



# North Ayrshire Council

Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 13 February 2019

Responses to Questions



## Question

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

"Can the portfolioholder for Economic Development please update the elected members on the work being undertaken at Lochshore, and in particular the contribution and agreement with Scottish Enterprise?"

## Response

"The *Go Garnock Charette* in 2016 and the Locality Patrtnership both identified the development of Lochshore as being important to the local community. Since then funding was secured to employ a dedicated regeneration officer and master planning for the site got underway. This has identified a vision to develop the site as a 'Parkland Destination.' A concept layout of the site has been produced which outlines potential uses and is being consulted on.

In addition, a number of projects are already progressing. These include consultation on the design of four active travel routes which would connect the site to the local communities of Kilbirnie, Glengarnock and Beith. The Council have also been working with the local rugby club and this has informed an application from the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund to develop a Community and Tourism Hub. This would provide new facilities for the Garnock Rugby Club, community space and a visitor centre. The application is through to second stage and we expect to hear this month on its outcome. If successful, the hub would act as a focal point for future plans across the site.

80% of the site is in Scottish Enterprise's ownership and discussions with SE are ongoing about the long term ownership and management of the site. The Council facilitated a site visit by the SE Chief Executive, Steve Dunlop in September last year providing an opportunity for him to see and hear first hand of the plans in progress. Site investigations are currently underway, the results of which will be available in early April 2019 and will be the subject of future discussions between SE and the Council, informing options on ownership and development requirements."

## Question

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

"What is the current policy for student mobile phone usage within primary and secondary schools in North Ayrshire?"

## Response

"Education and Youth Employment has a Standard Circular which offers guidance to schools on pupil use of mobile phones and similar equipment in schools.

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There may be circumstances where pupils could have a legitimate reason for bringing a mobile phone to school. They might, for example, have to contact their parents to make arrangements at the end of the school day. A universal prohibition of mobile phones in school would not, therefore, be desirable.

However, there is no necessity for pupils to have access to mobile phones during the school day and particularly during class time. Schools will have details of emergency contact information for parents or guardians, normally through the school office. Pupils and parents should be made aware of these arrangements. The use of mobile phones should, therefore, be prohibited during class time and discouraged during the school day.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority has issued specific guidance prohibiting the possession of mobile phones during examinations. The General Teaching Council for Scotland has advised teachers that contact with pupils through texting is inappropriate.

In the Standard Circular, schools are advised to devise their own policy taking account of the following:

- Any use of mobile phones in class time is unacceptable.
- Possession of a mobile phone during a prelim or other examination is prohibited.
- The use of mobile phones at intervals and lunch times should be discouraged. Use within the school building should be prohibited at these times.
- Taking photographs of staff or pupils without consent should be prohibited.
- All emergency contact between home and school should be through the school office rather than by mobile phone.
- Pupils may be asked to hand in their phones to the office at the start of the school day and collect them at dismissal. Head Teachers, if selecting this option, should consider carefully the administrative demands of such a system and should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for identifying and returning the correct phone.
- As with all valuable items of equipment, parents should be made aware that no liability can be accepted for loss of or damage to mobile phones which are brought to school.
- The school policy should be drafted in consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the Parent Council.
- Head Teachers may wish to include specific reference to mobile phone use in school handbooks.
- Head Teachers should use staff handbooks to remind all staff of GTC Scotland guidance that staff should not use texting, at any time, to communicate with individual pupils”

## Question

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

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Place provide an update on progress of the realignment of the B714 between Dalry and Saltcoats?”

## Response

“Discussions have been held with the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland to seek support for improvements and potential trunking designation for the B714. An appraisal in accordance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) has commenced in line with Transport Scotland requirements. The Pre-Appraisal and Part 1 Appraisal phases of this are now complete. This has identified the upgrade of B714 as an option to be taken forward for consideration at further stages of the STAG process. This will be taken forward for further consideration through an Ayrshire Regional Transport Appraisal as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

The commitment to funding the Ayrshire Growth Deal was made on the 30 January 2019 and Heads of Terms are expected to be completed in March. It is anticipated that the commitment to undertake the Regional Transport Appraisal will be included in the Heads of Terms.”

