



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 3 May – 20 June 2018

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 Eglinton Park, 8 May*

On 8 May, I visited two exciting projects, in the run up to Mental Health Awareness Week which are having a positive impact on the mental health of North Ayrshire residents. Both are based in Eglinton Park Country Park and work in tandem using horticultural therapy as an alternative method to help people overcome a range of issues associated with mental health.

The “Breaking Ground” initiative is run by Park Ranger and horticultural therapist, Linda Tedford and is a 9 month course which can accommodate up to 15 people referred by their GP who have struggled with anything from anxiety to depression.

The course aims to give people the opportunity to learn new skills in an outdoor setting, which improves mental and physical well-being. This could range from garden landscaping, planting flowerbeds to general garden duties and the key aspect is the “nurturing” concept and the connection for people when they plant something from seed, care for it and then watch it blossom. It is similar to the life cycle of an individual which helps them to move forward in life.

Also based in the park, is The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) community garden run by Anne Wilson who oversees the work done by the volunteers in the garden. This community garden helps not just those with alcohol and drug issues but those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and older people who are struggling with social isolation. It really is a fantastic facility that helps so many.

I would like to thank all the staff and volunteers who are involved with these projects, they are making a real difference to the lives of real people and deserve recognition.



Some of the volunteers from the TACT community garden based in Eglinton Park. With Councillor Cullinane, Leader of North Ayrshire Council (third from left) and Ann Wilson (far right) from TACT.

### ***QUARRY ROAD, 10 May***

Our Cabinet has now approved plans for the second phase of work to begin at the Quarry Road development and I was pleased to visit the site on 10 May together with Provost Clarkson, Councillor Louise McPhater and Councillor Gallagher. This will see a further £5.4m investment in the site which will provide indoor and outdoor 3G pitches for football and other sports and also the provision of a cycle loop.

I am proud that we are a Council committed to investing and regenerating our town centres. This will provide a much needed boost to our local communities while at the same time improving local health outcomes.





Provost Ian Clarkson, Caitriona McAuley, Council Leader Joe Cullinane, John Brown from the SFA, Councillor Louise McPhater, Gary Holt (ex footballer), Alasdair Laurenson, Councillor Alex Gallagher and Gary Hay (ex footballer).

### **HEAT AND EAT, 10 May**

On 10 May I visited the new “Heat and Eat” pilot initiative at the Church of the Nazarene in Ardrossan. North Ayrshire Foodbank has been developing this new project in partnership with our Council and Garfield Tapas and Wine Bar. It will offer those with no to low energy, access to cooking facilities two days a week. It is the expectation of the project that the users will have their own food but lack the facilities to cook it.

The project will provide cooking equipment, trays to take food away or crockery to eat at the church. A cook / chef will be at hand each session to give guidance on the use of the equipment and basic cooking instructions when necessary. This is thanks to the chefs from Garfield's Tapas.

### ***WATT COURT HOUSING COMPLEX, 11 May***

On 11 May I attended the ground breaking ceremony at Watt Court in Dalry. This new sheltered housing development is part of our ambitious affordable house building programme and will see the provision of 22 new homes, 8 amenity bungalows and a Local Housing Office.

### ***MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 14-20 May***

During Mental Health Awareness Week I visited several projects to highlight some of the invaluable work that North Ayrshire Council are involved in. This included:

### ***Meeting with School Counsellors, 16 May***

On 16 May together with our Mental Health Champion, Councillor John Sweeney, I met with our School Counsellors in Cunninghame House to find out how they are helping our pupils manage and cope with the stresses that exam pressures can bring.

It is almost a school year since our Counsellors have been in situ and so far their impact has been felt by pupils who have experienced a range of issues such as anxiety and low mood. More recently, specific courses have been organised to help pupils prepare for exams and to teach them coping mechanisms if they should feel stressed at any time.

Their work is invaluable and my thanks to all of you and the support you have provided, in what has been a very difficult year for some more than others.



Councillor Cullinane, Leader of North Ayrshire Council, Councillor John Sweeney and our team of school Counsellors.

### *Visit to North Ayrshire Wellbeing and Recovery College, 17 May*

On 17 May I visited Ayrshire College, Kilwinning Campus to find out more about some of the courses on offer by our North Ayrshire Wellbeing and Recovery College. This new scheme which is being being piloted by our NAHSCP will see a range of courses made available to those who may have been affected by mental ill-health and who are seeking help on wellbeing and recovery.

