



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

North Ayrshire Council

A Meeting of North Ayrshire Council will be held in the **Council Chambers, Ground Floor, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE** on **Wednesday, 27 March 2024** at **14:00** to consider the undernoted business.

Meeting Arrangements - Hybrid Meetings

This meeting will be held on a predominantly physical basis but with provision, by prior notification, for remote attendance by Elected Members in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003. Where possible, the meeting will be live-streamed and available to view at <https://north-ayrshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to give notice of any declarations of interest in respect of items of business on the Agenda.

3 Previous Minutes

The accuracy of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 February 2024 and the Special Meeting held on 28 February 2024 will be confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (copies enclosed).

4 Provost's Report

Submit report by the Provost for the period covering 5 February 2024 - 17 March 2024 (copy enclosed).

5 Leader's Report

Submit report by the Leader of the Council for the period covering 5 February 2024 - 17 March 2024 (copy enclosed).

6 Minute Volume (issued under separate cover)
Submit, for noting and for approval of any recommendations contained therein, the Minutes of Meeting of committees of the Council held in the period 20 November 2023 - 29 February 2024 (copy enclosed).

7 Appointment to Committee
The Council is invited to consider a nomination, duly proposed and seconded, for Councillor S. Ferguson to be appointed to serve as Vice Chair of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee.

8 North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Ltd
Submit report by the Head of Service (Democratic) to appoint a new director to the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Ltd (copy enclosed).

9 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
Submit report by the Head of Democratic Services on the outcome of the statutory review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (copy enclosed).

10 Working Group on Local Representation
Submit report by the Executive Director (Education and Communities) on the findings and recommendations of a short-life Working Group (copy enclosed).

11 Questions
In terms of Standing Order 14, submit:-

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

“The total number of Aggression and Violence incidents reported by Communities and Education Directorate for Quarter 3 increased from 270 in 2020 to 410 in 2021 and from 394 in 2022 to 563 in 2023 an increase of over 100% in 4 years.

Why the huge increase and what is being done to protect staff?”

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

“Has the Leader of the Council met the Transport Minister since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, to discuss the Ardrossan Harbour project, and if so to ask for an update?”

(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 how many primary and secondary schools in North Ayrshire have defibrillators?”

(4) a question by Councillor McPhater to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:

“What is the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care’s response to the latest drug death figures?”

(5) a question by Councillor Stephen to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

“What provision does North Ayrshire Council have for children moving up to secondary school who require additional support for their education?”

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

“To the Cabinet Member what effect does he believe the continued or expanded use of fossil fuels will have on the environment, considering NAC’s climate emergency declaration?”

(7) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Finance, in the following terms:

“Kelio swipe card access is installed at both Bridgegate and Cunninghame House and generate a database of attendance by individual staff.

How many staff have attended each of these offices?

1. One day a week
2. Two days a week
3. Three or more days a week

What is the maximum possible daily attendance for each of these locations?”

(8) a question by Councillor McLean to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Housing and the Islands in the following terms:

“To ask the Cabinet Member what provisions have been made to increase capacity within the housing department and specifically the team that deals with tenant disputes and anti-social behaviour?”

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

“To ask the Cabinet portfolio holder for Education if he believes digital inclusion for primary and secondary pupils is important?”

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

“Is North Ayrshire Council (including any specific departments or services, e.g. libraries etc.) in the process of, or considering becoming, a ‘Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Centre’? And if so, what risks does that open up the local authority to?”

(11) a question by Councillor T. Ferguson to the Cabinet Member for Finance in the following terms:

“To ask the Cabinet portfolio holder what the current civil contingency policy is for dealing with potential fires at battery energy storage systems (BESS)?”

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

“There is a Phase 1 proposal to spend some £1.5 m to reduce the width of the North Promenade in Largs by 50% to incorporate a cycle track. 80% of the Ward 1 Members are opposed to this.

There is also an ongoing consultation in relation to public toilet provision in Largs which may result in the closure of 80% of the toilets. 80% of the Ward 1 Members are opposed to this.

Will the views of local Elected Members prevail?”

12 Motions

In terms of Standing Order 15, submit:-

(1) a motion by Councillor T. Ferguson, seconded by Councillor Billings, in the following terms:

“That the Council:

1. welcomes the news from the UK government Spring Budget announcement that there will be an additional £48.5million in funding for local authorities in Scotland via the Barnett consequentials;
2. further notes that the Deputy First Minister of Scotland has said that this funding will only be passed onto those local authorities who agreed to freeze council tax in their 2024/25 budget proposals; and
3. asks that once the additional funding allocation has been announced for North Ayrshire, it is brought back to full council so that all 33 Councillors can have an input into where best to spend this additional money.”

(2) a motion by Councillor T. Ferguson, seconded by Councillor Marshall, in the following terms:

“That the Council:

1. notes, that North Ayrshire Council recognises the long, proud, and safe delivery of low-carbon nuclear energy at Hunterston A and B stations;
2. further notes, that the UK government recently announced the largest expansion in nuclear power in 70 years with a focus being on the delivery of Small Modular Reactors;
3. understands, that North Ayrshire Council have declared a climate emergency and is actively developing policy towards delivering net-zero;
4. finally, asks that the Chief Executive Officer write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Minister for Nuclear asking them to consider Hunterston and Ardeer as future sites for emerging SMR development here in the UK; thereby protecting our excellent nuclear workforce and providing vital employment for generations to come.”

(3) a motion by Councillor McPhater, seconded by Councillor Cullinane, in the following terms:

“Council agrees to provide a £50 clothing grant to all eligible* 3- and 4-year-olds in Early Years during the 2024/25 school year, funded through a proportion of the £123,000 residual balance unallocated in the Council’s Cost of Living support fund.

*based on the existing criteria for the school clothing grant.”

(4) a motion by Councillor McDonald, seconded by Councillor Cullinane, in the following terms:

“Council instructs officers to work to implement expanded free school meals to all P6/7s for the 2024/25 Academic year, commencing August 2024, for those not currently eligible and the cost of up to £1.403m would be covered by utilising the Service Concession Council reserves.”

(5) a motion by Councillor Robertson, seconded by Councillor Burns, in the following terms:

“Council agrees the increasing rate of violence against public sector workers is unacceptable and therefore agrees to sign up to UNISON’s Violence at Work Charter. In recognition of the importance of the safety of employees, signing up to the Charter would mean that North Ayrshire Council has committed to:

1. A written violence and aggression at work policy, which is available to all staff, with a policy that also covers lone working.
2. Responsibility for implementing these policies lies with a senior manager.
3. Measures taken to reduce staff working in isolated buildings, offices or other work areas to a minimum.
4. Encouraging staff to report all violent incidents and they are told how to do this.
5. Collecting and monitoring data on violent incidents on a regular and ongoing basis.
6. Where they are in place, union safety reps are able to access this data and are consulted on solutions to issues relating to violence in the workplace.
7. Thorough risk assessments are conducted for staff placed in vulnerable situations.
8. Support pathways in place for staff who are victims of violence at work, so that they know where to turn for advice and support.
9. Training to ensure staff are aware of the appropriate way to deal with threatening situations.
10. Where appropriate, independent counselling services are available to staff who are the victims of violence at work.”

13 Urgent Items

Any other items which the Provost considers to be urgent.

Webcasting

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Generally, the press and public seating areas will not be filmed. However, by entering the Council Chambers, using the press or public seating area or (by invitation) participating remotely in this meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and consenting to the use and storage of those images and sound recordings and any information pertaining to you contained in them for webcasting or training purposes and for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available to the public. If you do not wish to participate in a recording, you should leave the meeting. This will constitute your revocation of consent.

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North Ayrshire Council Sederunt

John Bell
Timothy Billings
Marie Burns
Eleanor Collier
Joe Cullinane
Scott Davidson
Anthea Dickson
Stewart Ferguson
Todd Ferguson
Robert Foster
Scott Gallacher
Tony Gurney
Alan Hill
Cameron Inglis
Margaret Johnson
Amanda Kerr
Christina Larsen
Shaun Macaulay
Jean McClung
Nairn McDonald
Matthew McLean
Louise McPhater
Davina McTiernan
Tom Marshall
Jim Montgomerie
Ian Murdoch
Donald Reid
Donald L Reid
Chloe Robertson
Ronnie Stalker
Angela Stephen
John Sweeney
Vacancy

Chair:

Apologies:

Attending:

North Ayrshire Council
14 February 2024

At a Meeting of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m. involving a combination of participation by remote electronic means and physical attendance within the Council Chambers, Irvine

Present (Physical Participation)

John Bell, Marie Burns, Eleanor Collier, Joe Cullinane, Anthea Dickson, Stewart Ferguson, Todd Ferguson, Robert Foster, Scott Gallacher, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Cameron Inglis, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen, Shaun Macaulay, Tom Marshall, Jean McClung, Nairn McDonald, Matthew McLean, Louise McPhater, Davina McTiernan, Donald Reid, Donald L. Reid, Chloé Robertson, Ronnie Stalker, Angela Stephen and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Electronic Participation)

Timothy Billings, Scott Davidson and Jim Montgomerie.

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive; C. Cameron, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director and Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Housing and Public Protection) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director (Communities and Education); M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance); F. Walker, Head of Service (People and ICT); and A. Craig, Head of Service, R. Lynch, Senior Manager (Legal Services); M. McColm, Senior Manager (Communications), M. Anderson, Senior Manager (Committee and Member Services) and D. McCaw and C. Stewart, Committee Services Officer (Democratic Services).

Chair

Provost Dickson in the Chair.

Apologies

John Glover, Amanda Kerr and Ian Murdoch.

1. Provost's Remarks

The Provost welcomed those present to the meeting and dealt with preliminary matters, including intimation that the meeting, which was taking place on a hybrid basis, would be live streamed to the internet.

2. Apologies

The Provost invited intimation of apologies for absence, which were recorded.

3. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Councillor Marshall, as the subject of the hearing in question, declared an interest in Agenda item 9 (Findings of Hearing Conducted by the Standards Commission for Scotland), and advised of his intention to leave the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

There were no declarations of the Party Whip.

4. Previous Minutes

The accuracy of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 December 2023 was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The Provost exercised her discretion to allow Councillor Marshall to ask a question in respect of Motion (1) (on the Business Rates Relief Scheme), which was considered at the last meeting. The Chief Executive confirmed that the correspondence in question had been issued and that a response was awaited.

5. Provost's Report

Submitted report by the Provost for the period from 4 December 2023-4 February 2024.

The Provost intimated that her written report should be taken as read and then took the opportunity to pay tribute to Audrey Sutton, Executive Director (Communities and Education), who was attending her last meeting of the Council prior to retiring in the coming weeks. The Provost commended Audrey for her quiet counsel, partnership engagement and innovative solutions, extended her personal thanks and, on behalf of the Council, wished Audrey well for a long and happy retirement.

Thereafter, at the invitation of the Provost, Councillors Burns, Marshall and Cullinane also paid tribute to the Executive Director. Each recognised Audrey's skill in bringing people together to solve problems, highlighting her experience, compassion and integrity. On behalf of their respective political groups, they offered their good wishes for a well-deserved and happy retirement.

Noted.

6. Leader's Report

Submitted report by the Leader of the Council for the period from 4 December 2023-4 February 2024.

Noted.

7. Council Minute Volume

Submitted for noting the Minutes of meetings of committees of the Council held in the period 16 November 2023-25 January 2024.

Noted.

8. Community Planning Partnership Board: Minutes of Meeting held in December 2023

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board held on 7 December 2024. The CPP Board Minutes were attached as an appendix to the report.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following elements of the report:

- an engagement session on the new North Ayrshire Green Health Framework, led by Greenspace Scotland;
- an update on Democracy Matters 2;
- progress on the Caring for Ayrshire programme, and
- the work on the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board.

Noted.

9. Appointments to Committee

The Council was invited, in terms of Standing Order 8.5, to note changes in the membership of the Integration Joint Board and the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee and, arising from this, a vacancy in respect of the Vice Chair of the latter committee.