## Question

- (4) a question by Councillor McPhater to the Cabinet Member for the Economy in the following terms:-

“The Fraser of Allander Institute recently produced the latest socio-economic briefing for North Ayrshire Council. I understand that, as well as providing an overview on a range of economic and social statistics for our area, the Fraser of Allander scrutinised the analysis used by the Government to determine the main operational locations for the new Social Security Agency. Can the Cabinet Member for Economy tell the Council what the Fraser of Allander's report states in relation to that decision?”

## Response

“The Fraser of Allander Economic Briefing for North Ayrshire includes analysis of the Scottish Government's decision regarding the location of the new Social Security Agency. The analysis in this report has been conducted independently by the Fraser of Allander Institute at the University of Strathclyde.

The independent report outlines the methodology used by the Scottish Government to determine the two locations to base the headquarters of the new Agency. Two phases determined where the headquarters were to be based. Phase 1 shortlisted 15 authorities which had access to a large labour force, either directly or within commuting. This list included North Ayrshire. Phase 2 aimed to further narrow this list by considering 'detailed quantitative evidence against an expanded set of criteria' and led to a shortlist of 4 Local Authorities – Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Dundee City. Dundee was chosen as the eventual site for the headquarters and Glasgow was chosen as a secondary office.

The report states that out of the 43 indicators used for Phase 2 of the process, North Ayrshire was preferential to Dundee in 34. The 43 indicators were split into four categories: Ability to Recruit; Inclusive Growth; Regeneration; and Proximity to Claimants. The Fraser of Allander aggregated the weighted scores of each category to show that this places North Ayrshire third and Dundee seventh. The report highlights that local authorities which ranked low in the 'Ability to Recruit' category were then excluded. This included North Ayrshire – even though it came out top for 'Inclusive Growth' category.

North Ayrshire was allocated a score low in 'Ability to Recruit' category due to scores in factors such as population, working-age economically active population and population density – indicators in which cities will perform well. The Fraser of Allander illustrate that, without this subgroup, the top three rankings would go to Glasgow, North Ayrshire and Inverclyde.

In short, the report summarises that despite North Ayrshire being identified as best choice of location for 'inclusive growth', it was passed over because it was felt that the local authority might struggle to attract people to work there, despite its close travel links to Glasgow.

It is worth noting that the report also illustrates the levels of regional inequality in Scotland and argues that tackling regional inequalities will only be achieved by 'investing significantly in Scotland's more fragile economic communities'. Additionally, the Fraser of Allander state that it is their view that 'given that the Scottish Government has made regional inclusive growth a priority, North Ayrshire should continue to press for recognition of the importance of national interventions to support economic development'".

## **Question**

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

"Could I ask the Cabinet Member for Place if there are any plans for the building and land at Hazeldene in Kilwinning now that the Cabinet decision has been taken to close the Hazeldene Public Social Partnership with services to be provided at Trindlemoss in Irvine?"

## **Response**

"Following the Cabinet decision to transfer the services currently provided at Hazeldene to Trindlemoss on its completion, officers are reviewing options for the use of the vacated land and buildings. On completion of the review, a report outlining recommendations for the future use of the site will be submitted to Cabinet for members' consideration."

## Question

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

"In relation to the closure of the swimming pool and leisure facilities at Harvies proposed by the administration, the Council Leader appears to have provided reassurances to Cllr Sweeney on social media that a public engagement exercise will be held amongst Three Towns residents in regard to the closure.

Can he confirm that is the case and, if so, that this will be extended to residents of Kilwinning and other surrounding towns to ensure that the engagement is as wide as possible, and allows as many users of Harvies facilities to have their views recorded as possible?"

## Response

"I have not only given Councillor Sweeney that assurance, I voluntarily attended the Stevenston Community Council last week to advise them of the process and to answer their questions on the issue.

I think it is important to be clear that this is an idea for a Campus in Ardrossan at this stage. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires a formal consultation on such projects and we are not at this stage yet. This is an early engagement process that will inform a project proposal which is based on a sound business case and which has been informed by a range of stakeholders through an open, transparent and valued early engagement. This will allow us to enter into the formal consultation period with a confidence that the community have been involved in informing the project and thus allow us to be in a position to obtain Scottish Government funding for the project at the earliest opportunity when the new school funding programme opens.

