



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 17 June – 15 September
2019

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

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VISIT TO KILWINNING EARLY YEARS and AUCHENHARVIE ACADEMY, 18 June

On 18 June, together with Provost Clarkson, I visited Kilwinning Early Years in Pennyburn Primary School and Auchenharvie Academy following investment from the Capital Investment Fund Project.

Auchenharvie Academy

With £5.38m Capital Investment being injected into Auchenharvie, much of the refurbishment work has been carried out by Ashleigh Scotland Ltd and includes:

- Toy Library and music store being combined to create a modern and spacious new PE block, making better use of existing space
- New windows have been installed in all classrooms as well as the Assembly Hall and Gym Area creating brighter and more inviting areas for pupils and staff
- Landscaping at the front of the building

Extensive overcladding and reroofing of the school has already been carried out by D&B Facades UK Ltd and this can be seen by anyone passing the school.

These works, however, are not only cosmetic but have also made the school much more energy efficient.

Kilwinning Early Years

Kilwinning Early Years Centre received a £670,000 upgrade as North Ayrshire Council continues with its Early Years Expansion Programme.

The extensive refurbishment project, co-ordinated and carried out by North Ayrshire Council's Property Management and Investment Team, has included the following:

- refurbishment of the two existing playrooms, along with the creation of quiet rooms for each.
- Toilets and changing spaces relocated to allow direct access from each playroom to promote child independence. A new multi-purpose space gives opportunities for children

to eat lunch outside the playrooms, as well as participate in other activities. The space can also be used for workshops and parental engagement sessions.

- Free flow access to the outdoor area was also created, leading to a new covered canopy area and revamped garden beyond. A pallet of natural and calming colours was carefully selected for indoor areas to ensure the most inclusive environment for staff and pupils.
- The shared entrance to both the school and early years centre was completely overhauled to create a more welcoming environment with significantly improved security. This saw the relocation of office facilities, the installation of a new entry system, the formation of a parent greeting room and the relocation of the staff toilets.

I would like to thank Headteachers, Calum Johnston and Ann Hamilton for taking the time out of their day to show me round their schools and thanks also to Head of Service, Caroline Amos, for accompanying us.

Work in both schools has been of a great standard and I would like to pass on congratulations and thanks to those involved, Ashleigh Ltd Construction, D&B Facades UK Ltd and of course, our fabulous Property Management and Investment team for all their sterling work.



Head Teacher Calum Johnston with Council Leader, Joe Cullinane, Provost Clarkson and two of the managers from Ashleigh Construction.

PENNYBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL SUMMER SHOW, 18 June

Later in the evening of 18 June, I was delighted to attend the Pennyburn Primary school summer show. A fantastic show with much enthusiasm from the teachers and pupils alike.

ASK THE LEADER (Basic Income), 19 June

On 19 June, I held the second of my ASK THE LEADER live social media engagement sessions, this time about a Universal Basic Income. These sessions enable members of the public to hear

more about work that is currently being undertaken by North Ayrshire Council via Twitter and Facebook and to ask any questions they may have.

North Ayrshire Council is one of four local authorities (the three others are Fife, Glasgow City and Edinburgh City) taking part in a feasibility study for a citizen's basic income pilot. The Scottish Government confirmed in May 2018 that £250,000 would be provided over two years to support the feasibility work in Scotland.

The four local authorities are working with NHS Health Scotland, the Improvement Service and Scottish Government to explore the feasibility of basic income pilot studies.

There was good engagement with the public and some interesting questions were asked. These have all been fed into the Basic Income Steering Group for them to consider going forward.

FLATT ROAD, LARGS GROUND BREAKING, 24 June

On 24 June, I attended the ground-breaking ceremony at the Flatt Road housing development in Largs. This development forms part of our ambitious house building programme and will see the provision of 122 new homes which will include general need housing, amenity bungalows, wheelchair liveable properties, sheltered housing and supported accommodation.

All these new houses will showcase the latest in assistive technologies including safety monitors and sensors and our sheltered housing will be fitted with automatic lights that can be voice controlled.

In line with our sustainability strategy, the site will have a biomass district heating system installed which will provide affordable heating and hot water to all 122 properties.