Councillor Gallacher intimated his intention to nominate Councillor S. Ferguson to the position of Vice Chair of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee. On the advice of the Monitoring Officer, and in terms of Standing Order 8.4, the Council noted that the deadline for nominations having expired at 12.00 noon, any nominations for this position would require to be considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

Accordingly, the Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to note (i) the resignation of Councillors Foster and McDonald, from the Integration Joint Board and Police and Fire and Rescue Committee, respectively and (ii) in terms of Standing Order 8.5, the appointment of Councillors McDonald and Kerr to the Integration Joint Board and Police and Fire and Rescue Committee, respectively; and

- (b) to note (i) the vacancy in respect of the Vice Chair of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee arising from Councillor McDonald's resignation from that committee and (ii) that nominations would be invited for consideration at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

Having declared an interest in the following item of business, Councillor Marshall left the meeting at this point.

10. Findings of Hearing Conducted by the Standards Commission for Scotland

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on the findings of a hearing by the Standards Commission for Scotland. The Standards Commission's report was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Council unanimously agreed as follows:

- (a) to note the decision of the Standards Commission dated 31 January 2024, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (b) to intimate to the Standards Commission that consideration of the findings had been undertaken by the Council.

Councillor Marshall rejoined the meeting at this point.

11. Council Tax on Second Homes

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the new discretionary powers available under the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 and which sought approval to consult with North Ayrshire's communities, including those on the islands, on a proposal to revise the current policy on Council Tax charges for Second Homes within North Ayrshire.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on any opportunities for Elected Members to have an input into the consultation approach and, in particular, whether the Council's 'island' Members could be involved in the design and drafting of the consultation exercise.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Johnson, moved approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report. There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to note the discretionary powers for the variation of Council Tax charges on Second Homes detailed within the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023; and

- (b) to consult on the proposal to implement an increased Council Tax charge on second homes in North Ayrshire, ensuring, in particular, that the island communities on the Isles of Arran and Cumbrae were given a platform to voice their opinions, concerns and suggestions.

12. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Investment Plan, Revenue Budget 2024/25 and consequential rent levels. The HRA Capital Investment Plan and Revenue Budget for 2024/25 were set out at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report. Details of the proposed 2024/25 rent charges for each property size, were provided at Appendix 3 to the report and Appendix 4 detailed the outcome of the consultation.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:

- whether, having consulted on two options for rent levels, the Council was obliged to proceed with one of these;
- the Council's obligations in terms of setting a balanced budget in respect of the Housing Revenue Account;
- whether the Scottish Government's recent announcement in respect of a reduction in funding for affordable housing had been factored into the officer's report and the likely impact of this;
- if any assurances had been received from the Scottish Government that the reduction in funding for affordable housing would not be recurring;
- the extent and impact of rent increases on the gypsy traveller site at Redburn Grove, formed part of the General Services Fund, rather than the Housing Review Account;
- the methods which would be used to meet the target of reducing rent arrears to pre-pandemic levels; and
- the kitchen replacement programme for the Council's housing stock and the length of time new kitchens were expected to last.

The Head of Service (Housing and Public Protection) undertook to provide Members with further information on the frequency of kitchen replacements for the Council's housing stock.

Councillor Gurney, seconded by Councillor Larsen, moved approval of the recommendations set out in the officer's report.

As an amendment, Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Foster, moved as follows:

- (a) to delay the setting of rent levels in 2024/25 for council houses, garages/lock-ups and gypsy travellers site fees, to the Special Meeting of the Council to be held on 28 February 2024; and

- (b) that, in the meantime, the Chief Executive write to the Deputy First Minister (i) to express concern in respect of the lack of vital information to set the HRA budget and rent levels, on the allocation of the Affordable Housing Fund, and whether the cut in this funding would be recurring or non-recurring and (ii) requesting a response prior to the Special Meeting of the Council.

A Member asked a question of the proposer of the amendment with regard to the feasibility of implementing new rent levels from 1 April 2024, in the event of the Council agreeing to delay consideration of the matter until the Special Meeting.

In terms of Standing Order 6.8, the Provost agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 2.45 p.m. to allow officers to consider the matter raised and provide advice on the competence of the amendment. The meeting reconvened at 3.00 p.m. with the same Members and officers present and in attendance.

The Chief Executive, having consulted with the Section 95 Officer and the Head of Service (Housing and Public Protection), advised that the timescale set out in the amendment would be insufficient to allow the Council to meet its legal obligations in terms of writing to tenants to provide 28 days' notice of changes to rent levels. In terms of Standing Order 15.4(ii), the amendment would not, therefore, be competent.

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, Councillor Cullinane, with the agreement of his seconder, withdrew his amendment, subject to the Council noting that the Housing Revenue Account budget was being set without an awareness of the full impact of the reduction in funding.

There being no further amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to approve (i) the HRA capital investment plan, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, (ii) the HRA revenue budget for 2024/25, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, (iii) a rent increase of 6.0% in 2024/25 for council houses, garages/lock-ups and gypsy travellers site fees, as detailed at Appendix 3 to the report, with effect from 1 April 2024; and
- (b) to note the indicative rent increases of 3.84% for the remaining 29 years of the Business Plan; and
- (c) to approve a 5.0% increase to housing service charges, as set out at Appendix 3, with effect from 1 April 2024.

13. Questions

In terms of Standing Order 14, submitted:

- (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)?”

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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 timeframe (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”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Marshall questioned whether the data sets were comparable and asked whether the Cabinet Member considered that the divergence between the downward trend in PISA figures and the reported upward trend in the Council’s results might be attributable to one measure being objective and the other subjective.

Councillor Macaulay responded by agreeing that these were two different data sets, but asserted that the figures presented were the best available match. The Cabinet Member commented that the downward trend in PISA results was not limited to Scotland, adding that the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) had commented that the latest PISA results could be described as the ‘COVID edition.’ Councillor Macaulay concluded his response by accepting that there were big challenges in education, something recognised by the Scottish Government in terms of its Pupil Equity funding allocation and which the Administration was seeking to address.

(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?”

Councillor Johnson thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Donald Reid asked whether the Cabinet Member felt the Scottish Government should be funding this service fully, given the delays arising from COVID and the increasing number of orders to be supervised by North Ayrshire Council Justice Services.

Councillor Johnson responded by advising that this not for her to comment on and was instead a matter for the Scottish Government.

(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?”

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor T. Ferguson asked whether the Cabinet Member would share the content of the new survey with all Elected Members.

Councillor Macaulay responded in the affirmative.

(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?"

In the absence of Councillor Kerr, and in terms of Standing Order 14.4, the question was instead asked by Councillor Cullinane.

Councillor Burns thanked the Member for the question and responded as follows:

"Had Councillor Kerr been here, I would have suggested we could sit here all day and have a tit-for-tat discussion on the faith we have in our respective party leaders. I suspect I might have more to say about Keir Starmer than she has about Humza Yousaf.

Instead let us focus on the important issue of the ferry and not turn it into a political football. It is important for North Ayrshire that we retain the ferry service at Ardrossan and it is the best solution for the Arran community. That is why my group will be supporting Cllr Billing's motion later on the agenda and we should continue to work together on this as we have done in the past."

(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?"

In terms of Standing Order 14.4, the following written response by Councillor Burns was taken as read:

"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 aged 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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor T. Ferguson commended the planned programme and asked whether particular care could be taken to ensure that children and young people from the island communities were included.

Councillor Burns responded in the affirmative.

(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?”

Councillor Macaulay thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Cullinane commented that £100k in Scottish Government funding could have been lost for each of the 12 teaching posts mentioned, and asked whether the Cabinet Secretary’s proposed meeting with councils to discuss individual circumstances would take place before or after the Council’s budget-setting meeting.

Councillor Macaulay responded by intimating that he was not yet aware of the arrangements, but that he would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Cabinet Secretary at the earliest opportunity.

(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?”

Councillor Gurney thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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.

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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor T. Ferguson gave an example of the projected costs of bringing the Crown Office building in Elgin to a more environmentally friendly standard and the estimated time taken to recoup those costs, and asked whether using the approximate costs per square metre reported from that pilot project, the Cabinet Member felt that a cost of approximately £8.5m to refurbish a building like West Kilbride Community Centre, would represent value for money for North Ayrshire tax-payers.

Councillor Gurney responded by clarifying that the Elgin example given was a pilot project to understand the costs and implications of such refurbishments, but agreed that no-one was suggesting this would be inexpensive. The Cabinet Member asserted, however, that it would still be less expensive than creating a world which was ‘unliveable.’

(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?”

Councillor Gurney thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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.”

Councillor Gurney supplemented his written response by thanking Councillor Montgomerie for presenting the figures as he had, as this demonstrated that recycling rates were dependent on a variety of factors and were not a party-political matter, Councillor Montgomerie himself having been part of the Administration at the start of both years cited.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Montgomerie reflected on the likely adverse impact on recycling rates of introducing ‘brown bin’ charges, and asked whether the Cabinet Member intended to reduce recycling rates further by introducing such charges.

Councillor Gurney responded by acknowledging the budgetary challenges faced by the public sector. The Cabinet Member asserted that it would not be appropriate to discuss possible charges in advance of the Council’s budget-setting exercise and expressed confidence that political groups would each be preparing their own thoroughly costed proposals for consideration by the Council.

(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?”

Councillor Gurney thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

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

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 31 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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor T. Ferguson expressed his support and for several initiatives underway in the North Coast and his admiration for the efforts of associated volunteers, and asked whether the Cabinet Member could request that officers bring forward proposals for a North Ayrshire wide approach to community orchards.

Councillor Gurney responded by thanking the Member for his support for the Administration’s policy and confirming that he would liaise with officers on bringing forward projects in other parts of North Ayrshire.

(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?”

Councillor Larsen thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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”

(11) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Finance 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?”

Councillor Larsen thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“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.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Marshall made reference to reports in the press about the deletion of WhatsApp messages by the former First Minister in accordance with Scottish Government policy, and asked whether WhatsApp messages on Council devices should be subject to the same information management conditions as applied to email communications.

Councillor Larsen responded by advising that the Council currently had no formal policy in relation to WhatsApp messages but confirmed that a review would be undertaken in relation to this.

(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”

Councillor Gurney thanked the Member for his question and introduced the following written response which was then taken as read in terms of Standing Order 14.4:

“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 e.g. waiting, loading or parking restrictions. The Police remain responsible for all ‘moving’ traffic offences, matters of obstruction and some temporary waiting restrictions.

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."

As a supplementary question, Councillor McLean asked whether photographic evidence or camera footage submitted by a constituent would be sufficient for the Council to issue a fine in respect of parking enforcement.

Councillor Gurney responded by intimating that a report on parking enforcement was due to be submitted to the Cabinet in March 2024 and undertook to ensure that it included clarification of the matter raised by the Member.

(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?”

Councillor Burns thanked the Member for his question and responded in the following terms:

“I thank Cllr McLean for his question. Let me just start by saying that I will take money from anywhere if it helps North Ayrshire. So, we will take the £20m, thanks very much, and will do the best we can with it. I would say to Cllr McLean that several residents of Irvine have already pointed out to me that £20m over 10 years will not come close to addressing the impact of 14 years of Tory austerity and I am sure many of us in this chamber would whole-heartedly agree.

If he is asking me if the DFM has a right to point out that this approach undermines the devolution settlement and our own democratically elected parliament then yes, I agree with her and I think most people can see it for what it is.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor McLean cited elements of the Verity House Agreement which asserted that the powers held by locally authorities “shall normally be full and conclusive” and the principle that decisions should be “local by default, national be agreement”, and repeated a question he had asked at a previous meeting, namely whether the Verity House Agreement was worth the paper it was written on.

On a point of order in terms of Standing Order 14.7(iii), the Provost intimated that the question was not competent, but exercised her discretion to allow the Leader to respond if she so wished.

