Employees</p> <p>Malcolm McPhail (C.E.O) Laura Barrie (Head of Active Communities) Kirsty Jordan (Head of HR) John McMillan (GM Portal) Scott Morrison (Head of Strategic Planning and Development) Rachel Williams (Head of Projects and Revenue Management) Kyle Lewis (GM Garnock) Stephanie Napier (PA to CEO) Notes</p> <p>NAC</p> <p>David Hammond - Executive Director (Communities and Housing) Rhonda Leith – Head of Service (Connected Communities)</p> <p>Also, In Attendance</p> <p>Councillor Louise McLaughlan Paul Brodie Brian Macdonald Steven Anderson Euan Smith</p>

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

MINUTES

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Jim Montgomerie.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 29th May 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th May were approved.

3. Director Appointments

The Chairperson provided an update on the recent recruitment exercise, which was undertaken following the retirement of several Directors and a governance review recommendation to expand the Board's membership. It was reported that Councillor Louise McLaughlan had been nominated by NAC as the new Community Director.

It was proposed that the following five candidates be appointed as Directors on the Board:

- ▶ Paul Brodie
- ▶ Brian Macdonald
- ▶ Steven Anderson
- ▶ Euan Smith
- ▶ Councillor Louise McLaughlan

The motion was unanimously agreed, and all five candidates were duly appointed as Directors. The Chairperson extended a warm welcome to the new Board members on behalf of KA.

4. Matters Arising/Action Points

The Chairperson worked through the action list, and further discussion was held on the following points:

- **Vice Chairperson Vacancy:**

The Chairperson invited nominations for the vacant position. It was proposed that Ross Glover be appointed, and he confirmed his interest. The Board unanimously approved his appointment as Vice Chairperson.

- **Report Author Identification:**

The previous action to include report authors' names had not yet been implemented. Anne Todd raised concerns regarding accountability, transparency, and good governance, and requested that authors' names be included. Malcolm McPhail explained that communications would be streamlined through Scott Morrison as Board Liaison, with questions directed to a single contact point. While welcoming this approach, Anne reiterated that authors' names should also appear. The Board agreed that all future reports will include the report author.

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

MINUTES (continued)

5. Sub Committee Meetings

The Board discussed membership of the HR and Audit Committees. Following concerns raised surrounding the capacity of the Audit Committee, it was agreed that an additional committee should be formed to focus on delivery of the Board Strategy. A Microsoft Form will be circulated to Directors to identify which committees they wish to join. It was agreed that the HR and Audit Committees should comprise of different Directors, while the Strategy Committee may include Directors who are also members of another committee.

6. Department Reports

Malcolm advised that as documented in the Board papers, most Departmental Reports would be written only with any questions to be directed to the associated managers by email.

Finance Report

Rachel Williams presented the Finance Report, noting a small surplus of just over £7,000 for the first quarter, advising that performance remained consistent up to the end of August and that higher employee costs reflected increased National Insurance contributions, which will be accounted for in future budgets. Kyle Lewis reported improved cost control, attributed to a more proactive approach, and confirmed that the Finance Team continues to meet regularly with General Managers to provide support.

The income loss resulting from the Auchendarvie pool closure was confirmed as approximately £12,500 per month, due in part to significant member loss and retention issues arising from the closure. Malcolm reported that insurance payments had commenced, with an initial payment of £50,000 received, despite the absence of business continuity insurance.

John McMillan reported that the relocated swimming lessons at the Portal would continue alongside the reopening of Auchendarvie pool, supporting growth in participation. Processes for advertising and filling spaces were being refined to reduce waiting times and increase capacity, currently at 90%. A marketing campaign will be launched ahead of Auchendarvie's reopening to attract returning and new members. Councillor

Louise McLaughlan highlighted the importance of providing swimming lessons for children, though financial and transport challenges were noted. John added that, with NAC support, KA Leisure offered free swimming and skating sessions over the summer. In response to concerns raised by the Vice Chairperson regarding the Dolphin Swim Club, John confirmed that Susan Kelly was liaising with the club to identify a solution.

