



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 11 September – 29  
October 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 GARNOCK VALLEY MEN'S SHED, 11 September*

On 11 September, I was delighted to visit the Garnock Valley Men's Shed together with my colleague, Councillor Louise McPhater, Cabinet Member for Communities. This follows on from the decision taken by Cabinet to set up a new Community Investment Fund (CIF), which will enable Communities throughout North Ayrshire to fund any priorities as identified through Locality Planning Partnerships.

The Men's Shed in the Garnock Valley will be one of the first groups to receive £28,000 funding which will help the Group finance general running costs and build on some of their fantastic work which looks to promote general wellbeing in men and tackle social isolation.

I am hugely proud of the fact that North Ayrshire Council is the first Local Authority in Scotland to have set up a Community Investment Fund which will further empower our local community groups and see Groups such as the Men's Shed continue with their great work and make a real difference to the lives of some of their local residents.



(Left to right) David Gardner and Henry Johnson (Men's Shed), Stewart Beck (Community Development Worker), Councillor Louise McPhater (Cabinet Member for Communities), Council Leader, Joe Cullinane and Ian Shaw (Men's Shed).

### ***GROUND BREAKING AT DICKSON DRIVE, 13 September***

On 13 September I attended the ground breaking ceremony of our new housing development at Dickson Drive in Irvine. This development is part of our ambitious affordable house building programme which will see the provision of 24 new homes including general needs housing, amenity bungalows and wheelchair liveable properties.

### ***LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE, 15 September***

I briefly attended the Locality Partnership Conference which was held on the 15 September in Saltcoats Town Hall. As Chair of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and as a member of the Kilwinning Locality Partnership, I have come to appreciate the diverse range of work that we are involved in when it comes to the work of our Locality Partnerships.

At the Community Planning Board, partners such as Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and Ayrshire College 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.

Since our Locality Partnerships were established, I have seen them develop and greatly transform. Not only have new relationships within the Locality Partnership membership been forged but also new and wider reaching relationships with our community have been made.

This has enabled us to agree local priorities and how best to tackle them going forward. This would not be possible if it wasn't for the commitment of the Locality Partnership members and for the support provided by our officers who support their work.

### ***JOINT YOUTH CABINET, Kilwinning Academy, 18 September***

On 18 September, together with my colleagues in Cabinet, we held another successful Joint Youth Cabinet meeting at Kilwinning Academy. Informative and useful discussions were held with pupils on a range of subjects including, safety in our local community, tackling bullying, the value of kindness and how poverty affects our young people. One of the key issues to arise from the poverty discussion was the fact that young people are expected to pay adult transport fares yet only get paid a minimum wage when taking up casual employment. This is an issue that was raised many times by pupils during Challenge Poverty Week, and it is clear that there is some disparity between rates of pay and costs of living.

My thanks to the officers in our Youth Services and Education teams for their continued support in facilitating these meetings which continue to be as valuable to pupils as they are to Cabinet Members.

### ***COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 20 September***

On 20 September, our Community Planning Partners (CPP) met for their Board meeting which was held at Largs Academy. John Burns, Chief Executive of NHS Ayrshire and Arran gave a presentation on the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Transformation Plan, outlining some of the changes that have already taken place which include an integrated approach to delivering specialist services at a regional and national level. He also spoke at some length about how a new approach was needed for the future to inform and engage with the public so that they have a better understanding of the challenges being faced.

CPP Board members also heard presentations from the Community Justice Ayrshire (CJA) team who spoke about the new three year Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan and from the Head of Connected Communities, Audrey Sutton, who gave an update on the North Ayrshire Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan Refresh 2018-21.

The next CPP Board meeting will be held on 29 November 2018 at Fullarton Community Hub.

### ***COSLA LEADERS, 28 September***

COSLA Leaders met in Edinburgh on the 28 September for their monthly meeting. The packed agenda included the Spending Review, Pay Negotiations, Partnership Working and Children and Young People's Mental Health.

There was some discussion about the recent announcement in June by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport of a joint Task Force with COSLA to look at Children and Young People's Mental Health. The Task Force will provide recommendations for improvements in provision for children and young people's mental health in Scotland and, in partnership, develop a programme of sustainable reform of services.

### ***BETTER OFF NORTH AYRSHIRE, 1 October***

On the 1 October, and almost a year to the date since it was launched, our Better Off North Ayrshire Service announced that it had had saved users of the Service a staggering £1,057,855.

