

Mike Newall, Chief Executive
South Ayrshire Council
County Buildings
Wellington Square
Ayr, KA7 1DR

By email to: mike.newall@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

24th November 2023

Dear Mr Newall,

Future of Ayr Station Hotel

I write on behalf of MSPs for Scotland South and West regions to outline our concerns regarding the future safety and preservation of Ayr Station Hotel.

On 15th November, a roundtable was convened at the Scottish Parliament where we heard from a variety of groups who are unified in wishing to see the building made safe and for all options for retaining the historic Ayr Station Hotel for the benefit of the town to be openly and carefully considered while enabling the road and railway to be urgently reopened.

We noted the view of a leading building conservation engineer who carried out a detailed inspection just before the fire and has visited since. His professional opinion is that the building can be stabilised without substantial demolition, a view supported by 20 Scottish architects and conservationists in a letter to The Times.

We support these aspirations and agree that the possible loss of Ayr Station Hotel would be a huge blow for Ayr's and Scotland's heritage. We resolved to seek Government intervention to assist the Council with achieving an outcome which benefits the people of Ayr and the heritage of the town.

The key message of the meeting was the need for proactive and transparent action that considers all outcomes for the Station Hotel while securing public safety. We therefore call on the Council to respond positively and pro-actively and:

1. Stabilise the building immediately, and allow the re-opening of the road and station, avoiding major demolition.
2. Publish and immediately make public all assessment reports and drone footage of the building's condition;
3. Communicate and publish the intended strategy for ongoing works;
4. Carefully consider all possible options for the retention and re-use of Ayr Station Hotel as a landmark for the town, avoiding hasty decisions on demolition. Publish these alternatives, working with partners to establish funding and development partner options.

It was stated at the roundtable that three hotel operators have expressed an interest in taking on the building alongside a local development partner and that this has been communicated with the Chief Executive. We request details of this initiative and the Council's response.

Signed by:

Siobhian Brown, MSP

Katy Clark, MSP

Emma Harper, MSP

Carol Mochan, MSP

Colin Smyth, MSP

Martin Whitfield, MSP