The Board discussed grass pitch management, raising concerns about maintenance, capacity, accessibility, and responsibility. John noted that bookings were being lost due to poor conditions and weather, with Streetscene responsible for many pitches. Malcolm advised that the new grass pitch at the Circuit would soon open for bookings, with plans to make all pitches accessible to children. Scott Morrison reported that Sportscotland would conduct a full facility review within six to nine months. David Hammond and Rhonda Leith expressed concern over ongoing maintenance issues and agreed to raise the matter at an upcoming meeting. The financial impact of using a contractor for Golf in place of a skilled manager and greenkeepers was raised and John confirmed that although there had been difficulty recruiting staff with skills in this area; the contractor being used was not costing the organisation any more than if these staff were in place.

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

MINUTES (continued)

The Board discussed the impact of large events at Auchenhavrie on local ice clubs. Malcolm reported positive feedback from organisers, with strong support from North Ayrshire Council and the local community. The World Federation praised the event and the venue, and Susan arranged for local clubs to play on the world-class ice, which was well received. Rhonda noted that Auchenhavrie Rink is widely recognised for having the best ice quality in the UK.

Lorraine Tulloch commended the financial progress achieved despite the challenging operating environment but expressed concern regarding future financial sustainability, noting that many cost-saving measures had already been implemented and that further reductions may prove difficult. Malcolm confirmed that NAC has been hugely supportive and that, while the reduction in the management fee has been discussed, it will remain subject to further review depending on KA Leisure's performance over the first 12 months of the reduction. He reiterated that NAC continues to support KA Leisure, with monthly finance meetings in place to maintain ongoing collaboration.

David commended KA Leisure for its year-to-date financial performance, achieved despite a challenging context that included a £600,000 reduction in management fees and income losses from the recent pool closure. He noted that this performance merits recognition and appreciation from NAC.

KPI Performance

Laura provided a background and summary of the KPI performance work to date, initially created for Directors with a series of high-level indicators providing concise and timely metrics to allow the Board to analyse the organisation's performance. Scott confirmed that the data would be updated by the 20th of each month. Anne suggested a summary report of the KPIs is included in future Board papers to improve clarity and accessibility of information. It was agreed that although the information is all there, the presentation and how

this is shared requires to be amended. The Board agreed a report capturing all 20 KPIs and their statuses, with particular focus on those marked red or amber was required. It was also highlighted the requirement for improved narrative balance in the reports to provide greater context to the KPIs. It was agreed that the team will create a consolidated KPI summary report bringing together the Progress on Target reports into a single document for the Board.

Scott Morrison discussed the new Director Portal; a central platform providing Directors with streamlined access to key documents, governance resources and current performance over-view alongside upcoming meeting dates. Scott confirmed that all policies will be uploaded into the centralised portal for ease of access. The Board noted the importance of reviewing existing documents to confirm legislative compliance and ongoing relevance. Scott reported a workshop will be organised to train staff on navigation around the new KPI framework.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

Following a discussion on insurance, there was a clear uncertainty regarding the existence of director liability insurance or whether this would be present within the public liability. Kirsty Jordan agreed to investigate and feedback to the Board.

Laura detailed that the Health and Wellbeing group would be meeting to compile an action plan of next steps.

Leisure Report

The Chairperson asked for assurance that risk assessments were carried out ahead of the expansion of celebration and birthday activities considering the increased risk with regular use of inflatables. Scott assured the Board that adhering to Health and safety requirements was at the forefront of all new activities. The Chairperson recognised the NAC funding for the free swim, ice and ASN specific sessions that were provided over the summer period.

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

MINUTES (continued)

A discussion was held on steps being taken for loss of members. Scott detailed that managers would be engaging with the sales team to gather further insight on member cancellations, ensuring this feedback informs ongoing work which would primarily be focussing on retention. The Chairperson noted that social isolation was currently a big issue, and Scott confirmed the new KeepMe platform would go some way to reaching out to members who had not been regularly attending, sending reminders and prompts encouraging them back to the centres.

Community Sport Report

The Chairperson highlighted his interest in the targeted intervention work and thanked the team for their efforts. David offered to share details with KA Leisure about the ACES group, who are planning locally focused intervention work on knife crime, to explore whether KA Leisure would be interested in a potential collaboration.

Health and Wellbeing Service Report

The Chairperson thanked the team for recent events where the Activator was utilised. The presentation of figures within the Board report was discussed and it was agreed that activator and community attendances should be separated for the purpose of reporting.

People Report

Kirsty reported that the health and well-being survey was completed at the start of the year, and the Health, Safety and Well-being Group, reinstated in May, will review the results at their meeting next week. They will also consider data from the Eeda platform, which has now been in place for six months and provides daily employee feedback. Encouragingly, the findings from both the survey and Eeda are consistent. The group will use this insight to develop an action plan for the way forward.

