

Cunninghame House,
Irvine.

14 December 2017

North Ayrshire Council

You are requested to attend a Meeting of the above mentioned Committee of North Ayrshire Council to be held in the Council Chambers, Cunninghame House, Irvine on **WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2017** at **2.00 P.M.** to consider the undernoted business.

Yours faithfully

Elma Murray

Chief Executive

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 (Page 16)

The accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2017 will be confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (copies enclosed).

4. Provost's Report (Page 35)

Submit report by the Provost for the period covering 5 October - 13 December 2017 (copy enclosed).

5. Leader's Report (Page 45)

Submit report by the Leader of the Council for the period covering 5 October - 13 December 2017 (copy enclosed).

6. **North Ayrshire Council Minute Volume (issued under separate cover)**
Submit for noting, the Minutes of meetings of committees of the Council held in the period 23 June to 6 December 2017.
7. **North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 30 November 2017 (Page 56)**
Submit report by the Chief Executive on the Minutes of the meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board held on 30 November 2017 (copy enclosed).
8. **Audit Scotland Report: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17 (Page 65)**
Submit report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the findings of the recent Audit Scotland report (copy enclosed).
9. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Investment Programme, Revenue Budget and Rent Levels for 2018/19 (Page 78)**
Submit report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the HRA capital investment programme and revenue budget for 2018/19 and the consequential rent levels (copy enclosed).
10. **Festivals and Events (Page 95)**
Submit report by the Chief Executive on the creation of a fund to support community run festivals and events in North Ayrshire (copy enclosed).
11. **Questions**
In terms of Standing Order No. 12 submit:-

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

"Since 2010, £73m of cuts have been made to North Ayrshire Council's budget. Given the accumulative impact of those cuts on services and jobs, the fact that due inflation and increasing demand for services Council officers have projected that we would need an additional £14m+ in funding in 2018/19 just to stand still and that for every percentage increase in Council Tax less than £600,000 is raised; does the Member think that North Ayrshire Council has received sufficient funding and revenue increasing powers from central government to deliver the services that our communities need?"

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

Since 2010, £73m of cuts have been made to North Ayrshire Council's budget. Given the accumulative impact of those cuts on services and jobs, the fact that due inflation and increasing demand for services Council officers have projected that we would need an additional £14m+ in funding in 2018/19 just to stand still and that for every percentage increase in Council Tax less than £600,000 is raised; does the Member think that North Ayrshire Council has received sufficient funding and revenue increasing powers from central government to improve planning services?

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

"Since 2010, £73m of cuts have been made to North Ayrshire Council's budget. Given the accumulative impact of those cuts on services and jobs, the fact that due inflation and increasing demand for services Council officers have projected that we would need an additional £14m+ in funding in 2018/19 just to stand still and that for every percentage increase in Council Tax less than £600,000 is raised; does the Member think that North Ayrshire Council has received sufficient funding and revenue increasing powers from central government to deliver the services that our communities need?"

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

"There has been a great deal of concern expressed by parents and children in Ardrossan over the closure of the play park adjacent to Stanley Road. Indeed, among the first contacts I have with constituents involved their outrage at this park's closure. When I visited one of our local schools recently, the main question pupils wished to ask me concerned this play park's closure.

Much of the coverage of this issue over the last few months has focussed on Councillor Montgomerie's supposed opposition to this closure and his campaign to have it reinstated.

During the 2016/17 budget process, among the many matters considered, was the removal of old, dangerous or underused play parks. The budget package was agreed by the whole Labour group, including Councillor Montgomerie.

The list of recommendations was brought before the Physical Environment Panel for discussion. Councillor Montgomerie was a member of that panel, and raised no concerns about the proposals. Still less did he reject any.

Implementation of the proposals was in the hands of the Labour administration, of which Councillor Montgomerie was a member. Specific responsibility for play parks rests with the Place Directorate. You won't be surprised to hear that Councillor Montgomerie is the Cabinet member with specific responsibility for Place.

Could Councillor Montgomerie please tell me how he can now oppose something HE voted for, raised no objection to, and was specifically responsible for implementing?"

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

"What is the total amount spent, by project, on Capital Projects in Irvine over the last 5 years?"

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

"Following the disappointment of the latest UK budget, can the Leader confirm what steps the Council will take to secure the UK Government's commitment to the Ayrshire Growth Deal?"

(g) a question by Councillor Billings to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:-

"At the Cabinet meeting on 29 August 2017, and subsequently ratified at the Integration Joint Board (IJB) held on 14 September 2017, it was agreed to significantly change the way in which public advice services were provided across North Ayrshire. The decision was to promote the services provided by the Council's Money Matters service, and to put a range of other advice services out to competitive tender.

A consequence of the new proposals is that it significantly changes the manner in which North Ayrshire Council supports the North Ayrshire's Citizens Advice Service. The current funding is in the form of a block grant, in return for which Citizens Advice provides a full range of advice services to anybody who requests advice. However, the money is not ring-fenced and enables Citizens Advice to have the assurance that it has sufficient funds to satisfy its office functions. This stability enables the service to attract significant additional funds so that it can provide a wide range of advice services across North Ayrshire.

At the IJB meeting I voiced my concerns that no account had been taken that the new proposals change the way in which the Council's funding of the North Ayrshire Citizens Advice Service, and that this change has the potential to compromise the services provided by Citizens Advice. It should be remembered that Citizens Advice currently receives less than a ¼ of the funding received by Money Matters, and Citizens Advice service is available to everybody, unlike Money Matters who is only for Health and Social Care clients.

I have been contacted by one of my Arran constituents who has informed me that the Citizens Advice service on Arran is being withdrawn with immediate effect and that reductions in staffing within the advice service are planned. It would appear that advice services to the general population of North Ayrshire are already being compromised as I feared when I voiced my concerns at the IJB meeting.

The result for Arran is that there will no longer be an island-based advice service. Therefore, people who find travel to the mainland difficult will no longer have access to one-to-one advice services. I have been advised that many of the advice issues are not suitable for phone conversations.

My question is how will the Council ensure that the people of Arran continue to have access to a comprehensive one-to-one advice service, without having to travel to the mainland or rely on phone services?"

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

"Are there any plans to decriminalise the parking enforcement and bring it in house to be enforced by North Ayrshire Council?"

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

"Are there any plans to expand, enforce and control the Trading Standards initiative, ("We do not deal with uninvited traders, please leave and don't return")?"

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

"On behalf of issues raised by my constituents in Whitehirst Park and also the cottages on Meadow Park Road leading to the A737 junction, could I ask the Cabinet Member for Place if there are any plans to upgrade Meadow Park Road from north of the roundabout to where it joins the A737 just north of Dalgarven Mill?

And would there be any possibility of incorporating appropriate traffic calming measures on the road where it leads to, and passes the cottages and also improving the junction at the A737 itself?

With road safety in mind can NAC Roads add this as a priority road to ensure it is gritted in line with all other priority roads in the area, and can a decision on gritting be made swiftly to provide the greatest possible benefit for all road users during this winter?"

- (k) a question by Councillor Hill to the Cabinet Member for Communities in the following terms:-

"Can the Cabinet Member for Communities quantify, by community centre, the number of opening hours that have been lost to local communities as a result of recently imposed changes made to staffing levels and charges?

Can she also explain how it can be that Community Associations have been told that they may be made responsible for paying for the holiday and sick pay of council employees given that most of the associations do not employ any of the caretaking staff?

Will she agree to immediately establish a Working Group consisting of Officers, Elected Members and representatives from NAFCO to look in depth at these issues and to look at how we can continue to support and develop community centres as a central asset within each of our communities?"

- (l) a question by Councillor Gurney to the Cabinet Member for Communities in the following terms:-

"At the last local elections the Labour manifesto stated that 'North Ayrshire Labour will seek to establish an Arts and Culture board, with representatives from key industry bodies on it, to develop an Arts and Culture Strategy for North Ayrshire'.

What stage of the creation of this are we at, and most importantly what does Culture look like in North Ayrshire to an industry that contributes £4.6 billion to Scotland's economy every year?"

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

"NAC has recently cut collections of waste for hard pressed residents in North Ayrshire for the second time in as many months. Will the Member commit to no more cuts in the waste collection regime?"

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

"The last SNP administration of North Ayrshire Council achieved record waste recycling rates of 56.5%, the second best in Scotland. Would the Member tell us the current recycling rate?"

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

"North Ayrshire has committed to building 1500 social houses over the next four years. Would the Member tell me how much of the funding, in percentage and absolute terms, has come from the SNP Scottish Government?"

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

"The continued investment in social housing by North Ayrshire is to be commended. Does this administration have any plans to progress with a shared ownership model of house building and, if so, what safeguards will be put in place to ensure we do not return to the dark days of council house sales, thus depleting our stock for those most in need?"

- (q) a question by Councillor McMaster to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:-

"Reports on Arran say that the current Citizens Advice Bureau provision on the Island, consisting of four hours in temporary accommodation every week, is to be removed.

There are also reports that the withdrawal of the service is directly at the behest of North Ayrshire Council.

Would the Member tell me if these reports are accurate and, if so, the reasons for removing this essential service to our Island community at a time of unprecedented austerity and in the face of the negative impact of the roll out of Universal Credit?"

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

"The Cabinet has decided to postpone the upgrade of the B714 and make it dependent on central government funding. What concrete confirmation has the Portfolio Holder for Place been given that such funding will become available and when?"

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

"New Street in Dalry is one of two streets within North Ayrshire Council to have been assessed as substandard and in need of monitoring in the sense of the Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2010. Although the Dalry Bypass, funded and built by the SNP Scottish Government, is anticipated to hugely alleviate any air quality issues on New Street, there is still over a year to go before construction is completed.

According to the Council's 2017 Air Quality Annual Progress Report, NO2 levels in New Street, Dalry have shown an increase since 2016. Can the Portfolio Holder for Place provide an update on how New Street is performing on air quality at the moment and what measures are being taken to ensure this improves while the Bypass is being constructed?"

12. Motions

In terms of Standing Order 13, submit:-

- (a) a Motion by Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Burns in the following terms:-

"Gender equality is the responsibility of all individuals in society and requires the active contribution of both women and men. An estimated 4.3m women across the UK have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 and one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. While the work of Council, Police and others to tackle domestic abuse through the MADART scheme has been sector leading, domestic abuse remains at unacceptably high levels in North Ayrshire.

The 2011 Istanbul Convention calls for the criminalisation and elimination of sexual harassment against women and requires countries to take the necessary measures to ensure that any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is subject to criminal or other legal sanction. This convention has not yet been ratified by the UK.

Council agrees that gender stereotypes, sexism, sexual harassment and abuse, either in the workplace or wider society is wrong, is a form of discrimination and will not be tolerated.

Council agrees to take a zero tolerance policy towards any form of harassment, including robust and sustainable support structures for all who have had to experience any form of harassment.

Council agrees that the Leader should write to the UK and Scottish Governments to urge that steps are immediately taken to bring the Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017 into force as soon as possible.

Within North Ayrshire it is important the Council and its partners continue to show community leadership, whether through the Violence Against Women Strategy, the Community Planning Partnership's work to 'Reclaim the Night', or making the White Ribbon Scotland pledge "never to commit, condone, or remain silent about men's violence against women in all its forms".

Council agrees to write to all Community Planning Partners, Community Councils and Community Groups with whom we work, to raise awareness of the issues, to encourage them to sign the White Ribbon Scotland Pledge, and seek their support for 'Reclaim the Night'.

Within the Council workplace we need to be able to ensure that any member of staff or Councillor, or members of the public who come into contact with them, can report harassment and bullying safe in the knowledge that appropriate action will be taken. Council recognises that while procedures where people can raise concerns about harassment and bullying in confidence are in place, we need to ensure that there is awareness of these procedures.

Council agrees to raise awareness by providing briefings/campaigns for all staff on respect and dignity at work in order.

Council agrees there should be mandatory training for all Members on respect and dignity at work to support them in ensuring that the zero tolerance approach becomes the norm.

Council notes that European Parliament Resolution 2017/2897 highlights that education systems and the media have a major influence in relation to gender differences and calls on states to ensure that awareness-raising about sexual consent and sexual harassment are compulsory components of education systems.

Council instructs the Executive Director of Education and Youth Employment to ensure that schools across the authority, in line with the European Resolution, provide clear guidance for pupils, taking account of age and capacity, on all issues related to all forms of harassment and gender based bullying."

(b) a Motion by Councillor Billings, seconded by Councillor Ferguson in the following terms:-

"The Isle of Arran is one of North Ayrshire's most buoyant and developing communities, and attracts over 700,000 visitors every year. North Ayrshire Council is aware of Arran's importance and is working with local communities to further develop the island through new housing and business support. All the work that has been done, and is due to take place, to support the ferry link between Ardrossan and Arran, is to ensure that both Arran and Ardrossan gain from the economic and social benefits that such a vibrant economy brings.

Council and community were assured that the new ferry was being designed and built for Ardrossan Harbour. Following a full Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Ardrossan was chosen as the best harbour. In announcing the decision in April 2017 that the Arran ferry would stay at Ardrossan, Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Keith Brown said:

"Having considered all the evidence and representations, we have decided that retaining Ardrossan as the mainland port for the Arran ferry service is the best option."

"The study looked at the options under four broad pillars: Connectivity, Reliability, Overall Operational Cost to the Public Purse and Socio-Economic considerations."

“The Scottish Government is committed to supporting our lifeline ferry links and ensuring that the Arran ferry service is fit for purpose, whilst also getting the best value for the public purse.”

It is therefore, deeply disappointing and concerning to learn that not only will be new £45m ferry (Glen Sannox) not be coming in to service on time, but also that significant issues are just being raised about the ability of the new ferry to operate effectively from Ardrossan. Due to the layout of Ardrossan port there are concerns that the new vessel will not be able to operate in anything other than in almost calm conditions, providing a worse service than is already provided by the Caledonian Isles ferry. The people of Arran and North Ayrshire were assured that the new vessel was being built to a design that was particularly suited to the operating constraints of Ardrossan Harbour, and that it would provide an enhanced service compared with the current service.

The total investment in the Arran ferry link is around £90m (£30m for Brodick terminal, £45 for Glen Sannox, £15m for Ardrossan). This has been many years in the planning and has involved 3 major publicly owned and operated bodies – Transport Scotland, CMAL and Caledonian MacBrayne. The people of North Ayrshire, and in particular Arran, are asking why it is only now, as this huge project is entering its last phase, that we discover the new ferry is not fit for purpose. Why, with such large amounts of money at stake, were these questions not sorted out in the planning phase?

I therefore move that Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Minister for Transport and the Islands (a) to express in the strongest terms the Council’s disappointment and concern about the current mess and uncertainty that surrounds the final stages of the upgrade to the Arran and Ardrossan ferry link, (b) for an explanation as to how this situation has been allowed to occur, (c) for an assurance that Ardrossan will continue to be the port of choice for the Arran ferry and (d) that if Ardrossan Harbour requires additional modifications to ensure that an efficient and reliable ferry service can operate from the harbour, this will at no additional cost to the people of North Ayrshire."

(c) a Motion by Councillor Gallacher, seconded by Councillor Glover in the following terms:-

"2018 will be the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, and will be a year that will bring in to focus the hardships and sacrifice that is caused by war and conflict. At the conclusion of the Great War, memorials were raised as a tribute to the people who died in the service of this country. These memorials remain a point of focus at which we are able to remember and contemplate the individuals who gave their lives, as well as the wider implications of conflict.

Across North Ayrshire there are many war memorials in varying states of repair. In Saltcoats the memorial has been extensively refurbished and sits a proud and worthy tribute to those it remembers. In Ardrossan the Great War memorial on the sea front is in a poor state of repair, however, the Council’s Bereavement Officer is working to obtain grant funding via the Centenary Fund so that repair work can be undertaken on the memorial.

The motion is that the Council will survey all war memorials across North Ayrshire. Grant funding will be applied for any memorial that is in need of repair, and the Council will arrange for necessary work to be carried out once the funding is in place. This will help ensure that during 2018 all the war memorials in North Ayrshire will be fit and worthy tributes to the people they were erected to remember."

(d) a Motion by Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Foster in the following terms:-

"The 1st Tier JCC meeting last week considered the following resolutions by UNISON, Unite and the GMB. In order that Council can take a joint approach, I move the following:-

North Ayrshire Council has had to manage significant budget pressures for over a decade. Each year over that period the budget settlement for North Ayrshire has reduced in real terms. Successive Governments at both a UK and Scottish level have presided over the funding regime during this period.

Union members have seen cuts to jobs and services with the remaining staff's workload and responsibilities increase with little or no reward.

The Council have adopted different approaches to deal with this problem. On the one hand they have made efficiency savings which has eased budget gaps by increasing income or reducing spending but without any impact in services. On the other hand, and to a lesser extent, they have reduced or withdrawn services.

Moving forward both the Council and the Trade Unions recognise that there is less and less scope for further efficiency savings. Further reductions in the settlement grant will inevitably lead to services being reduced or withdrawn. This will in turn impact on the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Approximately 80% of North Ayrshire Council's workforce live in this area any further job losses would have a significant economic impact on North Ayrshire.

This Council and Trade Unions believe that austerity as a political and economic strategy is completely discredited and has inflicted untold damage on our workforce, public services and our communities.

This Council notes Trade Unions support for this motion and resolves to:

- Publicly and consistently advocate for a fair Local Government settlement.
- Persuade Government to make money available to ensure that vital services for North Ayrshire residents are maintained at the level required for communities that are amongst the poorest in Scotland.
- Give a commitment that the current terms and conditions of employment will be honoured
- Work jointly with Trade Unions in campaigns at all levels of Government against austerity and the impact of austerity on Local Government services."

(e) a Motion by Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Gallagher in the following terms:-

"The revelations from the Paradise Papers showed, once again, that our economy is rigged to benefit the powerful, the wealthy and giant corporations.