The Engagement Mandate proposed is extensive and in relation to Harvies includes KA Leisure members of the centre, user groups of the centre and North Ayrshire residents, including Kilwinning residents, who use the facility. I am keen to ensure the widest possible engagement on the issue and continue to discuss this further with officers. I can assure the member that the process will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to share their views."

## Question

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

“Will the Leader of the Council provide members with:-

- 1) Details of all deposits made by North Ayrshire Council to Icelandic Banks/Financial Institutions between 2004/2008, to include name of Bank/Financial Institution, amount/term of investment, rate of interest and interest received from each investment?
- 2) The Institution that advised the Council on its Icelandic Investment Strategy?
- 3) The full and final repayment received by North Ayrshire Council in 2014 from the investments of 5 million pounds in Landsbanki and 10 million pounds in Glitnir banks?
- 4) Details of all fees/charges paid to banks, consultants, and individuals in relation to the Icelandic Bank transactions?”

## Response

- “1) The undernoted details all investments with Icelandic Banks between 2004 and 2008. The rates of return on investment were broadly in line with those secured from other institutions.

Icelandic Bank Deposits								
Institution	Principal Invested £m	Date of Investment	Date of Maturity	Term (Days)	Interest %	Principal Received £m	Interest Received £m	Total Received £m
Singer & Friedlander	5.000	20/10/2005	19/10/2006	364	4.60	5.000	0.229	5.229
Landsbanki	10.000	26/01/2006	25/01/2007	364	4.64	10.000	0.463	10.463
Singer & Friedlander	5.000	03/05/2006	02/05/2007	364	4.90	5.000	0.244	5.244
Landsbanki	5.000	18/05/2006	17/05/2007	364	4.99	5.000	0.249	5.249
Singer & Friedlander	5.000	19/10/2006	18/10/2007	364	5.37	5.000	0.268	5.268
Glitnir	5.000	30/11/2006	28/02/2007	90	5.22	5.000	0.064	5.064
Landsbanki	10.000	25/01/2007	24/01/2008	364	5.83	10.000	0.581	10.581
Glitnir	7.500	18/05/2007	18/02/2008	276	5.80	7.500	0.329	7.829
Landsbanki	2.000	16/08/2007	14/09/2007	29	6.30	2.000	0.010	2.010
Landsbanki	5.000	24/01/2008	14/11/2008	295	6.10	4.784		4.784
Glitnir	10.000	29/01/2008	21/01/2009	358	5.27	9.745		9.745
	<b>69.500</b>					<b>69.029</b>	<b>2.438</b>	<b>71.467</b>

- 2) All investments were carried out in line with North Ayrshire Council's Treasury Management Strategy where investment were only made to banks with ratings of “A” or above for long term investments and “F1” for short term investments. The credit ratings were provided by three recognised rating agencies who assisted in ascertaining the credit quality of banks and similar institutions. Compliance with the policy was confirmed by Internal Audit and reported to The Executive of North Ayrshire Council on 28 October 2008.  
No specific advice was provided by any institution on these investments.
- 3) Cabinet reports between June 2013 and March 2015 kept members fully apprised of the approach to secure the best possible return for the Council taking account of:

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- Independent professional advice;
- The value, timing and currency of any distributions;
- Foreign exchange risk and Icelandic capital controls;
- Ongoing cost of legal advice.

The table above provides information on the full payments received in respect of Landsbanki and Glitnir, with 95.7% and 97.5% of the principal being recovered. The final position in respect of Landsbanki was reported to Cabinet in April 2014 and Glitnir in March 2015.

- 4) North Ayrshire Council was one of eight Scottish local authorities and a significant number of English local authorities affected by the collapse of the Icelandic Banks. A coordinated approach, led by the Local Government Association, was taken to secure return of funds and minimise the cost of doing so. The principal legal advisor was Bevan Brittan. Over the period 2009 to 2016 this costs the Council totalled £177,382.”