North Ayrshire Council was selected as one of five areas in Scotland to receive funding from the Big Lottery and the European Social Fund to deliver the programme which helps North Ayrshire residents aged 16-plus, who are lone parents, or living in low income or non-working households to improve their financial circumstances through a package of financial services.

Working with partners such as Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP), ANCHO Housing Association, Cunninghame Housing Association, Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company and 1st Alliance Credit Union, Better Off North Ayrshire has helped over 1000 local people save, on average, £1,000 per year.

This has been a fine example of partnership working at its best and a fantastic announcement to make on the first day of Challenge Poverty Week. I would encourage anyone facing financial hardship to get in touch with our Better Off North Ayrshire team to find out about the great support and advice on offer.

### ***CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK, 1-8 October***

For the third year in a row, North Ayrshire Council supported the Poverty Alliance's Challenge Poverty campaign which aims to highlight the reality of poverty, demonstrate what is being done across Scotland to address poverty and increase public support for more action to solve poverty. The campaign ran from 1-8 October and the key messages this year were:

- Poverty exists in Scotland and affects us all
- Poverty can be solved by boosting incomes and reducing costs
- Solving poverty is about ensuring we can all participate in society

This year to coincide with Year of Young People, the programme for the week centred around visiting Primary Schools and Secondary Schools in each of the six different localities to raise awareness about poverty in all its forms and to encourage young people to think of ideas to help combat poverty.

In tandem with the above visits, I was keen to get ideas from all North Ayrshire residents on what else we could be looking at to help overcome poverty. This was launched on social media



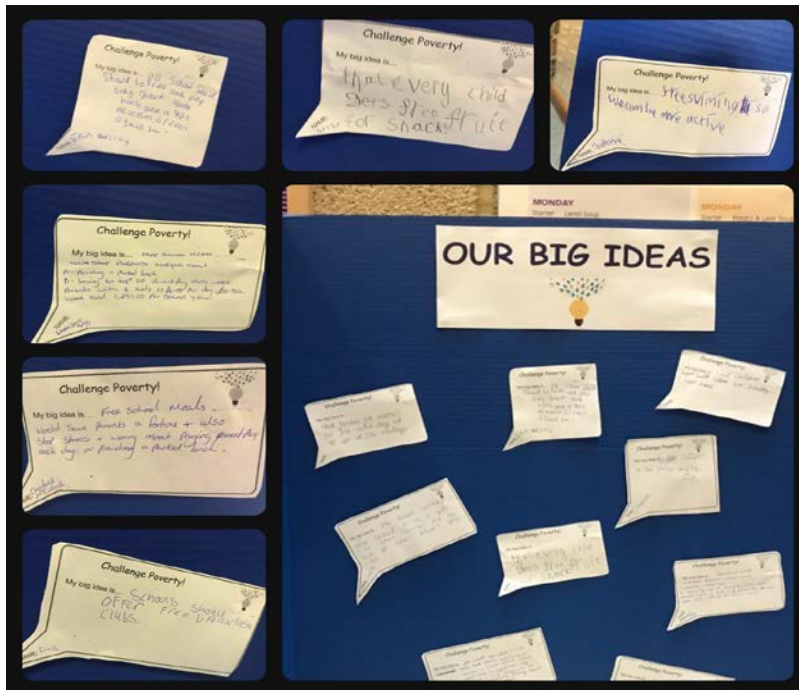
(Twitter) as #MyBIGIdeaNA and ideas were then discussed at evening locality meetings, facilitated by our locality representatives, to generate a general discussion.

The visits, some of which were also with Provost Clarkson, were as follows:

### ***Monday 1 October (Kilwinning)***

AM – **Blacklands Primary school**. Visit to Breakfast club (see uniform station, meet families). Better Off North Ayrshire photocall. Visits to primary classes P3 through to P7 to see some of the work they had been doing in class and to chat to them about some of their “BIG ideas” to tackle poverty and to make their community a better place to live. Value of Kindness. This was then followed by a school Assembly where pupils shared some of their work with their peers and treated visitors to some special singing.





Kindness Tree in Blacklands Primary School and some of the BIG Ideas from pupils.

PM – **Kilwinning Academy**. Interesting and engaging discussions with S1 and S2 pupils coming up with some great ideas to tackle poverty followed by a productive discussion with senior Modern Studies pupils on Basic Income.



Council Leader, Joe Cullinane with Kilwinning Academy pupils, teaching staff and Head Teacher, Mr Tim Swan.

PM – Visit to **Ayrshire College** to meet with HND Social Sciences students to discuss the Basic Income pilot and to get their views.

