



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 18 March
2019

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

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 18 March 2019

VISIT TO PRESTON – COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING, 14 February

I visited Preston on 14 February to hold further discussions with their Council Leader, Councillor Matthew Brown regarding Community Wealth Building. The visit also provided the opportunity for me to visit some of the buildings in the town centre which have been transformed following the social and economic benefits that community wealth building has brought to the area.

I am a strong advocate of Community Wealth Building and am keen to look at this further, as it has the potential to harness wealth more effectively and bring much needed economic, social and environmental benefits for our communities throughout North Ayrshire.

COUNCIL HOUSING SOLAR PANEL REFIT PROGRAMME, 18 February

On 18 February, together with the Cabinet Member for PLACE, Councillor Jim Montgomerie, I visited one of North Ayrshire Council's houses in Stewart Avenue in Irvine, which will benefit from the Council's solar panel refit programme.

North Ayrshire Council is currently fitting solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on up to 500 houses as part of an ongoing commitment to tackle fuel poverty. The initiative will produce major financial benefits for residents who are likely to save up to £115 in the first year alone with continued, annual savings.

Not only will residents reap the financial rewards but the programme will help to tackle the important issues of Fuel Poverty and Climate Change.

VISIT TO ARRAN, 19 February

On 19 February, myself and the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Councillor Alex Gallagher travelled to Arran to attend a business meeting with Sheena Borthwick from the Arran Economic Group and Barry Mochen, Chairman of the Arran Development Trust.

The meeting provided the opportunity to discuss ongoing developments on Arran and also to discuss housing on the island. I am proud of North Ayrshire Council's commitment to build more than 1500 new houses over the coming years as part of our ambitious Strategic Housing Plan (SHIP), with 26 of these being built in Brodick, the first council owned properties to be built there in a generation.

KILWINNING CHARRETTE, 20 February

After securing Scottish Government funding for a Charrette in Kilwinning, I attended the first meeting held on 20 February in Kilwinning Library. It is hoped that the Charrette will help us to engage with the public to identify and renew the Kilwinning Locality Partnership. My thanks to the Kilwinning Charrette team and of course to Neil Fergusson (Ice Cream Architecture), Nick Wright (Nick Wright Planning) and Willie Miller (Urban Design) for your help in taking this forward and valuable input into future planning.

DEPOPULATION MEETING, 22 February

Prior to the start of COSLA Leaders' on 22 February, I and other Council Leaders from Highland and Island authorities, attended a depopulation meeting with the Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development, Ben MacPherson. This meeting was in response to a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, Derek Mackay outlining our concerns regarding population decline and its particular impact on the west coast of Scotland.

COSLA LEADERS, 22 February

I attended COSLA Leaders in Edinburgh on 22 February for a meeting to discuss a range of subjects including the Local Government Settlement 2019/20, the Planning Bill (following the amendments at Stage 2), recognizing the rights of the Gypsy/Travelling communities and a post-Brexit Immigration system. It is anticipated that North Ayrshire may see a population decline over the next 20 years and that inward migration will be crucial in helping to combat this. COSLA will continue to lobby and engage with the UK Government, for a post-Brexit immigration system that can meet Scottish Local Government's needs.

CITIZENS BASIC INCOME FEASIBILITY STUDY COUNCILLOR GROUP, 22 February

Following COSLA Leaders on Friday 22 February, I attended a Citizens Basic Income Feasibility Study Group meeting for Councillors from the participating Local Authorities. This is the 3rd time the Group has met and it provided the opportunity for members to discuss the draft Basic Income update Report due to be submitted to the Scottish Government in March 2019. The Group also had the chance to discuss the findings contained in the report entitled "Exploring the practicalities

of a Basic Income pilot” prepared by the Carnegie UK Trust. The Carnegie UK Trust were sponsors of a study visit to the BIEN Congress 2018 held in Finland, a hub of international learning about basic income pilots underway and currently in planning. Much of the findings from the BIEN Congress have been included in the report and make interesting reading.