### **Question**

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

“Does the Leader of the Council still cling to the belief that the purchase of a Shopping Mall by the Council, with an asking price of £55 million, was a wise and commercially prudent move, in the light of a shopping centre in Fife put up for auction with a reserve price of only £1, being sold for £310,000?”

### **Response**

Councillor Cullinane will respond.

## Question

- (9) a question by Councillor Marshall to the cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:-

“A question to the portfolio holder for Health and Social Care.

Please list for each of the last five financial years the average number, within North Ayrshire, of

- a. Care home placements - both the total available and the number funded by the Council
- b Nursing home placements - both the total available and the number funded by the Council
- c. Care at home packages funded by the Council and the waiting list at the end of each year.”

## Response

“(a) and (b)

### North Ayrshire Older People's Care Homes

Capacity at January each year:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
DUAL	631	664	631	631	571
Nursing	312	248	249	249	249
Residential	154	160	160	160	157
Grand Total	1,097	1,072	1,040	1,040	977

5 year % reduction 10.9%

Total registered care home capacity available across North Ayrshire, would include capacity also used by other Council areas and private clients, as client choice determines care home placement.

### Average Funded North Ayrshire Placements (resident in NA care home):

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	5 Year Average
Nursing	542	534	473	490	461	500
Residential	223	225	219	222	224	223
TOTAL	765	759	692	712	685	723

Only includes those care home residents who are accessing financial support including FPC from the Council, any residents not requesting financial support would not be included

**Additional information:****Average Funded NA Placements (including placed out-with area)**

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>5 Year Average</b>
Nursing	646	644	638	602	578	622
Residential	252	258	258	259	256	257
TOTAL	898	902	896	861	834	878
% resident NA	85.2%	84.1%	77.2%	82.7%	82.1%	82.3%

**Total admissions/discharges in-year (demonstrating movement within homes):**

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Admissions	400	385	379	348	255
Discharges	372	363	368	324	234

Includes all residents supported by NA, including those out-with area. 2018-19 is not a complete year, only to January 2019

(c)

**Care at Home**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of service users receiving care at home service</b>	<b>Number of service users on the waiting list for a care at home service from hospital and community</b>
31/03/2015	1,737	36
31/03/2016	1,689	33
31/03/2017	1,791	76
31/03/2018	1,789	52
As at 8/2/19	2,091	53

## Question

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

“Question to the portfolio holder for Education.

What is the Council’s policy in relation to pupils who

a. are caught in school in possession of drugs with intent to supply

or

b are charged/convicted of being in possession of drugs with intent to supply out with the school premises?”

## Response

“All of our schools operate within the context of the Scottish Government guidance Included, Engaged and Involved, Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusion.

Each child or young person and each individual case or incident will be dealt with on an individual basis, given the school’s knowledge of the child or young person and his or her context and circumstances. This is particularly relevant if a child/ young person is care experienced or has additional support needs.

In general when a child or young person is caught in school in possession of drugs with intent to supply both the police and parents/ carers will be informed. A school may decide to exclude the pupil. Responsibility for decisions of this nature is delegated to Head Teachers. Schools are asked to be proportionate in their response and exclusions should provide an opportunity for reflection for the child or young person. Also, all children and young people have a right to education; and education authorities have a duty to provide this education. Arrangements to allow the child/ young person to continue his/ her education must be made timeously.

If a child or young person is charged or convicted of being in possession of drugs with intent to supply outwith the premises then the right to education remains the same. The school may be informed of a charge by the police or the child/ young person, or the parent/ carer, however at the stage of a charge there is no compulsion in any of the parties to share information. If the school is informed of a charge, then a decision would be made to assess risk and plan accordingly.

If a young person is found guilty in court of a charge of being in possession of drugs with intent to supply then a decision on the best means to provide education would be made by the education authority after careful consideration of all of the facts and through discussion with the Head Teacher. Again a young person has a right to education and education authorities have a duty to provide this education.”

## Question

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

"While I welcome the proposal for a new Ardrossan Academy, can the Cabinet Member for Education give an assurance that issues raised by my constituents will genuinely be taken into account during what I have been assured is simply an initial period of public engagement?"

