Programme Resourcing Update
September 2026

WE MAKE KILMARNOCK

Purpose

This paper sets out a proposed direction of travel for the future leadership and resourcing of We Make Kilmarnock and seeks the Board's views before more detailed arrangements are developed.

Context

In May, the Board approved a temporary resourcing model designed to provide We Make Kilmarnock with a flexible and delivery-focused team during the programme's early phase.

That approach was deliberately time limited and recognised that the longer-term staffing model would need to evolve as the programme matured, delivery activity increased and the requirements of the next phase became clearer. A plan was put in place for that transition.

However, the current Programme Manager has now indicated an intention to step down, creating an appropriate point at which to begin that transition sooner in a planned way.

The aim is to maintain continuity of delivery while progressively establishing a more sustainable staffing structure for the programme.

Proposed Direction of Travel

It is proposed that the transition takes place over approximately the next 12–15 months:

- **Programme leadership:** In the immediate period after handover, programme leadership and coordination would be provided from within the Development Planning & Regeneration team (Karen Purves' team) at East Ayrshire Council, with appropriate handover support from the current Programme Manager.
- **Programme Manager:** East Ayrshire Council will recruit a dedicated Programme Manager for We Make Kilmarnock, with processes starting now if agreed, and with the intention of having someone in place as soon as possible, but likely in early 2027. Although formally employed by the Council, the role would be dedicated to We Make Kilmarnock and work to the priorities and direction established by the Neighbourhood Board. A job specification and job evaluation will be progressed, aligning with the role specification set out as part of the previous paper.
- **Continuity of delivery:** Alan Foster and Martin McManus would continue in their existing Project Delivery and Community & Business Engagement roles during this period, ensuring continuity while the Programme Manager is recruited and becomes established.
- **Future delivery capacity:** A further delivery role would then be recruited around mid-2027. This would allow a planned crossover and handover with the existing delivery team, with the expectation that the current temporary arrangements would conclude towards the end of 2027.

This phased approach is intended to avoid unnecessary disruption, retain knowledge and relationships, and allow the future team to be built progressively around the needs of the programme.

Maintaining Community Leadership

A central principle in developing the future model is that We Make Kilmarnock must remain community led.

East Ayrshire Council will continue to play an important role as accountable body, employer and provider of professional and technical support. However, the intention is not for We Make Kilmarnock to become an internally directed Council programme.

The Neighbourhood Board should continue to set the strategic direction and priorities for the programme, consistent with the community-led approach expected through the UK Government's Plan for Neighbourhoods.

The proposed timetable also allows for the appointment of a new Neighbourhood Board Chair before recruitment of the Programme Manager is concluded. This would enable the new Chair to play a meaningful role in shaping the post and participating in the recruitment process.

Board View

The Board is asked to:

- agree the proposed direction of travel;
- agree to support the phased transition outlined above;
- confirm that maintaining clear community leadership should be a central principle in developing the future staffing model; and
- agree that more detailed proposals for the Programme Manager role, recruitment arrangements and future delivery structure are developed on this basis.