



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 5 February – 17 March
2024

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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NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN BOARD MEETING, 5 February

On 5 February, I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board meeting where attendees received updates on various Patient Safety Reports. The Board also received updates on some of the key items from the most recent meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee, HealthCare Governance Committee and Staff Governance Committee.

There were also further updates and discussions on Health and Care delivery planning for Ayrshire and discussion on the Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability report 2022/23.

Minutes from Integration Joint Board meetings held for East, South and North Ayrshire Councils in October and November 2023, were also agreed.

VISIT TO GLAXOKLEINSMITH, IRVINE, 6 February

On 6 February, together with North Ayrshire Council's Cabinet member for the Green Environment and Economy, Councillor Tony Gurney, I visited the premises of Glaxokleinsmith in Irvine. The aim of the visit was primarily to have a tour of the premises and hear about their renewable energy usage and to hear how important it is to them to be a sustainable, environment-friendly employer in the region.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 9 February

On 9 February, I attended a special meeting of COSLA Leaders' to discuss the Scottish Budget and Local Government Settlement 2024/2025.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE SUB COMMITTEE, AYRSHIRE SKILLS INVESTMENT FUND, 12 February

On 12 February, I attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund (ASIF), a project of the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD). The Deal presents a major opportunity to strengthen the Ayrshire, Scottish and UK economies with targeted co-ordinated investment throughout the region which will act as a powerful catalyst to stimulate growth, resulting in increased job opportunities and prosperity for Ayrshire, for Scotland and for the UK.

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Attendees received an update on Training Provider Grants as part of the ASIF Delivery Model and a further update on Employer Grants including applications received and timescales for future funding.

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD, 19 February

On 19 February, I chaired a special meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board (AEPB) where attendees were provided with updates and progress reports on various projects contained within the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) programme. The report covers progress up to 31 January 2024.

Attendees were also asked to note the outcome of the Programme Review Summary and agree next steps as part of the Review.

MEETING OF THE AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 19 February

Later on 19 February, I chaired a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee (AEJC) to consider a report submitted by South Ayrshire Council to note progress on the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Spaceport Project and to agree next steps.

MEETING WITH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CABINET MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, FIONA HYSLOP AND ARRAN STAKEHOLDERS, 21 February

On 21 February, together with North Ayrshire Council's Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I travelled to Edinburgh to attend a meeting with the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop to discuss the Arran Ferry and subsequent impact on the island. The meeting was also attended by various Arran stakeholders.

The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the ongoing frustrations regarding the business case development and has requested that a status report of the project be provided, outlining the various staging posts for the business case delivery.

It was also agreed that the request from stakeholders to outline a critical path with all aspects of the work and timelines to improve services (including vessels) set out. Transport Scotland officials would work on this element.

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Stakeholders stressed the need to set a date for the next Task Force as it was felt that this should be meeting more often and that there should be more transparency with the business case for members of the public.

TRADE UNION AND PRESS BUDGET BRIEFINGS, 22 February

On 22 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 2024/25 budget.

COSLA LEADERS' MEETING, 23 February

On 23 February, I attended a meeting of COSLA Leaders'. It was another packed agenda which included the following items for discussion:

- Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) update
- Active Travel Transformation Project
- 10 Year Population Health Plan
- Digital Strategy Update
- Local Government Finance
- Cruise Ship Levy
- Free School Meals – Scottish Child Payment Expansion
- Education Assurance and Minimum Learning Hours
- New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
- National Care Service

SLARC was reconvened in April 2023 to undertake an independent review of Councillor remuneration, having last reported in 2011. The update sets out the remit set by Scottish Government and COSLA and describes how the committee engaged with local government and other stakeholders, the techniques applied, the evidence considered and the committee's findings.

SLARC was asked to consider the following: workload and responsibilities of councillors, use of social media and other technology, increase in formal committee meetings, breakdown of the average time spent carrying out duties.

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The recommendation by the SLARC was a proposal to set councillors' salaries at 80% of the median salary for all employees in the public sector in Scotland as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). This results in an annual salary of £24,561 with effect from 1 April 2024.

COMMUNITY AND LOCALITY PLANNING CONFERENCE, 24 February

I was delighted to attend the Community and Locality Planning Conference on 24 February held at the Irvine Volunteer Rooms.

As Chair of the Community Planning Partnership (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.

VISIT TO PERSIMMON HOMES, KILWINNING SITE, 26 February

On 26 February, together with North Ayrshire Council Depute Leader, Councillor Shaun Macaulay, I was invited by Persimmon Homes to go along and look at their latest housing development site at Byrehill Grange in Kilwinning. The visit also provided the opportunity to hear about the training opportunities the company offers to young people who wish to train as apprentices.

The development will offer a variety of 426 much-needed two to four-bedroom energy-efficient new homes and will transform vacant, derelict land within the town into a vibrant new housing development which will be in line with North Ayrshire Council's sustainability ambitions.

