



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 12 June – 3 September
2023

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

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HARBOURSIDE HOUSING OPENING CEREMONY, 12 June

On 12 June, I was delighted to attend the official opening ceremony of North Ayrshire Council's latest housing development at Irvine Harbourside. The site provides 71 new houses including general needs houses, amenity bungalows and homes for wheelchair users. The development also includes a sheltered housing complex called "Alfred Nobel House" which overlooks the harbour.

The development followed extensive consultation with local residents to ensure the design of the homes blended in with the coastal area. All of the properties have been built to the Scottish Government's Greener Standard ensuring that all homes are environmentally friendly and energy efficient.

This latest development is part of our ambitious plans to build 1,625 new homes by 2028.

THE PROMISE JOINT YOUTH CABINET, 13 June

The first ever "Promise" Joint Youth Cabinet was held on 13 June at Redburn Community Centre and together with North Ayrshire Council Cabinet, I was delighted to take part in discussions with some of our care experienced young people.

The event provided the platform for some of our care experienced people to share their views and own experiences with North Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and North Ayrshire Youth Services.

I would like to thank all the young people who came along and had the courage to talk about their own personal experiences. As Corporate Parents, it is important that we listen to these experiences and ensure we improve in the areas that need addressing.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING COMMISSION, 14 June

On 14 June, I chaired a meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Wealth Building (CWB) Commission in Cunninghame House, Irvine. Attendees received updates from the Lead Officer Working Group, the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and the Ayrshire Growth Deal CWB Fund (Project updates). Attendees then took part in a series of discussions

LEADER'S REPORT



focusing on what climate action projects and initiatives exist locally that would benefit from adding value through CWB. Members also discussed the following in relation to Climate Change and CWB:

- How we can ensure a “Just Transition” for Ayrshire
- How do we grow the green sector within Ayrshire and in line with CWB
- Is there scope to amplify existing initiatives or explore new opportunities eg scale up community-owned energy generation.

My thanks again to officers and partners for taking part in these discussions which will work towards ensuring that our CWB and Climate Change Strategies work in tandem.

GREENWOOD ACADEMY PRIZEGIVING, 14 June

Later on, 14 June, I was delighted to be asked to attend the junior prizegiving for years S1, S2 and S3 at Greenwood Academy.

It is always heart-warming to hear of the achievements of our young people especially after their hard work during the academic year. I hope that teaching staff and pupils have all had an enjoyable break over summer and are ready for the new school year.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT SESSION WITH CHIEF EXECUTIVE, 15 June

On 15 June, together with North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive Craig Hatton, I took part in a virtual Staff Engagement session. The “Have your Say” event is one of a series of events that have been held for North Ayrshire Council staff to hear about the Council’s plans for the next few years and to hear about the Administration’s key priorities which include the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Climate Emergency and Working with Communities.

CHAP CELEBRATION EVENT, 16 June

I was delighted to be asked along to CHAP Offices in Ardrossan for a celebration event held on 16 June. CHAP is an Ayrshire charity which helps people from all walks of life with a range of housing, welfare, and debt issues. It also provides education and early intervention services. They provide free, confidential support on housing, debt, and benefit issues. With support and guidance, they offer clients straightforward, practical advice to make their lives better. The charity has three departments: Housing Advice, Money Advice, Welfare Advice. CHAP brings a wealth of benefits to individuals and the local community through its work; keeping people in homes and accessing welfare support for those who need it most as well as educating young people how to avoid related problems.

LEADER'S REPORT



It was lovely to be able to hear more about the charity's work, get a tour of the premises, meet the staff there and to be asked to present certificates to members of the team who had recently completed Diplomas in Digital Application Support.

My thanks to Debbie Alexander, CHAP's Chief Executive for asking me along to celebrate their achievements.

LAUNCH OF AYRSHIRE REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY, 19 June

On 19 June, together with Councillor Dougie Reid, East Ayrshire Council Leader and Chair of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership and Alastair Dobson, Chair of Regional Economic Strategy Working Group, I took part in the official launch of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (ARES) held at the Harbour Arts Centre in Irvine.