This Council believes that corporate tax evasion and avoidance is starving our public services of much needed funding. It further believes that tax practices, such as those exposed in the Paradise Papers, are unfair on all our citizens and small and medium sized businesses who pay their full tax liabilities.

Council believes that bidders for Council contracts should be asked to account for their past tax record. Council therefore agrees that all Council regulated procurement tenderers should be asked the following question "Has the bidder met all its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions, both in the UK, and in the country in which it is registered, if that is not the UK? If not, if the breach has occurred within the last 5 years and the tenderer has not taken steps to fully cleanse the breach, it is expected they would be excluded from the tender process.

Council also welcomes the introduction of Fair Tax Mark accreditation for businesses and agrees to work with Fair Tax Mark Ltd to promote use of the mark among North Ayrshire businesses."

(f) a Motion by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Donald Reid in the following terms:-

"This Council condemns the decision of the Royal Bank of Scotland to close branches in Kilwinning, Kilbirnie and Saltcoats next year. Notes that 71% of RBS is still owned by the British tax payer and believes it is unacceptable for the bank to act in this way having given guarantees in 2010 that they would stay open even if they were the last ones in town. Council believes that closure of the local branches will have an adverse impact on vulnerable customers, the elderly and local small businesses. Council therefore resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to both RBS and the UK Government's Economic Secretary to the Treasury to state our opposition and to urge a rethink."

- (g) a Motion by Councillor McPhater, seconded by Councillor Cullinane in the following terms:-

"The council notes that women are under-represented across councils in Scotland and make up only 29% of councillors. Council further notes that whilst voluntary mechanisms such as all women shortlists, networks and mentoring have made some progress, women are still not represented equally.

Council notes that despite these measures 29% is the highest proportion of women councillors in Scotland's history.

The council congratulates the Women 50:50 campaign which has been working across all political parties and has gained support from the SNP, Scottish Labour, Scottish Liberal Democrats and Scottish Green Party leaders and co-conveners.

The council supports Women 50:50's aim for fair representation of women in Scotland through legislated candidate quotas and backs the campaign's call for fair representation of women across Scotland's public life.

The council recognises that women are not a homogenous group, and that in any of our outreach work to encourage and champion women we should ensure that we engage a diverse group of women from different races, cultures, religions, disabilities, socio-economic statuses and sexualities.

Council therefore resolves to support the Women 50:50 campaign. Agrees that, in advance of the next local government elections, the Council will run a campaign to encourage more women to stand for election. Further agrees to a review of committee timetables, elected member development sessions and briefings to ensure that the commitments asked of elected members are family friendly, are able to accommodate members outside work commitments and enables members to undertake their ward duties in order to encourage under-represented groups, including women, to stand at the next elections."

- (h) a Motion by Councillor George, seconded by Councillor Marshall, in the following terms:-

"In the summer, 2017, the Scottish Government voted to incorporate the Scottish division of the British Transport Police in to Police Scotland. This was in spite of major concerns about a decrease in effectiveness in the service and a loss of the specialist skills that British Transport Police have.

The strategic overview report on the British Transport Police in Scotland, published on 8th December 2017 by the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, states that there are significant issues that have not yet been addressed to ensure an effective merger of the two forces, and Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins is quoted as saying that there would be "massive transition issues".

It is clear that there are still significant questions that still need to be answered and that the merger will require significant skill to ensure that it is managed effectively. The people of North Ayrshire need assurances that the current levels of service we all enjoy are not compromised by this complex change to our police services.

Police Scotland is currently in a state of chaos, with its top leaders either suspended from duty or brand new in to post. It is clear that Police Scotland is in no fit state to be able to manage such a complex and sensitive change, and there is significant risk that the safety of the people North Ayrshire will be compromised.

I therefore move that the Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to:

- a) express the concerns of the Council about the ability of Police Scotland to effectively manage the merger of Division D of the British Transport Police into Police Scotland due to the lack of effective leadership;
- b) gain assurances that there will be full evaluation of the risks of the merger as set out in the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary's report;
- c) state that it is the opinion of the Council that the merger should be put on hold until these issues have been resolved."

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If you have any queries regarding this and, in particular, if you believe that use and/or storage of any particular information would cause, or be likely to cause, substantial damage or distress to any individual, please contact committeeservices@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

North Ayrshire Council

Sederunt:

Ian Clarkson (Provost)
Robert Barr (Depute Provost)
John Bell
Timothy Billings
Joy Brahim
Marie Burns
Joe Cullinane
Scott Davidson
Anthea Dickson
John Easdale
Todd Ferguson
Robert Foster
Scott Gallacher
Alex Gallagher
Margaret George
John Glover
Tony Gurney
Alan Hill
Christina Larsen
Shaun Macaulay
Jean McClung
Ellen McMaster
Ronnie McNicol
Louise McPhater
Davina McTiernan
Tom Marshall
Jimmy Miller
Jim Montgomerie
Ian Murdoch
Donald Reid
Donald L Reid
Angela Stephen
John Sweeney

Attending:

Apologies:

Meeting Ended:

North Ayrshire Council
4 October 2017

IRVINE, 4 October 2017 - At a Meeting of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Ian Clarkson, Robert Barr, John Bell, Timothy Billings, Joy Brahim, Marie Burns, Joe Cullinane, Scott Davidson, Anthea Dickson, John Easdale, Todd Ferguson, Robert Foster, Scott Gallacher, Alex Gallagher, Margaret George, John Glover, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Christina Larsen, Shaun Macaulay, Tom Marshall, Jean McClung, Ellen McMaster, Ronnie McNicol, Louise McPhater, Davina McTiernan, Jimmy Miller, Jim Montgomerie, Ian Murdoch, Donald Reid, Donald L. Reid, Angela Stephen and John Sweeney.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; C. Hatton, Executive Director (Place); K. Yeomans, Executive Director (Economy and Communities); J. Butcher, Executive Director (Education and Youth Employment); S. Brown, Interim Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); L. Friel, Executive Director and M. Hogg, Head of Service (Finance) (Finance and Corporate Support); and A. Fraser, Head of Democratic Support, A. Craig, Senior Manager (Legal Services), M. Gilmour, Senior Communications Officer (Media and Internal Communications) and M. Anderson, Committee Services Team Leader (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Provost Clarkson in the Chair.

1. Apologies

The Provost invited intimation of apologies for absence. No apologies were recorded.

2. Declarations of Interest

In terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Councillors Hill and McPhater, as Directors of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust, declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 (North Ayrshire Ventures Trust). In terms of the Specific Exclusions to the Councillors' Code of Conduct they were able to take part in consideration of this item.

There were no declarations of the Party Whip.

3. Previous Minutes

The accuracy of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 June 2017, was confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, subject to the words "in favour of play parks on Arran" being added, by way of clarification, to the end of paragraph 4 of Item 9 "Unaudited Annual Accounts 2016/17".

4. Provost's Report

The Provost reported on the following matters:-

- attendance at a reception held by the US Consulate General as part of their 4 July celebrations;
- the Royal Garden Party on 4 July 2017, attended together with the Depute Provost;
- the presentation of Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards to North Ayrshire young people at a ceremony held on 5 July 2017;
- the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open and Scottish Ladies Open held at Dundonald Links in July 2017;
- an event on 13 July 2017 to celebrate the newly renovated Irvine Townhouse, followed by the formal opening of the Portal on 14 July 2017;
- attendance at a reception in Edinburgh International Conference Centre on 22 July 2017 as a guest of the Chinese Consul General, followed by a performance by Yun Nan Province Song and Dance Theatre;
- the closing concert of the Feis Arainn in Arran High School on 28 July 2017;
- the 50th anniversary of the Marymass Folk Festival, which included the launch of an Exhibition in Irvine Townhouse on 3 August 2017;
- the ground breaking ceremony of the Canal Court sheltered housing development in Saltcoats on 4 August 2017;
- a visit by representatives from Henan in China to Greenwood Academy on 12 August 2017 as part of a cultural and educational exchange;
- the traditional Kirkin' of the Council on 13 August 2017 in Irvine's Old Parish Church;
- the success of this year's Marymass Festival, which took place from 17-28 August 2017;
- a reception hosted by the Depute Provost to mark the opening of the Largs Viking Festival on 2 September 2017;
- attendance at the Older People's Forum in the Volunteer Rooms, Irvine, on 12 September 2017;
- the topping out ceremony for Largs Campus, which was held on 18 September 2017;
- the Ayrshire Apprentice of the Year event, which was arranged by Irvine Incorporated Trades and took place on 22 September 2017;
- the Academy of Creative Talent Oscars Night in Ardrossan Indoor Bowling Club on 24 September 2017;
- a meeting of the Scottish Provosts Association on 25 September 2017, held in the COSLA Offices, Edinburgh;

- a meeting on 25 September 2017 with Mr David Muir from Brisbane, Australia, as chair of the estate of Doctor Clem Jones, former long-term Mayor of Brisbane;
- the re-opening of Wellwood Burns Centre and Museum on 28 September 2017 following its renovation as part of the Irvine Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme;
- the world's biggest coffee morning on 29 September 2017 which, in Cunninghame House alone, raised nearly £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support;
- the Ayrshire Hospice Ball, which took place in the Seamill Hydro on 29 September 2017, raising over £40,000;
- the Cordiners Trade "Wee Pie" event in the Heckling Shed in Irvine on 2 October 2017; and
- a citizenship ceremony held on 4 October 2017 in Saltcoats Town Hall.

5. Leader's Report

The Leader of the Council reported on the following matters:-

- attendance at the COSLA Convention and Special COSLA Leaders meeting on 30 June 2017;
- the election of Councillor Alison Evison from Aberdeenshire Council and Councillor Graham Houston from Stirlingshire Council as COSLA President and Vice President, respectively;
- the golf symposium which took place at the Gables Hotel on 18 July 2017 and provided a platform for speakers to talk about how young people can unlock their full potential and be successful in their chosen field;
- a visit, on 21 July 2017, to the new Inverclyde National Sports Centre;
- a visit to Ardrossan Academy on 4 August 2017 as part of the week-long Leadership Programme delivered by the Active Schools team;
- recent attendance at the Three Towns Growers, a group which Councillor Miller has been involved in since its inception;
- the opportunity on 8 August 2017 to meet and chat with students from Kilwinning Academy and Irvine Royal Academy following their exam results;
- the 50th anniversary of the Irvine Folk Club and a meeting with its members on 9 August 2017 to view the club's anniversary exhibition at the Townhouse, Irvine;
- the graduation on 10 August 2017 of the a pilot Skills for Life course delivered from North Ayrshire's Early Years Centre in Castlepark, Irvine;
- the successful Picnic in the Park event, which was held on 10 August 2017 and organised by Councillor Donald Reid and the team at Kilwinning Community Events;
- the launch of period poverty on 17 August 2017 and the roll out of free sanitary products for young people in secondary schools;
- a visit on 14 August 2017 to North Ayrshire Table Tennis Club, which has been successful in competing on a national and international stage;
- the official opening of Cheviot Gardens on 23 August 2017, which includes a bespoke house to meet the complex needs of a family with a number of accessibility requires;
- attendance at the Locality Conference at Fullarton Connexions on 21 August 2017;

- the COSLA Leaders meeting which took place on 25 August 2017;
- participation in the Islands Bill consultation event on Arran on 28 August 2017, which, together with a similar event on Cumbrae the previous week, helped inform the Council's submission in respect of the Bill;
- the Family Learning Team's first birthday at an event on 1 September 2017;
- attendance at Kilwinning Academy's senior prize-giving on 7 September 2017;
- the official opening of the Fullarton Community Hub on 7 September 2017;
- a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport on 13 September 2017, to discuss health and social care issues in North Ayrshire;
- the successful Joint Youth Cabinet meeting at Auchenhavie Academy on 19 September 2017;
- attendance at the Community Planning Partnership Board meeting in Fullarton Community Hub on 21 September 2017;
- a visit to Arran on 27 September 2017 for follow-up discussions with the Arran Economic Group on plans for more affordable housing on the island;
- a meeting of the Economic Development and Regeneration Board on 28 September 2017;
- the COSLA Leaders group meeting in Edinburgh on 29 September 2017;
- an event held at the Hallmark Hotel, Irvine on 29 September 2017 to celebrate the work being carried out by education staff; and
- the Council's success in being recognised as this year's APSE "UK Council of the Year and the role of staff in this achievement.

6. North Ayrshire Council Minute Volume

Submitted for noting and approval of any recommendations contained therein, the Minutes of meetings of committees of the Council held in the period 22 June to 26 September 2017.

Noted.

7. North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board: Minutes of Meeting held on 1 June 2017

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the Minutes of the meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board held on 1 June 2017.

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update, advising that Members' briefings would be arranged in respect of the roll out of Universal Credit, and that the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) had been approved by the CPP Board at its 21 September 2017 meeting, the Minutes of which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Council.

Noted.

8. Appointments to Committees

In terms of Standing Order 7.2, the Council was invited to note any resignations from Committees and subsequent appointments made by the relevant political Groups.

The Council agreed, in respect of the Appeals Committee, to note the resignation of Councillor Ferguson and the appointment of Councillor Glover.

9. Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Council was invited to consider nominations made in respect of current outside body vacancies.

The Council agreed:-

Landfill Advisory Fund Panel

A nomination, duly proposed and seconded, was submitted in respect of the appointment of Councillor McNicol to fill the remaining vacancy on the Landfill Advisory Fund Panel. There being no further nominations, Councillor McNicol was duly appointed.

Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

A nomination, duly proposed and seconded, was submitted in respect of the appointment of Councillor Donald L. Reid as a substitute representative on the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee. There being no further nominations, Councillor Donald L. Reid was duly appointed.

10. Appointment of Proper Officer

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the appointment of Aileen Craig, Senior Manager, Legal Services as Clerk of North Ayrshire Licensing Board in terms of Schedule 1 Paragraph 8 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and as Proper Officer in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The Council agreed to approve the appointment of Aileen Craig, Senior Manager, Legal Services as (i) Proper Officer for the authentication and execution of documents on behalf of the Council in terms of Section 193 and 194 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and (ii) Clerk of North Ayrshire Licensing Board.

Councillor Montgomerie joined the meeting at this point.

11. North Ayrshire Ventures Trust

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the appointment of a new Director on the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust following the resignation of Craig Crosthwaite.

The Council agreed to approve the appointment of Ann Robertson MBE to the Board of North Ayrshire Ventures Trust.

12. Committee Timetable 2018

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the draft committee timetable for 2018.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to approve the draft timetable set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (b) to note that arrangements for Locality Partnership meetings, Integration Joint Board, IJB Performance and Audit Committee, and any ad hoc or Special Meetings would be intimated to Members in due course.

13. Long Term Financial Outlook 2018/19 to 2027/28

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on the significant financial challenge faced by the Council over the next ten years and the proposed approach to respond to this. The detailed Financial Outlook 2018/19 to 2027/28 report was set out in the appendix to the report.

The Head of Service (Finance) (Finance and Corporate Support) provided a presentation on the key issues facing the Council and their projected impact in budgetary terms. In response to a request by Councillor Marshall, the Head of Service undertook to provide a copy of the presentation slides.

The Council agreed, in considering the long term financial outlook and noting the scale of the financial challenge faced by the Council over the next ten years, to approve the approach to respond to this, as set out in the appendix to the report.

14. Review of Health and Social Care Integration Scheme in North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Interim Director (Health and Social Care Partnership) on the finding of Stage 1 of the Review of the Integration Scheme for North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and on the proposed next steps.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the representations received in response to the first stage of the review of the North Ayrshire Integration Scheme, as summarised at Appendix 2 to the report;

- (b) that further consideration be given with partners and the Scottish Government to the issues identified in Section 2.15 of the report;
- (c) that, pending (b) above, it was premature to amend the North Ayrshire Integration Scheme and any further review of the Scheme be held in abeyance meantime;
- (d) to receive a future report detailing progress made in addressing the issues raised in the review; and
- (e) to note the report would be considered at the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Health Board Meeting on 9 October 2017.

15. Questions

In terms of Standing Order No. 12 there were submitted the following questions:-

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

"A recent study by Bath University into the working conditions of Scottish Teachers reported that Teachers working conditions are poor in that they suffer from high levels of demand, poor support from management, at times strained relationships at work, a poor understanding of their role in an organisation and have to deal with constant change to the curriculum.

Furthermore they are exposed to high levels of poor student behaviour with approximately 40% of Primary Staff exposed to negative parental behaviour. The upshot of all of this is that majority of Staff are dissatisfied with the job and over 40% are planning on leaving the job in the next 18 months.

What measures will the Portfolio Holder now implement to improve the working conditions of Teaching Staff to ensure that in 18 months time we do not have a staffing crisis in North Ayrshire?"

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

"I read the report to which the Member refers with great interest. The Member will be aware that the report considers working conditions to mean a range of things all of which this Administration has a strong track record of supporting and developing.

Staff across North Ayrshire as evidenced by our own engagement surveys indicate that education staff were more engaged than other departments in 2015, with 69.6% of staff indicating that they were completely engaged.

The Administration continues to invest significantly in improving the physical environment across our education estate providing high quality facilities for young people, staff and communities. In addition, the Administration is focused on supporting the welfare of our staff through LiveWell, Occupational Health support, as well as, counselling devices based in our schools. The award winning Professional Learning Academy continues and will continue to deliver high quality training and support. We continue to invest in leadership development that will ensure we have a long term capacity to lead and deliver high quality education. The Administration supports the probationer development programme which will ensure new entrants to the profession get the best possible start to their careers which will clearly improve outcomes for young people. Approaches to early years staff development are sector leading and we anticipate not only a significant growth in well paid jobs becoming available for North Ayrshire residents over the next few years but that these will also reflect an investment in delivering quality.

