



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 6 February – 19 March
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.

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COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS MEETING, 10 February

On 10 February, I attended a special meeting of COSLA Leaders to discuss ongoing Scottish Government Education Interventions, Local Government Settlement and Teachers Pay Negotiations.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY BOARD MINI ENQUIRY ARRAN, 13 February

I was delighted to visit Arran on 13 February to attend a public mini enquiry hosted by North Ayrshire Council and community partners at the Ormidale Sports Pavilion in Brodick. The event was well-attended by Arran residents, businesses and community groups who were asked to share their views on what they believe are the contributing factors to the cost-of-living crisis.

Its aim was to explore what can be done, collectively, to help improve life on Arran for its residents. People who attended flagged up the need for some changes, including:

- more social and affordable housing
- easier access to benefits advice
- A review of local transport to better meet the needs of communities
- more 'warm rooms' to help people combat the cold weather and loneliness, like the one at Whiting Bay and Kildonan Parish Church and
- the need for organisations to pool their resources for the common good.

This event was the latest in a series of mini enquiries that are part of the work of the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board. Feedback will also help develop the Council's Child Poverty Strategy.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to come along to the event and be involved in the discussion.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS MEETING, 14 February

On 14 February, I attended another special meeting of COSLA Leaders to continue discussions on the Teachers Pay Negotiations.

NHS BOARD WORKSHOP, 16 February

On 16 February, I attended an NHS Board workshop to discuss finances and cost pressures for NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Attendees looked at viable solutions to alleviate cost pressures including pay uplifts and cost of supplies.

VISIT TO THE WEE HOUSE COMPANY, 17 February

I was delighted to visit “The Wee House Company” in Cumnock on 17 February, together with North Ayrshire Council’s Head of Service for Housing, Yvonne Baulk. The visit provided the opportunity to see first-hand some of the houses that have been completed, fresh off the production line to be used in some of our latest housing developments including the new amenity homes at Afton Court in Stevenston.

This will be the second time North Ayrshire Council has partnered with The Wee House Group to deliver new affordable housing using their innovative modular construction method. In 2019, The Wee House Company constructed 31 modular, affordable homes for North Ayrshire Council on Ardrossan Road, Seamill.

The project will deliver modern, energy efficient homes which will be built using cutting-edge and environmentally-conscious techniques. The modular construction method employed by the company takes the home-building process offsite and into a controlled factory environment. All bungalows will be constructed inside Connect Modular’s Ayrshire-based manufacturing facility with kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing and electrics all pre-fitted. In addition, tenants of the bungalows are expected to benefit from energy efficient homes thanks to the ultra-insulated building envelope and the installation of air-source heat pumps and photovoltaic (PV) panels.

One of the main advantages of this modern construction method is its environmental sustainability with there being much less waste compared to traditional building methods, while there is 67 per cent less energy required to produce a modular building.

The houses will then be split into modules, transported to site and craned into position for the final part of the building work to be completed.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING and AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING, 20 February

On 20 February, the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board met followed by a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee. Both Board and Joint Committee members received updates on the following:

- Ayrshire Growth Deal – discuss and approve Draft Ayrshire Growth Deal Annual Report 2021/22.
- Ayrshire Growth Deal – Programme Update - to advise the Economic Partnership Board members of the progress of the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the development of its component projects as of 31 January 2023.
- Visitor Economy Workstream Update – discuss and approve the Ayrshire Visitor Economy Strategy and Draft Action plan. The report outlines arrangements for future reporting on delivery and resource impacts related to the delivery of the Strategy and Draft Action Plan.
- Extension of Food Tourism Co-ordinator Ports – to discuss the efforts being made by the Food Tourism Co-ordinators in pursuit of the ongoing recovery and renewal of that sector.
- Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund – to provide the Board with an update in relation to the Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund for each of the three Councils.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL, 22 February

On 22 February 2023, I attended a meeting of the Community Wealth Building (CWB) Expert Advisory Panel where members were asked to discuss North Ayrshire Council's input into the consultation response on the Scottish Government CWB

Legislation. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-community-wealth-scotland-consultation-paper/documents/>

There was also a wider discussion on the potential of the consultation to facilitate a transformational approach to CWB and their views on the role of National Agencies in terms of supporting a CWB Duty.

The Scottish Government consultation will close on 25 April 2023.

NORTH AYRSHIRE TRADITIONAL MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR COMPETITION, 22 February

Later on the 22 February I was delighted to go along to Ardrossan Academy to see the North Ayrshire Traditional Musician of the Year Competition.

The event brought a wealth of talented young musicians from our North Ayrshire schools to perform traditional music and compete. It was a lovely evening with some first-class performances. Congratulations to all those who took part.

TRADE UNION AND PRESS BUDGET BRIEFINGS, 23 February

On 23 February, I attended two separate budget briefings; the first with Trade Unions and the second with the Press.

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.

COST OF LIVING INTERVENTIONS CONFERENCE, 23 February

Later on 23 February, I was delighted to welcome Mary McAllan, Director of Covid Recovery and Public Service Reform from the Scottish Government to North Ayrshire to attend a Cost-of-Living Interventions Conference held at Fullarton Connexions.

The event provided the opportunity for Mary and her team to hear first-hand about some of the incredible collaborative work that is being done here in North Ayrshire by community partners, to identify the key drivers into poverty and more importantly, the solutions that are being implemented to combat poverty in all its forms.