The ARES launch follows months of collaborative working and is the first of its kind to highlight the importance that Community Wealth Building has to play in our local economy. North Ayrshire Council has led the way in Scotland with Community Wealth Building and this is heavily reflected in the strategy which sets out a vision to strengthen our regional economy and to improve the lives of our communities here in Ayrshire.

It is the collective desire to take a more inclusive approach to regional economic development based on the principles of Community Wealth Building which is of huge significance and importance.

BROOMLANDS AND BOURTREEHILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AFTERNOON TEA, 20 June

On 20 June, I met with members of the Broomlands and Bourtreehill Association (BABCA) at Towerlands Community Centre for an afternoon tea. It was good to hear from BABCA members about events happening in their area and for them to raise any issues of concern.

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE, 21 June

On 21 June, I attended an NHS Audit and Risk Committee meeting where attendees discussed various Audit and governance papers. The Committee also approved the annual accounts for 2022/23 which will now be submitted to the NHS Board for their approval.

The Committee also approved the Annual Audit Assurance statement which will go to the NHS Board for final approval.

LEADER'S REPORT



COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 22 June

I chaired a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board on 22 June. Following on from the success of our last CPP Board meeting where we focused on the “Wellbeing” priority from our Partnership Plan, the meeting focused on the “World” theme.

The Board received a presentation from Jennifer Wraith, Manager for the Energy and Sustainability team at North Ayrshire Council, on the work of the Climate Change Steering Group. Board members were asked to consider opportunities to support the work taking place across North Ayrshire.

Board members also received a presentation on the Children’s Services Plan and to approve the Child Poverty Report and Action Plan and the Children’s Rights Report.

There were also presentations and further updates from the Green Health Partnership, the Active Travel team and work being done on the Cost of Living. Board members were asked to consider opportunities to support the work taking place across North Ayrshire in all of these areas.

GARNOCK CAMPUS SCHOOL SHOW, 22 June

Later on, 22 June, I was delighted to attend Garnock Campus school show “Back to the 80s”. The show was superb and there were fine musical and acting performances by pupils. It was a wonderful evening and a great way to celebrate the end of the school year. Well done to all those involved in putting the show together.

WELLBEING ALLIANCE EVENT, 23 June

On 23 June, I welcomed attendees to a 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 new group will focus on ways that people across North Ayrshire can live better lives by:

- Exploring activities which enhance the wellbeing of residents.

LEADER'S REPORT



- Creating opportunities to build capacity and scale up existing activities.
- Developing new programmes that will help to address the challenges that some of our communities face.
- 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.

COSLA BUSINESS GATEWAY BOARD MEETING, 23 June

Later on, 23 June, I attended a meeting of the COSLA Business Gateway Board where attendees received updates on the work of the Business Gateway National Unit and Marketing. The Board also discussed objectives for the Business Gateway National Unit following on from the new performance framework and reporting approach that was agreed in April 2019.

The current performance reporting was also developed prior to the announcement of the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, announcements of new strategies and operational changes from Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the establishment of the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency and the Business Support Partnership in its current form and announcements on the end of European Regional Development Funding and Incoming UK Shared Prosperity Funds.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 26 June

I attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee on 26 June. Attendees received updates on the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Implementation and Financial Plans, an update on the AGD Benefits Realisation Plan and an update on the AGD programme risk register.

Signed in November 2020 the AGD is a £251.5 million ten-year investment programme covering the three Ayrshire local authority areas. This funding will support a range of activities across six themes (Aerospace and Space; Economic Infrastructure, Energy, Circular Economy & Environment; Tourism; Digital and Communities). Amongst other outputs, the Deal is projected to unlock private investment and generate up to 7,000 jobs.

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN ENDOWMENT TRUSTEES MEETING, 27 June

On 27 June, I attended a meeting of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Endowment Trustees. The Committee were asked to consider a bid for funds for an Ayrshire Cancer Support facility in

LEADER'S REPORT



Kilmarnock, which was approved. The Committee also received a report on expenditure up to March 2023 and a portfolio performance report.