The Administration is committed to reducing bureaucracy in our schools. Our teachers have the lowest absence rates of any local authority in Scotland reflecting their commitment and engagement with the Directorates vision for improvement. The Authority has relatively low rates of exclusion and high attendance levels for its pupils. Fortunately violence and confrontation in our classrooms is also comparably low and Teachers receive good support in dealing with such issues in a restorative way which recognises children's additional support needs and rights to a high quality education.

In conclusion, our schools have a strong supportive ethos lead by excellent committed staff and as the report indicates we will support attempts to reduce demands on the profession in the short term with a long term investment in staff training and development being seen as a priority. Of course the Administration will continue to challenge external attempts to increase pressures on staff."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Marshall asked whether, given that only 44% of places for post-graduate training in Mathematics had been filled nationally, the Cabinet Member could provide reassurance that all schools in North Ayrshire would be fully staffed in STEM subjects in the next and future years.

Councillor Bell responded by making reference to the work being done in North Ayrshire to engage with staff, on staff retention, and to support probationers. He acknowledged that, to ensure full staffing in the longer term, there would need to be an increase in recruitment and work done to make teaching a profession to which people would aspire.

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

"I ask the Portfolio Holder for Place what action he has taken regarding public safety at the railway pedestrian tunnel between Pennyburn and Blacklands, and if he will commit to working with me in driving forward improvements to the area including the fitting of CCTV and appropriate lighting, working with network rail on suggestions from the Kilwinning community, and looking at the possibility of re-routing the footpath around the front of the trees as an alternative to the existing path which runs railside behind trees?"

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

"Our Community Safety Team have been working closely with Police Scotland to develop an integrated response to community concerns following the recent robberies and review wider community safety issues within the Kilwinning area.

Police Scotland deployed enhanced resources within the area to provide public reassurance, whilst actively pursuing the perpetrator of the crimes. Working alongside the local community, Police Scotland apprehended a 33 year old male in relation to the recent robberies

A coordinated approach to reviewing and responding to community concerns in and around the area of the pedestrian walk-way is being developed and will begin with an Environmental Visual Audit of the area, coordinated via the Prevention First initiative. Our Community Safety Team is working with Police Scotland to develop the audit which I expect to take place in the next few weeks. Invites to participate will be issued to all appropriate parties including Elected Members, local community representatives, Network Rail, British Transport Police and other services of the Council. The review will consider a range of issues including lighting, CCTV and walking routes along with any other improvements identified during the audit."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Davidson asked whether the Cabinet Member could keep him informed of any work to take forward the actions identified.

Councillor Montgomerie confirmed that he would do so.

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

"Following constituent queries from numerous classroom assistants and teaching staff from across Kilwinning, on behalf of my constituents, I ask the Council Leader - do North Ayrshire Labour regard Classroom Assistants in Kilwinning Schools as Quality Support Staff?"

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

"The Administration consider all staff in all of our schools to be providing high quality support for our children's learning and development. It is important to have a range of skills and experience within our school staff in order for our schools to provide a holistic approach to learning and support. Equally the Council continues to be offer appropriate relevant training to improve staffs skills as we continue to deliver improved outcomes across the service.

The identified additional support needs of children and young people are not only met by staff from Education. A wide range of Council staff, including Youth Workers, as well as those from the Health and Social Care Partnership, Voluntary Sector and Community Planning Partnership all contribute to delivering positive outcomes for our young people. It is this 'Team around the Child' approach that is delivering improving outcomes. The Council is also committed to giving children the best possible start in life. Our Early Years staff and their partners are also key to delivering a quality service that supports needs across the Authority."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Davidson asked why, given the reference made by Labour in its recent local government election campaign to supporting 'quality support staff' in schools, they would then axe 67 classroom assistant jobs just a few months later.

Councillor Cullinane responded by providing some contextual information, pointing out that the 17/18 budget of £1,705,311 set by the Labour Administration for classroom assistants had been identical to the 16/17 budget set by the then SNP Administration. He referred to an overspend of £664,877 in the previous SNP Administration's 2016/17 education budget and to the previous SNP Education portfolio-holder's statement, at a meeting of the Council in June 2016, about an overspend of some £520,000 in the 2015/16 budget. Councillor Cullinane advised that Education officers had, on an operational basis, undertaken a re-modelling of classroom assistant allocation to schools. The Leader concluded by advising that the Labour Administration had ensured all affected classroom assistants whose temporary contracts were not renewed, had been redeployed, with 30 receiving training to higher grade posts, while the Council had also appointed 27 nurture classroom assistants using the Attainment Challenge funding. Schools were also using their Pupil Equity funding to recruit 47 classroom assistants.

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

"In North Ayrshire Labours manifesto for the council election, they commit to ensuring all our beaches are fully accessible for people with disabilities, something I absolutely welcome. Following a constituent query from a couple in Whitehirst Park who both have physical limitations, I ask the Portfolio Holder for Place if he could provide me with an insight into the plans and timescales for providing disabled access to Irvine, Ardeer and Stevenston beaches and also a description of what the disabled access will consist of?"

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

“Good progress has been made to identify and develop two initiatives that will improve accessibility to our beaches.

The first scheme, for which a funding application is being submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Landscape Partnership programme, enables visitors to access the beach utilising either a demountable adaptation to their own wheelchair or using a beach specific wheelchair. A similar system that operates successfully in North Berwick has informed the development of proposals. The outcome of the funding application is expected by March 2018.

The second scheme, which is currently at the assessment stage, seeks to construct ramps at key access points to our main amenity beaches. This assessment work, which will be finalised over the next few months, will identify appropriate structures and the costs involved to inform budgetary requirements.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Davidson asked whether the Cabinet Member would undertake to keep him informed of any notable developments.

Councillor Montgomerie responded by confirming that he would do so.

(e) a question by Councillor Donald L. Reid to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:-

"On Wednesday 30 August Keith Robson, Chief Executive of Age Scotland gave an interview to the press explaining how well Free Personal Care for the Elderly was working in Scotland. This policy is indeed working well throughout Scotland, but North Ayrshire Council Health and Social Care Partnership appears to have implemented a policy to ration Free Personal Care on 15 June 2017, contrary to Scottish Government policy and without consulting the North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board.

During those 10 weeks of rationing, the waiting list for Free Personal Care, either the non-means tested element of £171 per week or the means tested assisted care element, grew to over 100, meaning that the most vulnerable in our community effectively subsidised the Council by a minimum of £171,000 (£171 x 100 X 10). And as of 13 September 2017, there were still 100 people in North Ayrshire being denied Free Personal Care.

Would the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care explain why such a major policy change, affecting the lives of many families, was not ratified by the Integration Joint Board before it was implemented?"

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

"The decision taken by the Health and Social Care Partnership Management team was not a policy change but an operational decision based on budgetary pressures. Officers cannot overspend the budget which has been set. The demand on the Partnership budget continues to be significant and this was discussed fully at the Integration Joint Board of the 14th of September. At that meeting, a decision was taken around a raft of mitigation measures which, ultimately, allows for a return to previous rates of admission to Care Homes."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Donald L. Reid asked whether, in the interests of transparency, the Council would change its current guidance to make it clear that the £171 weekly allowance for Free Personal Care was not mandatory and write to the Scottish Government to ask that its guidance to the public also be amended.

Councillor Foster responded by undertaking to hold a meeting with the Member, the Chief Executive and the Interim Director (Health and Social Care Partnership) to discuss this matter further. He also expressed a desire to ensure that care was provided to all those who needed it, but acknowledged that this had to be set against significant budgetary constraints.

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

"The Labour Party has recently announced that they will no longer use PFI contracts and that they will bring existing contracts back in to the public sector.

It goes without saying that the SNP welcome this and the fact that, as with so many other elements of public policy, Labour have now adopted long standing SNP policy.

Would the Leader of the Council now accept that the North Ayrshire PFI contracts, entered into by previous Labour administrations, have been an extravagant waste of public money?"

Councillor Cullinane thanked the Member for her question and responded in the following terms:-

"At the start I should point out this has been deemed a political question and therefore I have been advised the response should be a political response from me.

It probably won't be news to many in this chamber but I have always opposed private finance initiatives as a means of funding public infrastructure projects whether it be the Tories' PFI, Labour's PPP or the SNP's NPD deals.

The issue lies with central government who dictate what financial schemes are available to fund projects. As is the case now with NPD deals, the choice previous council administrations across the country have faced is whether to build new schools under PPP/NPD or not to build them at all. That's the reality of local authorities' options.

In terms of the more political aspects of Cllr Larsen's question I would question the accuracy of the claims. If buying back existing contracts is SNP policy I am sure the Member will be able to tell us which deals in Scotland have been bought out by the SNP Government? Similarly, I await a date for the end of the NPD model and look forward to see how it will be replaced with a non private finance initiative. If that information is not forthcoming in the supplementary I am sure it will be when we debate the motion, asking the Council to back Labour's current policy, later in the agenda."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Larsen asked whether the Leader had a costed plan for addressing the PPP/PFI matter, or whether he intended to wait for the SNP to fix it.

Councillor Cullinane responded by acknowledging the approximate cost of PPP contracts in terms of monthly charges and comparing this with the financial arrangements associated with the new Largs Campus.

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

"The new Arran ferry, Glen Sannox, is scheduled to come in to service in autumn of 2018. There is a commitment for Arran to have a 2-boat service all year, which will not be possible until the new ferry comes in to service. A more comprehensive ferry service has the potential to have a significant positive impact on the lives of the residents of Arran. Could the Council receive an update on the promised redevelopment of Ardrossan Harbour and an assurance that the harbour will be ready for the new ferry in Autumn 2018?"

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

"The importance of the ferry service to Arran, and the positive impact that a comprehensive service can have for the island is very clear. Arran has seen a significant rise in passenger numbers in recent years which has been positive for the economy. It is intended that the new ferry will provide additional capacity and potential for growth.

The importance of the ferry service, the benefits its presence brings to Ardrossan, and that the Ardrossan route offers the best service for Arran were all reflected in the priority given to the Save Our Ferry campaign in late 2016/early 2017. It was the success of this campaign by the Council and community partners that has allowed the Scottish Government to make a commitment to Ardrossan and for the Council and Peel Ports to deliver significant investment in the harbour area.

Officers have also been working closely with the Arran Economic Group for the past four years. The initial success of this group was the delivery of the Brodick harbour investment within a single phase of construction, and the new facilities are due to be opened in October. The AEG are also working to ensure additional housing options to help retain young people and staff on the island. The Council have recently announced the delivery of 46 homes on Arran in the next 10 years, and the group are considering options for how a development trust may help to facilitate additional housing.

In terms of investment at Ardrossan, since the confirmation of Ardrossan as the mainland port for Arran and Campbeltown ferries, all parties including, NAC, Peelports, Transport Scotland, CMAL and Calmac have been working to develop plans for both the land based and marine infrastructure. As part of this due diligence and port master planning, options have emerged to further improve the long term resilience of Ardrossan.

We are working to determine how to best accommodate these options as part of the overall programme for investment into the harbour in order to deliver the optimal solution to secure the long term resilience for the harbour. Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.”

Cllr Gallagher also added he would like to offer all Member a Private Members Briefing on the matter over the next few weeks and Cllr Billings confirmed he would therefore keep any supplementary questions for the Briefing.

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

"Can the Leader of the Council advise if he has had or plans to have any meetings/discussions with Scottish Government Ministers /officials which would be of importance to the Council?"

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

“I can confirm that on 13 September I met with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Shona Robison to discuss the health and social care in North Ayrshire, in particular, the demographics and future implications for care including service demand. I also undertook to seek their agreement to strengthen their commitment to working with us in the future to transform and improve current social care services.

I can also advise that as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal work that a Transport Summit will be held in the coming weeks with Ministerial engagement.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Reid, referring to the transport summit and asked whether the the Leader would agree to pursue with Ministers the importance of addressing the issue of the missing link between Wilson's Auctions and Sharpill when considering the B714 project.

Councillor Cullinane responded by indicating he was happy to do this on Councillor Reid's behalf and on behalf of other Kilwinning Ward Members.

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

"Now that the work at Countess Street, Saltcoats is near completion, will the Policyholder for Place inform the Elected Members of the value of the initial contract to refurbish the Street, how much was paid by Irvine Bay Regeneration Company to Land Engineering (up to the point of Land Engineering going into Administration) and what was the value of the work completed at the point of Administration? Will he also provide the final cost payable by North Ayrshire Council to complete the works?"

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

"The initial contract was awarded to Land Engineering at £812,902 on 4 August 2016. The amount paid to Land Engineering up to the point of entering Administration was £440,925 which was paid by the Council following the transfer of funds from IBRC. The value of work completed at point of Administration was £603,179 (estimated Final Account as advised by Neilson Partnership). The value of the contract with Rainton Construction who will complete the remaining works is £262,000."

As a supplementary question, Councillor McNicol asked the Cabinet Member to confirm whether plans had been submitted to the Council for the refurbishment of Dockhead Street, Saltcoats, and when these works would be commenced.

Councillor Montgomerie responded by advising that he had no information on this matter at present, but would circulate details to all Members when available.

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

"Due to the change in the Political Party structure of Elected Members after the Local Elections in May, 2017, will the Leader of the Council provide details of the costs for the creation of an additional Members room in the First Floor East within Cunninghame House?"

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

"The cost of the alteration works was £31,563.41."

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

"Will the Leader of the Council provide details of all PPP/PFI Contracts entered into by North Ayrshire Council?"

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

"The Council currently has a PPP contract for 4 schools at St Mathews, Greenwood, Arran High and Stanley Primary School. The Council has also entered into an NPD contract for the provision of Largs Campus. The monthly unitary charge is £988,183 for our existing PPP contracts. The estimated monthly unitary charge linked to Largs is £332,218 per month."

As a supplementary question, Councillor McNicol asked whether the Leader would agree with him that funding by PPP did not represent best value for money or whether he agreed with the view expressed by former Leader of the Council, Councillor David O'Neill at a Council meeting in 2012 that this procurement method was cost effective.

Councillor Cullinane responded by advising that he was not a Member of the Council when this issue was discussed, but that he was ideologically opposed to PPP and that changes in international accounting standards now appeared to have eroded any budgeting incentives which might have been associated with this financing approach. However the choice at the time had been between building the school under PPP or not at all.

The Council then adjourned for a short comfort break at 3.40 p.m., reconvening at 3.55 p.m. with the same Members and Officers present and in attendance.

16. Motions

In terms of Standing Order No. 13 there were submitted the following:-

- (a) a motion by Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Foster in the following terms:-

"One of the most important roles that the Council, and indeed Councillors, have is as corporate parents to our young people in care. This Council treats this responsibility with the upmost regard and has taken numerous steps to support our care experienced young people through initiatives such as guaranteed modern apprenticeship places. We acknowledge the financial challenges for young people leaving care including Council Tax. Whilst a number of local authorities in England have exempted care leavers from Council Tax, local authorities in Scotland do not have the delegated powers to do so. This council therefore resolves to lobby the Scottish Government for these powers, either through a change to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or new council tax exemption regulations. The Council agrees that the Chief Executive shall write to the Scottish Government to seek such powers and thereafter asks officers to bring a report to the Cabinet outlining options for an exemption."

In terms of Standing Order 14.7 and with the agreement of Councillors Cullinane and Foster, the motion was amended to provide for the report in question to be submitted to the full Council. There being no further amendments, the motion, as amended, was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed:-

"One of the most important roles that the Council, and indeed Councillors, have is as corporate parents to our young people in care. This Council treats this responsibility with the upmost regard and has taken numerous steps to support our care experienced young people through initiatives such as guaranteed modern apprenticeship places. We acknowledge the financial challenges for young people leaving care including Council Tax. Whilst a number of local authorities in England have exempted care leavers from Council Tax, local authorities in Scotland do not have the delegated powers to do so. This council therefore resolves to lobby the Scottish Government for these powers, either through a change to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or new council tax exemption regulations. The Council agrees that the Chief Executive shall write to the Scottish Government to seek such powers and thereafter asks officers to bring a report to the Council outlining options for an exemption."

(b) a motion by Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Foster in the following terms:-

"With Universal Credit full service due to be rolled out in North Ayrshire on 27th November 2017 this Council wishes to join third sector organisations and a number of cross party Parliamentarians in calling for the UK Government to halt the roll-out process.

Universal Credit was meant to simplify the UK's social security system but there is growing evidence from bodies such as Citizens Advice that its implementation has pushed many people and families into debt and poverty as they struggle to make ends meet. Evidence from across the initial roll-out areas highlight an increase in rent arrears, a near 87% increase in Crisis Grant applications and a 40-70% increase in families going to food banks for support.

This Council is particularly concerned about the impact of the six week waiting time for new claimants to receive payments with roll-out in North Ayrshire planned in the run up to Christmas. This Council therefore resolves that the Leader writes to the UK Government adding our voice to the calls for the roll-out of Universal Credit to be stopped.

In the interim, Council notes that officers will continue to raise awareness of the scheduled roll-out on the 27th November so that local people are prepared for the changes ahead."

As an amendment, Councillor Marshall, seconded by Councillor Ferguson, moved the terms of the motion, subject to the deletion of "adding our voice to the calls for the roll-out of Universal Credit to be stopped" from the penultimate paragraph and the insertion of the words "supporting the principle of Universal Credit".

Members then asked questions of the movers of the motion and amendment, including seeking clarification that roll-out was scheduled for 22, rather than 27 November 2017.

Following debate and summing up, on a division there voted for the amendment 6 and for the motion 25, and the the motion was declared carried.

(c) a motion by Councillor Cullinane, seconded by Councillor Gallagher in the following terms:-

"To congratulate North Ayrshire Council on achieving the 'Council of the Year' award at the annual Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) awards 2017.

This prestigious award reflects the efforts of all North Ayrshire Staff over a number of years in improving and transforming the way we deliver our services to the people of North Ayrshire.

Also to congratulate the North Ayrshire Council 'Change' team on having won the Best Efficiency and Transformation Initiative at the same event.