ACTIVE TRAVEL HUB LAUNCH, 25 June

On 25 June, I was delighted to be invited along to the launch of the Active Travel Hub and to see the closed cycle loop at the Circuit based at Quarry Road. Officially opened by the Active Nation Commissioner, the Trinity Active Travel Hub located in the former Trinity Church at Bridgegate, has been transformed into an activity space with working offices.

The Travel Hub will provide local advice on local active travel routes and public transport as well as access to bikes and maintenance equipment. There will also be training on cycle confidence and volunteering activities. The cycle loop will be used to provide cycle training to local residents, employees and other groups.

The project will support and complement the active travel infrastructure improvements being delivered locally through the implementation of the Irvine Cycle Friendly Town study (ICFT).

ECONOMIC, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION BOARD MEETING, 25 June

Also, on the 25 June, I attended the Economic, Development and Regeneration meeting held in Cunninghame House. Board members were provided with updates on the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) following the Heads of Term signing, the AGD Inclusive Growth Plan and the work of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership.

At the March 2019 meeting of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership (REP), the Board noted that work is underway to develop a new Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The Strategy will be owned by the REP and will provide the overarching strategic framework for economic development in the region.

It was agreed that work to refine the strategy and engage businesses and communities will take place over coming months with a draft strategy document being presented to the Joint Committee at its September 2019 meeting.

“GET HEARD” EVENT, 23 July

On 24 July, I was pleased to be asked to speak at the launch of the Poverty Alliance's “Get Heard” initiative at the Townhouse in Irvine. “Get Heard” will be a series of community engagements sessions that will be held throughout various local authorities with the aim of combating poverty. The sessions will aim to find out more about the issues that are affecting our communities, what is working, what isn't and what needs to change. These findings will be then passed to the Scottish Government.

At the outset of becoming Leader of North Ayrshire Council three years ago, I was clear that tackling poverty and inequality would be the overarching priority for our Administration. It is clearly unacceptable that so many children are living in poverty and it is something, that we, and politicians in particular should not shy away from and try and hide. Instead, I believe we should focus our attention on just how big the problem is and raise awareness of the lived experiences of people in our own communities. That is why I am glad we will be holding a series of “Get Heard” engagement events in each of our localities later this year.

VISIT TO QUARRY ROAD, 25 July

On 25 July, I was pleased to have a tour of The Circuit at Quarry Road in Irvine. This brand new facility sees £5.9m investment to create an innovative business hub, sports facilities and office accommodation. This is part of North Ayrshire Council's wider regeneration and business growth strategy. I look forward to attending the official launch later this year.

VISIT TO IRVINE ROYAL ACADEMY, EXAM RESULTS, 6 August

I visited Irvine Royal Academy on 6 August to meet with some pupils who had received their exam results. Congratulations to all pupils in North Ayrshire for working hard and sitting their exams. Exam time can be a stressful and anxious time but there is a lot of support out there for pupils who feel they need help before exams and afterwards. I would suggest that they speak to teachers in the first instance who will be able to provide them with more information.

FAIR FOR ALL COMMISSIONER MEETING, 8 August

On 8 August, I attended the second Fair For All Commissioner meeting at Fullarton Connexions. Our Fair For All Commissioners heard some more profound stories about those who have experienced hardships in the past and how they have struggled to survive. FFA Commissioners will continue to meet until May 2020 before a report will be submitted to the Scottish Government.

PICNIC IN THE PARK, 8 August

Later on the 8 August, I popped along to “Picnic in the Park” held at McGavin Park in Kilwinning. It was another fabulous event and well attended by locals and others from further afield. Congratulations to all those involved in organising an event that is enjoyed by so many in our local communities.

FAIR SAY STAFF ENGAGEMENT EVENT, 21 August

On 21 August, together with North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I took part in the staff engagement FAIR SAY event held in Cunninghame House. This engagement event provides North Ayrshire Council employees the opportunity to put any questions to myself or our Chief Executive, on Council related matters, specifically in relation to our new Council Plan. There will be several FAIR SAY events held throughout North Ayrshire to enable staff based in other localities to come along and participate.

