



**North Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 14 February 2024

Responses to Questions



## Question

- (1) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

“Every three years or so, schools in Scotland participate in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which objectively measures the performance of 15-year-olds in several subjects.

The mathematics results for Scotland over the last 20 years show a declining performance, particularly after 2012, when Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was introduced.

The PISA scores for Mathematics were:

Year	Score
2003	525,
2006	507
2009	499
2012	497
2015	491
2018	489
2022	471

For each of these years what was the recorded achievement for NAC pupils in mathematics (failing which, numeracy)?”

## Response

“The PISA survey is undertaken by a sample of learners across the country who are 15 years old. We do not have access to PISA results at local authority level. PISA data is only ever published at national level.

The closest equivalent we have is how our S4 pupils have performed in numeracy. The Numeracy measure, as calculated by the national benchmarking tool, Insight, includes the standalone numeracy qualification as well as mathematics qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 and level 5.

It should be noted that new qualifications were introduced across Scotland during this time frame (Standard Grades and Intermediate 1 & 2 qualifications have been replaced with new National 4 & 5 qualifications).

From the North Ayrshire data available with some degree of comparability, we can provide the following results:

Year	% of S4 pupils attaining SCQF level 4 or above in Numeracy	% of S4 pupils attaining SCQF level 5 or above in Numeracy
2012	70.8%	26.6%
2015	84.6%	51.3%
2018	84.2%	56.2%
2022	86.2%	60.0%

Source: *Insight Analytical dataset for several years*”

## Question

- (2) a question by Councillor Donald Reid to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:

"Justice Social Work Services is a service funded by the Scottish Government directly and overseen on their behalf locally by North Ayrshire HSCP.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm the total budget allocated to provide this service over the current financial year and the previous two years?

In line with the uplifts to cover wage increases seen elsewhere in council services, what was the uplift for these three years for justice social work services in North Ayrshire?"

## Response

"North Ayrshire Justice Services, these being our Locality Teams, Court-based Social Work Team and our Unpaid Work Team, are wholly funded from Section 27 of the Justice Social Work Funding Grant Allocation.

The total Section 27 funding for North Ayrshire Justice Services over the last 3 years is as follows:

2021-2022 - £3,468,948

2022-2023 - £3,540,184

2023-2024 - £3,540,184

There was a 2% increase in funding from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023, but no increase thereafter. Pay uplifts must be covered within the ringfenced funding grant received."

## Question

- (3) a question by Councillor T. Ferguson to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"To ask the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education whether he is planning on removing controversial questions relating to sexual relationships from the 2024/25 Health and Wellbeing census for schools?"

## Response

"North Ayrshire Council is not planning to participate in the national Health and Wellbeing census from 2024-25. Instead, we will use a multiple-choice survey which will be created locally to capture a snapshot of various aspects of health and wellbeing, which will then be used holistically to identify focused areas of improvement work for the education service and schools. Consequently, there will be no unique identifiers in the survey, ensuring individual respondents retain anonymity. The survey will not contain any controversial questions relating to sexual relationships."

## Question

(4) a question by Councillor Kerr to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“With Peel Ports announcing the permanent closure of the Irish berth, and the Cabinet Secretary for the islands stating that the new ferries may never sail from Ardrossan, does the Council Leader retain her faith that Humza Yousaf will protect the Ardrossan to Arran ferry service by delivering the necessary upgrades to Ardrossan Harbour, which he promised seven years ago as Transport Minister?”

## Response

The Leader will respond.

## Question

(5) a question by Councillor T. Ferguson to the Leader of the Council, in the following terms:

“To ask the Leader of the Council what plans have been made for Euro24 in North Ayrshire?”

## Response

“North Ayrshire welcomes the success of our men’s national football team in qualifying for the Euro 24 tournament and wishes them every success. Officers are engaging with the SFA regarding any support that they can provide to help ensure maximum benefit from the tournament, including encouraging the uptake of physical activity across as many sections of our communities as possible. Our colleagues at KA Leisure also are planning a range of events to mark the occasion.

Current plans include eight weeks of Euro-themed sessions in all football and mini-kickers classes; rebranding of the football festivals offered by KA Leisure and our Active Schools team to offer a themed event to all schools, with the finals being held just before the tournament starts; themed football memories sessions across North Ayrshire; a Walking Football festival at the Circuit; summer holiday football camps and a Street Soccer tournament for young people ages 12 – 18.