## Response

"Yes

All communications received in respect of the current pre-engagement process will be noted and taken into account when officers report back to Cabinet in June 2019."

## Question

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

"A multi million pound contract to build a new ASN school has been awarded by the Labour administration to Morrison Construction, a company named in the Scottish Affairs Select Committee Report as having used the Consulting Association blacklist to identify, deny employment to or terminate the jobs of trade union members.

The contract was awarded by Hub West Scotland.

However, as it is a North Ayrshire Council led project, can the Portfolio Holder advise me what representations, if any, they have made to hub West Scotland about Morrison Construction winning the contract and how does the award of the contract conform with this Council's previous commitment that companies exposed as having blacklisted workers should be excluded from Council contracts?"

## Response

"Following representation to the Scottish Government in January 2016, officers reviewed the Council's engagement with Hub South West and their supply chain and were given assurance that the Hub Programme Office Guidance Note (01/14) "Exclusion from Public Contracts of Companies which Engage in Blacklisting" provides contracts conditions which ensure companies which engage in blacklisting are excluded from these contracts.

In addition, following my instruction, officers sought evidence from Morrison Construction and their parent company, Galliford Try that they do not engage in blacklisting. We received the following statement:

"To the best of our knowledge, Galliford Try and the subsidiaries it manages have never been involved in blacklisting.

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We condemn the use of any blacklisting or discriminatory employment practices within our industry and continue to pursue a positive industrial relations policy with our workforce and supply chain.

Following the high profile of the issue in 2013/2014, investigations have been held but we have found no evidence of any involvement by any company managed by Galliford Try.

Galliford Try is not and has not faced any legal action from claimants alleging that they were blacklisted.”

Officers have also spoken directly with the Chief Executive of Hub South West regarding this matter, as a result of which it has been agreed that contractors will be asked specifically about blacklisting in tendering exercises.

Given our policy on backlisters not receiving public contracts I also personally made contact with trade unions to ascertain whether they had evidence of Morrison blacklisting workers – I was advised there were no contemporary cases.”

## **Question**

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

“Recipients of Universal Credit can have a single deduction taken from their benefit to be allocated equally between the recovery of an overpaid Tax Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. There is a legal maximum set for this but over and above this maximum, NAC is contacting customers to ask them to repay more. Can the Leader confirm how many people are currently repaying on this basis and provide a breakdown of the income it has brought into the council since the introduction of Universal Credit?”

## **Response**

### **“Council receiving Direct Deduction**

If the customer is repaying Housing Benefit debt by direct deductions from Universal Credit or other DWP benefits, they are not asked to pay additional monies towards this. The debt will continue to be collected in this manner until such time as it is repaid or the Council is advised by DWP it can no longer be collected. On this basis no additional income has been collected from customers where direct deduction from Universal Credit or other DWP benefits applies.

### **Council not receiving Direct Deduction**

It is only when the Housing Benefit debt is not being repaid by direct deductions that the Council will contact the customer and endeavour to secure further information on their financial position and where appropriate enter into an arrangement to collect the Housing Benefit debt. Affordability plus the customer’s circumstances are always taken into consideration to ensure hardship is not caused to that person or their dependants. If the customer cannot or will not enter into a payment arrangement, the debt will follow the regular corporate recovery procedure. No specific information is available on these arrangements as this aligns with the Council’s regular debt recovery process.”

## Question

- (14) a question by Councillor Gallagher to the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms:-

“Local SNP MSP, Kenneth Gibson claims North Ayrshire Council have received a 9.5% funding uplift for 2019/20. Does the Leader of the opposition agree with me that there is a deep dishonesty in the way that the MSP has presented those figures to his constituents with the result being the public being misled on the financial reality faced by this Council?”

## Response

Councillor Burns will respond.

## Question

- (15) a question by Councillor Murdoch to the Chair of the Planning Committee in the following terms:-

“What dialogue have NAC had regarding the Liaison Committee for the Oil Rig Decommissioning Site at Hunterston since the last Full Council meeting in December?”