VISIT TO LARGS ACADEMY, 23 August

I was delighted to meet with Corrie Shepherd at her school, Largs Academy, on 23 August to find out more about her inspirational concept called “Clearer Minds”.

“Clearer Minds” is a programme aimed at improving pupils’ mental health. Working with Mental Health specialists “Headstrong”, the school is promoting positive health through various

Assemblies, parent and teacher support and 1-1 training. The project received £30,200 from North Ayrshire Council's Community Investment fund with some of the money being used to train up Mental Health Ambassadors with the training delivered by Headstrong.

The programme has already received praise from teachers and parents and to date, approximately 15 pupils have benefitted from 1-1 sessions.



Principal Teacher of Pastoral Support, Grace Furey, Head Teacher Heather Burns, Corrie Shepherd and Council Leader, Joe Cullinane

PAN AYRSHIRE EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP EVENT, 26 August

On 26 August, I gave a welcome speech at the Pan Ayrshire Employee Ownership Event held at the Riverside hotel. The event entitled “Succession Masterclass” was hosted by Scottish Enterprise and North, South and East Ayrshire Councils and attended by many local businesses.

The event focused on equipping business owners/senior managers with the tools to consider the future operation of their business should they wish to sell the business, retire or pass it on to family or a member of staff.

This event also provided the platform for me to talk about Community Wealth Building and how that can help our local and family-run businesses. Community Wealth Building is one of the most strategic pieces of work that North Ayrshire Council will be involved in over the next few years and the Council has commissioned the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to produce a diagnostic report for North Ayrshire. In this report, CLES have commented on the importance of the local economy and of securing a future for existing businesses and safeguarding their jobs.

One of the recommendations of the CLES report is for family-owned businesses and local businesses to consider employee ownership as an option for safeguarding their businesses in the future and to protect them in times of economic difficulty. I am pleased to say that our Team North Ayrshire will be proactively working with our local and family businesses to explore the option of employee ownership.

FAIR FOR ALL ADVISORY PANEL, 28 August

I attended the Fair For All Advisory Panel on 28 August held here in Cunninghame House. The meeting was also attended by a visiting delegation from North Tyneside, who were keen to hear more about the work we are doing around “Kindness” and to exchange ideas of Best Practice. These discussions proved to be really interesting for both parties and my thanks again to the delegation for sharing their experiences with us.

The FFA panel also received presentations from Alliance Scotland and the Child Poverty Action Group to hear more about the work they are currently involved in. Thank you again to both organisations for speaking to us.

AYRSHIRE REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 9 September

On the 9 September I attended the Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership (AREP) Board Meeting held at East Ayrshire Council Headquarters in Kilmarnock. Board members heard presentations regarding transport projects for the area, an update on our Economic strategy and heard more about some of the work currently being done by the Ayrshire Growth Deal Programme Management Office following the signing of the Heads of Terms earlier this year in March.

Together with our Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, Caitriona McAuley, I spoke in some depth about developing an Ayrshire approach to Community Wealth Building. I believe strongly that there is a real opportunity for Ayrshire to be a pioneer in the local wealth building approach in Scotland. There is a strong case for Ayrshire to embrace a pan-Ayrshire Community Wealth Building approach particularly within the employment and procurement pillars, underpinned by a focus on ownership and assets.

AYRSHIRE REGIONAL ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING, 10 September

On 10 September I was back in Kilmarnock, this time for the Ayrshire Regional Economic Joint Committee meeting. Attendees discussed some of the key national issues which may have an impact on Ayrshire's economy highlighting where there may be an opportunity to devise a response on a regional basis.

Members were also provided with an update on the work being taken forward to progress both the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the wider Regional Economic Partnership as approved by the Economic Joint Committee earlier in April

1ST TIER JCC AND CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP MEETING, 12 September

Later on 12 September I chaired a meeting of the 1st Tier JCC and the Corporate Health and Safety Group held in Cunninghame House. I am proud to lead a Council which is committed to supporting women in their working environment and improving the well-being of all employees. This guidance will support employees in managing their health and raise awareness of the menopause throughout the workplace.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Cullinane'. The script is fluid and cursive.

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader North Ayrshire Council