The Active Schools team will use their social media channels to encourage young people to support the national team, and promote the opportunities to get involved in local boys and girls clubs.

KA will offer dedicated “fanzone” promoted areas within the Portal and Vikingar! which will show the games live.”

## Question

- (6) a question by Councillor Cullinane to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

“It has been reported in the media that the Cabinet Secretary for Education has written to a number of Councils where teacher numbers had fallen, threatening to financially penalise those Councils by withholding funding.

Can the Cabinet Member tell us whether North Ayrshire Council is one of the Councils the Cabinet Secretary has written to? If so, how many teaching posts did the Cabinet Secretary raise concerns about? And, what would the potential financial penalty be?”

## Response

“Correspondence was received from Scottish Government requesting further information on the reduction of twelve teaching posts. A response was issued explaining that this directly linked to a reduction in funding received through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Subsequent to this, correspondence has been received from the Cabinet Secretary to COSLA advising that no Council will have funding withheld within the current year in respect of teacher numbers.

In respect of the forthcoming financial year, the Cabinet Secretary has asked to meet with Councils to discuss individual circumstances and agree grant conditions in respect of teacher numbers. From a North Ayrshire Council perspective, the individual circumstances include the reduction in Scottish Attainment Challenge funding and a falling pupil roll demographic.”

## Question

- (7) a question by Councillor T Ferguson to the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and the Economy in the following terms:

“To ask the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for the Environment how much it will cost to make North Ayrshire Council buildings environmentally friendly?”

## Response

“The latest Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy (SNA) approved in December 2023, contains an action to implement decarbonisation measures across our building estate as identified through the Green Growth Accelerator report. This report has already been commissioned, and will include scenario planning and costed pathways to net zero for our non-domestic buildings for implementation, subject to funding availability. The report will take cognisance of the recently published proposals for a new Heat in Buildings Bill, which includes provision for zero direct emissions from public sector buildings by 2038. The report is due for completion during spring 2024.

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In terms of the Council's housing stock, a new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) was recently published for consultation and proposes a fabric efficiency rating and a requirement to replace polluting heating systems with clean heating alternatives by 2045. At present, the full costs of meeting the proposed new SHNZS cannot be quantified as the technical requirements of the standard are not yet confirmed. Cabinet will consider a proposed response to the SHNZS consultation next week. Officers are also developing a pilot project to help inform the likely cost and technical requirements of meeting the new standard for implementation later this year."

### **Question**

(8) a question by Councillor Montgomerie to the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and the Economy in the following terms:

"In 2021 North Ayrshire Council's improving recycling performance saw the Council become the second highest performing Council for recycling in Scotland. A press statement in the Cabinet Member's name was issued celebrating this achievement, achieved under the last Labour administration.

As far as I am aware, no press statement has been issued on SEPA's 2022 recycling report, can the Cabinet Member therefore advise us whether the Council's recycling performance went up or down in 2022?"

### **Response**

"SEPA's household waste recycling data for the calendar year 2022 was published slightly later than normal in October 2023.

The Household Waste Recycling Performance for the calendar year 2022 was 55.3%, a slight reduction of 1% compared 56.3% in 2021.

The Council is currently in 4th place for household waste recycling based on the 2022 calendar year figures."

### **Question**

(9) a question by Councillor T. Ferguson to the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and the Economy in the following terms:

"To ask the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for the Environment to provide an update on North Ayrshire's tree planting commitment?"

### **Response**

"North Ayrshire Council's woodland tree planting programme aims to plant 108,000 trees to contribute towards our net zero ambition by 2030.

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35,627 trees have been planted to date across North Ayrshire through various projects and through working with a range of community partners and organisations.

This included over 17,600 trees being planted at Lochshore Park, and plans are currently being evaluated for further large-scale planting at Montgomerie Park in Irvine which, if viable, may result in a further 15,000 to 23,000 trees being planted. The Streetscene Service also continues to identify other potential areas of open space for consideration for tree planting.

As part of the tree planting initiative, a Community Woodland Grant Fund was established, and to date this has helped community groups plant just under 2,500 trees, with new projects approved to plant a further 3,344 trees by 31st March 2024. This also includes support for planting trees within community orchards.

Tree planting can only take place during the winter tree planting season, which runs from November to March each year.”

### Question

(10) a question by Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Finance in the following terms:

“The Scottish Government have approved an 8.8% increase in water charges for 2024/25.