These awards, and the many others gained by our staff over recent years, are as a result of the truly excellent achievements of our workforce and reflect great credit on everyone who works within North Ayrshire to serve our communities"

There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

The Chief Executive undertook to ensure that the terms of the motion were communicated to Council staff.

(d) a motion by Councillor Dickson, seconded by Councillor Larsen in the following terms:-

"That North Ayrshire Council wishes to recognise the important role that many employees play in being carers; recognises that the policies and support employers have in place helps families to manage their caring requirements; and so North Ayrshire Council resolves to pursue accreditation as a Carer Positive employer; notes that there are three levels of accreditation (engaged, established and exemplary); and instructs officers to work to become recognised as a Carer Positive employer at the highest level to ensure the council maintains its reputation as 'employer of choice' in North Ayrshire.

There are no material cost implications in becoming an accredited Carer Positive employer as the benefits of supported working reduces stress and sickness absence, improves people management and staff morale, and reduces recruitment and training costs."

There being no amendment, the motion was declared carried.

(e) a motion by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Cullinane in the following terms:-

"In accordance with Scottish Labour Party policy, agreed in 2015 following a motion by Cunninghame South CLP, this Council agrees to lobby the Scottish Government to end all private finance initiative schemes as a way of funding major public infrastructure projects and calls on them to establish a debt disposal unit aimed at buying back existing PFI, PPP and NPD contracts now that financial regulations have changed. We make this call following the announcement of a similar policy by the UK Labour Party.

Should the Scottish Government fail to act, this Council instructs officers to keep our PPP contracts under review and seek opportunities to buy them back using the PWLB in accordance with the administrations aspirations. We recognise that any such deal will require Scottish Government agreement and note, to date, that the Finance Secretary has failed to give an assurance of his support in correspondence with the Council Leader."

As an amendment, Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Dickson, moved that the initial paragraph of the motion be deleted and the second amended to read "This Council instructs officers to keep our PPP contracts under review and seek opportunities to buy them back using the PWLB or any other affordable means."

In terms of Standing Order 14.7 and with the agreement of Councillors Foster and Cullinane, the motion was amended to accept the terms of Councillor Hill's amendment. There being no further amendments, the motion, as amended, was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Council agreed:-

"This Council instructs officers to keep our PPP contracts under review and seek opportunities to buy them back using the PWLB or any other affordable means."

The Meeting ended at 4.45 p.m.



PROVOST'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 October -13 December
2017

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

PROVOST'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 October -13 December 2017

BOBBY RAE

I was extremely saddened to hear the news of former Provost Bobby Rae's passing.

I always found Bobby to be a Councillor who cared deeply about his community, and wanted to make a difference to the lives of those he served.

For a while, we actually worked together – while Bobby was Provost, I served as his Depute Provost so I could see his commitment to public service first hand.

His absence was felt after he stepped down as Provost in 2010 due to ill health, and I would like to pay tribute to the work he did for the people of North Ayrshire over many years.

Since the last meeting of the Council I have attended various events throughout North Ayrshire.

LAUNCH SCOTTISH DIASPORA TAPESTRY, 5 October

I was delighted to officially open the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry Exhibition in the Portal, Irvine. This wonderful exhibition was hosted by North Ayrshire Council, in partnership with Irvine Burns Club and Irvine Lasses Club. The exhibition contained over 300 tapestry panels, and involved communities from around the world who celebrated their Scottish heritage and culture. They brought together their stories and recreated them in the tapestry, hence visually documenting their Scottish connections. This is a heartfelt homage to the achievements of Scottish migrants across the centuries.

WEST SOUND CREAM OF AYRSHIRE, 5 October

The event which was held in the Park Hotel, Kilmarnock celebrated Ayrshire's community heroes. Along with East and South Ayrshire Councils, I was delighted to sponsor and present the prize in the Unsung Hero category.

KIRKIN' OF THE DEACON CONVENER, 8 October

I attended the Kirkin' of the Deacon Convener of Irvine Incorporated Trades which took place in the Old Parish Church, Irvine. It is a pleasure to support such events which celebrate and promote the ancient traditions of Irvine.

PRINCE'S TRUST ENTERPRISE AWARDS, 9 October

It was a pleasure to attend The Prince's Trust Scotland – Ayrshire Enterprise Awards which took place in Saltcoats Town Hall. It was also great to see the good work which the Prince's Trust does, in encouraging our young people to become self-sufficient and successful in business.

GILLIAN'S SALTIRE APPEAL VISIT, 10 October

I met with Les Ward from Gillian's Saltire Appeal in Largs to find out a bit more about the charity. The charity aims to raise sufficient funds to provide and maintain respite accommodation for cancer sufferers, their families and carers in Ayrshire and other parts of Scotland. In the afternoon, I took the opportunity to visit Largs Academy and meet with the head teacher. We had a discussion about the school's imminent move to the new campus next year.

POLICE SCOTLAND AYRSHIRE DIVISIONAL RECOGNITION AWARDS CEREMONY, 11 October

I was delighted to attend Police Scotland Ayrshire Divisional Recognition Awards Ceremony, which was held in Fullarton Connexions in Irvine. The ceremony celebrated those in the community who go that extra mile to help others.

STORYBIRD PROJECT PREMIERE, 12 October

I attended the Storybird Project Premiere which took place in Saltcoats Town Hall. This excellent project involved digital storytellers working within the community, with groups and individuals to support them to film their own stories about personal experiences that are important to them.

GO PURPLE DAY, 13 October

Once again North Ayrshire went purple in support of the Ayrshire Hospice. A huge thanks to our generous staff and elected members who raised almost £1000 in Cunninghame House alone for this worthwhile cause.

SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL BOCCIA OPEN, 13 October

It was a pleasure to attend the Scottish International Boccia Open which was held at the SportsScotland National Centre in Largs. It is excellent to see events of this calibre taking place in North Ayrshire.

KILWINNING ARCHERS PRESENTATION, 14 October

I had the honour of presenting the Kilwinning Archers with a previously lost medal, which was discovered in a display case in Kilwinning Abbey. The official presentation took place in Kilwinning Library.

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK, 16-20 October

I was pleased to be able to support the Leader of the Council and our partners in challenging poverty in North Ayrshire. Various events took place over the week, which I am sure have had a positive impact on many. I must give credit to the Leader for his “better omelette” and superior culinary skills.

FESTIVAL OF JUVENILE SOLO PIPING COMPETITION, 21 October

I attended the Festival of Juvenile Solo Piping Competition in Auchenharvie Academy. Organised by volunteers, the event has now been running for 15 years, and attracts entrants from all over Scotland. This is an excellent example of the voluntary work carried out in our local communities.

ISLE OF ARRAN, 23 October

On the 23 October I attended the funeral of Lady Jane Fforde, former Chair of Irvine Bay Regeneration Company.

I visited Montrose House Care Home and Resource Centre, in Brodick and had a chat with the residents and staff, and enjoyed a tour of the building.

I also got the opportunity to have a tour of the impressive Arran Outdoor Education Centre. This is an excellent facility offering a wide range of activities in the beautiful setting of Arran.

My final stop in Arran was Brodick Hall where we had a celebratory event for the many people on Arran who were involved in the successful campaign to retain the ferry from Brodick to Ardrossan.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH, 24 October

As part of Black History Month, I attended an event in Irvine Town House to hear from Dr. Eric Graham, author of 'Burns and the Sugar Plantocracy'. Dr. Graham, originally from Ayrshire discussed the involvement of Ayrshire families, the connections to the Plantations in Jamaica and the impact of the slave trade locally throughout Ayrshire.

Black History Month in its modern version began in the USA in 1976, as a way of remembering important people and events. It was adopted by the UK in 1987.

In Scotland, Black History month is promoted by the Coalition for Racial Equalities and Rights (based In Glasgow). This is the first time in Ayrshire, which we know of, that an event like this had been organised.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY SPORTS AWARDS, 26 October

I was pleased to be able to welcome the guests and contenders for the North Ayrshire Community Sports Awards at the Waterside Inn, Seamill. The event gave us the opportunity to celebrate the successes, efforts, dedication and sheer hard work of all of North Ayrshire's athletes, coaches and volunteers. At the same time recognising those who are involved in making sport in our local communities such a success.

371st ANNUAL CELEBRATION – BIG PIE, VOLUNTEER ROOMS, IRVINE, 28 October

It was an honour to give the reply to the toast to the Burgh of Irvine at the 371st Annual Celebration (Big Pie) arranged by Irvine Incorporated Trades, in the Volunteer Rooms, Irvine. These type of events celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Irvine and its people, and demonstrate a high degree of civic pride.

ONE WORLD WEEK, 29 October

To coincide with One World Week I attended a service in St John's Church, Stevenston. All churches across North Ayrshire were invited to attend. The event was successfully arranged by the Outreach to the Poor Group and a collection for North Ayrshire Foodbank also took place. I also enjoyed the company of families who had to leave Syria.

NORTH AYRSHIRE ACHIEVES FINALISTS SHOWCASE, 3 November

On 8 December the Economic Development and Regeneration Board met and heard updates on regional partnership collaboration and its industrial strategy. There was also an update on progress of the Ayrshire Growth Deal. While I am hugely disappointed to see that the AGD was not specifically mentioned in the Chancellor's recent budget, I remain in hope this will be given the funding and support that the whole of Ayrshire needs and rightly deserves.

CONSULATE VISITS, 2 November

Along with the Executive Director (Economy & Communities) I met with the US Consulate, Chinese Consulate and the French Consulate in Edinburgh. The purpose of the meetings were to introduce North Ayrshire, build on existing links, and explore any opportunities for co-operation.

NORTH AYRSHIRE ACHIEVES, 3 November

It was a privilege to present the Customer Excellence Awards at this year's North Ayrshire Achieves, which took place in Saltcoats Town Hall. This event showcased the excellent work carried out by staff on a daily basis.

PRINCE'S TRUST, 9 November

I was pleased to present fourteen pupils from Greenwood Academy, and one from Irvine Royal Academy, with certificates of achievement from the Prince's Trust, recognising their invaluable support to the Prince's Trust event recently held in Saltcoats Town Hall.

AYRSHIRE COLLEGE GRADUATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY, 10 November

It was a pleasure to attend the College graduation and awards ceremony in Kilwinning Abbey Church, and celebrate with another generation of students on their academic achievements.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, 12 November

I attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade and service in Irvine. There was a huge turnout of local organisations who paid their respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The feedback from the other Remembrance Parades in North Ayrshire was very positive.

ROBERT SERVICE COURT OPENING, 14 November

It was a great pleasure to be able to mark the re-opening of the newly refurbished Robert W Service Court – a £2.8m project which was jointly funded by the Council and the Scottish Government.

The Council started work there last September, and now just a year later, we have 23 refurbished high quality sheltered homes, including a two-bedroom home for a wheelchair user.

ELDERBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL, 15 November

At the Marymass Flower Show, Irvine Horticultural Society arrange a schools poster competition. I was pleased to go along and present the prizes to the young people.

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY, 15 November

The ceremony took place in Saltcoats Town Hall. It is always a pleasure to attend these ceremonies, and celebrate the end of what can be a long and arduous journey for those applying for UK Citizenship.

LARGS ACADEMY LEGACY EVENING, 15 November

I was delighted to join pupils and staff at Largs Academy at their legacy evening. The event looked back over the years and at various milestones, whilst looking forward to their move to the state of the art Largs Campus next year.

AYRSHIRE HOSPICE RECEPTION, 16 November

The Chief Executive and I attended a reception in the Lochgreen House Hotel, Troon which was hosted by the Ayrshire Hospice. The event was arranged to thank all those who support the Hospice, and raise funds for what is such a worthwhile cause.

SHOWMEN'S GUILD ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 17 November

I attended the annual luncheon hosted by the Showmen's Guild. It was good to catch up with members of the guild, as many of them have operated in North Ayrshire at one time or another.

THREE TOWNS MOTOR PROJECT, 21 November

I was delighted to pay a visit to the Three Towns Motor Project team. This very successful project has helped many young people gain a variety of skills in motor mechanics.

PRINCE'S TRUST, 24 November

I visited Auchenharvie Academy for the launch of its new Nail Bar. The school received funding from Developing Young Workforce Ayrshire and the Prince's Trust. These projects enhance pupils' employability prospects by delivering key vocational skills. I was also the first customer to get my nails done.

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AYRSHIRE HOSPICE LIGHT UP A LIFE CHRISTMAS CONCERT, 26 November

The event took place in the Grand Hall, Kilmarnock and included performances from the Salvation Army Band, A Choired Taste, Isle of Cumbrae RBLS Pipe Band and local schools. The concert was an evening of Christmas celebration, and at a point in the proceedings the audience had the opportunity to light a light, in memory of their loved ones.

CASH FOR KIDS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH, 1 December

I attended the annual lunch in Ayr Racecourse and picked up a cheque on behalf of North Ayrshire Council for £54,646, for children most in need here in North Ayrshire. Cash for Kids is an excellent charity and one which I am delighted to support.

SPRINGSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE, 3 December

I popped into Springside Community for their festive celebration Breakfast with Santa. An excellent event which was enjoyed by many.

PRINCE'S TRUST EVENT, 4 December

I paid a visit to Greenwood Academy for the official opening of their new bike repair and furniture upcycling projects, which were funded in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce and Prince's Trust Scotland, to promote employability skills.

GARNOCK CAMPUS, 6 December

I joined the Royal British Legion Scotland at the Garnock campus, for the dedication and memorial service for those from Glengarnock who gave their lives in Word War 2.

CONSUL GENERAL OF JAPAN RECEPTION, 6 December

It was fabulous to attend a reception hosted by the Japanese Consul General, Mr Daisuke Matsunaga on 6 December through in Edinburgh at the Assembly Rooms. The event was attended by other Provosts, and many distinguished guests, and gave us all the opportunity to experience some diverse and fascinating Japanese culture.

IRVINE BURNS CLUB LASSES, 7 December

I attended a St Andrew's concert at the Burns Club in Irvine. The "Lasses" sang some beautiful songs, and I thoroughly enjoyed the night celebrating our patron Saint.

BURNS DAY CENTRE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, 8 December

It was a lovely morning spent meeting and chatting with some of the service users who attend the Burns Day Centre in Girdle Toll, as we got into the Christmas spirit. I was delighted to be asked to switch on their Christmas lights. It goes without saying how fabulous a job the staff in our day services do in providing enormous help and support to our elderly community. We were joined on the day by young people from Stanecastle School, who sang Christmas songs.

FOSTER CARERS CHRISTMAS COFFEE, 11 December

And talking of great staff, it is always great to meet our North Ayrshire foster carers and to get the chance to thank them for the great work they do in our community. I had the chance to do just that when I went along to the HSCP Family Placement team Christmas Coffee morning at

Fullarton Connexions. As well as chatting with some of the foster carers, there was a raffle to raise funds for the Foodbank Appeal and a fantastic £115 was raised in total.

FINALLY

I would like to thank everyone who has made 2017 another remarkable year. It is a real honour to be Provost of North Ayrshire, and nothing gives me more pleasure than spending time with our communities. Is there a Community in your area which would welcome a visit?

I'd like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.



Ian Clarkson

Councillor Ian Clarkson
Provost North Ayrshire Council



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 October -13 December
2017

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 October -13 December 2017

COSLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS, 5-7 October

On the 6th and 7th of October I attended the COSLA Annual Conference and Excellence Awards at the Crieff Hydro in Perth along with Councillors Bell, Burns and Marshall. North Ayrshire Council were shortlisted in two categories. I'm delighted that we were winners in both, with "Café Solace" successful in the "Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health" category and the Youth Empowerment team winning the award in the "Strong and Sustainable Communities" category.

Both worthy winners and fine examples of community and youth empowerment. Congratulations to both of them.

ENGAGE, DEVELOP, GROW BUSINESS EVENT, 11 October

I was invited by Team North Ayrshire to open the "Engage, Develop and Grow Business" event at Ayrshire College (Kilwinning Campus) on the 11th October. The event provided a platform for local businesses to speak about why it was worth investing in their workforce by offering training and opportunities for them to develop their skill set. Employees were also able to share with others their skills journey. I am confident that the businesses and employers who attended were inspired by hearing how other employers such as James Frew, Ashleigh Construction and GE Caledonian have benefitted from investing in their people. These employers have also had access to support enabling them to engage better with schools and colleges, invest in the development of their workforce through Modern Apprenticeships and support sustainable growth through their people with leadership and management training.

SKILLS FOR LIFE, GRADUATION EVENT, 12 October

I was delighted to be invited along to the Skills for Life Graduation Event on the 12th October which saw 25 students celebrate their achievements after completing an intensive 6 week training course at Ayrshire College. The course is aimed at providing support to those who have been affected by long term unemployment, in this case many of them lone parents who have faced many barriers when trying to get back into the workforce, such as childcare issues, lack of confidence, money management and well-being.

The course not only prepares them with the skills to enter into employment again but also helped them to gain 4 SVQ level 4 qualifications. I am pleased to report that all of them have secured employment or college place; some in Council services or in the private sector and some have gone on to further education.

This has been a life changing experience for the participants and it is encouraging to know that more students will be able to benefit from this programme when the next Skills for Life schedule begins in January 2018.

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK, 15-21 October

North Ayrshire Council played an instrumental role in supporting Challenge Poverty Week (15th – 21st October) with a series of events and visits aimed at challenging poverty in all its forms and promoting the work that is being done across North Ayrshire to tackle it.

The week kicked off with the “Aye we Can” challenge poverty conference held in the Fullarton Community Hub. More than 100 people attended to hear from our Chief Executive, Elma Murray about the Council’s commitment to be “Fair For All”, and Peter Kelly from the Poverty Alliance spoke about finding solutions to tackle poverty. Other speakers included Donna Fitzpatrick, Chair of the Fullarton Community Association and Zoe Ferguson from the Carnegie UK Trust. The Conference provided everyone with the chance to hear what the Council, partners and other organisations are doing to help and support our local communities.