Evening – Meeting in **Kilwinning Academy** with community groups, young people, Elected Members and third sector to discuss ideas to tackle poverty (digital, fuel, food poverty).



### *Tuesday 2 October (The Three Towns)*

AM – **Ardeer Primary school**. Visit to Breakfast Club. Visits to primary classes P1 through to P7 to see some of the work they had been doing in class including poverty relating to food, clothing, heat, housing, activities and interests, educational, employment and family life. Meeting with Pupil Council and JASS pupils to discuss “Big Ideas” and share good practice.

PM – **Auchenharvie Academy**. Meeting with senior Modern Studies pupils and general discussion on poverty and their perceptions, covering foodbanks and how they operate, the need for life skills. Overview and subsequent discussion on Basic Income.

Evening – Meeting in **Ardrossan Civic Centre** with community groups, young people, Elected Members and third sector to discuss ideas to tackle poverty, with quite a bit of discussion on the Basic Income and initiatives to target food poverty.

### *Wednesday 3 October (Arran)*

AM – **Brodict Primary school**. General Assembly which looked at poverty across the world and then at a national and local level. Visits to primary classes P1 through to P7 to see some of the work they had been doing in class. Meeting with Pupil Council/Rights Respecting School Group with discussion on some of the issues affecting those living on the island.

PM – **Arran Academy**. Meeting with senior Modern Studies pupils and general discussion on poverty. Poverty and potential links to crime. Overview and subsequent discussion on Basic Income.

Evening – Meeting in **Ormidale Pavilion** with community groups, Elected Members and third sector to discuss ideas to tackle poverty. (Foodbank on Arran, removal of Citizens Advice from island, high travel costs for islanders, basic income).

### *Thursday 4 October (Garnock Valley)*

AM – **St Bridget's Primary school**. General Assembly with pupils and parents. General overview of some of the fantastic work the pupils had done on challenging poverty. Visit and chats with parents at school who are undertaking cooking and sewing/knitting classes in the school with volunteers from Beith Community Trust. Discussions with Pupil Council about local area and tackling poverty in general. Meeting with staff.



Council Leader, Joe Cullinane and Head Teacher, Dennis Hopkins at morning Assembly at St Bridget's



Mums at St Bridget's PS making blankets for the homeless and trauma teddies



PM – **Garnock Campus**. Meeting with senior Modern Studies pupils and general discussion on poverty and their perceptions including poverty relating to food, fuel and employment. Need for more advice on careers/life skills/budgeting skills in school. Overview and subsequent discussion on Basic Income.

Evening – Meeting in **Bridgend Community Centre** with community groups, young people, Elected Members and third sector to discuss ideas to tackle poverty. (Zero hour contracts, Garnock transport issues/costs, discounted travel for young people, more education on life skills to be given in schools).



Challenge Poverty Meeting at Bridgend Community Centre in Kilbirnie. Lots of lively discussion

### *Friday 5 October (North Coast)*

AM – **West Kilbride Primary school**. Challenging Poverty Assembly for P4-P7 pupils – looking at poverty through the years in UK. Visit to primary classes to look at work undertaken in class. Discussion with Pupil Council.

PM – **Largs Academy**. Meeting with junior and senior pupils for general discussion on challenging poverty including poverty relating to cost of transport, cost of school day (dress down days), limited information on clubs happening in school, how to look at more ways of getting older and younger generations to come together regularly to tackle social isolation.

### *Monday 8 October (Irvine)*

AM – **Loudoun Montgomery Primary school**. Visit to Breakfast Club. Tour of school and Early Years facility.

AM – **Annick Primary School** – General Assembly to see fabulous work pupils had done on challenging poverty and some of the great work already being done by the school. Importance of being thankful for the good things we have in life and to be kind to each other. Visit to individual classes to chat to pupils. Tour round school's uniform station, food donations.







Annick Primary School Uniform Stations – fabulous!



Council Leader, Joe Cullinane and Provost Clarkson in discussion with Annick Primary pupils talking about how they challenge poverty

PM – **Irvine Royal Academy** - Meeting with senior Modern Studies pupils and general discussion on poverty. Discussion of some ideas on how to tackle poverty (raise minimum wage, Education Maintenance Allowance, need for more budgeting advice in schools). Overview and subsequent discussion on Basic Income.

Evening – Meeting in **Fullarton Community Hub** with community groups, Elected Members and third sector to discuss ideas to tackle poverty. (Overview of work by Fair for All Commissioner, fuel poverty, food, need to value lower paid members of the community/volunteers, kindness, cost of school day, value of work done by our communities).