The courses which will be run in local communities across North Ayrshire will provide safe spaces where people can improve their knowledge of mental health, learn self-management techniques and receive and provide peer support.

The pilot is being managed by a steering group consisting of representatives of NAHSCP along with community partners and individuals with have experience of mental ill-health. Courses are open to anyone over the age of 16 who lives, works or studies in North Ayrshire and either has experience of mental ill-health themselves, or has a partner, relative or friend who has.



### *Visit to Tarryholm Drive, 17 May*

Also on 17 May, I went along to visit Tarryholm Drive (formerly Red Cross House) in Irvine. The site was jointly purchased by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, on behalf of the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (NAHSCP).

As part of the Partnership's work to transform community mental health and learning disability services in Ayrshire, the plans for this development will see the refurbishment of the existing properties at Warrix Avenue and refurbishment and extension the existing building at Tarryholme Drive.

Building work has already begun and it is hoped that works will be finished in March 2019. Upon completion the facilities will include:

- a new learning disability day facility
- supported accommodation for people with complex learning disabilities (26 houses)
- transitional community based mental health rehabilitation homes for people recovering from mental-ill health and moving on from Woodland View (9 houses)

### *TOUR OF GLENCAIRN HOUSE, 17 May*

On 17 May, I paid a visit to Glencairn House in Stevenston to have a look around our new sheltered home project and in particular find out more details about the district heating network that will be shared by Glencairn House and Glencairn Primary school. A twin biomass boiler plant was installed adjacent to the primary school and will provide a cost effective heating system to both facilities. Using wood fuel which is low carbon as an alternative to other traditional fossil fuels will produce less harmful emissions therefore, bring socio and environmental benefits to our local area.

I look forward to attending the official opening of the Sheltered Home Complex on the 21<sup>st</sup> June, which will see the completion of 28 high quality, dementia friendly new homes including one which is fully wheelchair adapted as well as providing residents communal facilities.

### ***COSLA LEADERS, 25 May***

I attended COSLA Leaders in Edinburgh on 25 May, there was a packed agenda on a range of subjects including the proposal to reintroduce funding for education psychologists, school clothing grants and access to sanitary products in schools. I am pleased to say that the Leaders were unanimous in their support to deliver a national minimum level of clothing grant of £100 per eligible child and to support the financial partnership arrangements.

On the subject of provision of free sanitary products in schools, North Ayrshire Council has been the Council leading the way on this campaign and I was happy to share my thoughts with other Leaders about the campaign's success here in North Ayrshire and how well this has been received by pupils and general public alike.

### ***KILWINNING ACADEMY SURGERY, 29 May***

On 29 May, I was delighted to spend the morning at Kilwinning Academy meeting pupils across all year groups for a special surgery. The morning provided the opportunity for pupils to ask me questions on a range of topics that were important to them. I was also able to explain to them details of what my job, as Leader of North Ayrshire Council, involves and some of our Council priorities. The session also provided our National 4/5 Modern Studies pupils the opportunity to ask me questions relating to Scottish politics and some of the wider, current political issues.

### ***AYRSHIRE REGIONAL PATHFINDER MEETING, 30 May***

I met with the two Leaders from East and South Ayrshire Councils and all our respective Chief Executives on 30 May to hold discussions on the Ayrshire Regional Pathfinder. The meeting enabled all parties to share their thoughts on how they view any future collaborative joint working and to agree the best way to achieve our aims and goals. We are all in agreement that we must continue momentum in pushing through our Ayrshire Growth Deal and some discussion was given to how best to do this, in light of Patrick Wiggins departure as lead officer.

I would like to thank Patrick for his dedication and drive on the project and for getting us to where we are now.



## ***COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 31 May***

On 31 May our Community Planning Partners met for their Board meeting which was held in Fullarton Community Hub. Agenda items included an update by Morna Rae on key CPP issues covering our Fair for All priorities, Locality Partnerships, tackling child poverty, Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities and an overview of the community engagement and consultation.

Stephen Brown, Director of North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (NAHSCP) presented an informative paper on collaborative working to improve current children's services and in the future. This covered our work NAC in becoming a child centred Council and the importance of partnership working.

Attendees then took part in one of three workshop group sessions under the subject headings of "Garnock Valley Locality Partnership", "Fair for All Food Pledges" and the "Kilwinning Locality Partnership".

