



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 December 2022 – 5
February 2023

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

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 December 2022 – 5 February 2023

RECLAIM THE NIGHT WALK, 6 December

On 6 December, I was pleased to take part in the “Reclaim the Night Walk” which is an annual event held as part of the end Violence Against Women Campaign.

The campaign is supported by the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP) who work to prevent violence against women and girls in North Ayrshire through strategic, multi-agency working. This collaborative approach tackles gender inequality and Gender-Based violence across all its forms.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 8 December

I chaired a meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board meeting on 8 December. Attendees received updates on the following subjects

- Draft Local Police Plan 2023 – 2026
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Refugee Task Force
- Child Poverty in North Ayrshire

Attendees were also provided with a report on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2023 – 2028 which sets out the priorities for affordable housing investment in North Ayrshire over the next five years to support the outcomes in the Local Housing Strategy. The Plan is prepared in accordance with Scottish Government guidance and includes details of individual development projects to be taken forward over its five-year lifespan. The plan supports the Council's historic commitment to develop 1,100 new build Council homes.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING & AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING, 8 December

On 8 December, the three Ayrshire Councils met for a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board (AEPB) followed immediately by a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee (AEJC). Attendees received updates on various projects from the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) including the following:

- Digital Projects
- Benefits Realisation Plan
- AGD Governance Guidance
- AGD Programme Update

Attendees also discussed a report on the Flexible Advance Manufacturing Space at i3 and availability of part funding from the AGD for Phase 1 of the project

COSLA BUSINESS GATEWAY BOARD MEETING, 9 December

I attended my first COSLA Business Gateway Board meeting on 9 December. The Business Gateway service was originally provided by Scottish Enterprise and provided an entry point to a Growth Pipeline of additional support from Scottish Enterprise for a select few companies, including Account Management and further specialised support.

As an output from the 2007 Enterprise Review, and after considerable lobbying by COSLA, the Cabinet Secretary at the time, John Swinney, agreed in September 2007 that Local Government should be responsible for Local Economic Development and, as part of that, they should manage delivery of the Business Gateway service. COSLA and Local Government subsequently rolled the service out across the whole of Scotland.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING COMMISSION MEETING, 13 December

On 13 December I chaired a meeting of the Community Wealth Building Commission, held in Cunninghame House. The meeting provided the chance for some of our newer members to meet in person.

Commission members were provided with updates on various streams of work as discussed at the last Lead Officer Working Group (LOWG) held in November. This included updates on the Land and Assets, Fair Employment and Procurement workstreams, Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building project, the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and a presentation from NHS Ayrshire and Arran on their CWB approach and activities. The presentation by NHS Ayrshire and Arran gave an overview of their CWB approach. Earlier in 2022, NHS AA appointed a CWB Programme Manager and established a CWB Programme Board with lead officers aligned to each of the five CWB pillars and an officer for Climate Change. Recent NHS AA CWB Activities include Production of CWB Communication resources such as Staff News Bulletins, a CWB website page and posters; a CWB self-assessment based on the Joseph Rowntree Anchor self-assessment tool is currently underway; a workshop is being planned to discuss development of an NHS AA CWB Strategy.

Following previous discussions in relation to the CWB Anchor Charter Ambition Setting template, it was agreed there was a need to increase understanding and awareness around the Plural Ownership pillar. A workshop is currently being planned which will focus on plural ownership, including different types of ownership models, the benefits of these and how Anchors can support the development of more diverse ownership models.

The Commission will meet again on 24 March.

COSLA LEADERS, 16 December

I attended the final meeting for the year of COSLA Leaders on 16 December where discussion focused on the Local Government settlement and Pay settlement for 2022/23.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY BOARD – FOOD MINI PUBLIC ENQUIRY, 11 January

On 11 January 2023, I attended a Food mini public enquiry held at the Volunteer Rooms in Irvine. The event was well attended by Elected Members, officers, Community partners and community groups.