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN SPECIAL BOARD MEETING, 27 June

Following on from the Endowment Trustees meeting on 27 June, I attended an NHS Special Board meeting where Board members were asked to consider and approve the Integration Schemes for East, South and North Ayrshire Councils Health and Social Care delivery.

HOUSING CEREMONIES, 29 June

On 29 June, I attended the opening of two housing developments. The first one was Friar's Lawn in Kilwinning and the second was at Caley Gardens in Stevenston. The 22 properties at Friar's Lawn sheltered housing, have undergone major refurbishment works including energy-efficient boilers, insulated rendering and new windows. New kitchens have been fitted taking into consideration the needs of the residents using dementia friendly design principles.

The Caley Gardens development consists of 12 one-bedroom and three two-bedroom properties. Each home has been equipped so that assistive technology can be installed to suit the needs of each individual resident, helping to provide support in a way that promotes independent living.

All homes are modern and energy efficient and are part of our continued commitment to build 1,625 homes by 2028.

COSLA LEADERS', 30 June

On 30 June, I attended the final COSLA Leaders' meeting before summer recess and the final meeting for the outgoing COSLA Chief Executive, Sally Loudon. It was another packed agenda including the following items for discussion:

- Local Government Finance
- Council Tax Joint Working Group update
- National Care Service
- Local Government Data Platform Project
- The Promise
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- Asylum Dispersal

LEADER'S REPORT



In May 2020 Leaders approved a project to explore the development of an online data portal for Local Government. The aim being to explore the creation of an online data portal that would coordinate data returns to third parties while streamlining data and the processes required to provide it. The Improvement Service (IS) has led this work, with governance provided by an Oversight Group jointly chaired by SOLACE and COSLA and they will now be looking at implementation of Phase 2. Phase 2 will include Rationalising the data reporting landscape, ensuring it meets assurance requirements, reducing manual collection and improving reuse (using proof of concepts).

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY AND COST OF LIVING BOARD MEETING, 5 July

On 5 July, I chaired a meeting of the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board. Attendees discussed the Cabinet approved Child Poverty Strategy & Action Plan for 2023/24 and received updates on the following items:

- Health Impact Assessment – Mitigating the impacts of the rising cost of living audit of North Ayrshire supports.
- Childcare mini-enquiry output report
- No Wrong Door
- Data Update

The Board agreed with the proposed format with data, progress updates and next steps presented together to demonstrate a clear rationale, progression, and future improvements. NHS Ayrshire & Arran Child Poverty Plan actions have been mapped into this work and a shorter public friendly version of the report will be devised to sit alongside the full report, which aligns with legislative Child Poverty reporting requirements.

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN HEALTHCARE BOARD MEETING, 14 August

On 14 August, I attended a meeting of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board meeting. Attendees received updates on several reports including the Parent Experience annual report for 2022/23 and a Quality and Safety report for Pediatrics. The Board also received updates from some of the key items from the most recent meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee, HealthCare Governance Committee and Staff Governance Committee.

LEADER'S REPORT



MARYMASS OPENING FESTIVAL, 17 August

On the 17 August, I attended the Marymass Festival Opening Ceremony at the Townhouse in Irvine. I would like to congratulate Gordon Storrar on being re-elected as Captain of Irvine Carters.

WELLBEING SHOWCASE, 18 August

I was delighted to be invited to a “Wellbeing Showcase” on 18 August held at the Harbour Arts Centre. The event uses the power of drama therapy to connect young people allowing them to express themselves whilst addressing issues surrounding Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Congratulations to all the young people involved in putting such a powerful and moving production together.

THREE TOWNS LOCALITY VISIT, 21 August

Together with North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I took part in the first of several locality visits to visit some of our staff and community organisations in their place of work. The first visit was to the Three Towns and I was delighted to meet and chat with one of the residents from Afton Court to find out how they are enjoying living there.

This was followed by a visit to North Ayrshire Council Building Services at Portland Place. It is always great to get the opportunity to meet and talk to Council staff and find out what their work entails and hear how things are post-pandemic.

