



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 21 December 2017 – 19  
February 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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## ***MEETING WITH RBS AND WARD 3 MEMBERS, 11 January***

In response to news that RBS were to close some of their local branches, (Kilwinning, Kilbirnie and Saltcoats) I arranged to meet with a delegation from RBS Head Office and invited Ward 3 Elected members to attend the meeting also. The meeting was held on 11 January in Cunninghame House and provided a chance for us to express our disappointment in the decision. It was made perfectly clear to RBS, the concerns of how our local communities, many of whom are the most vulnerable, would be affected and voice our worries about the future of high street banking in our towns.

## ***MEETING WITH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND, 12 January***

On the 12<sup>th</sup> January, together with our Chief Executive, Elma Murray and East and South Ayrshire Council Leaders and Chief Executives, I attended a meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell. At the meeting we expressed our disappointment to Mr Mundell about the lack of support received from the UK Government in allocating funding for our Ayrshire Growth Deal in the last budget. Despite previous assurances from the Secretary of State for Scotland that the Deal would be supported by the UK Government at all stages, Ayrshire remains one of the few areas in Scotland not to have secured funding for a growth deal.

We will continue to lobby for support for our AGD from both the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure that this deal progresses over the coming months.

## ***VISIT BY COSLA PRESIDENTIAL TEAM, 12 January***

I was delighted to welcome the COSLA Presidential team to North Ayrshire Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> January to meet with myself, Cabinet members, our Chief Executive Elma Murray and Head of Democratic Services, Andrew Fraser. The meeting provided the opportunity to brief COSLA, represented by Councillor Alison Evison (President), Councillor Graham Houston (Vice President), Sally Loudon (Chief Executive) and James Fowlie (Director of Operations) on some of our current areas of key work including the future of education and the fairer funding model, the Citizens Basic Income pilot, the Poverty Truth Commission, social care funding and Enterprise regional partnership working.



**(Left to right) Councillor Montgomerie, Councillor Gallagher, Councillor Bell, COSLA President Councillor Alison Evison, Leader of NAC Councillor Cullinane, COSLA Vice President Councillor Graham Houston**

### ***WHITEHIRST PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL BURNS SUPPER, 24 January***

On the 24<sup>th</sup> January I spent a lovely afternoon with the pupils and staff from Whitehirst Primary school in Kilwinning as they celebrated their Burns supper. Guests were treated to some first class entertainment by the pupils including some Scottish dancing and live music performances. It is great to see such enthusiasm from our local pupils and staff. A great day was had by all.

### ***AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, 25 January***

The 3 Ayrshire Councils met on 25 January at Ayr Academy for the Ayrshire Economic Development Board meeting. Agenda items included the establishment of a regional pathfinder and an update by Patrick Wiggins on the Ayrshire Growth Deal following the meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell on 12<sup>th</sup> January between the three Council Leaders and Chief Executives.

### ***COSLA LEADERS, 26 January***

I attended COSLA Leaders on 26 January where there was discussion on a range of subjects including the Planning Bill and performance of Planning authorities.

There was also discussion on the national transfer scheme regarding Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. Over the last couple of years North Ayrshire has demonstrated a real commitment to aiding humanitarian efforts having resettled 93 refugees and has agreed to resettle a further 60 Syrian refugees by 2021.

### ***OPENING OF KILWINNING EMPLOYABILITY HUB, 1 February***

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February the Kilwinning Employability Hub based in Ayrshire College was officially opened. I would like to thank all the partners involved and for their support: CEIS, Job Centre Plus, Ayrshire Chamber, Skills Development Scotland, the Department of Work and Pensions and of course, Ayrshire College.

As Employability hubs become increasingly common throughout Scotland, I think it would be fair to say that we have been leading the way in demonstrating what can be accomplished when partners come together to work on a common goal. Having Kilwinning Employability hub based here within Ayrshire College is, to my knowledge, the first of its type in Scotland and therefore, something to be immensely proud of.



**Figure 1 Leader talks about the importance of Employability hubs**





**Figure 2 Partners involved in launch of Kilwinning employability hub. With Councillor Alex Gallagher and Provost Clarkson**

### ***SWEENEY COURT OFFICIAL OPENING, 6 February***

I was invited by Cunninghame Housing Association (CHA) to the official opening of the Sweeney Court housing development in Ardrossan on 6 February.

This is another first class housing development offering a further 70 new affordable homes in North Ayrshire, some of which have been specially designed to accommodate wheelchair users. Working together with partners such as CHA, we are continuing to increase the work on our council housing building programme delivering new homes for the people of North Ayrshire.

### ***ARDROSSAN TASK FORCE MEETING, 7 February***

On 7 February I attended the Ardrossan Task Force meeting in the Scottish Parliament, chaired by Minister for Transport, Humza Yousaf. Discussion at this was predominantly about the continued development to reorientate the Arran berth and how to progress funding options. Discussions are ongoing with Peelports and Transport Scotland.

### ***AYRSHIRE TRANSPORT SUMMIT, 9 February***

On 9 February I attended the Ayrshire Transport summit at the Park Hotel in Kilmarnock. Invitees included representatives from the Scottish Government, the 3 Ayrshire Councils, SPT and the private sector.

The main focus of the summit was the role of transport and associated infrastructure to support the economy and communities of Ayrshire. There was also discussion about how we could remove the barriers to a more effective transport network for Ayrshire and Arran and what a 21<sup>st</sup> century transport network would look like. The summit also set the direction to achieve our AGD vision of economic growth including unlocking Ayrshire's full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Joe Cullinane'.

Councillor Joe Cullinane  
**Leader North Ayrshire Council**