***Elma Murray, Peter Kelly, Donna Fitzpatrick,
Councillor Joe Cullinane and Zoe Ferguson.***



Later that afternoon I was pleased to take part in the launch of the “Better off North Ayrshire” service. This new service which is part funded by the European Social Fund and Big Lottery Fund Scotland provides a one stop service aimed at those on low incomes or out of work and enables them to access information on how to improve their financial circumstances.



***Launch of “Better Off
North Ayrshire” at The
Playz in Kilwinning.***

“Better off North Ayrshire” roadshow at Tesco supermarket in Kilbirnie.



On Wednesday the 11th October the Fullarton Employability Hub was officially opened. This is the fourth Employability hub to open in North Ayrshire (others are in Stevenston, Ardrossan and Kilbirnie) and will provide a range of facilities to help those looking to find employment as well as offering training and workshops aimed at helping them develop their skills.

These were just some of the events held during the week but others included joint visits with the Provost to Café Solace in Irvine and Café Solace in Ardrossan, Better off North Ayrshire roadshows in Kilbirnie and Ardrossan and a visit to Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company who are providing recycled and new furniture and white goods at affordable prices for those on a budget.

The week was rounded off on Friday with a visit to Hayocks Primary school in Stevenston to see the youngsters enjoying activities as part of the Holiday meals initiative, an initiative that continues to go from strength to strength.

CARE EXPERIENCED AWARDS, 24 October

Along with Councillor Robert Foster and Stephen Brown (Interim Director for Health and Social Care) I was invited along to celebrate the successes of Care Leavers at Ayrshire College on the 24th October. The event was a collaboration between NAHCP Throughcare Team and Ayrshire College and takes place during National Care Leaver's Week.

This is the second time that this event has been held, with the aim of giving young people information and support on a range of subjects including training opportunities offered by the

Prince's Trust and Redburn Centre as well as providing advice on drug and alcohol abuse, smoking cessation and services available from Women's Aid.

I was privileged to meet with some of the young people who received certificates acknowledging their achievements in training, education and employment. I am hugely proud of the steps they are taking and wish them every success for the future.

COSLA LEADERS, 27 October

I attended COSLA Leaders on the 27th October where there was discussion on a range of subjects including Community Choices (Participatory Budgeting) for 2020/21 and Welfare Reform.

Leaders agreed to endorse the framework outlined for the 1% of local government budgets to form part of Participatory Budgeting from 2020/21 and also agreed to the appointment of a COSLA Participatory Budgeting Development Manager.

Following discussion on welfare reform, it was unanimously agreed by Leaders, that the COSLA President would write on behalf of Scottish Local Government Leaders, to David Gauke MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling on the UK Government to acknowledge the wishes of the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Scottish Local Government that the roll out of the full universal credit service should be paused until effective improvements were put in place.

BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE CONFERENCE, 31 October

North Ayrshire was pleased to welcome a delegation from Mid and East Antrim Council on the 31st October who joined us to observe our community partners in action at the Saltcoats Town Hall.

The Conference entitled "building stronger communities through Partnership and Place" was run in conjunction with the Improvement Service and provided a platform for us to detail our locality planning journey from initial stages of engagement to partnership. Discussion focused on the development of locality planning throughout North Ayrshire and how the PLACE Standard tool has contributed to the success of locality planning as a whole.

ARDROSSAN ACADEMY, 2 November

I was delighted to be asked to do a Q&A session with Modern Studies pupils at Ardrossan Academy. The questions were challenging and I just hope the answers were equally as clear.

LAUNCH OF GLOW, 2 November

Later on the 2nd November I attended the launch of 'Glow' at Irvine Royal Academy. Glow is a new online resource available to young people and staff in our schools to provide information about mental health. I hope that pupils and staff are able to use the resource to help tackle this important issue.

NORTH AYRSHIRE ACHIEVES, 3 November

On the 3rd November I was invited to celebrate the achievements made by NAC staff throughout the year at the North Ayrshire Achieves. This Programme recognises those members of staff who go the extra mile and who make a real difference to the workplace and the wider community through their hard work and dedication.

North Ayrshire Council is a Council defined by excellent and innovative services. Our staff help to achieve this through the high standard of service they provide, their commitment to the job and their positive attitudes when working with our residents and customers.

I'd like to congratulate all those nominated, the finalists and the winners in the 9 separate categories. A special thanks also to the singers from the NAC Workplace Choir who opened the night's proceedings with a wonderful performance.

LIVING WAGE WEEK, 5-11 November

To celebrate Living Wage Week 2017 (5-11 November), I was pleased to announce that North Ayrshire Council, already an accredited Living Wage Employer, would begin to pay the new rate of £8.75 per hour to NAC staff from the date of announcement, this is 4 months ahead of schedule.

I also took the opportunity to visit some of the local companies who are proud to call themselves an accredited Living Wage employer. I would like to thank all the companies throughout North Ayrshire who see the benefits in paying the living wage to their staff and comprehend that in doing this they are making a positive difference not only to their business and staff but to the wider community.

I would urge any North Ayrshire employer who has not signed up yet to be an accredited Living Wage employer to give it their consideration and play a part in creating a fairer society for all.



Elma Murray, Council Leader and Jack Evans from Poverty

LAUNCH OF THE MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT, 10 November

On the 10th November I was invited to attend the launch of the mental health toolkit at Ardeer Community Centre. I am beyond delighted to see the culmination of Courtney Gemmell's hard work and passion for helping others with mental health issues, result in the launch of such an important resource to be used in our schools, children's units and colleges.

My thanks to the Youth Services team and of course, to Courtney herself for helping to change the lives of so many other young people throughout North Ayrshire.

ROBERT SERVICE COURT SHELTERED HOUSING OPENING, 14 November

On the 14th November, together with other Elected Members and Provost Clarkson, I attended the launch of the newly refurbished Robert Service Court Sheltered Housing Unit in Kilwinning.

This project will see the residents of Robert Service Court enjoy the benefits of living in fully accessible homes. The Council remains fully committed in delivering suitable housing to meet the needs and demands of our local residents.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank James Frew Ltd, the local contractor responsible for the project for their outstanding work but also for their Modern Apprenticeship programme that gives young people the opportunity to earn while they learn. A shining example of a local employer giving back to the local community.

COSLA LEADERS, 24 November

I was back at Verity House in Edinburgh on the 24th November when COSLA Leaders met to discuss various subjects including the next stages of the Social Security Bill and operation of the new Social Security Agency; migration policy post Brexit and promotion of equality in Local Government. COSLA recognises the important role it has to play in promoting equality and diversity in local democracy and Leaders agreed to explore further options where this could be further developed.

Needless to say there was also discussion about the forthcoming Budget, details of which will be announced on 14 December. These are challenging times for all local authorities and in North Ayrshire we anticipate there will be a further funding shortfall over the next 3 years of approximately £70m.

That is why I was keen to ask the people of North Ayrshire to take part in the **online budget engagement** to see how any cuts would affect them and for them to have their say about what services they would like to protect. The results from this public engagement will help form our spending decisions with an ever decreasing budget while simultaneously trying to deliver the services our communities need and deserve.

JOINT YOUTH CABINET AT IRVINE ROYAL ACADEMY, 28 November

We held our latest Joint Youth Cabinet in Irvine Royal Academy on the 28th November. As always our young people excelled with the level of discussion and engagement. In particular I was delighted that the pupils challenged the answers they were given from the top table and helped initiate a debate back and forth. It is this sort of engagement with our young people which means that our Youth Services are 'sector leading'. I would like to pay a particular thanks to Irvine Royal Academy for hosting us and the Council's Modern Apprentices who do a fabulous job helping to organise these sessions.

MEETING WITH SCHOOL COUNSELLORS, 29 November

On being appointed Leader of North Ayrshire Council, it was my intention from the outset to visit some of the teams and staff that work in our sectors and different communities, to appreciate the vast array of work that the Council is involved in. I was fortunate to meet with some of our newly appointed school counsellors on the 29th November and have a chat with them to find out more about the invaluable work they are doing in our schools to help support our young people.

Sometimes, problems can seem insurmountable to the best of us and therefore it was reassuring to know that young people in our schools now have professional help to turn to when they need someone to listen to them and/or provide advice. The team of Counsellors have already shown that their work is making a difference to the lives of many of our pupils in North Ayrshire. Thank you.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP, 30 November

The Community Planning Partnership Board met in Ayrshire College on the 30th November. The agenda included a presentation from Community Justice Ayrshire, Ayrshire College on their Strategic Plan and on North Ayrshire's Local Housing Strategy. North Ayrshire Council officers also gave updates on Welfare Reform and Participatory Budgeting. The Board agreed that partners should follow the Council's lead and work to secure Carer Positive Employer status.

YEAR OF YOUNG PEOPLE LAUNCH, 8 December

On the 8th December I was proud to take part in the launch of North Ayrshire's "Year of Young People" (YOYP) in Cunninghame House. The aim of the YOYP is to celebrate the achievements and work of our young people and to showcase the valuable contribution that they make to their communities.

The year will also provide new opportunities for young people to influence decision making on the issues that affect their lives and matter most to them. I have no doubt that with the wealth of talented young people throughout North Ayrshire, 2018 promises to be an exciting one, a year where they can positively influence other young people and inspire other generations for many years to come.

ECONOMIC, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION BOARD, 8 December

On the 8th December the Economic Development and Regeneration Board met and heard updates on regional partnership collaboration and its industrial strategy. There was also an update on progress of the Ayrshire Growth Deal. While I am hugely disappointed to see that the AGD was not specifically mentioned in the Chancellor's recent budget, I remain in hope this will be given the funding and support that the whole of Ayrshire needs and rightly deserves.

FINAL COMMENTS

As 2017 draws to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in NAC who work so tirelessly throughout the year to provide high quality public services to the people of North Ayrshire. I look forward to working with you all again in 2018.

I would like to wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Cullinane'.

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader North Ayrshire Council

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 7

20 December 2017

North Ayrshire Council

Title: **North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board: Minutes of meetings held on 30 November 2017**

Purpose: To submit the Minutes of the meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board held on 30 November 2017

Recommendation: That the Council notes the Minutes contained in Appendix 1.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 It was previously agreed that the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board be submitted to North Ayrshire Council for information. The key matters arising from the minutes have been highlighted for the attention of the Committee and are detailed in Section 2.1.

2. Background

- 2.1 Minutes of the meeting of the CPP Board held on 30 November 2017 are appended. Particular matters for the Council's attention include the following:-

Agenda Item 3

The Board received a presentation on Community Justice Ayrshire. This included information on the membership and governance, Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan, and future developments.

Agenda Item 4

A report was given on Carer Positive Employer. The Board heard how some partners are already pursuing this accreditation and wider partners also agreed to consider how they might become Carer Positive employers.

Agenda Item 5

The Board received a report with an overview of the main issues and proposed strategic direction outlined in the draft Local Housing Strategy 2018-22. The Board noted the strong links between housing and other key Community Planning themes and commended the strategy.

Agenda Item 6

The Board received a presentation on Ayrshire College's Strategic Plans and Outcomes, and how these align with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. Specific examples of a wide range of initiatives were given.

Agenda Item 7

An update was given on the work of the North Ayrshire Welfare Reform Working Group. This covered the Autumn budget statement, Better Off North Ayrshire and the preparations for the roll out of Universal Credit. The Board complemented the work of the group, and the training and advice they were supplying.

Agenda Item 9

The Board considered North Ayrshire's Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2016-2017, including background to the plan, key achievements in all stages (Early Years, Primary Years and Secondary Years) and the next steps.

Agenda Item 11

The Board agreed to support an Elected Members Development Session which will be taking place on 8 February 2018. The purpose of this session is for Elected Members to understand the range of work that Community Planning partners are involved in, how partner organisations link into the CPP, and how Elected Members can work with the partner organisations and support constituents in their interaction with them.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Council notes the Minutes contained in Appendix 1.

4. Implications

Financial:	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Human Resources:	There are no human resource implications arising from this report.
Legal:	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
Equality:	There are no equality implications arising from this report.
Environmental & Sustainability:	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
Key Priorities:	The CPP activities detailed within this report support the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.
Community Benefits:	There are no community benefit implications arising from this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 No consultations were required.



ELMA MURRAY
Chief Executive

Reference : MR

For further information please contact Morna Rae, Community Planning
Team Leader on telephone number 01294 324177

Background Papers

None

Community Planning Partnership Board

Thursday 30th November 2017, 10.30am
Ayrshire College, Kilwinning Campus



North Ayrshire
Community Planning Partnership

Present

North Ayrshire Council

Joe Cullinane, Elected Member (Chair)
Marie Burns, Elected Member
John Bell, Elected Member
Alex Gallagher, Elected Member
Elma Murray, Chief Executive

Ayrshire College

Jackie Galbraith, Vice Principal

Jobcentre Plus

Lynn Hamill

NHS Ayrshire and Arran

John Burns, Chief Executive
Lynne McNiven, Consultant in Public Health
Martin Cheyne, Chairman

Scottish Government

Steven Cullum, Business Manager

Scottish Fire and Rescue

Jim Scott, Area Manager

Police Scotland

Paul Main, Chief Superintendent

Third Sector Interface

Vicki Yuill, Chief Executive

In Attendance

Audrey Sutton (NAC), Morna Rae (NAC), Stephen Humphries (NAC), John Butcher (NAC), Stephen Brown (HSCP), Alison McAllister (NAC), John Butcher (NAC), Alice Dillon (CJA), Morna Rae (NAC), Anthea Dickson (NAC), Yvonne Baulk (NAC), Erin McLaughlin (NAC) (Minute taker)

Apologies

Gary Higgon (KA Leisure), , Mark Newlands (SE), Stephen Gallagher (SG), Jim Scott (SFRS), Allan Comrie (SPT), Heather Dunk (Ayrshire College), Katie Hutton (SDS), Tim Ross (PS), Scott Davidson (NAC), Ellen McMaster (NAC), Anthony Gurney (NAC)

Chair: Cllr Joe Cullinane

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Minute of the Previous Meeting and Action Note

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and Action Note was discussed. All actions are now complete.

3. Community Justice Ayrshire

Alice Dillon, Community Justice Ayrshire gave a presentation on the work of Community Justice Ayrshire. She explained the partnership approach to:

- Help people who have been in trouble to connect to communities,
- Help victims of crime,
- Deal with the underlying causes of crime,
- Reduce the revolving door of prison sentences,
- Ensure people can access the services they need and
- Break the cycle of inter-generational offending (ACEs).

She provided an update on the current position including the establishment of the Community Justice Ayrshire Board, the employment of support staff, creation of local action and thematic groups, delivery of commitments within the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) and funding.

Future plans include:

- Provide midyear update on progress made on actions within CJOIP to CJ Ayrshire Board and CPPs,
- Consult with partners on priorities for next CJOIP,
- High level outline of next CJOIP to be taken to CJ Ayrshire Board and CPPs December 2017 / January 2018,
- Areas of focus identified linked to Thematic Groups,
- Agree actions with partner agencies and identify KPIs, and
- Whole population, evidence based approach to community justice which focuses on: Early intervention / prevention (linked to work on ACEs) and recovery model.

Board members asked about links to employability. Alice explained that this is a real area of focus to the team, including a project to support and encourage employers to recruit people with convictions.

The Board also discussed female custodial units. There are no current plans to locate these locally but there may be scope post 2020 for an Ayrshire location. It was agreed that work to support this potential development was important.

The Chair thanked Alice for her presentation and agreed to receive further updates in future.

4. Carer Positive Employer

Morna Rae, North Ayrshire gave a report on Carer Positive Employer. She explained the accreditation process and the benefits both to individuals and employers. Partners agreed to pursue accreditation for their own organisations.

5. Local Housing Strategy (LHS)

Yvonne Baulk provided the Board with an overview of the main issues and proposed strategic direction outlined in the draft Local Housing Strategy 2018-22, and associated Outcome Plan.

The key housing challenges were considered, including demographics, affordability, deprivation, private sector condition, supply, homelessness and specialist housing. The LHS is grouped into five overarching 'themes' to respond to the challenges. These themes are 'supply', 'condition', 'place', 'support', and 'homeless'. Detail in relation to each of these was given.

Partners noted the importance of quality housing in supporting the delivery of the partnership priorities. It was highlighted that statistics are available on a locality, and sub locality geography.

Cllr Burns asked about residents from North Ayrshire sleeping rough or presenting as homeless in other areas. Yvonne explained the cross local authority communication channels that are in place.

Audrey Sutton spoke about the increased levels of community engagement in the Local Development Plan, and the links between community planning and spatial planning.

Cllr Cullinane thanked Yvonne for her input.

6. Ayrshire College Strategic Plan & Outcomes

Jackie Galbraith gave a presentation on Ayrshire College's Strategic Plan, and how these align with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. The Strategic Goals are:

- To be an ambitious, innovative and inclusive learning and skills organisation in which students and staff thrive
- To develop people and communities, and support inclusive growth, through high quality learning and skills
- To be a high performing, sustainable college recognised for excellence and integrity.

Regional Outcomes:

- Learning is accessible and diverse attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds

- An outstanding system of learning where all students are progressing successfully and benefitting from a world class learning experience, in the hands of lecturers delivered in modern facilities
- Well prepared and skilled students progressing into jobs with the ability, ideas and ambition to make a difference to the economy
- High performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements.

Jackie provided the Board with examples of how Ayrshire College are working to fulfil these, some of which included:

- Providing a 6 month course delivered in partnership with North Ayrshire Council to help people back in to employment,
- Running campaigns such as My Mental Health Matters, Reclaim the Night and Blow the Whistle on Domestic Violence, to help raise awareness of mental health and domestic violence,
- Promoting case studies of students with care experience to break the stigma of this, and
- Running transition classes every Friday for pupils with additional support needs.