I would like to highlight the Mini Public Enquiries that have been held over the past few months, which form a key element of the work of the Tackling Child Poverty Board. These sessions have enabled partners to discuss how we can join up the support available and ensure that no matter which way our residents turn for help and advice, they will be directed and supported to access the help required. In addition, our partners will share information so we can better understand how best to support all our residents.

There is “No Wrong Door” for anyone struggling with poverty and I look forward to continuing to build on the great work being done by the Tackling Child Poverty Board in the coming months.

COSLA LEADERS, 24 February

COSLA Leaders met on 24 February to discuss a packed agenda, including the following items:

- COSLA-Police Scotland-SPA Partnership Agreement
- Joint Working Group on Sources of Local Government Funding and Council Tax Reform
- Local Government Finance Update
- Scottish Government Education Interventions Update

- National Care Home Contract Negotiations
- Levelling Up Fund
- Digital Boost Funding Position
- Managing Pressures from Humanitarian Protection Schemes
- CELCIS – Protecting Children Programme
- Local Governance Review

COSLA, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority have prepared a draft Partnership Agreement to frame the relationship between the organisations and partnership work going forward. The purpose of the partnership agreement is to strengthen collaborative working in respect of several shared goals:

- Local scrutiny and accountability
- Prevention and early intervention
- Health and wellbeing
- Resource and investment

The parties will develop a partnership delivery plan setting out how the three organisations will drive forward progress in these areas, setting out ownership and key milestones. By formalising this agreement, the parties aim to strengthen existing collaboration and engagement to further strengthen local accountability in policing. The partnership agreement is intended to complement local authorities' scrutiny of policing under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

NHS HEALTHCARE GOVERNANCE MEETING, 27 February

I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Healthcare Governance meeting on 27 February. Attendees received updates from various services and several annual reports from teams. There was also discussion on the impact of current system pressures on the quality and safety of services provided for patients.

1st TIER JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP MEETING, 28 February

On 28 February, I chaired a meeting of the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee immediately followed by a meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Group. Attendees received Health and Safety reports from various Directorates. There was also an update on the work of The LiveWell Group which continues to promote wellbeing activities and campaigns via a range of

communication channels including email, News in Brief, SharePoint and Social Media platforms.

The LiveWell programme is split into five key themes which are: PlayWell, BeWell, WorkWell and EatWell. During September 2022, a fifth theme called SaveWell was added to the LiveWell programme and provides a range of information on debt, food and advice to help with the cost of living.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 3 March

I attended another special meeting for COSLA Leaders on 3 March for further discussions on the Local Government Settlement for Teachers.

COSLA BUSINESS GATEWAY BOARD MEETING, 3 March

Later on 3 March, I attended a COSLA Business Gateway Board meeting. The DigitalBoost Programme has been successfully managed and delivered through COSLA's Business Gateway National Unit and Local Authority Business Gateway services since its launch in 2016-17. The Programme is funded by Scottish Government.

IRVINE LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP MEETING, 6 March

On 6 March, I attended a meeting of the Irvine Locality Partnership at Dreghorn fire station. Attendees received various updates from community partners for the Irvine area and there were two applications for Community Investment Funding from Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) and Irvine Angling Club.

CHAP has been established in North Ayrshire for over 20 years, and provides free, impartial, and confidential advice and guidance to individuals experiencing issues with welfare rights, housing, and debt. CHAP services are available to all residents in North Ayrshire over the age of 16 and in the last operational year, helped 863 individuals with 1,096 issues relating to debt, housing, and welfare rights achieving financial gains for clients of £1.92m.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 8 March

I was proud to support International Women's Day on 8 March which focused this year on embracing equity. The theme seeks to get the world talking about why equal opportunities are no longer enough and the difference between "equality" and "equity".

I also took part in the march organised by North Ayrshire Women's Aid which had an international theme, celebrating women's achievements globally and a reminder that we still have a way to go, particularly in addressing violence against women.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP MEETING, 13 March

I chaired a meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership on 13 March. Attendees received updates on the following:

- Wellbeing Alliance update from Malcolm McPhail and Laura Barrie at KA Leisure.
- Police and Fire Wellbeing update from Superintendent Derek Frew from Police Scotland and Ian McMeekin, Local Senior Officer from Scottish Fire and Rescue
- Child Poverty and Cost of Living update from Audrey Sutton, Executive Director (Communities & Education), North Ayrshire Council.

The pandemic, energy crisis and cost of living crisis has accelerated the appetite for local authorities and their partners to look at leisure services more broadly and re-examine purpose of their provision. The key consideration is aligning the broader strategic outcomes, particularly Health and Wellbeing. North Ayrshire has been a champion of wellbeing in its approach to improving the lives of its residents and communities. This is seen clearly in its approach, via the Community Partnership Plan, in naming wellbeing as one of the three key pillars. The establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HWBA) by consensus is the chosen approach to actively deploy transformational change in relation to strategy, partnership relationships, programming and monitoring. The HWBA Steering Group has had its initial scoping meeting in January with further timetabled meetings taking place over the next few months.

NHS AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE, 15 March

On 15 March, I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Audit and Risk Committee where attendees received updates on the following:

- Internal Audit Progress Update Report
- Risk Management Report
- Recruitment Report
- Organisational Culture Report
- Review of PMO (Part 2)
- Microbiology Point of Care Testing Report
- Quality and Cost Improvement Report

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- Internal Audit Plan 2023-24
- Counter Fraud

Attendees also received a presentation from Audit Scotland summarising work undertaken for the NHS in Scotland during 2022.



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

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council