## Response

“Planning Permission, subject to conditions, was granted by the Planning Committee in April to vary Condition 1 of Planning Permission (ref 16/00268/PP) to allow use of the site for decommissioning of large marine structures. Condition No. 8 states:

‘That within 3 months of the date of the consent, a draft Code of Practice for the operation of the construction, repair and decommissioning of Marine Structures, hereby approved, shall be submitted for the approval in writing by North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority. The draft Code of Practice shall include the formation of a liaison committee, which shall comprise of local councillors, local community group members, the site operator and other interested parties; and should include the timescales for the meetings of the liaison committee. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with any Code of Practice as approved by North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.’

In November 2018, the applicant, Clydeport Operations Ltd., submitted by letter, the proposed Hunterston Marine Yard Liaison Committee – Draft Terms of Reference. The applicant proposed that ‘the meetings of the Liaison Committee are expected to only take place once the Hunterston Marine Yard is fully consented and there is an operator secured by Peel Ports on a contractual basis and business has been secured for the facility enabling the facility to become operational.’

In response at that time, Officers advised that an early meeting of the Liaison Committee should be held and not await the Hunterston Marine Yard being fully consented and an operator secured by Peel Ports on a contractual basis and business has been secured for the facility enabling the facility to become operational.

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At the meeting of the Council's Planning Committee on 5 December 2018, the Senior Manager (Planning) noted and circulated the terms of reference for the Hunterston Marine Yard Liaison Committee as set out in Condition 8 of planning permission (ref. 17/01273/PP) which had been submitted by the applicant. The Committee questioned the reason for the delay in the set up of the Hunterston Marine Yard Liaison Committee. However, the Members raised no objections to the Draft Terms of Reference

Officers subsequently discussed the matter with the applicant, Clydeport Operations Ltd., on 17 January 2019 to again encourage early dialogue with the respective partners on the Liaison Committee. It is understood that the applicant is progressing with the necessary arrangements and the first meeting is scheduled for 18 March 2019."

## **Question**

(16) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Chair of the Planning Committee in the following terms:-

"Why are Largs and Skelmorlie Community Councils not included in the Liaison Committee for the Oil Rig Decommissioning Site at Hunterston?"

## **Response**

"In the submission in November 2018 on the proposed Hunterston Marine Yard Liaison Committee – Draft Terms of Reference, the applicant, Clydeport Operations Ltd., the membership of the Liaison Committee was proposed by Clydeport Operations Ltd.

At the meeting of the Council's Planning Committee on 5 December, the Senior Manager (Planning) noted and circulated the terms of reference for the Hunterston Marine Yard Liaison Committee as set out in Condition 8 of planning permission (ref. 17/01273/PP) which had been submitted by the applicant.

The members of the Liaison Committee is proposed to be:

- North Ayrshire Council – 2 named Local Councillors and their nominated deputies when they are unable to attend in person;
- Cumbrae Community Council – a named representative and their nominated deputy when they are unable to attend in person;
- Fairlie Community Council – a named representative and their nominated deputy when they are unable to attend in person;
- West Kilbride Community Council – a named representative and their nominated deputy when they are unable to attend in person;
- Peel Ports/Operator – up to 3 representatives between the landowner and the site operator. Attendees flexible subject to matters to be discussed;
- Chairperson – the appointment of a named independent chairperson;
- Secretariat – Peel Ports to act as secretariat.

It has been agreed with Peel Ports that invitations are also extended to Largs and Skelmorlie Community Councils."



## Question

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

“Will the promotion and operation of tourism be affected by the Oil Rig Decommissioning Site at Hunterston and the operation of industry within Hunterston Park?”

## Response

“Hunterston is a strategic industrial investment site being promoted for development by the Peel Group. The site has been an industrial location for over 60 years and is of national importance as an energy hub and deep water port and as such, has a critical role in the diversification of the economy.

Our approach to developing a more resilient and vibrant North Ayrshire economy is to build upon the area’s strategic assets and ensure that our local residents are equipped to take advantage of good quality local jobs. Tourism is a key component of this strategy and initiatives such as the Coig and the Ayrshire Growth Deal proposals to develop Irvine Harbourside/Ardeer Peninsula as a major waterfront destination and to strengthen our marine tourism offer should attract more visitors. Moreover investment and job creation in our strategic locations at Hunterston and I3 play a vital part in developing a year round economy, which in turn supports the growth of the hospitality, food and drink sectors.”