Councillor Burns responded by asserting that the UK Government’s attempt to bypass the Scottish Government and go straight to local councils had nothing to do with the Verity House Agreement.

14. Motions

In terms of Standing Order 15, submitted:

- (1) a motion proposed by Councillor Marshall and seconded by Councillor Inglis in the following terms:

“That the Council agrees to the formation of a Member Officer Working Group to consider altering the governance arrangements of the Council from the present Cabinet system to a traditional Committee structure and thereafter provide a progress report to the meeting of Council on 15 May 2024. Member representation on the Group shall be 2 SNP, 2 Conservative, 2 Labour and 1 Independent.”

As an amendment, Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Macaulay, moved the direct negative.

A Member asked a question clarification of the mover of the motion, seeking to confirm the timescale set out in the motion and establish whether there would be provision for substitute representatives. Councillor Marshall confirmed both elements of the query.

There followed debate and summing up.

On a point of order in terms of Standing Order 17.6, Councillor Cullinane sought to correct a statement made in the course of debate as to the timing of discussion which had taken place about potential governance structures. Councillor Cullinane advised that the Chief Executive had met with political groups on 9 May 2022, only a short time prior to the Statutory Meeting of the Council on 18 May 2022.

On a further point of order in terms of Standing Order 17.6, the Chief Executive corrected an assertion made in the course of debate, by clarifying that approval of the the Council’s governance arrangements was a matter for Council, and not officers.

At the invitation of the Provost, the Chief Executive requested that the mover of the motion reconsider the proposed timescale for a working group to meet and report back to the Council, noting both the forthcoming budget-setting process and the Easter recess period.

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, Councillor Marshall, with the agreement of his seconder, intimated a willingness to alter the wording of his motion to reflect that a report would be submitted to the Council prior to the summer recess, rather than to the May 2024 meeting. The Council agreed to accept the alteration.

Thereafter, on a division and a roll call vote, there voted for the amendment, Councillors Burns, Collier, Davidson, Dickson, Gurney, Hill, Johnson, Larsen, Macaulay, McClung, McTiernan and Robertson (12), and for the motion, as revised, Councillors Bell, Billings, Cullinane, S. Ferguson, T. Ferguson, Foster, Gallacher, Inglis, Marshall, McDonald, McLean, McPhater, Montgomerie, D. Reid, Stalker, Stephen and Sweeney (17), Councillor Donald L. Reid abstaining, and the motion, as revised, was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to approve the formation of a Member Officer Working Group, comprising two representatives of the Administration, two representatives of the Main Opposition, two representatives of the Second Opposition and one Independent Member, plus relevant Officers, to consider altering the governance arrangements of the Council from the present Cabinet system to a traditional Committee structure; and
 - (b) that a progress report be submitted to the Council prior to the summer recess.
- (2) a motion by Councillor Billings, seconded by Councillor S. Ferguson, in the following terms:

"The ferry service between Ardrossan and Arran continues to be disrupted by technical issues. With the closure of the Irish Berth at Ardrossan and the Caledonian Isles out of service for at least two months, the drop in passenger and vehicle capacity is causing significant harm to island life.

In addition, there is still no certainty about the future of Ardrossan Harbour continuing to be the mainland port for the Arran service. Although the delivery of new Glen Sannox ferry is yet again delayed, it is imperative that the refurbishment work starts on Ardrossan Harbour without delay so as to minimise the temporary transfer to Troon.

Therefore, North Ayrshire Council notes its concern about the immediate impacts that the current technical issues are having on the people and businesses of Arran. The Council would like to see urgent action taken to make full use of the Alfred ferry so that the Arran service has the maximum capacity possible as the island moves into the busy February half-term holiday period.

In addition, North Ayrshire Council notes its disappointment that the Scottish government is allowing the uncertainty about the future of Ardrossan to continue, given the importance that keeping Ardrossan Harbour as the mainland port for the Arran ferry service has for both the people of Arran and Ardrossan. The Council urges the Scottish government to allow the refurbishment work to start without delay.

To these ends, the Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the following:

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition to restate the Council's concerns about the ongoing delay to the refurbishment work at Ardrossan Harbour and to urge her to enable the work to start without delay;

The Scottish Minister for Transport, the Chief Executive of Calmac and the Chief Executive of CMAL to state the Council's concerns about the detrimental impacts on the residents and businesses of Arran caused by the current lack of capacity on the Arran ferry service, due to the current technical issues. Further to ask them to work together to urgently enable full use of the Alfred ferry for both passengers and all vehicles so as to maximise ferry capacity."

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, and with the agreement of his seconder, Councillor Billings intimated that he wished to alter the wording of his motion, to read as follows:

"The ferry service between Ardrossan and Arran continues to be disrupted by technical issues. With the closure of the Irish Berth at Ardrossan and the Caledonian Isles out of service for at least two months, the drop in passenger and vehicle capacity is causing significant harm to island life.

In addition, there is still no certainty about the future of Ardrossan Harbour continuing to be the mainland port for the Arran service. Although the delivery of new Glen Sannox ferry is yet again delayed it is imperative that the refurbishment work starts on Ardrossan Harbour without delay so as to minimise the temporary transfer to Troon.

Therefore, North Ayrshire Council notes its concern about the immediate impacts that the current technical issues are having on the people and businesses of Arran. The Council would like to see urgent action taken to ensure effective and efficient use of every possible ferry-related resource so that the Arran service has the maximum capacity possible as the island moves into the busy February holiday period.

In addition, North Ayrshire Council notes its disappointment that the Scottish government is allowing the uncertainty about the future of Ardrossan to continue given the importance that keeping Ardrossan Harbour as the mainland port for the Arran ferry service has for both the people of Arran and Ardrossan. The Council urges the Scottish government to allow the refurbishment work to start without delay.

To these ends the Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the following:

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition to restate the Council's concerns about the ongoing delay to the refurbishment work at Ardrossan Harbour and to urge her to enable the work to start without delay;

The Scottish Minister for Transport, the Chief Executive of Calmac and the Chief Executive of CMAL to state the Council's concerns about the detrimental impacts on the residents and businesses of Arran caused by the current lack of capacity on the Arran ferry service. Further, to ensure that there are effective customer-focused contingency plans in place to enable an efficient switch from Ardrossan to Troon if Ardrossan is not available for service."

As an amendment, Councillor Gurney, seconded by Councillor Collier, moved as follows:

"To append the following text to the motion, as revised:

The Chair and COO of Peel Ports in the terms noted above to express our disappointment that the Irish berth has been decommissioned, to ask for the detail of the decision-making process, and to request their agreement to bring the berth back into operation as soon as possible."

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, and with the agreement of his seconder, Councillor Billings intimated a willingness to alter his motion further, to incorporate the terms of the amendment.

On that basis, Councillor Hill, with the agreement of his seconder, agreed to withdraw his amendment in favour of the motion, as revised. There being no further amendment, the revised motion was declared carried.

At the discretion of the Provost, Councillor Cullinane requested and received clarification from the Chief Executive, that the Fraser of Allander Institute report commissioned by the Council had been submitted to Transport Scotland; that the latter's business case had not yet been completed, but that officers continued to press Transport Scotland in this regard; and that no date had been set for the next meeting of the Ardrossan Ministerial Taskforce. The Leader was also invited to comment, confirming that an urgent meeting with the newly appointed Cabinet Secretary was being sought.

The Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to note (i) its concern about the immediate impacts of the current technical issues on the people and businesses of Arran, (ii) that it would like to see urgent action taken to ensure effective and efficient use of every possible ferry-related resource so that the Arran service had the maximum capacity possible as the island moved into the busy February holiday period and (iii) its disappointment that the Scottish Government was allowing the uncertainty about the future of Ardrossan to continue given the importance that keeping Ardrossan Harbour as the mainland port for the Arran ferry service had for both the people of Arran and Ardrossan;

- (b) to urge the Scottish Government to allow the refurbishment work to start without delay; and
- (c) to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the following:
 - (i) the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition to restate the Council's concerns about the ongoing delay to the refurbishment work at Ardrossan Harbour and to urge her to enable the work to start without delay;
 - (ii) the Scottish Minister for Transport, the Chief Executive of Calmac and the Chief Executive of CMAL to state the Council's concerns about the detrimental impacts on the residents and businesses of Arran caused by the current lack of capacity on the Arran ferry service and, further, to ensure that there were effective customer-focused contingency plans in place to enable an efficient switch from Ardrossan to Troon in the event of Ardrossan not being available; and
 - (iii) the Chair and COO of Peel Ports in the terms noted above to express the Council's disappointment that the Irish berth had been decommissioned, to ask for the detail of the decision-making process, and to request their agreement to bring the berth back into operation as soon as possible.
- (3) a motion by Councillor McLean, seconded by Councillor S. Ferguson, in the following terms:

"Council requests officers bring a paper to Council for noting regarding what the authority can do to mitigate poverty traps and whether any policies NAC currently has exacerbated this."

As an amendment, Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved the direct negative.

There followed debate and summing up.

On a division and a roll call vote, there voted for the amendment, Councillors Bell, Burns, Collier, Cullinane, Davidson, Dickson, Foster, Gurney, Hill, Johnson, Larsen, Macaulay, McClung, McDonald, McPhater, McTiernan, Montgomerie, D. Reid, D.L. Reid, Robertson and Sweeney (21), and for the motion, Councillors Billings, S. Ferguson, T. Ferguson, Gallacher, Inglis, Marshall, McLean, Stalker and Stephen (9) and the amendment was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed not to proceed with the terms of the motion.

(4) a motion by Councillor McLean, seconded by Councillor S. Ferguson, in the following terms:

“Council requests officers bring a paper to Council outlining the anti-social behaviour provisions within housing tenancies, what tenants can do regarding anti-social behaviours of neighbours, how the investigation of complaints is undertaken, and what can be done to streamline the eviction process in the most serious cases.”

As an amendment, Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Collier, moved the direct negative.

Members asked question of clarification in respect of the following:

- the relevance of the ‘no evictions policy’ applicable during the pandemic to the timescales for eviction cited by the mover of the motion in his preamble;
- any potential new powers for the Council to expedite the evictions process; and
- whether an Elected Member seminar, rather than a report to Council, would be acceptable to the mover of the motion

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, and with the agreement of his seconder, Councillor McLean intimated a willingness to alter the terms of his motion to provide for this matter to be the subject of an Elected Member seminar, rather than a report to Council.

On that basis, Councillor Hill, with the agreement of his seconder, agreed to withdraw his amendment in favour of the motion, as revised. There being no further amendment, the motion, as revised, as declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed that officers arrange an Elected Member seminar outlining (i) the anti-social behaviour provisions within housing tenancies, (ii) what tenants could do regarding anti-social behaviours of neighbours, (iii) how the investigation of complaints was undertaken and (iv) what could be done to streamline the eviction process in the most serious cases, including any potential new approach to expedite evictions.

15. Urgent Items

The Provost intimated that she had received a request that the Council consider a late question in terms of Standing Order 14, but that the matter did not meet the test for urgency and would not, therefore, be considered.

Noted.

The Meeting ended at 4.55 p.m.

North Ayrshire Council
28 February 2024

At a Special Meeting of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m. involving a combination of participation by remote electronic means and physical attendance within the Council Chambers, Irvine

Present (Physical Participation)

John Bell, Timothy Billings, Marie Burns, Eleanor Collier, Joe Cullinane, Scott Davidson, Anthea Dickson, Stewart Ferguson, Todd Ferguson, Robert Foster, Scott Gallacher, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Cameron Inglis, Margaret Johnson, Amanda Kerr, Christina Larsen, Shaun Macaulay, Tom Marshall, Jean McClung, Nairn McDonald, Matthew McLean, Louise McPhater, Davina McTiernan, Jim Montgomerie, Donald Reid, Chloé Robertson, Angela Stephen and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Electronic Participation)

Donald L. Reid and Ronnie Stalker.