Board members spoke about the links between inclusive growth and the work of Ayrshire College. It was agreed that Jackie would discuss this with Audrey Sutton.

Stephen Brown highlighted the employability work undertaken by health visitors and positive trends in relation to younger people becoming care at home staff.

The Chair thanked Jackie for her input.

7. **North Ayrshire Welfare Reform Working Group – Update Report**

Stephen Humphries, North Ayrshire Council provided the Board with an update on the work of the Welfare Reform Working Group.

This covered the Autumn budget statement, and the launch of Better Off North Ayrshire.

He detailed the preparations for the roll out of Universal Credit, including the potential risks and actions taken to mitigate these.

The next phase of the group's work will be to monitor impacts of the changes and uptake of services.

The CPP Board agreed the recommendations to –

- Note the progress made by the Welfare Reform Group in preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit Full Service.
- Note the intention to report back on any evidence emerging of impacts following the roll-out.

The Board complemented the work of the group, and the training and advice they were supplying.

8. **Welfare Reform Pathway**

Lynne McNiven, NHS Ayrshire and Arran gave a report on referral pathways to address Fuel Poverty and Financial Vulnerability. She provided background to fuel poverty, and the health implications of this.

Partners agreed to share the pathways document and it will be taken to the Welfare Reform Working Group.

9. North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan – Annual Report

John Butcher, North Ayrshire Council, provided the Board with North Ayrshire's Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2016-2017. He gave a presentation which gave some background to the plan, key achievements in all stages (Early Years, Primary Years and Secondary Years) and the next steps. The next steps are as follows:

- Further develop joint Partnership practices,
- Build a new £25m school in Stevenston for young people with a range of additional support needs,
- Implement the Inclusion Process (incorporating Accessing Additional Support Needs Placements) Policy 2017-18 throughout North Ayrshire schools to ensure additional support is targeted,
- Adapt the Early Learning and Childcare Trial to provide 1140 hours of childcare for all children attending Loudon Montgomery Early Years before the 2020 roll out,
- Roll out whole-school nurture training to Early Years Centres,
- Roll out the Corporate Parenting Plan,
- Further develop the Locality Model of Care pilot in Kilwinning with potential for roll out,
- Move forward with discussions around the introduction of Functional Family Therapy,
- Recruit a further 6 schools counsellors,
- Another 5 nurture groups will be established,
- Consider opportunities the Year of Young People 2018 will bring, and
- Establish a CSSP Data and Performance Sub Group to further develop the performance framework for improving children's outcomes as a result of the work of the Partnership.

The Board approved the Children's Services Plan 'Getting it Right for You' Annual Report 2016-17.

10. Participatory Budgeting Report

Audrey Sutton, North Ayrshire Council reported to Board on recent developments in Participatory Budgeting in North Ayrshire. The report outlined work undertaken by the North Ayrshire Community Planning partners and North Ayrshire Council in relation to community grant awarding PB and the developing approach to using PB in mainstream budgets. It also provided an update on the national context.

The Board noted and approved the progress to date and the potential future implications for public sector bodies.

David Cowan commended the positive work undertaken in North Ayrshire and the broadening out from communities influencing the spend of specific funds to wider service development.

11. Elected Members Development Session

Morna Rae, North Ayrshire Council gave the Board an overview of the Elected Members Development Session which will be taking place on 8th February 2018. She explained the purpose of this session, which is for Elected Members to understand:

- The range of work that Community Planning partners are involved in,
- How partner organisations link into the CPP, and
- How Elected Members can work with the partner organisations and support constituents in their interaction with them.

Partners agreed to support this session and Elected Members will encourage participation.

12. Community Planning and Locality Update

Morna Rae, North Ayrshire Council gave an update on recent development in relation to Community Planning and Locality Partnerships.

This included:

- The finalisation and publication of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan,
- The Improvement Service Conference which took place on 31st October,
- The visit from delegates from Mid and East Antrim,
- Sharing and learning with other CPP areas, and
- Locality Partnership priorities

The Board agreed to share this update on Community Planning and Locality Partnerships within their own organisations.

13. Locality Partnership Updates

Cllr Bell, Cllr Burns, Cllr Gallagher and Cllr Cullinane gave a brief update from each of their localities. It was noted that the next round of meetings will take place in December and meeting notes are available on the CPP website.

14. Urgent Items and Future Agenda Items

None

15. Date of Next Meeting

22 March 2018 at 10:30am, Fullarton Community Hub, Irvine

The Chair thanked partners for their contributions and a tour of Ayrshire College was provided.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 8

20 December 2017

North Ayrshire Council

Title: **Audit Scotland Report: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17**

Purpose: To inform Council of the findings of the recent Audit Scotland report.

Recommendation: That Council (i) notes the findings of the recent Audit Scotland report, (ii) notes the current position in North Ayrshire and (iii) considers these as part of the budget deliberations

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Audit Scotland recently published its 2016/17 financial overview of local government in Scotland. The timing of the report gives councils the opportunity to use its findings to inform their budget setting. A link to the report is attached below;

http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2017/nr_171128_local_government_finance.pdf

- 1.2 The report examines the financial performance of local government in Scotland for 2016/17 based on an analysis of councils' annual accounts and their annual audit reports. The report has a summary of key findings with more detail provided in three parts covering;

- Councils' income and budgets;
- 2016/17 financial performance; and
- the financial outlook.

- 1.4 The report sets out a number of questions to assist councillors to understand their council's financial position and scrutinise its financial performance. These questions are published in a separate self assessment supplement. A link to the document is attached here; .

http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2017/nr_171128_local_government_finance_supp1.pdf

- 1.5 Appendix 1 to this report highlights the key messages identified within the Audit Scotland report and notes the current position of North Ayrshire Council in relation to these.
- 1.6 A copy of the Actions emerging from the 2016/17 Audit is attached at Appendix 2.

2. Background

Financial Overview 2016/17

- 2.1 This is the second Audit Scotland report in this format. The report examines the strategic financial position of local government in Scotland in 2016/17.
- 2.2 A summary is provided within the report with further information provided in 3 main sections:
- Part 1 - Councils' income and budgets
 - Part 2 - 2016/17 financial performance
 - Part 3 - The Financial Outlook.

2.3 Key Messages

Audit Scotland Report

- 2.3.1 Common themes emerge across the Summary and the 3 Parts of the report. These are summarised below;
- councils face significant financial challenges with funding reductions, and until 2017/18 the council tax freeze, sitting alongside increasing costs, demands and new policy commitments;
 - signs of increasing financial stress are emerging as councils find it more difficult to identify and deliver savings with more evidence of reserves being drawn down, alongside this the report notes the need for the risks associated with savings being clearer, including the impact on service levels;
 - some councils are increasing their debts as they borrow more at the current low rates to fund larger capital programmes, however the report does recognise that this is not problematic currently;
 - a number of issues were raised about budget setting; the late notification of funding from the Scottish Government (SG) with some SG funds being channelled through other SG portfolios;
 - all councils secured an unqualified audit with some councils requiring to improve financial management and reporting;
 - the need for robust budget setting including developing medium term financial strategies and effective leadership taking a proactive approach to making difficult decisions;

- the need for assurance that the current GAE funding formula remains fit for purpose;
- the need for a collaborative approach with partners, stakeholders and local communities.

North Ayrshire Council

2.3.2 An update on the North Ayrshire position is noted below;

- the Long Term Financial Outlook approved at Council on 4 October 2017 outlines the scale of the anticipated financial challenge facing North Ayrshire Council over the next 10 years;
- the council reviews its 3 year rolling medium term financial plan as part of the annual budget setting;
- Having delivered savings of £80m over the period 2010/11 to 2017/18 identification of new options is becoming increasingly challenging;
- incremental change will not be sufficient or sustainable in bridging the anticipated funding gap with the need to develop further transformation;
- Council's unearmarked reserves are sitting at the minimum acceptable level of 2% with an annual review of earmarked reserves undertaken;
- the council borrows for capital investment in line with its approved capital plan with affordability confirmed in its Treasury Management and Investment Strategy;
- North Ayrshire secured an unqualified Audit and as part of its commitment to continuous improvement keeps the format of its financial reporting under review;
- need to ensure robust financial discipline across services continues to be applied;
- support the Health and Social Care Partnership deliver outcomes within the agreed financial envelope reducing its deficit position for 2016/17 and its current in year projected overspend;
- the North Ayrshire Locality Partnerships are an effective vehicle for engagement with Partners, communities and other stakeholders.

3. Proposals

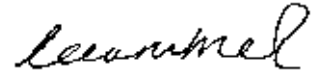
3.1 That Council notes the findings of the recent Audit Scotland report and the current position in North Ayrshire.

4. Implications

Financial:	The report highlights the anticipated reduction in grant funding and the need for the development of medium and longer term financial plans to identify financial pressures and develop sustainable solutions to bridge the anticipated funding gap. North Ayrshire Council develops medium term financial plans on a three year rolling basis and Council approved the (10 year) Long Term Financial Outlook on 4 October 2017. Financial sustainability, including the need to ensure an appropriate level of reserves, is a focus of the annual external audit.
Human Resources:	As part of a sustainable financial strategy the Council will continue to actively manage the size of its workforce. Regular communication and consultation will take place with the workforce and Trade Unions.
Legal:	There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.
Equality:	An equality impact assessment will be carried out for all options identified as part of the medium and long term financial plans
Environmental & Sustainability:	There are no direct environmental and sustainability benefits associated with this report.
Key Priorities:	In addressing the financial challenges which it faces, the Council will seek to minimise the impact on delivering its key priorities.
Community Benefits:	There are no direct community benefits associated with this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 There was no requirement to consult on the preparation of this report.



LAURA FRIEL
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support)

Reference :

For further information please contact Laura Friel , Executive Director
(Finance and Corporate Support) on 01294 324554

Background Papers

None

Audit Scotland: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17

Summary

Ref	Key Message	NAC Feedback
S1	Councils' financial challenges continue to grow. Funding reductions are compounded by increasing costs and demands on services. In response, councils have needed to achieve ambitious savings plans, including around £524 million of savings for 2016/17.	<p>North Ayrshire Council has delivered savings of £80m between 2010/11 and 2017/18 meaning that future reductions will be more challenging and will require a significant transformation of what we do alongside a different relationship with our communities.</p> <p>Action: one of the actions emerging from the Council Audit was development of our next stage transformation.</p> <p>Council approved the Long Term Financial Outlook at its meeting on 4 October 2017, this estimated the 10 year funding gap in the period to 2026/27 at £156m, 47% of the current net revenue budget.</p>
S2	Councils are showing signs of increasing financial stress. They are finding it increasingly difficult to identify and deliver savings and more have drawn on reserves than in previous years to fund change programmes and routine service delivery. Some councils risk running out of General Fund reserves within two to three years if they continue to use them at levels planned for 2017/18.	<p>North Ayrshire used made no use of reserves when it set its budget for 2016/17.</p> <p>North Ayrshire Council applied 3 sources of non recurring funding when it set its budget for 2017/18;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of earmarked reserves identified £3.441m of funds which were no longer required for the purpose identified • The 2016/17 in year underspend of £2.771m supported non recurring investment in the Community Investment Fund • Unearmarked reserves were reduced by £2.570m (to 2%) to contribute to the Health and Social Care Partnership Challenge Fund, a fund established to support transformation and demand mitigation.

Audit Scotland: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17

Ref	Key Message	NAC Feedback
		The use of reserves as outlined above is not explained correctly within the Overview Report.
S3	Debt increased by £836 million in 2016/17 as councils took advantage of low interest rates to borrow more to invest in larger capital programmes. Councils' debt levels are not currently problematic, but some are becoming concerned about affordability of costs associated with debt within future budgets.	In 2016/17 North Ayrshire borrowed in line with its long term capital investment programme and treasury management strategy. The level of borrowing was £37.5m more than 2015/16 but £43.1m less than its underlying capital financing requirement due to use of internal funds. The Council's annual loan charges are 5% of the net General Fund expenditure, placing North Ayrshire at 27 out of the 30 local authorities included in the report.
S4	Councils' budget-setting processes for 2016/17 were complicated by late confirmation of funding from the Scottish Government and the funding arrangements for integrating health and social care. Councils' expenditure and use of reserves often differed noticeably from that originally planned, indicating the need for budget-setting to become more robust and reliable.	<p>The late notification of funding from the Scottish Government allowed North Ayrshire Council to establish a programme of non recurring investment, thereby avoiding adding further pressures in later years, it also allowed a number of savings proposals to be deferred.</p> <p><i>For 2016/17 an underspend of £5.3m was delivered, including a net contribution of £1.2m from earmarked reserves. Following the earmarking of funds to support future commitments, including £2.8m to support the non-recurring investment identified as part of the 2017/18 revenue budget, a breakeven position was reported for the year. This was in line with the approved budget.</i></p>
S5	All councils received an unqualified audit opinion on their 2016/17 accounts but auditors found that in several councils financial management could be improved. Councils can use their accounts to more clearly explain	<p>North Ayrshire Council continued to receive an unqualified audit opinion.</p> <p>Action: One of the actions emerging from the Audit was the requirement to establish more robust financial management</p>

Audit Scotland: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17

Ref	Key Message	NAC Feedback
	their financial performance over the whole year to support better scrutiny.	<p>on the resources delegated to the Council from the Integrated Joint Board for social care services. The report noted that North Ayrshire HSCP was the only Partnership to overspend in 2016/17, we understand that other Partnerships did overspend but that additional funding was then provided by Partners. Within the North Ayrshire Partnership no additional funding was provided and a deficit was carried forward into 2017/18. A dedicated interim Head of Finance with a focus on the social care element of the Partnership's budget has been established to support this and development and delivery of the Partnership's transformation programme.</p> <p>Action: the statement re financial performance over the whole year is not clear. Discussion will take place with Deloitte to identify areas for improvement for the Council. The current position within North Ayrshire is bi monthly reporting of financial performance with a detailed year end outturn report summarised in the narrative in the Management Commentary.</p>
S6	The financial outlook for councils continues to be challenging, with the need to deliver savings being increasingly critical to their financial sustainability. As such, robust medium-term financial strategies and effective leadership to deliver them are of increasing importance.	<p>There are 3 strands to the Council's financial planning; annual budget setting; sitting alongside the rolling three year medium term plan and the long term financial outlook.</p> <p>Action: the Executive Leadership Team and Elected Members will require to identify and implement increasingly difficult decision.</p>

Part 1 Councils income and budget for 2016/17

Ref	Key Message	NAC Feedback
P1 (1)	2016/17 was a challenging year for councils with a real-terms reduction in revenue funding, a continuation of the council tax freeze, inflationary pressures and the cost of new UK and Scottish Government policy commitments.	In 2016/17 NAC had a £10m reduction to its Scottish Government funding. Net pressures of £8.2m were identified resulting in savings of £18.2m.
P1 (2)	Councils depend on Scottish Government funding for the majority of their income. The largest element of Scottish Government funding, relating to Grant Aided Expenditure, has remained largely unchanged since 2008/09, with additional funding linked to supporting national policies. The Scottish Government and COSLA should assure themselves that the funding formula remains fit for purpose in a changing landscape for local government. It is important that it is suited to improving outcomes for local communities and sensitive to priorities such as reducing inequality within and across council areas.	North Ayrshire would support a review of the current funding formula to ensure total resources align with policy priorities.
P1 (3)	In response to funding reductions, councils approved about £524 million of savings and the use of £79 million of their reserves when setting budgets for 2016/17. Councils' savings plans have focused on reducing staff numbers, rationalising surplus property and improving procurement of goods and services. Councils were not always clear in their budget-setting reports about the risks associated with savings and their potential impact on levels of service.	Refer to S1 North Ayrshire aligns its budget decisions with the priorities set out in its Council Plan. As part of the budget setting process all options are shared with all Members with a RAG status identified to highlight risks and issues. In addition detailed information is provided to all Members on the impact of options.

Audit Scotland: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17

Ref	Key Message	NAC Feedback
P1 (4)	Councils' budget-setting processes for 2016/17 were complicated by later confirmation of funding from the Scottish Government and the funding arrangements for integrating health and social care.	Refer to S4. Councils and CoSLA has a clear position which states that funding should be allocated directly to the body with responsibility for service delivery. As indicated in the auditor's report an element of funding for health and social care is channelled via the Health and Sport Budget. A similar scenario is anticipated for the expansion of Early Learning and Child Care with funds coming via the Education and Skills portfolio.
P1 (5)	Councils set larger capital budgets in 2016/17 than in 2015/16. The Scottish Government capital grant fell and councils planned to fund expenditure through increased borrowing.	Refer to S3. North Ayrshire's General Services' final capital budget for 2016/17 was £52.3m compared to £55.4m in 2015/16. This was achieved against a background of reduced levels of grant funding and reduced prudential borrowing through the increased use of internal funds and receipts from the sale of Council assets.