## Question

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

“What has been done to implement the decriminalisation of parking and what measures have been taken to create new parking in Largs since the Full Council Meeting held on 9 May 2018?”

## Response

“A Project Steering Group, has been established to develop the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) and car parking charges. The Steering Group comprises officers from Roads, Economy & Communities, Legal Services, Communications and Customers and Digital Services. Initial preparations have included officers meeting with Transport Scotland. A project plan has also been developed which identifies the key activities and milestones to introduce DPE and car parking charges. Key actions that are being progressed include:- review of the Car Parking Strategy, review and consolidation of Traffic Regulation Orders, audit of car parks, assessment of options for enforcement ( in-house delivery, shared service , third party), infrastructure and payment options, including the use of digital technology and cashless payment options. A business case for the introduction of DPE and car parking charges is being prepared and will identify a number of charging options for consideration.

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It is proposed to take a paper on proposals to the Policy Advisory Panel on 2nd May and following this to take recommendations for approval to the Cabinet meeting on 11th June.

If approved at Cabinet an application will be submitted to the Scottish Government for DPE powers to be introduced in the North Ayrshire Council area. This is a statutory process and it is anticipated that following the application being submitted it will take a year for powers to be granted by Scottish Government. It is therefore anticipated that the introduction of DPE and car parking charges could be introduced on 1st October 2020 depending on the outcome of the statutory process.

With respect to additional parking spaces in Largs I can advise that the shore front car park has been re-marked providing an additional 10 parking spaces within the car park. There are no additional measures currently proposed however as part of the DPE project the Roads Service are currently reviewing existing parking restrictions in all towns with the aim of consolidating our parking restrictions Traffic Regulation Order and maximising parking spaces within our towns. In addition, Officers continue to work with all Largs elected members to identify potential sites which could be utilised for additional parking.”

## **Question**

(19) a question by Councillor Murdoch to Councillor Marshall (as a Council representative on an outside body) in the following terms:-

“Why did Councillor Marshall raise the following motion to the Hunterston Site Stakeholder Group at the meeting held on Thursday 6 December?

That Hunterston Site Stakeholder Group issues a press statement saying "Hunterston Site Stakeholder Group has every confidence in EDF and ONR and their staff in the safe and continuing operation of Hunterston B Station.””

## **Response**

“Cllr Murdoch was actually in attendance at the meeting in question and would have heard the debate. I would have thought that rather than asking me this and other previously asked Questions on the Agenda he would have sought in person an explanation from a fellow Ward Member rather than repeated grandstanding

However, to answer the Question. I moved the Motion for the following reasons.

The Motion supported a statement made by Mr Stuart McGhie, Vice Chair and Trade Union representative on the Hunterston Stakeholder Group ( SSG) and was subsequently agreed by all the Council appointees to the SSG who are also voting Members and the majority of the other voting Members of the SSG.

Ms Rita Holmes, Chair of the SSG was reported in BBC Online News on 21 November 2018, in local media and in Ferret as stating that “she did not believe that Reactor 3 should be brought into operation.” (Reactor 3 is currently shut down awaiting clearance to restart from the Office of Nuclear Regulation).

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Mr McGhie, vice Chair and Union Rep, reminded Mrs Holmes that being the chairperson did not give her “dictatorial rights” to make statements on behalf of a democratic organisation. He called upon her to retract her statements as many of the 500 workers were angry at her position. This she refused to do.

North Ayrshire Depute Provost Robert Barr told Mrs Holmes that she should be impartial stating “I don’t think you are because you are antinuclear”. Mrs Holmes who attends meetings of a Nuclear Free Zone Committee replied “I am not totally pro Nuclear”

I was of the belief that Mrs Holmes alleged statements did not reflect the views of the SSG and as a Senior Councillor believed that the workforce should be supported and so moved the Motion which was subsequently agreed almost unanimously.

Mrs Holmes subsequently stated in the Press that she was speaking in a “personal capacity.”