



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 28 February 2018

Responses to Questions

Question

- (a) a question by Councillor Donald L. Reid to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

“The Road systems in North Ayrshire including those which are the responsibility of Scotland Transerv have been badly affected by the rain, snow and long period of ice which prevailed between November 2017 and January 2018. I would invite the Cabinet member for Place to comment on:

- (1) What plans NAC Roads have to bring our Roads generally in North Ayrshire back up to an acceptable standard with any specific comments on Roads within the Garnock Valley area which has suffered disproportionately because the Valley suffered with longer periods of snow and ice during November 2017 - January 2018?
- (2) What is the likely cost of these repairs?
- (3) Is NAC considering asking the Scottish Government to provide additional funding to be spent exclusively on assisting in bringing our crumbling roads network back to an acceptable stand and if not, why not?”

Response

- “(1) In line with best practice the Council has adopted an Asset Management approach to road maintenance and undertakes an annual programme commensurate with the allocated budget. The prolonged spell of poor weather during the current winter has caused significant damage to the road network. To support our roads team additional contractors have been engaged to assist in repairing potholes that have developed over the on-going cold spell.

With specific reference to the Garnock Valley in addition to on-going pot-hole repairs wider resurfacing work is being arranged for Auldlea Road, Laigh Road and Beech Drive in Beith and Milton Road in Kilbirnie and the rural road known locally as the Coldstream Road.

The road maintenance programme which is being developed for 2018/19 has taken cognisance of a number of roads, across the area, that have deteriorated more quickly than expected as a result of the continued poor weather. The details of projects being included in the programme will be presented to Cabinet for approval on the 20 March 2018 following agreement of the Council’s budget.

- (2) The Council’s Roads Asset Management Plan agreed in January 2017 estimated, at that time, a maintenance backlog figure of £30.9m. The above average deterioration attributable to the prolonged cold spell over the current winter will have increased this figure.

The specific works currently being arranged within the Garnock Valley at Auldlea Road, Laigh Road and Beech Drive in Beith and Milton Road in Kilbirnie along with the rural road known locally as the Coldstream Road are estimated at £115,000. In addition to this the additional cost of employing contractors to assist in repairing potholes in the Garnock Valley is approximately £30,000.

(3) The Leader of the Council has written to the Finance Minister on several occasions regarding the budget settlement and the requirement to provide additional funding to enable the Council to invest in its services.”

(b) a question by Councillor Donald L. Reid to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:-

“Can the Cabinet Member for Place tell this full council meeting how many families have been evicted from NAC properties between 1.1.17 and 31.12.17 (or whatever period its easier to get figures for)”

Response

“The Council only evicts tenants as a last resort when all other avenues to support tenants have been exhausted. Unfortunately eviction is unavoidable in some instances such as where tenants continually refuse to make arrangements to pay their rent, engage in continuous or serious anti-social behaviour or seriously or continually breach tenancy agreements.

The approach taken by the Council to support tenants to pay their rent and manage their tenancy in a responsible way enables the Council to have one of the lowest eviction rates in Scotland.

In the calendar year 2017 57 evictions took place of which 51 were for rent arrears, 6 for anti-social behaviour and 1 for breach of tenancy.”

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

“At a Special Meeting of North Ayrshire Council held on 20th. December, 2017 a Resolution was passed and agreed by all Councillors to exclude the press and public on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6,8, and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7a of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973.

Will the Leader of the Council inform members if an enquiry has been carried out to establish the identity of the Labour insider, who according to a report in the Irvine Herald, allegedly passed confidential information to the reporter regarding information disclosed at the Special meeting?”

Response

Cllr Cullinane will respond.

(d) a question by Councillor Gallacher to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:-

“**Neatebox** is a system worked through an app, that helps blind people, and the less mobile, like wheelchair users, to locate, and operate pedestrian crossings and the like, by using their phone. The app enables them to request to cross, without having to find, or attempt to reach the button on the crossing that the rest of us would press. The software link for this gets built into the existing road crossing boxes retrospectively.

There are already a few local authorities who have taken up this service, and I am led to believe that there are more in the pipeline who are almost at the rolling out stage. Given that Irvine High Street is in the process of being done up, would the council leader please have a serious look into this service, in order to make the day to day lives of our sightless and mobile impaired residents just that bit easier, in particular, when it comes to crossing roads.”

Response

“The Council’s pedestrian crossings meet all appropriate regulations regarding accessibility. However it is recognised that there are many developing technologies that may increase the ease with which they can be used by our communities.

Indicative prices of £200,000 have been received from one supplier to purchase the hardware required to retrofit the 274 push button crossings within the area. Any on-going maintenance requirements would need to be added to this figure.

Officers will work with the North Ayrshire Access Panel to identify appropriate technology and funding implications for consideration within the public realm improvements within Irvine.”

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

“Can the Council Leader assure me that he will not be recommending further cuts to classroom assistant posts in his budget proposals later today?”

Response

Councillor Cullinane will respond.

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

“Can the Portfolio holder for Finance provide me with answers to the following questions:-

- 1) What was the public response level to the budget consultation?
- 2) How much did it cost?
- 3) Do you think it was the best method of engaging with the public?”

Response

- “1) 207 people responded to the survey
- 2) Total cost £11,208.
- 3) Engagement with residents on the budget reflects the wider commitment of the Council to work in partnership with our communities. Increasingly councils are using tools like “The Budget Challenge” to engage with communities on options to bridge funding gaps.”

- (g) a question by Councillor Brahim to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:-

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Place confirm when the upgrade of the B714 will take place?”

Councillor Brahim has requested that this question be withdrawn.

- (h) a question by Councillor Murdoch to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:-

“For the Cabinet Member – Place

What do North Ayrshire Council intend to do about the poor quality, below expectations, reduced budget prom surface, that a very large number of residents and visitors are complaining about on Largs Shore Front?”

Response

“As the procuring service the Executive Director (Economy and Communities) has written to all North Coast members regarding the works to the promenade and shelters. A copy of the correspondence is attached.”