### ***COSLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AWARDS, 11-12 October***

On 11 and 12 October, I attended the COSLA Annual Conference and Excellence Awards in St Andrews along with Councillors Bell, Burns and Marshall. Our new Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, also attended. The Conference was the platform for many distinguished speakers from Local and Scottish Government to talk about current affairs at the heart of local authority decision making.

### ***CONVENTION OF HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS, 22 October***

On 16 October, I attended the Convention of Highlands and Islands at Moray College in Elgin. Discussion points on the Agenda included the development of a post-Brexit Regional Policy for Highlands and Islands and looking at ways of maximizing the benefits from digital infrastructure and investment. The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, Fergus Ewing, also led on a discussion about the potential future of strategic economic opportunities within the wider Highlands and Islands.

North Ayrshire Council have requested the inclusion of the project "Transitioning to a Tourism and Creative Arts destination with global reach – Marine Tourism."

### ***PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME, 24 October***

I was asked along to Kilwinning Academy on the 24 October to present certificates to parents who had completed the Parents in Partnership Programme. The programme, which is run by our Family Learning Team, looks to involve parents in pupil learning by following the school curriculum over a period of time. This enables parents to gain a better understanding of secondary education and helps further strengthen family engagement.

Congratulations to all the parents who were involved and to the Family Learning Team for their excellent work in this area.

### ***ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM, 25 October***

On 25 October, I took part in the Islands Transport Forum meeting. Agenda items included a review of the National Transport Strategy and updates on the ferry service investment plan and the air discount scheme which is due for renewal in 2019.

There was also discussion on the decentralisation of key transport posts and management to islands.

### ***CARE EXPERIENCED AWARDS, 25 October***

Together with the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, Councillor Robert Foster, and our new Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I was invited along to celebrate the successes of Care Leavers at Ayrshire College on 24 October. The event was a collaboration between NAHSCP Throughcare Team and Ayrshire College and takes place during National Care Leaver's Week.

I was privileged to meet with some of the young people who received certificates acknowledging their achievements in training, education and employment and I am hugely proud of the steps they are taking and wish them every success for the future.

### ***COSLA LEADERS, 26 October***

I attended COSLA Leaders on 26 October, where there was discussion on a range of subjects including an update on the 2018 Spending Review, an impact assessment of the Local Government workforce post-Brexit and discussion on the Public Pledge for the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG). The key role of the NACWG is to raise awareness of and tackle gender inequality by pushing for progress that will make a difference to women and girls. Identifying gaps in work to tackle gender inequality while considering ways to increase the pace and scale of change.

COSLA will sign the pledge on behalf of Local Government which will commit individual local authorities to consider participating in the "Spotlight Wee Circles" process. This will see a new spotlight topic being launched each month, with supporting information and interested local authorities will be asked to host discussions and feedback information to NACWG.



## ***BASIC INCOME MEETING, 26 October***

Following on from COSLA Leaders, there was a meeting in Verity House to discuss the Basic Income Pilot. North Ayrshire Council will be the lead for engagement with the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) on behalf of the Steering Group. DWP have already agreed to explore the best way to provide answers to the Steering Group regarding questions about flexibilities of the existing benefit system.

In addition, the Steering Group have posed questions regarding HMRC involvement. A follow up call is currently being organised to take place in November with DWP and Scottish Government officials, to agree a way forward.

Members of the Steering Group attended the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) Congress at the University of Tampere in Finland and were able to meet with key contacts to share information and learning from Basic Income pilots currently underway in Finland and Ontario.

A short International Learning Report is currently being drafted to share learning from BIEN. The report will be published and made available publicly by Carnegie UK Trust in November

## ***WHO CARES? SCOTLAND CONFERENCE, Greenwood Conference Centre, 27 October***

On 27 October, North Ayrshire hosted the “Who Cares? Scotland” Conference at Greenwood Conference Centre, a landmark event which was attended by our First Minister. The Conference, which came at the conclusion of Care Leavers Week, was attended by an audience who all share the same vision of making life better for the children and young people in our care.

I am proud as Leader of North Ayrshire Council to say that we have been leading the way when it comes to the role of corporate parenting. I have been proud to lead a Council that was the first in Scotland to abolish council tax for care experienced young people and proud too of the fact that we are the first Council in the whole of the UK to become a child centred council putting the views and experiences of the children here at the very heart of everything that we do.

Our work continues and I am proud to lead a Council of committed staff here in North Ayrshire whose work continues to lead by example.



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

Councillor Joe Cullinane  
**Leader North Ayrshire Council**