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive; C. Cameron, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director and D. Hammond, Head of Service (Sustainability, Transport and Corporate Property) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director (Communities and Education); M. Boyd, Head of Service, D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Strategic Business Partner), N. Graham, Team Manager (Financial Management and Revenues) and K. Macdonald, Team Manager (Strategic Projects) (Finance); F. Walker, Head of Service (People and ICT); and A. Craig, Head of Service, R. Lynch, Senior Manager (Legal Services); J. Hutcheson, Senior Communications Officer, M. Anderson, Senior Manager (Committee and Member Services) and D. McCaw and S. Wilson, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Chair

Provost Dickson in the Chair.

Apologies

Ian Murdoch.

1. Provost's Remarks

The Provost welcomed those present to the meeting and dealt with preliminary matters, including intimation that the meeting, which was taking place on a hybrid basis, would be live streamed to the internet.

The Provost then expressed her sadness at the recent passing of serving Elected Member, Councillor John Glover (Conservative and Unionist Group) and of former Elected Member, Cunninghame District Council Provost and SNP Group Leader, Matthew Brown.

On behalf of the Council, the Provost extended her condolences to the families of both men and confirmed that funeral arrangements would be intimated to Members in due course.

2. Apologies

The Provost invited intimation of apologies for absence, which were recorded.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

There were no declarations of the Party Whip.

4. General Services Revenue Estimates 2024/25 to 2026/27

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Council's revenue spending requirements and anticipated funding for 2024/25 to 2026/27, the level of reserves and fund balances held by the Council, and options to address the funding gap.

Appendices 1 and 2 to the report set out the revised expenditure requirements for 2024/25 and operational budget adjustments, respectively. Savings approved as part of the 2023/24 revenue budget and the expenditure requirements identified for 2024/25 to 2025/26, were detailed at Appendices 3 and 4. Appendix 5 summarised proposed savings, excluding the Health and Social Care Partnership, and Appendix 6 contained a list of proposed charges with effect from 1 April 2024. The budget matrix for 2024/25 was set out at Appendix 7 to the report. A revised Appendix 5 was circulated separately in a Supplementary Agenda.

The Head of Service (Finance) provided a short verbal update in relation to an announcement by the Depute First Minister on 21 February 2024 to allocate a further £62.7m to councils, advising that this would be subject to confirmation through the UK Government's Spring budget on 6 March 2024 and to councils agreeing a Council Tax freeze.

The Provost then invited the Administration to move its budget proposals.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Burns, moved as follows:

“That the Council supports the position to freeze Council Tax at 2023/24 levels and approves the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments noted below:

- a) delete £1.7m Locality Based Town Centre Fund. Replace with
 - Business Recovery and Sustainability Fund £500k
 - Community Wealth Building (CWB) For Communities £300k
 - Repurposing Property Grant Fund £350k
 - Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Fund £350k
 - School Welfare Rights Officers £160k
 - Wellbeing Alliance Fund £40k
- b) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £1,343,731
- c) remove the recurring saving to review staffing allocations to primary and secondary schools through the Devolved School Management scheme of £1,343,731 in 2024/25, and continue to engage with Scottish Government around North Ayrshire Council’s individual circumstances.”

Thereafter, Councillor Marshall, seconded by Councillor Inglis, moved the following amendment:

“That the Council supports the position to freeze Council Tax at 2023/24 levels and approves the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments noted below:

- a) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £1,914,000
- b) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the Locality Based Town Centre Fund by £174,163
- c) invest the sum of £1,000,000 for 2024/25 in the Roads infrastructure
- d) invest the sum of £500,000 for 2024/25 in the Council’s Streetscene operations
- e) remove the 2024/25 recurring savings option in respect of charging for garden waste collection totalling £588,163, and

- f) to address the recurring impact of removing the saving in respect of charging for garden waste, request North Ayrshire Leisure Ltd to undertake a review of their operations to identify recurring savings options to the value of £588,163 for members to consider as part of the 2025/26 Council Budget.”

Following a point of order by Councillor Burns, the Monitoring Officer provided confirmation as to the legal competence of point (f) of Councillor Marshall’s amendment. At the invitation of the Provost, the Chief Executive provided further clarification on the financial detail and implications of this element of the amendment.

Thereafter, Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved an amendment as follows:

“That the Council supports the position to freeze Council Tax at 2023/24 levels and approves the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments noted below:

- a) remove the 2024/25 recurring savings option in respect of charging for garden waste collection totalling £588,163
- b) apply an additional level of vacancy turnover to non-school staff budgets across the Council of 0.375% on a recurring basis, equating to £300,000 in 2024/25
- c) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £288,163
- d) to address the recurring impact of £288,163 from the reduction in non-recurring investment, bring forward proposals during 2024/25 to identify recurring savings for consideration as part of the 2025/26 Budget across the following areas:
 - (i) proposal to transfer the responsibility of the Redburn Grove traveller site from the Council’s General fund to the Housing Revenue Account,
 - (ii) proposal to introduce pavement parking enforcement as part of the Council’s Decriminalised Parking Enforcement policy, and
 - (iii) proposal to review the current non-domestic rates reliefs and exemptions policy.
- e) agree to invest the £7.5million contribution from earmarked reserves earmarked for use in 25/26 (£4million) and 26/27 (£3.5million), a sum which is related to the PPP service concession approved in 2023, on the following:
 - (i) top-up the Investment Fund (to be invested in renewable energy at i3, commercial estate, energy efficiency projects, invest to save and cost avoidance initiatives etc) – £7.500m”

Members then asked questions of clarification of the movers of the motion and amendments and received clarification on the following:

- further detail on the purpose and implications of point (b) of Councillor Cullinane's amendment;
- the purpose and intended benefits of the additional Community Asset Transfer funding and the additional staffing resource for Community Wealth Building referred to in point (a) of Councillor Larsen's amendment;
- whether the proposed additional funding for Streetscene operations referred to in point (d) of Councillor Marshall's amendment would form part of a general fund to be used as required, or if it was intended for a particular purpose;
- the level of expected savings to be achieved by North Ayrshire Leisure Limited in terms of point (f) of Councillor Marshall's amendment and whether discussion had taken place with NALL on how this might be achieved;
- the total number of new roles arising from point (a) of Councillor Larsen's motion;
- whether funding set aside for Community Wealth Building for communities had been fully utilised or if the £300k referred to in point (a) of Councillor Larsen's motion represented top-up funding;
- any savings which were expected to arise from the engagement with the Scottish Government referenced in point (c) of Councillor Larsen's motion;
- whether any engagement had taken place with the executive directors on North Ayrshire Leisure Limited in respect of point (f) of Councillor Marshall's amendment;
- the likely impact on next year's budget of North Ayrshire Leisure Limited being unable to achieve the level of savings set out in point (f) of Councillor Marshall's amendment;
- the loss of income which may arise from the reduction in investment in renewable energy development referred to at point (b) of Councillor Larsen's motion;
- the implications of point (c) of Councillor Larsen's motion in the context of the further cut of £1m in the Scottish Government Attainment Challenge funding for North Ayrshire;
- the Council's powers to vary the level of non-domestic rates relief and exemptions policy; and
- the impact on next year's budget of point (e) of Councillor Cullinane's amendment;

Questions in respect of the parking charges, engagement with the Scottish Government on education staffing, and the impact on communities of reduced funding to North Ayrshire Leisure Limited, were not permitted by the Provost on the grounds that they did not constitute questions of clarification.

On a point of order in terms of Standing Order 11, Councillor McClung sought, and received, confirmation that membership of the Board of North Ayrshire Leisure Limited did not preclude a Member from participating in the debate on this item of business.

In terms of Standing Order 6.8, the Provost agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 3.10 p.m. to allow Members to consider the motion and amendments. The meeting reconvened at 4.45 p.m. with the same Members and officers present and in attendance, with the exception of Councillor Gallacher.

In terms of Standing Order 16.7, the Provost sought clarification as to whether the mover and seconder of the motion or any amendment wished to alter or withdraw their motion or amendment.

Councillor Larsen, with the agreement of her seconder, intimated that she wished to alter her motion to read as follows:

“That the Council supports the position to freeze Council tax at 2023/24 levels and approves the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments noted below:

- a) delete £1.7m Locality Town Centre Fund. Replace with
 - Business Recovery and Sustainability Fund £350k
 - CWB For Communities £300k
 - Repurposing Property Grant Fund £250k
 - School Welfare Rights Officers £160k
 - Wellbeing Alliance Fund £40k
 - Contribution to roads infrastructure - £750k
- b) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £1,343,731
- c) remove the recurring saving to Review staffing allocations to primary and secondary schools through the Devolved School Management scheme of £1,343,731 in 2024/25, and continue to engage with Scottish Government around North Ayrshire Council’s individual circumstances.
- d) remove the 2024/25 recurring savings option in respect of charging for garden waste collection totalling £588,163,
- e) apply an additional level of vacancy turnover to non-school staff budgets across the Council of 0.375% on a recurring basis, equating to £300,000 in 2024/25.
- f) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £438,163

g) to address the recurring impact of £438,163 from the reduction in non-recurring investment, bring forward proposals during 2024/25 to identify recurring savings for consideration as part of the 2025/26 Budget across the following areas:

- proposal to transfer the responsibility of the Redburn Grove traveller site from the Council's General fund to the Housing Revenue Account,
- proposal to introduce pavement parking enforcement as part of the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement policy, and
- proposal to review the current non-domestic rates reliefs and exemptions policy"

On a point of order in terms of Standing Order 15.4, Councillor Cullinane sought and received confirmation from the Section 95 Officer as to the financial competence of the revised motion.

Thereafter, in terms of Standing Order 16.5, Councillor Cullinane, with the agreement of his seconder, intimated that he wished to alter his amendment to read as follows:

"That the Council supports the position to freeze Council tax at 2023/24 levels and approves the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments noted below:

- a) remove the 2024/25 recurring savings option in respect of charging for garden waste collection totalling £588,163,
- b) apply an additional level of vacancy turnover to non-school staff budgets across the Council of 0.375% on a recurring basis, equating to £300,000 in 2024/25.
- c) reduce the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £288,163
- d) to address the recurring impact of £288,163 from the reduction in non-recurring investment, bring forward proposals during 2024/25 to identify recurring savings for consideration as part of the 2025/26 Budget across the following areas:
 - (i) Proposal to transfer the responsibility of the Redburn Grove traveller site from the Council's General fund to the Housing Revenue Account,
 - (ii) Proposal to introduce pavement parking enforcement as part of the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement policy, and
 - (iii) Proposal to review the current non-domestic rates reliefs and exemptions policy.
- e) delete £1.7m Locality Town Centre Fund.

- f) remove the recurring saving to Review staffing allocations to primary and secondary schools through the Devolved School Management scheme of £1,343,731 in 2024/25, and continue to engage with Scottish Government around North Ayrshire Council's individual circumstances.
- g) £356,269 for CWB
- h) agrees to invest the £7.5million contribution from earmarked reserves earmarked for use in 25/26 (£4million) and 26/27 (£3.5million), a sum which is related to the PPP service concession approved in 2023, on the following:
 - (i) top-up the Investment Fund (to be invested in renewable energy at i3, commercial estate, energy efficiency projects, invest to save and cost avoidance initiatives etc) – £7.500m”

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, Councillor, Marshall, with agreement of seconder, intimated the withdrawal of his amendment in favour of the motion, as revised.

There followed debate.