The final stop was at “Doon The Beach Café” on Shore Road and meeting with the volunteers who provide fantastic food and refreshments to our community there. It has been a positive addition to the area and well worth a visit.

VISIT TO MILLPORT, 23 August

On 23 August, I went on the second of the Locality visits again with our Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, this time to Millport. Visits included Cumbrae Primary School where I met with the Head Teacher, Julie McAleese and spoke to some Ukrainian children to find out how they have settled into life on the island and adjusted to being at school on the island.

The next visit was to the newly refurbished Millport Town Hall where I got the chance to meet with the Chair of the Trustees, Angie McCallum and find out about funding and progress of the renovation works to the Town Hall.

LEADER'S REPORT



To end the day off, a visit to the Flood Protection Scheme and a meeting with the Council Roads Team Leader, Martin Miller plus representatives from the contractor to discuss ongoing works and its progress.

COSLA LEADERS', 25 August

On 25 August, I attended COSLA Leaders' meeting for another packed agenda which included the following items for discussion:

- Scottish Welfare Fund Action Plan Update
- Local Government Finance Update
- Scottish Recommended Allowance Foster and Kinship Carers
- Joint Health and Social Care Winter Planning Priorities
- Asylum Contingency Accommodation and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- Ukraine Strategic Policy Position Paper, Welcome Accommodation Proposals and Funding

The Ukraine Strategic Policy Paper asks Leaders to agree the draft proposals contained in the paper 'A Warm Scots Future' (appended) before its publication. It provides an update on welcome accommodation proposals and ask Leaders to agree next steps. The paper also updates Leaders on discussions between COSLA and UK and Scottish Government officials regarding funding for the scheme in order that local authorities are appropriately resourced and reimbursed for the work being undertaken.

MARYMASS SATURDAY, 26 August

I was delighted to go along to Marymass Saturday on 26 August and see the crowning ceremony of the Marymass Queen, Rebecca Orr. I took part in the parade up to Irvine Moor and attend the Provost's Reception and lunch. My thanks to Provost Anthea Dickson for a lovely afternoon and my congratulations to the Royal Marymass Party who have performed their duties so well as part of the longstanding, local traditions of Irvine.

VISIT TO ST BRIDGETS PRIMARY SCHOOL, 28 August

On 28 August, together with Depute Leader, Councillor Shaun Macaulay, I visited St Bridget's Primary School in Kilbirnie. The visit provided the opportunity to meet with the Head Teacher and staff and also to meet with pupils who kindly showed us round their allotment where they are learning the benefits of growing fresh produce. The pupils have been learning how to plan,

LEADER'S REPORT



look after and cook with the produce. It was a fantastic visit and great to see the enthusiasm shown by the pupils when they were talking about their allotment project.

My thanks to Dennis Hopkins, Head Teacher and to all the staff for taking time out of their busy day to meet with us.

LOCALITY VISIT TO ARRAN, 30 August

On 30 August, another locality visit, to Arran this time. Together with the Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I visited and met with HSCP staff at "Glenartney". Glenartney premises were set up to be used by North Ayrshire Health & Social Care staff who have accommodation problems on the island. It was interesting to learn about the specific challenges they face on the island.

From there, it was a visit to Arran Eco Savvy to hear about the fantastic work the group continue to do in order to reduce Arran's carbon footprint, reducing food waste and delivering on environmental projects.

The day was rounded off with an interesting visit to Arran High School, with a meeting with the Head Teacher, Susan Foster and to hear about the school's involvement in sports. The school was awarded a "gold" level award in the Sport Scotland national school sport programme.

Then a visit to Arran Youth Foundations, a youth group making a difference in the lives of teenagers on the island. The Group received £45,226 in Community Investment funding in 2020 from North Ayrshire Council and this has been used to enhance mental health and well-being services for young people in crisis.

From there a visit to Arran High School Mountain Bike Club which encourages residents on the island to engage in cycling activities.

Finally, to wrap up the day, a visit to the Council Area Office in Lamlash to meet front office staff, the Streetscene team and social work colleagues. My thanks to Brodie Pearcey for taking us round the island all day and giving up his time.

LEADER'S REPORT



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

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council