Thank you to the Persimmon team for the invitation and for the opportunity to hear all about their ambitious plans for this latest housing development here in North Ayrshire. These new modern houses will provide warm and energy efficient homes for residents, in line with North Ayrshire Council's sustainability ambitions, as well as providing opportunities for young people to train as apprentices.

My thanks to Chris Logan, Persimmon West Scotland Managing Director and the team for inviting us along and sharing their plans with us. I look forward to revisiting the housing site upon completion.

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***NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN HEALTHCARE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE, 4 March***

On 4 March, I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Healthcare Governance Committee where attendees received reports on patient safety and patient experiences. There was also discussion on quality improvement in areas including food, fluid and nutritional health and safety.

Attendees were also provided with an update on the winter vaccination programme for 2024 detailing the roll out and delivery of the seasonal flu and Covid-19 vaccination programmes.

The Committee were also asked to note and approve minutes from various corporate governance Committees and Groups including the Acute Services Clinical Governance Group, the Pediatric Clinical Governance Group, the Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee and the Primary and Urgent Care Clinical Governance Group.

WELLBEING ALLIANCE EVENT, 5 March

On 5 March, I welcomed attendees to the second Wellbeing Alliance event hosted by KA Leisure at the Irvine Townhouse. North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership's local outcome improvement plan for 2022-2030 sets out three key priority themes: World, Work and **Wellbeing**. The Community Planning Partnership has asked KA Leisure to support the development of a new partnership which will bring together a broad range of partners to create a Wellbeing Alliance for North Ayrshire.

This was the second of these events with the first one held in June last year. The group will focus on ways that people across North Ayrshire can live better lives by:

- Exploring activities which enhance the wellbeing of residents.
- Creating opportunities to build capacity and scale up existing activities.
- Developing new programs that will help to address the challenges that some of our communities' face including social isolation.
- Establishing smart, collaborative approaches to securing new funding.

I look forward to continuing to develop this work with our CPP partners here in North Ayrshire.

VISIT TO CHILDREN 1st, 6 March

On 6 March, I visited Kirsty Aitken and the team at the Irvine premises of the Children 1st charity organisation.

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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.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY AND COST OF LIVING BOARD MEETING, 6 March

Later on 6 March, I chaired a meeting of the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board, where attendees were provided with feedback, received from Public Health Scotland regarding the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26, Child Poverty Progress Report 2022-23 & Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-24.

The Board also discussed the latest update on the progress of the Child Poverty Action Plan Progress Report 2023-24.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS, 8 March

On 8 March, to mark International Women's Day (IWD), I visited North Ayrshire Women's Aid (NAWA) in Saltcoats, who hosted an event to celebrate this special day.

The theme this year for IWD, calls for action to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes and create environments where all women are valued and respected.

My thanks to NAWA for hosting this event and bringing some inspirational women together to celebrate IWD.

CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN WORKSHOP, 11 March

On 11 March, I attended a Child Poverty Action Plan Workshop as part of the continued work of the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board.

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The Workshop enabled attendees to discuss progress, within their respective services, relating to the Scottish Government “Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26” which was published in March 2022. [Executive Summary - Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/executive-summary-2022-26/pages/10.aspx)

Scottish Government has indicated that its key priorities at present are:

- to support progress toward meeting child poverty targets;
- to address climate change and
- to secure a stronger; fairer, greener economy.

The workshop also helped to identify to future priorities which the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board will drive forward.

My thanks to everyone who attended and took part in discussions.

1ST TIER JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE & CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP MEETING, 13 March

On 13 March, I chaired a meeting of the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and the Corporate Health and Safety Group. Attendees received Health and Safety reports from various Directorates.

As part of the LiveWell – Healthy Working Lives Programme, which is split into five key themes: PlayWell, BeWell, WorkWell, EatWell and SaveWell, a range of resources and support mechanisms have been brought together as part of the SaveWell theme. Recognising the impact that finances can have on our wellbeing, these resources may be useful to Council staff and include:

- ScotWest Credit Union - AVCwise
- Employee Perks, highlighting discounts and at various supermarkets and local businesses.
- Promotion of Jobcentre Plus support for employees who are also in receipt of Universal Credit. This helped employees explore any barriers that may be preventing them from working full time hours.

There are also a number of upcoming activities, dates have still to be agreed, but which are being planned by the LiveWell team, including:

- a “Building healthy habits webinar”
- health checks at Saltcoats Townhall and Cunninghame House

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- an Everyday Mindfulness Course
- wellbeing activities for Kilwinning schools' cluster
- a range of KA leisure activities.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 15 March

On 15 March, I chaired a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board. The Board received updates on:

- Employability and opportunities to support work taking place across North Ayrshire
- Transformation - an update and presentation on Single Shared Assessment and Data work
- CPP Website update
- Child Poverty and Cost of Living, update on recent work by the Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board

There was also some partner discussion and sharing of key developments and working opportunities.



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

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council