Thereafter, on a division and roll call vote, there voted for the remaining amendment, as revised, Councillors Bell, Cullinane, Foster, Kerr, McDonald, McPhater, Montgomerie, D. Reid, and Sweeney (9) and for the motion, as revised, Councillors Billings, Burns, Collier, Davidson, Dickson, S. Ferguson, T. Ferguson, Gurney, Hill, Inglis, Johnson, Larsen, Macaulay, Marshall, McClung, McLean, McTiernan, D.L. Reid, Robertson, Stalker and Stephen (21) and the motion, as revised, was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council, having considered (i) the equality and children's rights impact of proposed service change and (ii) feedback from the community engagement sessions to help inform budget plans; agreed as follows:

- (a) to note (i) the anticipated funding available to meet the Council's expenditure requirements and (ii) the areas of ongoing financial risk to the Council;
- (b) to approve the Council's expenditure requirements for 2024/25 and note the indicative requirements 2025/26 and 2026/27;
- (c) to approve the new strategic investments outlined in section 2.7.3 of the report, subject to:
 - (i) deletion of the £1.7m Locality Based Town Centre Fund and its replacement with the following:
 - Business Recovery & Sustainability Fund £350k
 - Community Wealth Building (CWB) for Communities £300k
 - Repurposing Property Grant Fund £250k

- School Welfare Rights Officers £160k
 - Wellbeing Alliance Fund £40k and
 - Contribution to roads infrastructure - £750k
- (ii) a reduction in the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £1,343,731
- (iii) a reduction in the level of non-recurring investment for 2024/25 in respect of the contribution towards renewable energy development by £438,163
- (d) to note the projected outturn position for 2023/24;
- (e) to note the level of reserves and fund balances held by the Council and approve any use and contributions to and from these;
- (f) to approve the additional contribution to the Health and Social Care Partnership noted at section 2.8.1 of the report;
- (g) to approve efficiencies and savings to ensure a balanced budget for 2024/25, consequential and new proposals for future years, subject to:
- (i) removal of the recurring saving to review staffing allocations to primary and secondary schools through the Devolved School Management scheme of £1,343,731 in 2024/25, and continued engagement with Scottish Government around North Ayrshire Council's individual circumstances
 - (ii) removal of the 2024/25 recurring savings option in respect of charging for garden waste collection totalling £588,163 and
 - (iii) the application of an additional level of vacancy turnover to non-school staff budgets across the Council of 0.375% on a recurring basis, equating to £300,000 in 2024/25
- (h) to approve the schedule of Council fees and charges detailed at Appendix 6 to the report;
- (i) to freeze Council Tax at 2023/24 levels, noting the Scottish Government funding to support this, as set out at section 2.3 of the report;
- (j) to note the anticipated funding gaps for 2025/26 and 2026/27;
- (k) to note progress to date on the Council's Sustainable Change Programme and Corporate Workforce Planning;
- (l) to approve the budget matrix for 2024/25 as set out at Appendix 7 to the report; and

- (m) in order to address the recurring impact of £438,163 from the reduction in non-recurring investment, bring forward proposals during 2024/25 to identify recurring savings for consideration as part of the 2025/26 budget across the following areas:
 - (i) proposal to transfer the responsibility of the Redburn Grove traveller site from the Council's General fund to the Housing Revenue Account,
 - (ii) proposal to introduce pavement parking enforcement as part of the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement policy, and
 - (iii) proposal to review the current non-domestic rates reliefs and exemptions policy

Councillor Stalker left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

5. Capital Investment Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the draft Capital Investment Programme to 2033/34.

The current capital programme to 2030/31, details of the proposed changes to the programme following the refresh, and the revised Capital Investment Programme covering the period from 2024/25 to 2033/34, were set out at Appendices 1-3 to the report, respectively. The revised Capital Investment Strategy was provided at Appendix 4 to the report.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Burns, then moved approval of the recommendations set out in the report.

As an amendment, Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved as follows:

“That the Council approves the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments noted below:

- a) agrees that no ward should be left with no planned capital projects for a period of six years (or more) and therefore instructs officers to bring forward a report that will ensure future Capital Investment Programmes provide an equitable plan that delivers investment for all localities and communities in North Ayrshire.”

In terms of Standing Order 16.5, Councillor Burns, with the agreement of the proposer, intimated her willingness to withdraw the motion in favour of Councillor Cullinane's amendment, subject to the inclusion of some wording to qualify the terms of the proposal.

Councillor Cullinane, with the agreement of his seconder, intimated his willingness to revise his amendment to insert the words “endeavour to” immediately following “to bring forward a report that will...”

A Member asked a question of clarification of the mover of the amendment on whether this represented a change from the approach of targeting capital investment on the basis of identified need.

Discussion took place on the opportunity to form a future short-life Member/Officer Working Group to review the Council's Capital Plan, current projects, identified need and geographical balance.

Thereafter, in terms of Standing Order 16.5, Councillors Larsen and Burns agreed to withdraw their motion in favour of amendment. The amendment became the substantive motion and, there being no further amendments, the substantive motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to approve the draft Capital Investment Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34 set out at Appendix 3 to the report;
- (b) to note that the programme would be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with the next major review in 2026/27;
- (c) to approve the refreshed Capital Investment Strategy set out at Appendix 4 to the report; and
- (d) that no ward should be left with no planned capital projects for a period of six years (or more) and therefore instruct officers to bring forward a report that would endeavour to ensure future Capital Investment Programmes provided an equitable plan that delivered investment for all localities and communities in North Ayrshire.

Councillor Billings left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

6. Revenue Estimates 2024/25 – Common Good Funds and Trusts

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the anticipated annual income and expenditure of the Common Good Funds and Trusts administered by North Ayrshire Council and seeking approval for the level of grant funding to be made available for disbursement in 2024/25. The 2024/25 revenue estimates for the Common Good Funds and registered Charitable Trusts were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. Appendix 2 listed the remaining trusts and a number of sundry bequests.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Burns, then moved approval of the recommendations set out in the report. There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed as follows:

- (a) to approve (i) the 2024/25 revenue estimates for the Common Good Funds and registered Charitable Trusts detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, (ii) the carry forward of funds from Irvine Common Good Fund to meet the costs of essential works required at Seagate Castle, as noted at section 2.2 of the report and (iii) the amounts available for disbursement noted at sections 2.12 and 2.13 of the report;
- (b) to approve capital spend from the dormant and low value Trusts and Common Good Funds, and instruct officers to seek approval from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulatory (OSCR) prior to the disbursement of any grant which would result in the winding up of a Trust; and
- (c) to note that approval would now be sought from OSCR for the winding up of the James Dyer Simpson Fund H Watt Trust and JH Watt Trust held within North Ayrshire Charitable Trust.

7. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2024/25

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the proposed Strategy for Treasury Management and Investment activities within the Council for the financial year 2024/25. The draft Strategy document was attached as an appendix to the report.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Burns moved approval of the recommendations set out in the report. There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed to approve the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2024/25 set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

8. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.



PROVOST'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 17 March
2024

The attached report gives a summary and brief details to Council, of meetings and events attended by the Provost of North Ayrshire Council, Councillor Anthea Dickson.



PROVOST'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 17 March 2024

Since the last meeting of the Council, I have taken part in many events, including:

Nethermains Groundbreaking Event, 5 February

On 5 February, I was delighted to be joined from pupils from Blacklands Primary School to perform the groundbreaking ceremony at the former landfill site at Nethermains. This site and the site at Shewalton, have been identified as locations for ground mounted solar photovoltaic farms. The two projects are expected to be complete, commissioned and generating clean, green energy by end of the year.

Scottish Youth Parliament Announcement Evening, Saltcoats Town Hall, 5 February

On the evening of 5 February, I was in Saltcoats Town Hall where the announcement was made on who would be serving on the Scottish Youth Parliament. Within North Ayrshire we have four young people who are local representatives of the Scottish Youth Parliament, two for the Cunninghame North Constituency and the other two for the Cunninghame South Constituency. The Scottish Youth Parliament are a youth-led organisation where young people aged 14-25, from all over Scotland, represent the views of young people within their constituencies. Congratulations to Adam Johnson, Rhyan Gorrie, Emma Burns and Freya Fitzsimmons and I wish them well for their term of office.

'Kindness Murals' Tree-planting with BeeYou Mental Health Ambassadors, Eglinton Community Gardens, Kilwinning, 9 February

On 9 February, I teamed up with North Ayrshire's BeeYou (Mental Health Ambassadors) and Climate Change Ambassadors in Eglinton Community Gardens to plant a new community time capsule and orchard. It was great to see the hard work and determination of our climate-conscious and mentally aware young people. The idea of the time capsule as a key design element in this new outdoor community space, was introduced so that each of the young people involved could have the chance to anonymously share their own experiences, fears and aspirations for future generations. It is hoped that the new trees will contribute towards a brighter, greener and more mentally resilient environment for all.



Judging of Burns Art Exhibition, Dalry Primary School, 19 February

On 19 February, I visited Dalry Primary School to help select the winners at their Burns Art Exhibition. There was so much talent and enthusiasm, it was an absolute pleasure to judge but also a very tough job. A splendid example of how Burns can be enjoyed, not just in recitation, but also through art. The excellent project involved the whole school.

Beat the Street Launch, St. Bridget's Primary School, Kilbirnie, 20 February

I attended the 'Beat the Street' launch at St. Bridget's Primary School in Kilbirnie, on 20 February. Our Active Travel Team worked hard to bring this interactive community game to North Ayrshire, which was playable for six weeks in the Garnock Valley, Three Towns and on the Isle of Arran. The challenge was to score as many points as possible for you and your team while walking, cycling and wheeling in the local area.

North Ayrshire Young Musician of the Year, Saltcoats Town Hall, 21 February

On 21 February, the best musical talent from our secondary schools came together for the Young Musician of the Year competition in Saltcoats Town Hall. The standard of each performance was amazing, showing the impressive capability of the performers and highlighting the breadth of musical tuition available to support their musical development. The worthy winner, Liam McGrath, now goes on to represent North Ayrshire at the Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year.

Newhouse Drive, Kilbirnie and Laburnum Avenue, Beith, Groundbreaking Event, 27 February

On 27 February, I was delighted to mark the commencement of works across four sites at Newhouse Drive, Kilbirnie, and Laburnum Avenue, Beith. The new developments will deliver seven modern, energy efficient homes in each town.

Marie Curie Cancer Care, Day of Reflection Photocall, Saltcoats, 29 February

On 29 February, I visited the Marie Curie Cancer Care Shop in Saltcoats to support the Marie Curie Day of Reflection which took place on Sunday 2 March. The aim was to encourage as many people as possible to take a moment out of their day to think about anyone who lost their life during the pandemic. This was the end-of-life charity's fourth Day of Reflection, and as well as remembering everyone who died during the pandemic – regardless of the cause – it also aims to support the bereaved and help connect families, friends, colleagues and communities.



North Coast and Cumbrae Men's Shed, First Anniversary Event, Largs, 2 March

I visited the North Coast and Cumbrae Men's Shed on their first anniversary on 2 March in the Brisbane Centre, Largs. It was great to hear from the members on all the activity the has been happening over the last year and how this is contributing to the improvement of men's mental health and wellbeing in the local area.

Planting of tree to mark The King's Coronation Eglinton Park, Kilwinning, 4 March

On 4 March, I joined the Lord Lieutenant for Ayrshire and Arran, Iona McDonald and the Ground Force Volunteers to plant a tree, in Eglinton Country Park, to commemorate King Charles' coronation. Local authorities across the UK also took part in this initiative which reflects the King's love for nature and the environment.

Barnett Court Official Opening Ceremony, Saltcoats, 5 March

On 5 March, I attended the official opening ceremony of Barnett Court in Saltcoats. This sheltered housing complex has been refurbished as part of the Sheltered Housing Reprovisioning Programme. The site contributes to the regeneration of North Ayrshire and continues the significant investment the Council are making to provide housing for older people.

International Women's Day, North Ayrshire Women's Aid, Saltcoats, 8 March

On 8 March, in celebration of International Women's Day, I, along with colleagues attended a special event arranged by North Ayrshire Women's Aid in Saltcoats. This is a global initiative celebrating the achievements of women and highlighting the issues facing women on a day-to-day basis.

Ordination Mass of Bishop of Galloway, Church of St. Peter-in-Chains, Ardrossan, 9 March

On 9 March, I attended the Ordination of the new Bishop of Galloway, the Right Reverend Francis Dougan in the Church of St. Peter-in-Chains in Ardrossan. The service was an incredibly happy and uplifting occasion, and it was a pleasure to meet the new Bishop.

The Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships, William McIlvanney Campus, Kilmarnock, 10 March

I attended the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships in Kilmarnock on 10 March. Young people from all over Scotland competed in the event which is now in its tenth year. I was delighted to see young people from the Isle of Arran and Ardrossan Academy taking part in this prestigious event.

Provost's Visit, Discovery Award Group, Kilwinning Library, 11 March

On 11 March, I visited Kilwinning Library where the Discovery Award Group were meeting. The discovery awards are for the over fifties and are a fantastic way to elevate your interest and take on new challenges. It was great to meet this very inspirational group on the day when some received their bronze certificates.

Cafecchino Launch, Townend Community Centre, Dreghorn, 15 March

On 15 March, I was delighted to launch the Cafecchino Project in Townend Community Centre, Dreghorn. This DYW Ayrshire funded cafe will be operating in the Centre and is run by pupils from Greenwood Academy in partnership with Connected Communities. This is a notable example of partnership working and gives our young people additional skills making them better equipped when seeking employment.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthea Dickson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Councillor Anthea Dickson
Provost North Ayrshire Council



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 17 March
2024

The attached report gives a summary and brief details to Council, of meetings and events attended by the Leader of North Ayrshire Council, Councillor Marie Burns.

LEADER'S REPORT



LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 17 March 2024

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN BOARD MEETING, 5 February

On 5 February, I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board meeting where attendees received updates on various Patient Safety Reports. The Board also received updates on some of the key items from the most recent meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee, HealthCare Governance Committee and Staff Governance Committee.

There were also further updates and discussions on Health and Care delivery planning for Ayrshire and discussion on the Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability report 2022/23.

Minutes from Integration Joint Board meetings held for East, South and North Ayrshire Councils in October and November 2023, were also agreed.

VISIT TO GLAXOKLEINSMITH, IRVINE, 6 February

On 6 February, together with North Ayrshire Council's Cabinet member for the Green Environment and Economy, Councillor Tony Gurney, I visited the premises of Glaxokleinsmith in Irvine. The aim of the visit was primarily to have a tour of the premises and hear about their renewable energy usage and to hear how important it is to them to be a sustainable, environment-friendly employer in the region.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 9 February

On 9 February, I attended a special meeting of COSLA Leaders' to discuss the Scottish Budget and Local Government Settlement 2024/2025.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE SUB COMMITTEE, AYRSHIRE SKILLS INVESTMENT FUND, 12 February

On 12 February, I attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund (ASIF), a project of the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD). The Deal presents a major opportunity to strengthen the Ayrshire, Scottish and UK economies with targeted co-ordinated investment throughout the region which will act as a powerful catalyst to stimulate growth, resulting in increased job opportunities and prosperity for Ayrshire, for Scotland and for the UK.

LEADER'S REPORT



Attendees received an update on Training Provider Grants as part of the ASIF Delivery Model and a further update on Employer Grants including applications received and timescales for future funding.

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD, 19 February

On 19 February, I chaired a special meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board (AEPB) where attendees were provided with updates and progress reports on various projects contained within the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) programme. The report covers progress up to 31 January 2024.

Attendees were also asked to note the outcome of the Programme Review Summary and agree next steps as part of the Review.

MEETING OF THE AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 19 February

Later on 19 February, I chaired a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee (AEJC) to consider a report submitted by South Ayrshire Council to note progress on the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Spaceport Project and to agree next steps.

MEETING WITH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CABINET MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, FIONA HYSLOP AND ARRAN STAKEHOLDERS, 21 February

On 21 February, together with North Ayrshire Council's Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I travelled to Edinburgh to attend a meeting with the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop to discuss the Arran Ferry and subsequent impact on the island. The meeting was also attended by various Arran stakeholders.

The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the ongoing frustrations regarding the business case development and has requested that a status report of the project be provided, outlining the various staging posts for the business case delivery.

It was also agreed that the request from stakeholders to outline a critical path with all aspects of the work and timelines to improve services (including vessels) set out. Transport Scotland officials would work on this element.

LEADER'S REPORT



Stakeholders stressed the need to set a date for the next Task Force as it was felt that this should be meeting more often and that there should be more transparency with the business case for members of the public.

TRADE UNION AND PRESS BUDGET BRIEFINGS, 22 February

On 22 February, I attended two separate budget briefings: the first with Trade Unions and the second with the Press.

The Council is facing unprecedented budget challenges due to factors that are largely beyond its control, including increased energy costs, inflation, and the Cost-of-Living crisis. These issues are being faced by councils across the country and are significantly impacting the 2024/25 budget.

COSLA LEADERS' MEETING, 23 February

On 23 February, I attended a meeting of COSLA Leaders'. It was another packed agenda which included the following items for discussion:

- Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) update
- Active Travel Transformation Project
- 10 Year Population Health Plan
- Digital Strategy Update
- Local Government Finance
- Cruise Ship Levy
- Free School Meals – Scottish Child Payment Expansion
- Education Assurance and Minimum Learning Hours
- New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
- National Care Service

SLARC was reconvened in April 2023 to undertake an independent review of Councillor remuneration, having last reported in 2011. The update sets out the remit set by Scottish Government and COSLA and describes how the committee engaged with local government and other stakeholders, the techniques applied, the evidence considered and the committee's findings.

SLARC was asked to consider the following: workload and responsibilities of councillors, use of social media and other technology, increase in formal committee meetings, breakdown of the average time spent carrying out duties.

LEADER'S REPORT



The recommendation by the SLARC was a proposal to set councillors' salaries at 80% of the median salary for all employees in the public sector in Scotland as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). This results in an annual salary of £24,561 with effect from 1 April 2024.

COMMUNITY AND LOCALITY PLANNING CONFERENCE, 24 February

I was delighted to attend the Community and Locality Planning Conference on 24 February held at the Irvine Volunteer Rooms.

As Chair of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as being a member of the Irvine Locality Partnership, I have come to appreciate the diverse range of work that we are involved in. At the Community Planning Board, partners such as Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, Ayrshire College and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, work at a strategic level to look at developing ideas for our communities. But it is through our Locality Partnerships that these ideas come to fruition and where the relationships are further strengthened enabling all of us to deliver the work that is most relevant to our local communities.

VISIT TO PERSIMMON HOMES, KILWINNING SITE, 26 February

On 26 February, together with North Ayrshire Council Depute Leader, Councillor Shaun Macaulay, I was invited by Persimmon Homes to go along and look at their latest housing development site at Byrehill Grange in Kilwinning. The visit also provided the opportunity to hear about the training opportunities the company offers to young people who wish to train as apprentices.

The development will offer a variety of 426 much-needed two to four-bedroom energy-efficient new homes and will transform vacant, derelict land within the town into a vibrant new housing development which will be in line with North Ayrshire Council's sustainability ambitions.

Thank you to the Persimmon team for the invitation and for the opportunity to hear all about their ambitious plans for this latest housing development here in North Ayrshire. These new modern houses will provide warm and energy efficient homes for residents, in line with North Ayrshire Council's sustainability ambitions, as well as providing opportunities for young people to train as apprentices.

My thanks to Chris Logan, Persimmon West Scotland Managing Director and the team for inviting us along and sharing their plans with us. I look forward to revisiting the housing site upon completion.

LEADER'S REPORT



NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN HEALTHCARE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE, 4 March

On 4 March, I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Healthcare Governance Committee where attendees received reports on patient safety and patient experiences. There was also discussion on quality improvement in areas including food, fluid and nutritional health and safety.

Attendees were also provided with an update on the winter vaccination programme for 2024 detailing the roll out and delivery of the seasonal flu and Covid-19 vaccination programmes.

The Committee were also asked to note and approve minutes from various corporate governance Committees and Groups including the Acute Services Clinical Governance Group, the Pediatric Clinical Governance Group, the Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee and the Primary and Urgent Care Clinical Governance Group.

WELLBEING ALLIANCE EVENT, 5 March

On 5 March, I welcomed attendees to the second Wellbeing Alliance event hosted by KA Leisure at the Irvine Townhouse. North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership's local outcome improvement plan for 2022-2030 sets out three key priority themes: World, Work and **Wellbeing**. The Community Planning Partnership has asked KA Leisure to support the development of a new partnership which will bring together a broad range of partners to create a Wellbeing Alliance for North Ayrshire.

This was the second of these events with the first one held in June last year. The group will focus on ways that people across North Ayrshire can live better lives by:

- Exploring activities which enhance the wellbeing of residents.
- Creating opportunities to build capacity and scale up existing activities.
- Developing new programs that will help to address the challenges that some of our communities' face including social isolation.
- Establishing smart, collaborative approaches to securing new funding.

I look forward to continuing to develop this work with our CPP partners here in North Ayrshire.

VISIT TO CHILDREN 1st, 6 March

On 6 March, I visited Kirsty Aitken and the team at the Irvine premises of the Children 1st charity organisation.

LEADER'S REPORT



Children 1st works to keep children safe, loved and together with their families. The charity offers practical, emotional and financial support to prevent and protect children and their families from harm and to support them to recover from trauma and abuse.

The charity has been successful in receiving some money from our Community Investment Fund which is being used to fund a new post to strengthen the team and to continue the great work with children and families throughout North Ayrshire.

My thanks to Kirsty and her team for inviting me along to visit them.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY AND COST OF LIVING BOARD MEETING, 6 March

Later on 6 March, I chaired a meeting of the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board, where attendees were provided with feedback, received from Public Health Scotland regarding the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26, Child Poverty Progress Report 2022-23 & Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-24.

The Board also discussed the latest update on the progress of the Child Poverty Action Plan Progress Report 2023-24.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS, 8 March

On 8 March, to mark International Women's Day (IWD), I visited North Ayrshire Women's Aid (NAWA) in Saltcoats, who hosted an event to celebrate this special day.

The theme this year for IWD, calls for action to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes and create environments where all women are valued and respected.

My thanks to NAWA for hosting this event and bringing some inspirational women together to celebrate IWD.

CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN WORKSHOP, 11 March

On 11 March, I attended a Child Poverty Action Plan Workshop as part of the continued work of the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board.

LEADER'S REPORT



The Workshop enabled attendees to discuss progress, within their respective services, relating to the Scottish Government “Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26” which was published in March 2022. [Executive Summary - Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/pages/introduction.aspx)

Scottish Government has indicated that its key priorities at present are:

- to support progress toward meeting child poverty targets;
- to address climate change and
- to secure a stronger; fairer, greener economy.

The workshop also helped to identify to future priorities which the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board will drive forward.

My thanks to everyone who attended and took part in discussions.

1ST TIER JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE & CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP MEETING, 13 March

On 13 March, I chaired a meeting of the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and the Corporate Health and Safety Group. Attendees received Health and Safety reports from various Directorates.

As part of the LiveWell – Healthy Working Lives Programme, which is split into five key themes: PlayWell, BeWell, WorkWell, EatWell and SaveWell, a range of resources and support mechanisms have been brought together as part of the SaveWell theme. Recognising the impact that finances can have on our wellbeing, these resources may be useful to Council staff and include:

- ScotWest Credit Union - AVCwise
- Employee Perks, highlighting discounts and at various supermarkets and local businesses.
- Promotion of Jobcentre Plus support for employees who are also in receipt of Universal Credit. This helped employees explore any barriers that may be preventing them from working full time hours.

There are also a number of upcoming activities, dates have still to be agreed, but which are being planned by the LiveWell team, including:

- a “Building healthy habits webinar”
- health checks at Saltcoats Townhall and Cunninghame House

LEADER'S REPORT



- an Everyday Mindfulness Course
- wellbeing activities for Kilwinning schools' cluster
- a range of KA leisure activities.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 15 March

On 15 March, I chaired a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board. The Board received updates on:

- Employability and opportunities to support work taking place across North Ayrshire
- Transformation - an update and presentation on Single Shared Assessment and Data work
- CPP Website update
- Child Poverty and Cost of Living, update on recent work by the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board

There was also some partner discussion and sharing of key developments and working opportunities.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marie Burns".