The event provided the opportunity for attendees to hear from various organisations on their programs to support food provision. Attendees were also asked to share their thoughts on what North Ayrshire Council was doing well so far in this area of work, what could be improved upon and identify any gaps.

My thanks to all those who took time to attend the mini enquiry and for their invaluable input which will be used in our strategy going forward.

AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN VISITOR ECONOMY MEETING, 16 January

On 16 January, together with North Ayrshire Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, and Chief Executives and Council Leaders from East and South Ayrshire, I attended a meeting with the Chair of the Ayrshire and Arran Visitor Economic Leadership Group (AAVELG).

The AAVELG group is a group involved in partnership working across Ayrshire and beyond, with colleagues from Visit Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, plus members from industry representing their own businesses and the Ayrshire and Arran Destination Alliance (AADA). This group was involved in the development of a Visitor Economy Strategy, which has a focus on four key themes:

- Connect our high quality, memorable experiences
- Connect our diverse businesses to grow and build community prosperity
- Regenerate the region through the talent and creativity of our people
- Harness our natural and place-based assets to enhance our environment for the benefit of visitors and our communities

The AAVELG are currently working on finalising an action plan for 2023/24 to bolster tourism across the region. The group will present their plan to the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee in due course.

LOCALITY BUDGET ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS, 17 – 25 January

I have attended 3 of the recent Locality Budget Engagement sessions held throughout North Ayrshire (Garnock Valley, North Coast and Arran) from 17 – 25 January. These were also attended by North Ayrshire Council Depute Leader, Councillor Shaun Macaulay and North Ayrshire Council Cabinet member for Finance, Councillor Christina Larsen.

North Ayrshire Council is seeking views on the wide range of services it provides before it sets its budget later in March.

The Council is facing unprecedented budget challenges due to factors that are largely beyond its control, including increased energy costs, inflation, and the Cost-of-Living crisis. These issues are being faced by councils across the country and are significantly impacting the 2023/24 budget.

In addition to undertaking engagement with locality partnerships, community groups and voluntary organisations, the Council is also inviting residents to share their views on the services it provides by completing an online questionnaire.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY BOARD MEETING, 18 January

On 18 January, I Chaired a meeting of the Tackling Child Poverty Board where much of the discussion focused on the outcomes from the Food Workshop held at the Volunteer Rooms in Irvine on 11 January.

Attendees also discussed the upcoming workshops to be held on Arran and Millport in relation to the report published by the Improvement Service (November 2022) entitled “A Design Based Approach to Understanding and Tackling Rural Child Poverty”.

The approach taken by the Improvement Service was to look at the impact of barriers from the perspective of a child or family rather than purely an academic discussion. It brought several different organisations together to ensure the issues were considered from various viewpoints. This included the Northern Alliance, the Scottish Poverty Research Exchange (SPRE), the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU), NHS Grampian and several local authorities. The Improvement Service was able to create several problem statements centred around issues impact on families.

The forthcoming workshops on Arran and Millport will look to identify the barriers here in North Ayrshire specifically to rural poverty.

LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP AGENDA GUIDANCE MEETING, 19 January

On 19 January I attended a Locality Partnership Agenda Guidance meeting with North Ayrshire Council Locality Partnership Chairs.

It was agreed that Locality Partnership agendas will be drafted by the Chair, Senior Locality Officer and CPP officer. The draft agenda will then be circulated to Locality Partnership elected members for comment/addition before the final version is circulated.

ARDROSSAN TASK FORCE MEETING, 23 January

I travelled to Arran on the 23 January to attend a meeting of the Ardrossan Task Force, chaired by the Scottish Government Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP.

LOCKHART CAMPUS OFFICIAL OPENING, 26 January

It was wonderful to attend the official opening of the Lockhart Campus on 26 January and celebrate with the pupils.