Part 2 2016/17 financial performance

Ref	Key Messages	NAC position
P2 (1)	All councils received an unqualified audit opinion on their 2016/17 accounts but the accounts could more clearly explain their financial performance.	Refer S5
P2 (2)	Councils are showing signs of increasing financial stress with 20 councils drawing on their usable reserves in 2016/17	Refer S2
P2 (3)	Councils' actual use of reserves was often quite different from that originally planned. The reasons why are not always clear	Refer S4
P2 (4)	Auditors found that budget-setting needed to be more robust and that financial management could be improved in several councils	Refer S6

Audit Scotland: Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2016/17

Ref	Key Messages	NAC position
P2 (5)	Levels of net debt increased by £836 million in 2016/17. On average councils spent almost ten per cent of their revenue budgets servicing this debt. Some councils are concerned about the ongoing affordability of servicing their debt as resources decrease	Refer S3
P2 (6)	Councils that have been proactive in making difficult decisions will be better placed to deal with future financial pressures	Refer S6

Part 3 Financial Outlook

Ref	Key Messages	NAC position
P3 (1)	The financial outlook for councils remains challenging with further real-terms reductions in funding and a range of cost and demand pressures on budgets.	Refer S6
P3 (2)	In total councils approved £317 million of savings and the use of £105 million of reserves when setting budgets for 2017/18.	Refer S2
P3 (3)	Some councils relying heavily on the use of reserves to fund services will need to take remedial action or they will run out of General Fund reserves within two to three years.	Refer S2
P3 (4)	Robust medium-term financial strategies and savings plans are increasingly critical to the financial sustainability of councils.	Refer S6
P3 (5)	Strong leadership is increasingly important and it is essential that councillors work effectively with officers, their partners and other stakeholders to identify and deliver necessary savings. It is important that councils engage with local communities when planning and delivering services and identifying savings.	Refer S6 North Ayrshire has undertaken a range of budget community engagement over the last few years. Locality Partnerships have been in place since 2016/17. For 18/19 an on line engagement tool has been developed. To ensure we engage with hard to reach groups facilitated sessions have been held with a wide range of community groups.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL EXTERNAL AUDIT 2016/17 ACTION PLAN

Area	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsible person	Target Date	Priority
Property Valuations	From our property specialists review of the valuations performed in the year, a number of recommendations have been made in relation to the valuation process. These should be taken forward as part of the 2017/18 revaluation exercise.	The Council is making a number of changes to how it manages its estate. The issues identified by Deloitte will be addressed as part of this.	Executive Director Place	31 March 2018	High
Charitable Trusts	We note that there has been very little movement in these trusts over the last 12 months, with the movements largely relating to interest from investments held. We would encourage the Council to ensure that appropriate plans are in place to ensure these funds are used in accordance with the donors' wishes.	The Council is taking a proactive approach with its communities to identify opportunities to apply trust funds in accordance with the donor's wishes.	Executive Director Economy and Communities	Ongoing	Moderate

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL EXTERNAL AUDIT 2016/17 ACTION PLAN

Area	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsible person	Target Date	Priority
Financial Sustainability/Transformation	Due to increasing demand for services and the continuing restraint in relation to Council funding settlements, the Council will have to consider how it can transform service delivery through its T2 Programme in order to minimise the impact on citizen with reducing budgets.	The Council recognises the challenges it faces. An updated Long Term Financial Strategy will be considered by Council in October 2017. This will identify the need for further significant transformation to ensure financial sustainability of services.	Chief Executive	31 March 2018	High
Health and Social Care	The IJB, working closely with both North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, need to agree mitigating actions to ensure that budgets (amend this to say services – we don't deliver budgets in line with resources) are delivered in line with the resources available.	Regular financial reports are submitted to the IJB, these include options to reduce expenditure in line with delegated resources. The reports note the responsibility of the IJB to ensure that services are contained within available resources.	Chief Officer, North Ayrshire HSCP	31 March 2018	High

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 9

20 December 2017

North Ayrshire Council

Title: **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Investment Programme, Revenue Budget and Rent Levels for 2018/19**

Purpose: To advise Council of the HRA capital investment programme and revenue budget for 2018/19 and the consequential rent levels.

Recommendation: That Council:

- (a) approves the HRA capital investment programme for 2018/19, as detailed in the attached Appendix 1;
 - (b) approves the HRA revenue budget for 2018/19, as detailed in the attached Appendix 2;
 - (c) approves a rent increase of 2.79% in 2018/19 for council houses (including sheltered housing);
 - (d) approves an increase of 2.79% for garage sites and lock-ups;
 - (e) approve an increase of 7% in sheltered housing service charges, as part of equalisation of the cost of service charges, for existing tenants; and
 - (f) notes the indicative rent increases of 2.93% for 2019/20 and 3.65% for 2020/21.
-

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 requires local authorities to maintain a Housing Revenue Account to record all income and expenditure related to the provision of Council houses.

- 1.2 The annual review of the HRA Business Plan was carried out during 2017 to assess the factors expected to impact on the HRA budget. Tenants have also been consulted on the budget proposals included within this report. This has resulted in capital and revenue budgets which deliver: -
- a capital investment programme which maintains the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and works towards achieving the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by 2020;
 - a further 36 new build houses by 31 March 2019 taking the total new builds to 296 units, supporting the target of 1,000 units of new build housing over the 10 year period to 31 March 2022;
 - £17.167m of property related expenditure within the revenue account.
- 1.3 In order to meet these commitments the proposed increase to housing rents is 2.79% for 2018/19.
- 1.4 A summary of the anticipated level of earmarked and unearmarked reserves is provided. Based on the probable outturn as at the end of September 2017 it is anticipated that the HRA will have reserves of £14.468m at the end of the financial year, of which £1.000m (2.1% of revenue budget) is unearmarked. This is at the lower end of CIPFA's recommended level of reserves of between 2% and 4%.
- 1.5 Full details of the capital and revenue budgets are contained in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

2. Background

- 2.1 A Special Meeting of the Council on 1 March 2017 gave consideration to rent levels for the three years to 2019/20. Members approved an increase of 2.79% for 2017/18 and noted the indicative rent increases of 2.79% for 2018/19 and 2.93% for 2019/20.
- 2.2 The HRA Business Plan financial model was updated during 2017 to reflect the significantly improved stock condition together with the potential impacts of Welfare Reform. In addition, the updated plan now provides for the commitment to build an additional 250 units over and above the previous target of 750 new build housing units by 31 March 2022. The Business Plan provides assurance of the financial sustainability of the Council's housing stock over the 30 year period it covers.

2.3 As part of the annual review of the Business Plan consideration was also given to the following factors:

- Capital and revenue expenditure requirements
- Council house building targets
- Inflation
- Outcome of tenants' consultation
- Value for Money
- Future challenges
- Revenue and Capital balances

Capital and Revenue Expenditure Requirements

Capital

2.4 The proposed 2018/19 HRA capital programme of £29.427m is detailed in Appendix 1. As outlined in the appendix, the programme will be funded by a combination of capital funded from current revenue (CFCR), government grants, prudential borrowing, reserves and the affordable housing contribution.

2.5 The capital programme will result in the housing stock receiving major repair or improvement works in 2018/19, including the following:

Programme	No. of properties	
	2018/19	2017/18 projected
Installation of new double-glazed windows	86	100
Roofing and rendering	739	816
Insulated rendering	51	101
Electrical rewiring	78	200
Installation of new kitchens	230	270
New central heating	424	350
Installation of new bathrooms	220	1,200

Council House Building

- 2.6 The revised Business Plan includes the recently approved addition of 250 new build houses, taking the total number of units to be delivered by 31 March 2022 to 1,000. Details of developments on site during 2018/19 are shown below:

Project Location	No. of properties
Dickson Drive, Irvine (phase 2)	24
Watt Court, Dalry	33
Canal Court, Saltcoats	36
Flatt Road, Largs	122
Brathwic Terrace, Brodick	26
Harbourside, Irvine	80
Ardrossan Road, Seamill	31
Totals	352

Details of the full Council house build programme, including the additional 250 units can be found in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan which was reported to Cabinet on 26 September 2017.

- 2.7 A sheltered housing refurbishment programme is also underway, with work on site at Dickson Court, Beith (22 units) due for completion October 2018 and Connell Court, Kilbirnie (17 units), due to complete March 2019. Refurbishment work is due to start at the former Redcross House site in Irvine which will deliver 20 units of supported accommodation.
- 2.8 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities requires Councils to demonstrate that capital investment programmes and the level required to be funded by borrowing are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The key Performance Indicators which demonstrate this is noted below;

Treasury Management Performance Indicators

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	2017/18 Estimate £m	2018/19 Estimate £m	2019/20 Estimate £m
HRA	16.6%	18.0%	19.2%

Revenue

- 2.9 The proposed 2018/19 HRA revenue budget is outlined in Appendix 2. Planned expenditure of £48.598m will mainly be funded by rental income and charges for services.

- 2.10 The revenue budget includes funding of £17.167m for property related expenditure in the year. This expenditure will assist the Council in maintaining its efficient and sector-leading performance in respect of management of void properties and planned and responsive maintenance.

Outcome of Tenants' Consultation

- 2.11 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires councils to consult with tenants and have regard to the views expressed prior to setting the rents.
- 2.12 In preparing the budget for 2018/19, two options for rent increases were identified by officers and these were considered by the Business Plan Implementation Group in September 2017. The options were subsequently included in the tenants' consultation exercise that took place in October and November 2017, namely to increase rents by either 2.79% or 3%. The difference of 0.21% reflected the option to increase the Estates Based Projects budget from £0.204m to £0.300m. Further information on the options considered is included within the Rent Matters Newsletter as attached at Appendix 3.
- 2.13 Responses received from the tenants' consultation indicated a 63% preference for option 1, a rent increase of 2.79% for 2018/19.

Rent Increase

- 2.14 In order to meet the investment requirements of the 30 year Business Plan, including the Council house building programme; maintaining the SHQS; and working towards achieving the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020, it is proposed to increase housing rents by 2.79% for 2018/19. The Business Plan indicates anticipated rent increases of 2.93% for 2019/20 and 3.65% for 2020/21.

Sheltered Housing Utility Charges

- 2.15 During the initial preparation of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year business plan in 2010, an issue with the service charge income from sheltered housing units was highlighted. At that time there was a considerable gap between the income received from service charges and the actual cost of the energy supplied. Additionally, new HRA Guidance was issued by the Scottish Government in February 2014 which states that tenants must only pay for services which are used by them and expenditure must be fair and transparent. To address this historical shortfall, approval was given by Cabinet in February 2016 to increase service charges over a three year period, with a review being undertaken at the end of the period to ensure all relevant charges are sufficiently covered. 2018/19 is the final year of this approved implementation period and includes an increase in charge of 7%.

Value for Money

- 2.16 The Council's average weekly rent is below the Scottish average Local Authority rent for 2017/18 (Council average is £68.38 compared to Scottish average of £70.55). The proposed rent increase for 2018/19 is expected to maintain the Council's position compared with the Scottish average. The Council's average rent is also significantly lower than the average for Registered Social Landlords within North Ayrshire. Details of the weekly rent charges are shown in the table below.

	Average Rent 2017/18
Scottish Local Authority Average	£70.55
North Ayrshire Council	£68.38
East Ayrshire Council	£70.73
South Ayrshire Council	£72.52
ANCHO	£78.77
Irvine Housing Association	£81.04
Cunninghame Housing Association	£82.61

- 2.17 Following a tenant consultation exercise, Cabinet on 14 November 2017 approved the implementation of a new rent structure from April 2018. The new rent structure will be implemented over a two year period and will result in a decrease in rent charges for 60% of tenants (circa 7,800 households). Of the 40% of tenants who will experience an increase in rent charges, 78% will see a maximum increase of £1.00 per week. These movements are before the application of the proposed 2018/19 rent increase.

Future Challenges

Welfare Reform

- 2.18 The changes introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 have placed pressure on the management of rent collection. Like most local authorities, an increase in rent arrears has been experienced during this period. This has partly stabilised, due to the mitigation of the under occupation charge through Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), and the close management of Universal Credit Live Service claimants. The end of year position for 2016/17 was £0.912m, an increase of approximately £0.025m on the previous year.
- 2.19 £0.140m of these arrears are attributed to tenants claiming Universal Credit, an increase of approximately £0.028m from 2016/17 with an additional 141 tenants claiming Universal Credit from the previous year. 299 of the 382 tenants claiming Universal Credit at 2016/17 year end were in arrears, with an average debt of £468. This is a reduction in the average debt per Universal Credit claimant of £83 from 2016/17, however is still significantly higher than the £237 average overall debt per tenant.
- 2.20 Nonetheless, the Council performance in rent arrears management is very good. In 2016/17, gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due was 3.39% (Scottish average was 5.3%). The estimated arrears within the 2018/19 budget assumes full DHP continuing to be available for under occupation.
- 2.21 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 poses significant risks to HRA income streams and therefore the HRA Business Plan. Universal Credit Full Service has been implemented in all three job centres in North Ayrshire from 22 November 2017. Welfare Reforms place a number of pressures on tenants - a high proportion of council tenants are on low income, and approximately 58% are in receipt of Housing Benefit. The overall impact is expected to be significant upon tenants, the local economy and the Housing Revenue Account.
- 2.22 The Scottish flexibilities to vary the frequency of Universal Credit payments and to make payment of rent direct to landlords was implemented on 4 October 2017. North Ayrshire Council has been given 'trusted partner' status by the DWP and has access to their landlord portal. This allows the Council to request direct payments for tenants, who are considered vulnerable according to DWP criteria, when they initially claim Universal Credit.
- 2.23 In order to continue to meet the priorities within the HRA Business Plan it is essential that the risks presented by Welfare Reform and uncertainties around future rental income are addressed. Therefore, £3m continues to be earmarked within the HRA as a contingency to manage the impact of Welfare Reform.

Climate Change and Fuel Poverty

- 2.24 Around 25% of greenhouse gas emissions derive from housing. Measures to improve domestic energy efficiency in both new and existing housing stock are crucial in meeting Scottish Government targets to reduce energy consumption. Through the North Ayrshire Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy 2017-2020, the Council continues to develop and implement a number of actions. These include building new homes which incorporate sustainable technologies and are well insulated and inexpensive to heat and light, undertaking improvement works to our existing stock to increase energy efficiency, providing tenants with access to energy advice and switching services, and delivery of new capital projects generating renewable and/or low carbon energy for the benefit of tenants.
- 2.25 A range of initiatives are currently underway. These include a pilot programme involving retrofit of solar panel systems on up to 500 Council homes to reduce electricity bills for tenants and provide other benefits including carbon reduction. Officers are currently undertaking a procurement exercise for the project with anticipated roll out during 2017-18. A further project involves two new district heating schemes comprising shared heating from renewable biomass between primary schools and Council housing. One scheme is currently at construction stage, with another at detailed technical design stage. Officers are also well advanced with proposals for procurement of a white label energy supply partner, with an intent to go to market prior to the end of financial year 2017/18. This initiative will provide lower fuel bills for tenants, helping to alleviate fuel poverty and boost the local economy.
- 2.26 The Scottish Government published the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) in March 2014. The publication provides clear guidance in relation to the level of energy efficiency each Council owned house requires to achieve by 31 December 2020. A full analysis of the cost associated with achieving the ESSH has been carried out. The Council will be able to deliver the requirements of the standard through the allocation of specific funding, to implement new improvement projects and initiatives and the continuation of current initiatives such as the Council's replacement central heating and external wall insulation programmes and identification of further external funding sources, including Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS) funding.
- 2.27 Approximately 95% of the Council's housing stock already complies with ESSH and energy improvement works such as cavity, wall or replacement central heating are planned for those properties which are not compliant.

Revenue and Capital Balances

2.28 The HRA revenue budgetary control report to 30 September 2017, submitted to the Cabinet meeting of 14 November 2017, advised Members of a projected HRA balance of £14.704m at 31 March 2018. Since the report was produced further expenditure on infrastructure improvements has been planned which will reduce the projected HRA balance to £14.468m at 31 March 2018. This includes an uncommitted balance of £1.000m which equates to around 2.1% of revenue expenditure. An analysis of the HRA balances is shown in the following table:

	Balance at 31 March 2017	Use of Earmarked Funds	Transfers and Adjustments	Projected Balance at 31 March 2018
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council House Building Fund	8.082	-	0.156	8.238
Welfare Reform	3.000	-	-	3.000
Contingency Balance	1.000	-	-	1.000
Sheltered Housing Unit Works	0.156	-	(0.156)	-
Major Refurbishment Works	0.762	-	-	0.762
Infrastructure Improvements	0.613	(0.236)	-	0.377
Tarryholme	1.091	-	-	1.091
	14.704	(0.236)	-	14.468

3. Proposals

3.1 Council is invited to:

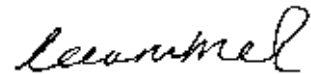
- a. approve the HRA capital investment programme for 2018/19, as detailed in the attached Appendix 1;
- b. approve the HRA revenue budget for 2018/19, as detailed in the attached Appendix 2;
- c. approve a rent increase of 2.79% in 2018/19 for council houses (including sheltered housing);
- d. approves an increase of 2.79% for garage sites and lock-ups;
- e. approve an increase of 7% in sheltered housing utility charges, as part of equalisation of the cost of service charges, for existing tenants; and
- f. notes the indicative rent increases of 2.93% for 2019/20 and 3.65% for 2020/21

4. Implications

Financial:	The proposed rent increase of 2.79% in 2018/19 will result in significant resources to invest in the Council's housing stock, with total planned revenue expenditure of £48.598m and a capital programme totalling £29.427m in 2018/19.
Human Resources:	None
Legal:	The Council has consulted with tenants on the proposed rent increases in line with the legal requirement to do so.
Equality:	The investment proposals outlined in the report will ensure the housing stock continues to support the needs of our tenants including those with accessibility issues due to age or disability.
Environmental & Sustainability:	These proposals support the Council's Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change strategy.
Key Priorities:	Investment through the HRA capital programme and revenue budget supports and links to the following Council Plan 2015-2020 strategic priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting all of our people to stay safe, healthy and active; and ● Protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations
Community Benefits:	None.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Housing Services engaged in a programme of consultation with key stakeholders in order to gather their views of the current service provision and priorities for future service delivery. This engagement and consultation was facilitated in the main, through the Business Plan Implementation Group and the Tenants and Residents Network.
- 5.2 In addition a Consultation on the proposed rent increases (Appendix 3) was issued to 12,985 Council tenants via the Tenants Newsletter in October 2017. The consultation period ran between October and November and tenants were asked to provide their views on two options for rent increases.



LAURA FRIEL
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support)

Reference :

For further information please contact Laura Friel, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support) on 01294 324512.