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

27th March 2024

North Ayrshire Council

Title: North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Ltd

Purpose: To appoint a new director to the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Ltd

Recommendation: That the Council agrees to the appointment of David Hammond to the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Ltd

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Articles of Association of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVt) stipulate that there will be four Appointed Directors who are appointed by North Ayrshire Council. Audrey Sutton will retire from the Council on 31st March 2024 and in consequence will resign as a Director of the NAVt Board on that day. Council needs to appoint a new Director to the Board to comply with the Articles of Association and it is proposed that David Hammond, who will take up post as Executive Director for Communities and Housing on 1st April 2024 is appointed to the role.

2. Background

2.1 The Articles of Association of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVt) stipulate that there will be a maximum of nine directors on the Board. The present directors are Alan Hill, Louise McPhater, Craig Hatton, Audrey Sutton being Appointed Directors and the co-opted Directors are Billy Kirkwood, Derek McCrindle, and Justin Jones.

2.2 Four directors are appointed by the Council and comprise 2 elected members and 2 officers. Co-opted directors are appointed by the Board and approved by the Council. Audrey Sutton will retire from the Council on 31st March 2024 and in consequence will resign as a director of the NAVt Board on that day. Council requires to appoint a new director to the Board and it is proposed that David Hammond, who will take up post as Executive Director for Communities and Housing on 1st April 2024 is appointed to the role.

3. Proposals

3.1 That Council appoints David Hammond as director of NAVt in terms of Article 51 of the NAVt Memorandum and Articles of Association and to authorise the Head of Democratic Services to write to the Board of Directors of NAVt confirming the appointment of David Hammond as director.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None arising from this report.

Human Resources

4.2 None arising from this report.

Legal

4.3 The appointment of a new director ensures compliance with the NAVT Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None arising from this report.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None arising from this report.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 The proposal accords with the Council's priorities of Communities and Local Democracy and Well-being in that NAVT is a charitable company with objectives to:
- relieve poverty among the residents of the area;
 - advance education among the residents particularly among the unemployed;
 - promote training in skills of all kinds, particularly those which will assist residents obtaining paid employment;
 - advance citizenship or community development in terms of Section 7(2)(f) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005;
 - promote other scheme of a charitable nature for the benefit of the residents of the Operating Area.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None arising from this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 There are no consultations required.

Aileen Craig
Head of Service (Democratic Services)

For further information please contact **Aileen Craig, Head of Service (Democratic Services)**, on **01294 324125**.

Background Papers

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NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

27th March 2024

North Ayrshire Council

Title: **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

Purpose: To approve the outcome of the statutory review of Polling Districts and Polling Places.

Recommendation: Council is recommended to a) note the conclusions and recommendations of the review of polling districts and polling places and (b) approve the venues listed in Appendix 1 as polling places for future electoral events.

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires Returning Officers to undertake a periodic review of Polling Districts and Polling Places within their Council area. A review of polling districts and polling places was carried out and consultations undertaken on proposals. No changes are proposed to polling districts and the proposed changes to polling places have been necessitated by the non-availability of some previous venues.
- 1.2 Council is asked to note the outcome of the review and approve the proposals for polling places.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires Returning Officers to undertake a periodic review of Polling Districts and Polling Places within their Council area. A review of polling districts and polling places has been carried out. Three venues utilised as polling places are not going to be available for future use due to Church of Scotland property rationalisation plans. Those venues are:
 - Dunn Memorial Hall, Largs.
 - Kilbirnie Auld Kirk Hall, Kilbirnie.
 - High Kirk Hall, Stevenston.
- 2.2 The review therefore required to consider alternative venues within the polling districts concerned.

- 2.3 A public consultation was carried out asking for feedback on the list of current polling Districts and Polling Places and included the interim proposals for replacement venues. Notice of the review was placed in public facing buildings, sent to MSPs, MPs, Elected Members, accessibility groups, Community Councils, advertised in the local press and placed on the North Ayrshire Council website.
- 2.4 The choice of polling places is determined by a number of principles:
- i. In selecting polling places the Council must follow the guidance issued by the Electoral Commission. Local authorities have a duty to consider the location and accessibility of polling places to voters, and in particular to voters with a disability.
 - ii. The Council tries, wherever possible to avoid the use of schools as polling places, to reduce or remove the inconvenience this causes to pupils, parents and the school.
 - iii. It is important not to change polling places unless essential as this leads to confusion for voters and potentially could reduce turnout.
- 2.5 The initial proposals for review were advertised and consulted upon from 2nd October 2023 to 30th November 2023. The changes proposed were:
- Dunn Memorial Hall, Largs, moving to Clark Memorial Hall, Largs.
 - Kilbirnie Auld Kirk Hall, Kilbirnie, moving to Garnock Community Social Club, Kilbirnie.
 - High Kirk Hall, Stevenston, moving to Ardeer Neighbourhood Centre, Stevenston.
- 2.6 Consultation responses were received covering the following points:
- **Clark Memorial Hall:** Clarification was required on the venue to make it clear that the venue proposed was the church hall rather than the church. Clarification was provided during the course of the consultation period by amending the plans. Generally, this proposed venue was considered acceptable and will be clearly marked and signed on polling day.
 - **Garnock Community Social Club:** Comments in relation to this proposed venue reflected the premises being referred to locally as “the Labour Club” and whilst still in the polling district, it was a distance from the existing polling place. It was suggested that Ladeside Pavilion be considered as it is nearer to the existing polling place, is convenient for public transport having a bus stop nearby, its own car park and has no previous “affiliations” which may deter voters. Whilst Ladeside Pavilion had been considered as part of the initial review, and was discounted due to works which would require to be done to ensure it met accessibility standards, officers decided to reconsider that venue.
 - **Ardeer Neighbourhood Centre:** This is some distance from the existing polling place which could in turn deter voter turnout. Stevenston Library was proposed as an alternative.

- 2.7 Following this feedback, the alternative proposals of Ladeside Pavilion, Kilbirnie, and Stevenston Library, Stevenson, were assessed by officers and considered to be suitable. In terms of Ladeside Pavilion, some adaptations are required to improve accessibility. A further period of consultation was undertaken and no further comments were received.
- 2.8 The finalised proposals for polling places are detailed in Appendix 1. No changes are considered necessary to polling districts.
- 2.9 If Council approves the proposals there is provision for appeal, for certain aggrieved parties, to the Electoral Commission on the grounds that the review does not meet the reasonable requirements of the electorate and take sufficient account of disabled access to polling stations. However, it is considered that the review does meet all statutory requirements.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 That Council (i) notes the conclusions and recommendations of the review of polling places and polling districts and (ii) approves the venues listed in Appendix 1 as polling places for future electoral events.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 The costs associated with hiring venues as polling places for all except Local Government elections, are reclaimed from national Governments.

Human Resources

- 4.2 None

Legal

- 4.3 The conduct of the review meets the statutory obligation to review polling districts and polling places in terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 Three local organisations were contacted in terms of accessibility for voters and no comments were received. All polling places are fully accessible.

Climate Change and Carbon

- 4.5 None

Key Priorities

- 4.6 The review accords with the Council priority of 'Communities and Local Democracy' by ensuring that polling places are accessible and within polling districts to encourage participation in democracy by the local electorate.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 None

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation was undertaken with Chief Officers, Local Members, MPs, MSPs, Council employees, accessibility groups, Community Councils and notification to the public was given by newspaper advert and publication on the Council's website.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive of North Ayrshire Council

For further information please contact **Aileen Craig, Head of Service (Democratic Services)**, on **01294 324125**.

Background Papers

None

2023 Review of Polling Districts/Polling Places in North Ayrshire: Final Proposals

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 1 NORTH COAST				
Barrfields Pavilion Greenock Road LARGS KA30 8QJ	NA101	NO CHANGE	N/A	Barrfields Pavilion
DA Hall The Garrison MILLPORT KA28 0AZ	NA102	NO CHANGE	N/A	DA Hall, Millport
Dunn Memorial Hall Bath Street LARGS KA30 8BL	NA103	Proposal – Change to Clark Memorial Hall	Change required due to Church of Scotland property rationalisation. The proposed hall provides all required facilities and is in close proximity to the previous polling place.	Clark Memorial Hall Bath Street Largs KA30 8BL Directly across the road from Dunn Memorial Hall
Fairlie Village Hall 72 Main Road FAIRLIE KA29 0AB	NA104	NO CHANGE	N/A	Fairlie Village Hall
Largs Campus Gymnasium Alexander Avenue LARGS KA30 9EX	NA105	NO CHANGE	Gymnasium used – school remains open.	Largs Campus Gymnasium
Skelmorlie Community Centre Skelmorlie Castle Road Skelmorlie PA17 5AH	NA106	NO CHANGE	N/A	Skelmorlie Community Centre

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 1 NORTH COAST				
West Kilbride Community Centre Corse Street WEST KILBRIDE KA23 9AX	NA107	NO CHANGE	N/A	West Kilbride Community Centre
WARD 2 GARNOCK VALLEY				
Barmill Community Centre Beith Road BARRMILL KA15 1HW	NA201	NO CHANGE	N/A	Barmill Community Centre
Beith Community Centre 45/47 Kings Road BEITH KA15 2BQ	NA202	NO CHANGE	N/A	Beith Community Centre
Beith Parish Church Hall 17 Kirk Road BEITH KA15 1EX	NA203	NO CHANGE	N/A	Beith Parish Church Hall
Bridgend Community Centre 17-19 Bridgend KILBIRNIE KA25 7DJ	NA204	NO CHANGE	N/A	Bridgend Community Centre
Dalry Primary School Sharon Street DALRY KA24 5DR	NA205	NO CHANGE	Community wing used - school remains open on Polling Day.	Dalry Primary School
Kilbirnie Auld Kirk Hall Dalry Road KILBIRNIE KA25 6HY	NA206	Proposal – Ladeside Pavilion, 30 Kirkland Road, Kilbirnie KA25 6HU	New venue required due to Church of Scotland property rationalisation. Proposed venue which is in the Polling District assessed as suitable with requisite facilities available. Minor upgrading will take place.	Ladeside Pavilion 30 Kirkland Road Kilbirnie KA25 6HU Distance 0.3 miles from Auld Kirk

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 2 GARNOCK VALLEY				
St. Bridget's Primary School Hagthorn Avenue KILBIRNIE KA25 6EJ	NA207	NO CHANGE	School in closed on polling day.	St. Bridget's Primary School
WARD 3 ARDROSSAN				
Ardrossan Civic Centre 150 Glasgow Street ARDROSSAN KA22 8EU	NA301	NO CHANGE	N/A	Ardrossan Civic Centre
Park Parish Church Hall Dalry Road Ardrossan KA22 7LD	NA302	NO CHANGE	N/A	Park Parish Church Hall
Whitlees Community Centre Carrick Place ARDROSSAN KA22 7DT	NA303	NO CHANGE	N/A	Whitlees Community Centre
WARD 4 ARRAN				
Brodick Hall Brodick ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8DL	NA401	NO CHANGE	N/A	Brodick Hall
Corrie and Sannox Hall Corrie ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8JB	NA402	NO CHANGE	N/A	Corrie and Sannox Hall
Kilmory Hall ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8PQ	NA403	NO CHANGE	N/A	Kilmory Hall

