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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

20 February 2024

### Cabinet

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**Title:** **Scottish Maritime Museum Trust – Memorandum of Understanding**

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**Purpose:** This report seeks approval to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Scottish Maritime Museum Trust, to develop the Maritime Heritage Hub project at Irvine harbourside as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal funded Great Harbour programme.

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**Recommendation:** That Cabinet approves the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between North Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Maritime Museum Trust to facilitate collaboration between parties to develop the Maritime Heritage Hub project as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal funded Great Harbour programme.

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Great Harbour programme is a key project for the Ayrshire Growth Deal in terms of its Tourism Programme, with planned investment of £14m, subject to business case approval. The programme aims to stimulate investment in the Irvine harbourside area through the Ayrshire Growth Deal, including improving facilities around the harbourside and promoting the area as a regionally significant destination that will benefit local communities and businesses.
- 1.2 The overall Masterplan for the Great Harbour area was approved at Cabinet on 5 December 2023, subject to approval of Planning Committee and sets out how the investment will be targeted along the Maritime Mile from Irvine Railway Station to the Beach Park. This focusses on three key areas and phases – the Coastal Hub (around the Beach Park) as Phase 1, the Marine & Arts Hub and Public Realm (around the Harbour Arts Centre) as Phase 2 and the Maritime Heritage Hub (around the Puffers Café) as Phase 3.
- 1.3 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will help to establish a collaboration between NAC and the Scottish Maritime Museum Trust, for the development and delivery of the Maritime Heritage Hub as Phase 3.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Scottish Maritime Museum (SMM) was founded in 1983 and operates from two sites in Scotland at Irvine and Dumbarton, with the aim of promoting Scotland's

maritime heritage. It is part of a network of 15 industrial museums in Scotland and is a major heritage asset within the Great Harbour project area and an important tourism attraction, holding a nationally recognised collection of historic vessels, artefacts, art, and Scotland's largest collection of shipbuilding tools and machinery.

- 2.2 The SMM has an established presence within the local community as a key institution and as custodian, interpreter, educator, provider of volunteering opportunities and supporter of community engagement. The SMM also holds a number of events within the local events calendar. With a growth aspiration expressed in their Strategic Business Plan for 2022-27, the SMM is recognised as an anchor partner for the Great Harbour project, to help achieve the ambitions of the Masterplan and to deliver Community Wealth Building benefits as part of the project.
- 2.3 Whilst the main SMM building is the "A" listed Linthouse located off Harbour Road and Linthouse Vennel, the SMM also operates the Puffers Café and Gift Shop on Harbour Street and adjacent to the River Irvine, where there is an opportunity to create a focal point and to enhance and expand visitor and tourist facilities along the main tourist route of the Maritime Mile, increasing dwell time and opportunities for visitor spend.
- 2.4 Subject to legal and funding requirements, proposals could potentially include an extension to the Puffers Cafe building to host a new gallery for the Museum's maritime artwork, exhibition and education space, and additional outdoor event and public space to the front of the building adjacent to Harbour Street. This would extend the visitor attraction to wider and new audiences and provide more facilities for education and community activity, alongside public amenities and tourist information and increase employment opportunities. The project will also explore improvements to the existing café including extending the provision into the evening, supporting the local evening economy and activity in the area. The Maritime Heritage Hub will be developed as the last phase of the Great Harbour programme, which is anticipated to be on site in mid-2027.
- 2.5 The project has been developed to a concept stage and, in order to realise the full collective ambition of the partners, SMM are working to raise additional funding to increase the scale of offer from the SMM at the Puffers Café area. The MoU provides a basis for collaboration to allow SMM to identify fundraising opportunities to match planned AGD investment and thereafter develop a joint business case, setting out delivery arrangements, given that some aspects of the project will likely be delivered by the SMM. Therefore, the MoU is required to provide the basis for collaboration on the Maritime Heritage Hub project and to enable the parties to work together in developing and realising the aims of the project, and establishing its specific remit, content, total funding package, operational viability and management and overall project governance.
- 2.6 The MOU has a 12-month term, which can be extended by mutual agreement. The aims of the MoU are to:
  - provide a basis for the Council and SMM to collaborate on the project;
  - help deliver the AGD vision for the Maritime Mile, contributing to the establishment of the wider Great Harbour destination;

- enable the Council and SMM to work together in developing and realising the aims of the project and establishing its specific remit, content, funding (particularly to enable SMM to identify external funding sources to support the expansion of the SMM offer at Puffers Café), operational management and governance.

2.7 The Council and SMM have provisionally agreed to have regard to the following areas of opportunity as part of the MoU:

- Works to open up the waterfront as part of the Puffers Café compound;
- Creating a new visitor attraction to display the artworks owned by the SMM;
- Showcasing the vessels owned by the SMM in a waterfront setting; and
- Providing new berthing facilities and upgrading existing slipways

### **3. Proposals**

3.1 That Cabinet approves the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Scottish Maritime Museum Trust, to facilitate collaboration between the parties to develop the Maritime Heritage Hub as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal funded Great Harbour programme.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty,**

#### **Financial**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed MoU. The Maritime Heritage Hub project is currently estimated at around £9m with £5.6m for the proposed building extension to create the gallery space and café upgrade, which includes proposed Ayrshire Growth Deal funding as well as partner investment for the enabling external, works including surrounding public realm and events space from the AGD. The MoU will provide the SMM a window of opportunity to fund raise to develop and deliver the gallery project to complement planned Ayrshire Growth Deal investment.

#### **Human Resources**

4.2 The progress of the MoU will be monitored and supported within the Growth and Investment Team by the Great Harbour Project Lead.

#### **Legal**

4.3 The MoU has been developed and discussed with the SMM, in line with the terms set out in this report and in conjunction with Legal Services. The parties will ensure that any action ultimately agreed upon through their collaboration is compliant with all applicable law, including (but not limited to) subsidy control and procurement rules, and in which respect the parties shall respectively take their own legal advice as required. The MOU is being considered by the SMM Board for approval on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024.

## **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 There are no impacts arising from the MoU. Any emerging proposals developed from the MoU will be subject to future approvals and further considerations would be given at that time to equalities and / or social economic implications.

## **Climate Change and Carbon**

- 4.5 None.

## **Key Priorities**

- 4.6 The wider Great Harbour programme which this MoU is part of, reflects the Council priorities contained in the new Council Plan 2023 to 2028 of wellbeing, communities and local democracy, climate change and a sustainable Council.

## **Community Wealth Building**

- 4.7 Collaboration with the Scottish Maritime Museum, which is an anchor institution located within the Great Harbour area, reflects the Council's community wealth building approach. The museum has already a strong presence in the area, including its work and support of the local community groups and is well placed to work with NAC to tackle challenges and inequalities within the local community.
- 4.8 The informal engagement with the SMM is already supporting CWB, including collaboration on organising local events and, most recently, the appointment of the local area resident as a Community Engagement Officer to aid the fundraising process and support community events.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The Maritime Heritage Hub proposals were consulted publicly as part of the draft Great Harbour Masterplan consultation during March and April 2023, with overall wide support for the proposals. A final draft was endorsed by the Cabinet on the 5 December 2023, for submission to Planning Committee in February 2024.
- 5.2 Crown Estate Scotland own land within the Maritime Heritage Hub project area and have been consulted as part of the development of the MoU and are supportive of the project progressing.
- 5.3 Further development of the proposals will be subject to wide stakeholder engagement and public consultation.

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For further information please contact Neale Mcilvanney, Interim Head of Service, Growth, Investment and Employability, on [nealemcilvanney@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:nealemcilvanney@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

## **Background Papers**

None