Background Papers

0

North Ayrshire Council Draft HRA Capital Plan 2018/19			
Programme Description	2018/19 New programme for Approval	2018/19 Previously Approved	Total 18/19 Programme
	£000	£000	£000
Council House Building			
Dickson Drive - Phase 2		2,690	2,690
Tarryholme		1,531	1,531
Brathwic Terrace, Brodick	600		600
Flatt Road, Largs - Phase 1	1,800		1,800
Watt Court SHU		4,772	4,772
Canal Court SHU		2,152	2,152
Garrier Court SHU		1,613	1,613
Acquisition of Houses - Open Market	480		480
Improvements to Existing Stock			
Window Replacement	669		669
Bathroom Programme	627		627
Kitchen Programme	705		705
Other Capital Works	518		518
Central Heating	1,321		1,321
Insulated Re-rendering	528		528
Electrical re-wiring	186		186
Refurbishment - Dickson Court		995	995
Refurbishment - Connell Court		1,314	1,314
Roofing and Rendering	3,167		3,167
Regeneration - Garrier Court	1,613		1,613
Energy Efficient Standard	1,035		1,035
Professional Management Charges	1,111		1,111
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	14,360	15,067	29,427
Funded By:-			
CFCR	(12,767)		(12,767)
Use of Reserves		(1,091)	(1,091)
Government Grants - House Building	(1,475)	(6,880)	(8,355)
Affordable Housing Contribution	(118)	(240)	(358)
Prudential Borrowing		(6,856)	(6,856)
TOTAL INCOME	(14,360)	(15,067)	(29,427)

Draft HRA Revenue Budget 2018/19		
	Cost Type	2018/19 (£'000s)
<u>Income</u>	Rents:	
	Council houses	(47,395)
	Other rents	(311)
	Other Income:	
	External recharges	(767)
	Internal recharges	(125)
Gross Income		(48,598)
<u>Expenditure</u>	Employee Costs	4,748
	Property Costs:	
	Responsive repairs	1,753
	Void expenditure	2,559
	Planned & Cyclical maintenance	7,050
	Estate Based Projects	204
	Infrastructure Improvements	306
	Roads & Lighting Maintenance	196
	Aids & adaptations	1,792
	Other property costs	3,307
	Supplies and Services	286
	Transport Costs	42
	Administration Costs	376
	Central Support Costs	1,705
	Payments to Other Agencies, Bodies and Persons	271
	Internal Services	1,586
	Capital Financing:	
	CFCR	12,767
	Contribution to New House Build Fund	1,709
	Principal repayments	2,490
	Loans Fund interest	5,394
	Loans Fund expenses	115
	Revenue interest	(58)
Gross Expenditure		48,598

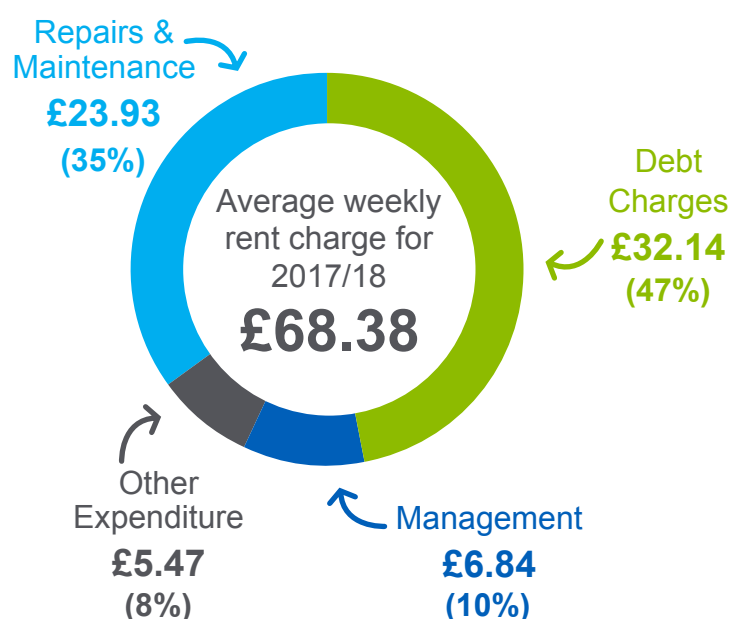
INFORMATION FOR NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL TENANTS

October 2017

RENT MATTERS

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent rent restructure consultation. We are currently collating the responses and we will update you with results in the near future.

How your rent is being spent in 2017/18:



Between April 2017 and March 2018 we plan to have completed:



1400
new bathroom
installations



270
new kitchen
installations



816
roof/render
replacements



200
properties
rewired



350
central heating
system upgrades



101
external
wall installations



46
properties with
new window
installations



£1m
of energy efficiency
improvements



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

How do our rents compare for 2017/18?

North Ayrshire Council	£68.38
Scottish local authority average	£70.55
East Ayrshire Council	£70.73
South Ayrshire Council	£72.52
ANCHO	£78.77
Irvine Housing Association	£81.04
Cunninghame Housing Association	£82.61

We want to consult with you on the proposed annual rent increase for North Ayrshire Council's houses in 2018/19.

Your Views Matter

We have outlined two options for rent charges for 2018/19 below:

Option One

Increase rents by **2.79%**
average increase of **£1.91**

The planned improvements for 2018/19 would include:

- Install 220 bathrooms
- Install 230 kitchens
- Complete 93 new build council houses
- Invest £0.300 improving parking, pavements, roads & lighting
- Refurbish two sheltered housing complexes
- Refurbish 20 units for supported accommodation

Option Two

Increase rents by **3.00%**
average increase of **£2.05**

The planned improvements for 2018/19 would include:

- Install 220 bathrooms
- Install 230 kitchens
- Complete 93 new build council houses
- Invest £0.300 improving parking, pavements, roads & lighting
- Refurbish two sheltered housing complexes
- Refurbish 20 units for supported accommodation
- Increase the Estates Based Projects budget by circa £100,000

Everyone pays rent, even if you receive housing benefit, so it is important that we receive feedback from as many tenants as possible.

Struggling to pay your rent?

It is important that you pay your rent on time and in full. You should contact your Housing Officer immediately if you are in arrears and have not made an arrangement to clear them.

The Welfare Reform Team can help if you are experiencing financial difficulties, but you must get in touch quickly. Call them on **0300 999 4606**.



Pay your
rent **first**

Don't risk losing your home

Do your bit to improve our services

Would you like to get more involved with the Council's Housing Service?

Housing Services is looking for new members to join our existing Inspection Panel, Service Improvement Groups and take part in Mystery Shopping. Training will be provided and expenses will be reimbursed.

For more information, contact the Tenant Participation Team on **01294 324878**, or email tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk



Did you know?

You can view your rent account 24 hours a day, 7 days a week online at the HUB.



Register at www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk

The easiest way to pay your rent is by direct debit

Call today on
01294 324603



Have your say

Our plans and how we spend our budget will have an impact on your home and your community. We want to hear what you think.

Please let us know your views by completing and returning this feedback form to us.

A pre-paid envelope is enclosed and one lucky respondent will win £50 of shopping vouchers.

Your rent options for 2018/19

☐

Option One: Increase rents by 2.79%

Average weekly increase of £1.91*

☐

Option Two: Increase rents by 3.00%

Average weekly increase of £2.05*

*Based on the average weekly rent in 2017/18

Do you have any comments on the options?

Contact Details

Name

Address

Town

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Complete this form and put it into the pre-paid envelope provided. Return your completed questionnaire by **12th November** to make sure your views are counted and to be entered into our prize draw. Thank you and good luck!

Alternatively you can hand the form into your local housing office or complete the on-line survey at **www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/87FQM5J**



WIN!
£50 Shopping Vouchers

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 10

20 December 2017

North Ayrshire Council

Title: **Festival and Events**

Purpose: This report proposes the creation of a fund to support community run festivals and events in North Ayrshire.

Recommendation: That the Council agrees (a) to the creation of a fund for community run festivals and events of £150,000; and (b) to review the operation of the fund after the first year.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report has been brought forward as a result of Member concerns about the impact on festivals, particularly Marymass and Largs Viking Festival, of any reduction in the amount that Irvine and Largs Common Goods make available for annual grant distribution. It seeks Council approval to create a fund to support community organised festivals and events which would also be available to support festivals and events across North Ayrshire.

2. Background

- 2.1 There are a number of festivals and events which are organised and run by communities across North Ayrshire. Many of these raise funds to support them, whilst the larger festivals are heavily dependent on local Common Good Funds. The latter include Marymass based in Irvine, and the Largs Viking Festival. Based on 2015/16, those events which receive the largest funding support are:-
- Marymass Festival - Irvine Common Good met £49,994 out of total Council grant of £50,994
 - Largs Viking Festival - Largs Common Good met £5000 out of total Council funding of £6,850
 - Saltcoats Queen of the Sea - Total Council funding £1,350

- 2.2 As outlined in paragraph 2.1 the bulk of the funding for Marymass and Largs Viking Festival comes from Irvine and Largs Common Goods respectively. In contrast to other towns in North Ayrshire, Irvine and Largs retain sizeable Common Good Funds. These can only be expended for the benefit of the former area of Irvine Burgh (being the westernmost part of the current town of Irvine) and Largs, or their respective residents.
- 2.3 These common goods receive annual rentals from properties let by them, often from the Council. In turn this has allowed an annual distribution of funds which does not erode the capital of the Common Goods. In the case of Irvine Common Good, average annual grant expenditure for 2014/15 to 2016/17 was £59,132. Largs Common Good has disbursed an annual average of £13,485 over the same period.
- 2.4 In the case of Largs, the Largs Car Park fund can also fund festivals and events. While not part of Largs Common Good, North Ayrshire Council's Corporate Policy Committee of 10 September 2002 agreed to ring fence the net car park income for expenditure on the tourist and visitor areas of Largs. Accordingly this fund is also able to fund festivals and events in Largs, in a similar manner to Largs Common Good.
- 2.5 The car park fund currently has a balance of £256,122. After Council's decision in February 2017 to use part of the Fund's annual surplus for public toilets in Largs, the Fund's annual surplus available for distribution is £85,000. In recent years approximately £33,000 has been used to meet Streetscene costs relating to Largs Viking Festival. The remaining monies have been distributed to other projects in the town. Largs is also able to disburse funds to local groups from the benefits from windfarm community benefit monies distributed by an independent trust.
- 2.6 The Council budget, agreed in February 2017, included a 10% budget reduction in grounds maintenance costs, to be implemented in the current financial year. To meet this, a full review was undertaken of the sites where grounds maintenance was carried out. This is an extensive exercise, still ongoing, which requires examination of time sheets and title deeds.

- 2.7 This review has to date identified a number of sites where the Council was undertaking grounds maintenance on sites owned by Agencies of the Scottish Government, housing associations, or on private ground where factoring arrangements should be in place. It also identified maintenance being carried out on Housing Revenue Account(HRA) owned ground and common good lands, which was not being charged to these accounts. Measures are now being taken to regularise the position on such charges. In North Ayrshire, two Common Goods receive grounds maintenance services, these are at Irvine and Largs.
- 2.8 The areas of Irvine Common Good land maintained are as follows:
- The Moor;
 - Low Green;
 - Recreation Park (part of);
 - Galt Avenue;
 - Grass are behind Irvine Old Parish Church;
 - Redburn Community Centre grounds;
 - Land at end of Berry Drive;
- 2.9 The cost of the provision of grounds maintenance services for this land in Irvine is £28,995. This includes labour charges, vehicle costs and plants/bedding. Some of the areas of land are large in size and require significant resources to maintain them. The areas are well used and maintained to a high standard. Costs will reduce slightly if the sale of common good land at Redburn to the HRA, is approved by Cabinet on 12 December.
- 2.10 The area of Largs Common Good land maintained is Douglas Park including the bowling green and tennis courts. The cost of the provision of grounds maintenance services for Douglas Park, Largs is £30,907. Again, this includes labour charges, vehicle costs and plants/bedding. Again, the area is well used and maintained to a high standard. In the case of Douglas Park it has been ascertained that Largs Common Good have been receiving the rental income from the bowling green and tennis courts, only the maintenance charges have been incorrectly coded to the wrong account.
- 2.11 In relation to the common goods, financial rules are clear. All income and expenditure which relates to common good properties must be charged to the relevant common good. Now it is known that grounds maintenance costs are being incorrectly charged to the wrong account (Council), the position needs to be regularised by charging to the correct account (Common Good).

- 2.12 Given the level of the charge, it is not proposed to back-date any charges to the Common Goods. This differs from the previous approach taken where land occupied by the Council was found to be within a Common Good. In those cases, the Common Goods received income backdated for up to 17 years.
- 2.13 If the current policy approach is maintained, where annual grants can only be made at a level which does not erode the capital of the Common Good fund, the impact of charging for grounds maintenance will be to reduce the annual amount available for distribution. It would reduce the level of grant available for disbursement from Irvine Common Good Fund to £29,272 for 2017/18. Based on current levels of capital balances, the continued disbursement of grants at their current level from the Irvine Common Good Funds would result in the full utilisation of the available capital balances of the Irvine Common Good Fund within 33 years.
- 2.14 For Largs Common Good Fund, the inclusion of Grounds Maintenance recharges would reduce the level of grant available for disbursement to zero and would result in a deficit position which would require the utilisation of capital balances each year. Based on current levels of capital balances, the continued disbursement of grants at the current level from the Largs Common Good Funds would result in the full utilisation of the available capital balances within 15 years. This does not take into account the availability of alternative funding from Largs Car Park Fund.
- 2.15 Community organisations and festival groups in North Ayrshire have been successful at fundraising and in attracting sponsorship for events. This is increasingly important as opportunities for external, particularly public sector, funding support reduces. Both Marymass and Largs Viking Festival committees are working hard to attract external funding to reduce dependency on the Common Good. However, it is accepted that large local festivals, with the potential to have a significantly positive economic impact on local businesses and communities, will continue to require some level of support from the Common Good. As Marymass last year utilised £49,994 of the current £59,132 annual grant of Irvine Common Good, it is evident that the annual grant to Marymass could not continue at current levels without reducing the capital of Irvine Common Good. Similarly, Largs Common Good could not continue to grant aid Largs Viking Festival without eroding its capital.

- 2.16 In order to minimise the immediate impact on Marymass and Largs Viking Festival, as well as to provides some financial support for communities without access to a common good, to provide some financial support for local festivals, it is proposed to set up a Festivals and Events fund. A non-recurring fund of £150,000 could be funded out of the current year underspend in the pensions auto-enrolment budget.
- 2.17 Distribution of the fund would be managed by Connected Communities to ensure central oversight of all Council events and festivals funding. The combined funding package for Marymass and Largs Viking Festivals from the Festivals and Events Fund and Common Good would be managed in the same manner as at present, to encourage community ownership of Marymass and the Viking Festivals against a background of continuing reduction in overall Council funding. In relation to other events, opportunities for funding would be identified and evaluated by Connected Communities, priority being give to those events which would best support locality priorities or community empowerment.
- 2.18 The Tourism Strategy approved by Cabinet on 12 December 2017 envisages that Council support may be required for major events. Such funding would be the subject of individual decision by Officers or Cabinet, depending on the level of funding required, and would not be funded out of the Festivals and Events Fund.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed to set up a Festivals and Events fund of £150,000. This would be funded out of the current year underspend. As this is non-recurring it is recommended that Council review the operation of the fund after the first year

4. Implications

Financial:	Common Goods require to meet grounds maintenance costs which relate to their land- see Legal implications. The creation of a non-recurring Festival and Events Fund of £150,000 can be funded from a specific current year underspend. Once expended, Council would require to identify new funding as part of a future budget exercise.
Human Resources:	Officers from Economy and Communities and Communications will be required to support the allocation and disbursement of the fund, and the organisational support required by event and festival organisers.
Legal:	<p>Common Goods require to meet grounds maintenance costs which relate to their land. Section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 requires Councils to follow 'proper accounting practice'. 'Proper accounting practice' comprises legislation, statutory guidance, recognised Codes, and the Council's Financial Regulations. The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18 requires separate accounts for Common Goods. The LASAAC Guidance on 'Accounting for the Common Good' anticipates that repair and maintenance of assets would be a charge met by a Common Good. It should also be borne in mind that one of the grounds for the Controller of Audit to make a report to the Accounts Commission under section 102 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 is that "any sum which ought to have been credited or debited to one account of the authority has been credited or, as the case may be, debited to another account of the authority".</p> <p>The Head of Democratic Services has investigated the question of whether the payment by the Council of grounds maintenance charges which relate to Common Good properties, might create a right to receive such maintenance free of cost, independent of land ownership. The same right would also apply to ground owned by Agencies of the Scottish Government, housing associations, or to private ground which the Council was inadvertently maintaining. There is no lease or other documentation to create such a right.</p>

	<p>Therefore such a right would be akin to an implied servitude, existing independently of the land. There is no Scottish case law which could substantiate the creation of such a new type of servitude. Accordingly neither the Common Goods or anyone else has a right to receive free grounds maintenance from the Council.</p> <p>It would be legally competent for the Council to grant fund the Common Goods to support them in meeting grounds maintenance costs. However this would effectively continue to divert funds available for the whole Council area to subsidise Largs and Irvine West. By way of contrast, the proposals in this report take a more equitable approach.</p>
Equality:	There are no equality implications.
Environmental & Sustainability:	There are no environmental and sustainability implications.
Key Priorities:	The continuation of vibrant festivals supports the Council Plan objective of Working Together to Develop Stronger Communities.
Community Benefits:	None.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Irvine and Largs Locality Partnerships were advised in September 2017 of the implications of grounds maintenance charges being charged to Common Goods. There has also been consultation with the Executive Directors of Economy and Communities, Finance and Customer Support and Place. The feedback received as a result of the consultations has informed this report presented to Council today.



ELMA MURRAY
Chief Executive

Reference : AF/JM

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Background Papers

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