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 4 ARRAN				
Lamlash Primary School Mackelvie Road Lamlash ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8NP	NA404	NO CHANGE	Side wing used – school remains open on polling day.	Lamlash Primary School
Lochranza Village Hall Lochranza ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8HL	NA405	NO CHANGE	N/A	Lochranza Village Hall
Shiskine Hall Torbeg Shiskine ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8HE	NA406	NO CHANGE	N/A	Shiskine Hall
Whiting Bay Hall Shore Road Whiting Bay ISLE OF ARRAN KA27 8PR	NA407	NO CHANGE	N/A	Whiting Bay Hall
WARD 5 SALTCOATS & STEVENSTON				
Ardeer Neighbourhood Centre Shore Road Ardeer STEVENSTON KA20 3NB	NA501	NO CHANGE	N/A	Ardeer Neighbourhood Centre
Argyle Community Centre Campbell Avenue SALTCOATS KA21 5AF	NA502	NO CHANGE	N/A	Argyle Community Centre

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 5 SALTCOATS & STEVENSTON				
Dykesmains Primary School Simpson Drive Saltcoats KA21 6EY	NA503	NO CHANGE	School is closed on polling day.	Dykesmains Primary School
Hayocks Community Centre Hyslop Road STEVENSTON KA20 4HS	NA504	NO CHANGE	N/A	Hayocks Community Centre
High Kirk Hall Schoolwell Street STEVENSTON KA20 3DL	NA505	PROPOSAL - Change to Stevenston Library, 1 Main Street, Stevenston KA20 3AB	High Kirk Hall, Stevenston, will no longer be available for use due to Church of Scotland property rationalisation. Library will be closed the afternoon before polling day, polling day and morning after polling day.	Stevenston Library 1 Main Street Stevenston KA20 3AB Distance 0.2 miles from High Kirk
St Anthony's Primary School Dykesmains Road SALTCOATS KA21 6DE	NA506	NO CHANGE	School is closed on polling day.	St Anthony's Primary School
Mayfield Primary School Kenilworth Drive SALTCOATS KA21 6HS	NA507 & NA508	NO CHANGE	School remains open with traffic management arrangements in place.	Mayfield Primary School

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 6 KILWINNING				
Cranberry Moss Community Centre Cambusdoon Place KILWINNING KA13 6SL	NA601	NO CHANGE	N/A	Cranberry Moss Community Centre
Dirran's Centre Dirrans Terrace KILWINNING KA13 7PH	NA602	NO CHANGE	N/A	Dirran's Centre
Mansefield Trinity Church West Doura Way KILWINNING KA13 6DY	NA603	NO CHANGE	N/A	Mansefield Trinity Church
Nethermains Community Centre Nethermains Road KILWINNING KA13 6ES	NA604	NO CHANGE	N/A	Nethermains Community Centre
William Love Memorial Hall Moncur Road KILWINNING KA13 7LD	NA605 & NA606	NO CHANGE	N/A	William Love Memorial Hall
Woodwynd Hall David Gage Street KILWINNING KA13 7EF	NA607	NO CHANGE	NA	Woodwynd Hall

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 7 IRVINE WEST				
Castlepark Community Centre 4 Castlepark Road IRVINE KA12 9LQ	NA701	NO CHANGE	N/A	Castlepark Community Centre
Redburn Centre Dickson Drive IRVINE KA12 9EW	NA702	NO CHANGE	N/A	Redburn Centre
St. Mark's Primary School Clark Drive IRVINE KA12 0NS	NA703	NO CHANGE	Due to the size and layout of St. Mark's Primary School it is not possible to allow the school to operate on Polling Day. This school will therefore continue to close on Polling Day.	St Mark's Primary School
Vineburgh Centre Quarry Road IRVINE KA12 0PS	NA704	NO CHANGE	N/A	Vineburgh Centre
Volunteer Rooms High Street IRVINE KA12 0BA	NA705 & NA706	NO CHANGE	N/A	Volunteer Rooms

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 8 IRVINE EAST				
Lanfine Community Centre Lanfine Terrace IRVINE KA11 1BT	NA801	NO CHANGE	N/A	Lanfine Community Centre
Littlestane Community Hall Littlestane Road IRVINE KA11 2EX	NA802	NO CHANGE	N/A	Littlestane Community Centre
Annick Primary School (formerly Stanecastle Primary School) Benslie Rise Girdle Toll IRVINE KA11 1BQ	NA803	NO CHANGE	Early Years area (new extension) used. School remains open.	Annick Primary School
Towerlands Community Centre Towerlands Farm Road IRVINE KA11 1PY	NA804	NO CHANGE	N/A	Towerlands Community Centre
WARD 9 IRVINE SOUTH				
Drybridge Community Centre Main Street Drybridge IRVINE KA11 5BY	NA901	NO CHANGE	N/A	Drybridge Community Centre
Elderbank Primary School St Kilda Bank IRVINE KA11 1LA	NA902	NO CHANGE	School remains open on polling day.	Elderbank Primary School

CURRENT POLLING PLACE	Polling District	Change/ No Change	Comments	NEW POLLING PLACE
WARD 9 IRVINE SOUTH				
Fullarton Community Hub 1 School Lane IRVINE KA12 8DF	NA903	NO CHANGE	N/A	Fullarton Community Hub
Springside Community Centre Overtoun Road Springside IRVINE KA11 3BG	NA904	NO CHANGE	N/A	Springside Community Centre
Townend Community Centre 15 Townfoot Dreghorn IRVINE KA11 4EQ	N905	NO CHANGE	N/A	Townend Community Centre

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

27 March 2024

North Ayrshire Council

Title: Working Group on Local Representation

Purpose: To report on the findings and recommendations of a short-life Working Group on Local Representation

Recommendation: The Council is invited to:

- (a) Note the work carried out by the short-life Working Group on Local Representation; and
- (b) Note the conclusions reached by the Working Group on Local Representation.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17 May 2023, the Council approved a motion on the establishment of a short-life Member Officer working group to examine opportunities for, and any gaps in, local representation. The motion also sought further information on the operation of community councils and the process for reviewing the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in North Ayrshire.
- 1.2 A politically representative working group met in June and August 2023 with a further meeting in January 2024 to consider the above and prepare recommendations for the Council's considerations.

2. Background

- 2.1 The following motion was approved by the Council at its meeting on 17 May 2023:

“Council notes that Community Councils are operating in some areas of North Ayrshire and are working hard in partnership with local Elected Members to give their communities a voice; however, some areas currently don't have an active Community Council.

Council further notes that Community Councils as the first tier of Local Government are an important and vital part of local democracy especially when it comes to their role as a statutory consultee under Planning Legislation.

Council therefore agrees to instruct officers to bring to a Special Council meeting a report outlining the current operation of Community Councils in our area and highlighting which areas do not have an active Community Council.

Officers are also requested to advise Council of the process for the review of the Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils and its implications in the event that Council decides at a Special Meeting to review the Scheme.

Furthermore, the Council agrees to:

- 1. Establish a Members' short-term working group that will explore how local representation operates in each of North Ayrshire's localities. The purposes of this working group will be to:
 - a. Establish how local representation currently operates.*
 - b. Clearly define the representative roles of existing groups.*
 - c. Identify where there are gaps in local representation; and*
 - d. Establish a plan that helps ensure equality of local representation across all areas of North Ayrshire, which will include clarification on the different representative roles of Locality Partnerships and community councils and how non-statutory community groups fit into local representation; and**
- 2. Consider, review, and potentially agree to implement the recommendations of the short-term working group at the proposed Special Meeting of North Ayrshire Council along with the report on the review on the Scheme of Establishment."*

- 2.2 The politically representative working group, which included officer participation from Connected Communities and Democratic Services, met on 27 June 2023, and 10 August 2023 with a concluding meeting on 18 January 2024. The June meeting focused on the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils ("the Community Council Scheme") and agreeing what further information the group required to complete the work requested of it. At the August meeting, the group considered a presentation showing the range of communities, both geographical and of interest, who are presently involved in participating through the various mechanisms surrounding locality planning. This is included as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The current Community Council Scheme was adopted at a Special Meeting of the Council on 30 March 2016. The Scheme provides for up to 17 community councils covering every part of North Ayrshire. At the moment, eleven are active, namely Arran, Beith and District, Cumbrae, Fairlie, Irvine, Kilbirnie and Glengarnock, Kilwinning, Largs, Skelmorlie, Stevenston and West Kilbride.
- 2.4 Locality planning is a requirement of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. It is one of the ways local communities work together with public and third sector organisations to improve residents' lives and neighbourhoods. North Ayrshire has taken a particularly inclusive approach to community and locality planning, understanding that building community capacity and social capital within our communities is a more effective route to reducing inequalities than public sector service delivery alone.
- 2.5 Each of the 6 localities in North Ayrshire – Arran, Garnock Valley, Irvine, Kilwinning, North Coast and the Three Towns – has a well-developed Locality Partnership, where elected members, community representatives and officers from the Council and partners come together to identify and act on their local priorities. The work of these partnerships extends beyond the formal meetings themselves, with a range of

participation opportunities available in each locality. Appendix 1 explains these and the various communities, geographical and of interest, who are engaged in them. The overview is illustrative, not comprehensive.

- 2.6 The working group considered the support which is available should areas without an active community council wish to establish one, and the range of other groups in each area including the ways which they can be involved in decision making. They also considered the national context, with the Democracy Matters phase 2 conversation taking place nationally to consider if some decisions about a wide range of Scotland's vital public services that are currently the responsibility of either national or local government should be taken closer to the people, they most affect. This is part of the ongoing Local Governance Review which has been a shared review by the Scottish Government and CoSLA and is expected to produce recommendations for action.
- 2.7 The group considered how information on the opportunities which are available to participate is shared with communities. The development of a new participation strategy, outlining the commitment of the Council and its partners to participative approaches, and the various opportunities which are available, will help to clarify the purpose of different community participative groups and the ways in which people can take part in them. This will include clear information of the roles of the representative groups as well as the less formal routes for participation.
- 2.8 The working group discussed the challenges around participation, including ensuring representativeness, and encouraging people to participate when life can be demanding and there may be less capacity for them to do so. Officers recognised these challenges and were able to advise that representativeness is a core consideration when designing participation routes, including ensuring that people can engage in the way that is most appropriate and attractive to them. It was recognised that sustained participation requires adequate resourcing and appropriate skills and methods, and this will be an ongoing challenge which officers will continue to address along with support from elected members.

Conclusions

- 2.9 The majority of the working group found that there was no current need for a review of the community council scheme of establishment, given the range of participation opportunities available in all geographical areas, although not all members were in agreement with this. Encouragement would continue to be given for community councils to be established in areas which do not currently have one. In the absence of any recommendation by the working group to conduct a formal review of the Community Council Scheme at this stage, there is no requirement for the matter to be considered at a Special Meeting of the Council.
- 2.10 The working group recognised that the local representation through locality planning is extensive and that the majority of groups in each area are already represented in an appropriate way. They agreed that there were several groups where stronger links should be developed in order to ensure all communities of interest across the area had opportunities to participate. This in particular included continuing the developing work with older people and ensuring that the link with BME communities is strengthened. Work is being progressed around these areas.

- 2.11 The working group requested that consideration be given to whether non-statutory community groups could receive information on planning proposals in order to submit responses. This was investigated and information was shared that groups could sign up to the portal in order to receive the same information as statutory consultees such as Community Councils. This will be vigorously promoted.
- 2.12 In view of the depth and breadth of participation and engagement across North Ayrshire, and the potential of forthcoming change through the conclusions of the Local Governance Review, the working group concluded that there was no need for any changes to the current landscape of representation within North Ayrshire beyond the developmental work outlined in 2.7. In addition, the promotion of opportunities to participate should continue through local networks and partners to ensure that the widest possible range of community members are aware of them.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 Note the work carried out by the short-life Working Group on Local Representation; and
- 3.2 Note the conclusions reached by the Working Group on Local Representation.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None

Human Resources

- 4.2 None

Legal

- 4.3 None

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 None

Climate Change and Carbon

- 4.5 None

Key Priorities

- 4.6 Strategic Aim - We will have active, inclusive, and resilient communities.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 None

5. Consultation

5.1 No consultation was required.

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For further information please contact **Rhonda Leith, Head of Service (Connected Communities)**, on **01294 324415** or **Rhondaleith@north-ayrshire.gov.uk**.

Background Papers

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