EXPRESS YOURSELF EXHIBITION, 28 February

On 28 February I visited the “Express Yourself” exhibition at the Townhouse in Irvine with Councillor Robert Foster, Cabinet member for Health and Social Care. The exhibition features the work of young people taking part in Impact Arts’ and North Ayrshire Throughcare Service’s “Express Yourself” project. The project offers free tuition in creative techniques to young people in North Ayrshire with experience of the care system.

I was greatly impressed by some of the work on display which included pieces the group had worked on with artist Laura Froud. Congratulations to all those involved in putting together such an inspiring and thought provoking exhibition.

LAUNCH OF KILWINNING ACADEMY CREDIT UNION PROJECT, 1 March

I was delighted to be invited along to the launch of the Kilwinning Academy Credit Union project on the 1 March. The project is part of the Innovative Schools Project run by Developing Young Workforce (DYW) and the Prince’s Trust Scotland. Kilwinning Academy pupils will now be able to learn key financial and employability skills while at the same time develop community links.

School pupils throughout North Ayrshire always tell me that they need more support with financial education and it is my opinion that there is no better way to do that than via a Credit Union.

ECONOMIC, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION BOARD, 7 March

On 7 March the Economic Development and Regeneration Board met in Cunninghame House and heard updates on regional partnership collaboration and final steps in securing our Ayrshire Growth Deal.

The Board were also provided with an update on Strategic Transport issues and received a presentation from the Fraser of Allander Institute following the issue of their latest economic report. The report provides an assessment of economic key trends for North Ayrshire and takes into consideration the overall Scottish economic and policy context, including Brexit, the Scottish budget and inclusive growth. Regional economic performance is a key focus of the report given the stark levels of regional inequality in Scotland and to provide context to the Ayrshire Growth Deal and Regional Partnership developments.

SIGNING OF HEADS OF TERMS FOR AYRSHIRE GROWTH DEAL, 8 March

It's been a long time coming, but it was a truly momentous day when I joined the Leaders from East and South Ayrshire, together with our respective Chief Executives and other representatives from the Ayrshire Growth Deal team to welcome the Secretary State for Scotland, David Mundell MP and Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity for the signing of the Heads of Terms for the Ayrshire Growth Deal at Ayr College on 8 March.

The signing of the £250 million Ayrshire Growth Deal will mean the delivery of a range of projects throughout Ayrshire including:

- £80m investment into aerospace and space
- £23.5m Ayrshire manufacturing investment corridor
- £21m in i3 area of Irvine
- £16m Ayrshire engineering park
- £14m tourism investment at Irvine harbourside and ardeer peninsula

The vision is for Ayrshire to be a vibrant, outward looking and confident region that is an even better place to live and attractive to investors and visitors. There is huge potential in Ayrshire, one Ayrshire can make a major contribution to Scottish and UK growth.



FAIR FOR ALL ADVISORY PANEL, 13 March

On 13 March I attended the Fair For All Advisory Panel held in the Ardrossan Civic Centre. The panel were provided with an update on the work to date of the Fair For All Steering Group and then heard about some of the place based work that has been happening. It was particularly interesting to hear from some of the different local organisations and people about the work that they are doing in Ardrossan and the impact it is making.

KILWINNING HOUSING OFFICE OPENING CEREMONY, 15 March

I was delighted to attend the opening of the new Kilwinning Housing Office on Friday 15 March. The previous Housing office was no longer fit for purpose, with the location and design making it difficult for staff and tenants to access. This project has allowed the office to be relocated through the renovation of an empty retail unit into a fantastic and modern housing office on the Main Street of Kilwinning. Well done to the Council's Building Services team on carrying out an excellent job and of course, to the Housing Office staff there who did much of the hard work clearing out the old offices.

NORTH AYRSHIRE UNISON BRANCH OFFICE OPENING, 15 March

On 15 March I was invited along to the opening of the North Ayrshire UNISON Branch office in Irvine Royal Academy. Thanks to all those who have taken this forward in particular to Louise McDaid, Branch Secretary for UNISON in North Ayrshire.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Joe Cullinane'.

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader North Ayrshire Council