John updated the Board on progress to date with the Head office relocation, highlighting that work had commenced at the Circuit to separate the buildings and preparations were underway to clear out the current offices. Works were due to start at the Townhouse, and the next stage would be to organise the technical side before furniture was relocated.

The Board noted performance across all business areas.

7. 25/26 Performance Strategy Update

Scott reported that the Performance Strategy, launched in June, has been well received internally and with partners. Teams will continue to progress the initial work threads through to the end of October, after which targets will be realigned over the following three months.

Scott discussed the board strategy with the actions identified in the O'Donnell's report, with

an emphasis on the importance of monitoring and recording progress on an ongoing basis. Scott highlighted the three epics chosen as priorities for the strategy and will engage with the board through the creation of a Board Strategy Committee, to further shape the action plan.

The Board noted performance across the business area.

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

MINUTES (continued)

8. Wellbeing Alliance Update

Laura provided a summary of the background of the Alliance for all the new Directors confirming there would be a more formal detailed session as part of the Director Inductions. Laura provided a handout and discussed the series of engagement events and family fun days, highlighting the work of the pilot program in the Kilwinning area, which currently involves 430 households and has engaged 28 partner organisations in a range of activities. Laura reported the partnership group will reconvene shortly to plan the second phase of the program. Councillor Jean McClung thanked the team for their collaborative efforts in this area.

David discussed progress on whole-system, person-centred approaches being developed through the Wellbeing Alliance, which brings together public sector and community planning partners. This approach has been praised for meeting people at their point of need but was noted to be resource-intensive, raising questions about how pilot projects and tested change can be scaled. The work also connects to the national Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland programme, with North Ayrshire designated

as a Marmot place. The Wellbeing Alliance provides a delivery vehicle for Marmot principles, demonstrated through practical initiatives such as the Garnock pilot and Kilwinning activities, which have shown positive, diversionary outcomes.

A key challenge identified is how to capture and report progress in a way that links broad wellbeing goals to measurable impacts, such as improvements in health and life expectancy. To address this, work is underway to align with a Wellbeing Dashboard being developed through the Wellbeing Assurance Oversight Board, creating a shared framework for data collection and reporting across partners.

Malcolm discussed the urgent issue of childhood poverty in North Ayrshire, detailing that a higher proportion of children are affected, than families or individuals. Building on lessons from recent pilots, the Alliance will pivot its focus toward child poverty, targeting resources more precisely to address this systemic challenge while continuing efforts to secure support and seed funding.

KA LEISURE BOARD REPORT

MINUTES (continued)

9. AOB

Scott reported progress on the annual report that is in its final stages for submission to Cabinet in late October. The report will be based on unaudited accounts, with the final audited version to follow as soon as the audit is complete. A draft version, including the narrative section, will be shared with directors next week for feedback. The presentation is also being finalised, with an updated version expected to be circulated shortly. It was confirmed that the annual report will be retrospective only, focusing on the previous year's results.

Scott agreed to send a calendar of dates over to all Directors for site visits, and data sessions as part of the Director Inductions. It was agreed that the full Board should be given the opportunity to attend; The Chairperson confirmed he would like to attend to get better acquainted with the new Directors.

The Chairperson raised ongoing concerns around the PMI system and how high-priority repairs are managed. An example was raised of delays in repairs at Ravenspark Golf Club, where the slow response to a roof issue risked jeopardising events. David noted that budgetary pressures

remain a challenge, but expectations must still be managed more effectively. Communication gaps between PMI and service teams were highlighted, with a need for greater clarity on how prioritisation is determined. A meeting has been scheduled with an NAC Head of Service and PMI, to explore improvements in understanding and process. Malcolm will attend and will bring along John McMillan and Mark Pilkington who will contribute operational examples to ensure the impact of delays is fully understood. The meeting aim is to strengthen communication, align priorities, and ensure that genuinely urgent repairs are escalated appropriately.

Malcolm again welcomed the new Directors and highlighted the breadth of the organisation's work, spanning commercial and membership aspects through to community impact, including support for young people in poverty. Malcolm noted the ongoing shared commitment of everyone involved to leave North Ayrshire in a stronger position and create a lasting legacy. The Chairperson thanked David and Rhonda at NAC for their support and KA staff for their dedication and always making themselves available.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 27th November 2025.