The next CPP Board meeting will be held on 20 September 2018.

## ***YOYP RECEPTION, 31 May***

Later on 31 May I attended a reception, hosted by Provost Clarkson, in Saltcoats Town Hall to celebrate some of the achievements of our young people in North Ayrshire. As Leader of the Council I am immensely proud of the work we have done in conjunction with our young people and I can think of no better place than North Ayrshire to demonstrate the impact and valuable contribution our young people have already made to their local community and further afield. Whether this be through the work of our Youth Cabinets, MSYPs, youth forums, charity work or their contribution to the world of sports or expressing their talents in the fields of music, dance or art, we have some incredibly talented and inspirational young people who are a positive influence to all those around them.

## ***KILWINNING ACADEMY SCHOOL SHOW "WE WILL ROCK YOU", 5 June***

On the 5 June, I was invited to watch senior pupils at Kilwinning Academy perform in their school show "We Will Rock You". It was an outstanding performance and once again, I am proud to

see our young people working together with enthusiasm and passion to deliver some first class entertainment.

I would also like to wish all pupils who are leaving Kilwinning Academy and indeed, all our North Ayrshire school leavers, good luck with their future endeavours as they leave familiar pastures to continue on their life's journey and on to pastures new.

### ***INAUGURAL NORTH AYRSHIRE SPORTS ACADEMY GRADUATION, 6 June***

I was delighted to attend the Inaugural North Ayrshire Sports Academy Graduation on 6 June held at Saltcoats Town Hall and equally delighted to be asked to present two awards on the evening; award for outstanding commitment and award for outstanding volunteering.

Our North Ayrshire Sports Academy is a Coach Education, Leadership and Personal Development Course aimed at senior pupils. All students on the course completed a number of workshops, National Governing Body (NGB) courses and leadership opportunities. They have also worked closely with their Active Schools Co-ordinator and school staff to promote, deliver and provide opportunities for younger pupils to participate in sport and physical activity in their school and local community.

I would like to express my thanks to all those who have been involved in delivering the courses and workshops and to pass on my congratulations to all our Sports Academy graduates. A special mention to the winners of the two awards I was asked to present on the night: Abbie Freeman and Jodie Quirk winners for their outstanding commitment and Rachel Gorman, for outstanding volunteering.

### ***KILWINNING LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP MEETING, 7 June***

On the evening of 7 June, I attended a meeting of the Kilwinning Locality Partnership at Ayrshire College, Kilwinning Campus to discuss a packed agenda. I am pleased to say that the Group has been successful in arranging for new and enhanced signage to be purchased and displayed in the taxi ranks and disabled bays. These have been ordered and we are just waiting for a date for them to be erected.

There was also discussion about our future "Active Travel Hub" which will involve the recruitment of officers to promote healthy lifestyle changes which will include walking and cycling initiatives. This, in turn, should hopefully see a reduction in traffic congestion and problems with parking. We will liaise with community partners, including Ayrshire College, to successfully deliver this.

### ***JOINT YOUTH CABINET, 13 June***

On 12 June, together with my colleagues in Cabinet, we held another successful Joint Youth Cabinet meeting with representatives from all of our secondary schools throughout North Ayrshire. The meeting was held at Greenwood Conference Centre and informative debates were held on a range of subjects including, safety in our local community, police stop and search and work around our Syrian refugee resettlement plan. I am proud to say that as a Council we have already provided homes for 97 refugees within North Ayrshire, who are now settling into their new lives here with the help of our officers and their local communities. By 2021, we hope to have the number increase to 160.

My thanks to the officers in our Youth Services and Education teams for enabling these meetings to take place. They are as valuable to the pupils as they are to the Cabinet Members.

### ***OFFICIAL OPENING OF LARGS CAMPUS, 13 June***

On the 13<sup>th</sup> June, the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon visited North Ayrshire to formally open our new Largs Campus. The First Minister was taken on a tour to see the first class facilities on offer at the school, including one of the largest sports halls in the UK and a visit to our new Confucius Hub to meet pupils.

### ***FINALLY***

Finally, may I wish you all an enjoyable and well deserved summer break with your families and loved ones. I look forward to working with you all again in the early autumn and to build on the great work we have done so far; work which is setting the bar which others aim for.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joe Cullinane". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" written in a larger, more prominent style than the surname.

Councillor Joe Cullinane  
**Leader North Ayrshire Council**