Lockhart Campus brings together pupils from all over North Ayrshire including those who formerly attended James Reid, James Macfarlane, Stanecastle and Haysholm schools. The decision to amalgamate these schools was an ambitious and creative one, but one worth doing as it will ensure a better future for the new school community.

Pupils will have access to state-of-the-art facilities including a Swimming Pool, large hydrotherapy pool, soft play, multiple sensory rooms, activity areas out with classrooms, a mix of dining environments and of course, access to state-of-the-art technology throughout.

Lockhart is a truly inspiring and innovative building, a great achievement by all those involved including the designers, builders, teams from across the Council and of course, the school community – pupils, teachers and parents. Thank you to all those involved.

I wish all the pupils many happy years of learning ahead.

COSLA LEADERS, 27 January

I attended a meeting of COSLA Leaders on 27 January, where Leaders discussed a packed Agenda including:

- National Care Service
- National Care Home Contract
- Health and Social Care Pressures
- Social Work Workforce
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Cost-of-Living Support – BEIS Energy Support Scheme

The Suicide Prevention Strategy report provides an update on the development of the infrastructure to support implementation and delivery of Creating Hope Together, Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan which was published in September 2022. COSLA has been a core member of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG) and hosts delivery lead officers for three actions from the previous action plan Every Life Matters. Learning from the strengths and areas for improvement of the structures in place to support the implementation of the previous strategy, the new strategy sets out the new governance model which aims to bring about these improvements.

This approach is in alignment with both the North Ayrshire suicide prevention programme and wider high level multiagency Pan Ayrshire suicide prevention strategic group.

COMMUNITY AND LOCALITY PLANNING CONFERENCE, 28 January

I was delighted to attend the Community and Locality Planning Conference on 28 January held at Saltcoats Town Hall. This was the first Conference in three years and it was great to see community partners and community groups coming together in person.

As Chair of the CPP, as well as being a member of the Irvine Locality Partnership, I have come to appreciate the diverse range of work that we are involved in. At the Community Planning Board, partners such as Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, Ayrshire College and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, work at a strategic level to look at developing ideas for our communities. But it is through our Locality Partnerships that these ideas come to fruition and where the relationships are further strengthened enabling all of us to deliver the work that is most relevant to our local communities.

AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN NHS BOARD MEETING, 30 January

I attended an NHS Board meeting on 30 January where attendees received updates on the following:

- Healthcare associated infection (HCAI)
- Quality and Safety Report on Mental Health
- Corporate Governance
- Performance Governance
- Financial management report N
- North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan performance report 2021-2022

The North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23 was developed by the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership following a Strategic Needs Assessment which drew data from a range of sources including the views and experiences of our children and young people, school census data, child protection data and public health data.

The North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23 was approved and published in October 2020 and sets out five key priorities to achieve our vision in North Ayrshire – “for all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up”.

The priorities are:

- Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to
- Acting early to improve what happens next
- Making things fairer and better
- Supporting mental health
- Helping children and young people to be active and healthy

ADULT VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS, 31 January

I was delighted to be asked to go along and take part in the Adult Volunteer Recognition Awards hosted by The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) held on 31 January at Whitlees Community Centre in Ardrossan.

The work undertaken by volunteers throughout North Ayrshire is staggering and invaluable to many in our communities.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who work selflessly to help others and congratulate all the nominees and winners. Also, a big thank you to Kayleigh Livingston and her team at TACT for all their work with our communities.

VISIT TO CHILDREN 1st, 1 February

On 1 February it was great to go along to the premises of the Children 1st charity organisation in Irvine and meet the team there.

Children 1st works to keep children safe, loved and together with their families. The charity offers practical, emotional and financial support to prevent and protect children and their families from harm and to support them to recover from trauma and abuse.

The charity has been successful in receiving some money from our Community Investment Fund which is being used to fund a new post to strengthen the team and to continue the great work with children and families throughout North Ayrshire.

My thanks to Kirsty and her team for inviting me along to visit them.

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

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council