As the Cabinet Member knows, water charges are collected by the Council as part of the Council Tax collection. Can the Cabinet Member advise us how much water charges will increase across all Council Tax bands in North Ayrshire?”

### Response

“The table included in this response provides details of the anticipated water and waste-water charges across each Council tax Band

Band	2023/24	2024/25	Increase
A	334.86	364.26	29.40
B	390.67	424.97	34.30
C	446.48	485.68	39.20
D	502.29	546.39	44.10
E	613.91	667.81	53.90
F	725.53	789.23	63.70
G	837.15	910.65	73.50
H	1,004.58	1092.78	88.20”

## Question

- (11) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“What is the policy of the Council in relation to Members’ retention of electronic communications such as emails, WhatsApp, etc on Council provided devices?”

## Response

“The policy relating to the retention of electronic communications in North Ayrshire Council is covered predominantly by the Information Management in Email policy) which defines the default retention period at 6 years + current year from date of receipt but is subject to our records management retention schedule. Where electronic communications are required for the purposes of legal proceedings or prospective legal proceedings outwith the set retention period, a legal hold can be placed indefinitely on this information.

The Council policy only applies to data which is created whilst Elected Members are acting within their Council capacity.

In terms of WhatsApp, etc there is currently no specific Council policy on the usage of such, but Members should adhere to the Acceptable Computer Use Policy when using a Council managed device.”

## Question

- (12) a question by Councillor McLean to the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and the Economy in the following terms:

“Can you please outline whether or not the following offences are dealt with by NAC under DPE provisions, and what, if any responsibilities are still retained by the police:

- A) Blocking a vehicle in a driveway
- B) Blocking access outside a driveway
- C) Double Parking
- D) On Grass parking
- E) On Kerb Parking
- F) Parking on a narrow street prohibiting access/flow of traffic”

## Response

“Decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) enables NAC enforcement officers to administer parking penalties to ensure compliance with parking controls. Stationary traffic offences cease to be criminal offences enforced by the police and instead become civil penalties enforced by the local authority eg waiting, loading or parking restrictions. The police remain responsible for all ‘moving’ traffic offences, matters of obstruction and some temporary waiting restrictions.

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The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (commonly referred to as The Pavement Parking Ban) includes a ban on pavement parking, double parking and parking at dropped kerbs, and provides local authorities the relevant powers to enforce these new provisions. Parking at dropped kerbs is in relation to pedestrian crossing points only, the legislation does not include parking at dropped driveway accesses.

The secondary legislation to enable enforcement by local authorities came into force in December 2023.

Cabinet will receive a paper for consideration in March 2024, outlining the provisions of the new legislation with proposals for consideration of enforcement by officers authorised to carry out DPE enforcement.

Clarification on each of the scenarios raised is as follows:

**a) Blocking a vehicle in a driveway**

Blocking a vehicle in a driveway, preventing someone from 'actively' leaving that driveway and the offending driver is not present, remains the responsibility of Police Scotland.

**B) Blocking access outside a driveway**

Blocking access outside a driveway is generally not deemed to be an obstruction, however, action would be at the discretion of the Police.

**C) Double Parking**

Enforceable by local authority enforcement officers under the powers provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

**D) On Grass parking**

Parking on grass verges is enforceable by local authority enforcement officers under the powers provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 but only where there is a footpath to the rear of the grass verge and, as such, the verge forms part of the adopted road. Parking on grass verges in rural areas or where there is no footway to the rear of the verge cannot be enforced by local authority enforcement officers. Action would be at the discretion of the Police if deemed to be causing an obstruction to road users.

**E) On Kerb Parking**

Enforceable by local authority enforcement officers under the powers provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

**F) Parking on a narrow street prohibiting access/flow of traffic**

Parking on a narrow street prohibiting access/flow of traffic remains the responsibility of Police Scotland. Should parking on a narrow street result in access difficulties the Council in liaison with Police Scotland will consider mitigation measures to control parking behaviour, e.g. double yellow lines.

A vehicle causing an obstruction is one which has been parked and left unattended in such a way that it is considered to be a hazard to other road users. For example, a vehicle may have been parked on a bend on the carriageway, or at a junction, creating a safety hazard to other road users."

## Question

(13) a question by Councillor McLean to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“Are you aware DFM Shona Robison has written to the UK government regarding money being given to Irvine and Kilmarnock for Town Centre Redevelopment, saying that the money should not be coming to councils but should be passed to Holyrood for distribution - and do you agree with her complaints?”

## Response

The Leader will respond.