

Cabinet
30 May 2023

At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Marie Burns, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen and Shaun Macaulay; and Andrew Bruce (Church Representative) and Jacqui McKenzie (Teaching Representative) (Agenda Items 3 – 6).

Also Present

Cameron Inglis.

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive, M. Boyd, Head of Service and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance) and F. Walker, Head of Service (People & ICT) (Chief Executive's Service); C. Cameron, Director (Health and Social Care Partnership); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, D. Hammond, Head of Service (Sustainability, Transport & Corporate Property), N. McIlvanney, Senior Manager (Growth & Investment) and C. Fitzsimmons, Senior Manager (Economic Development and Regeneration) (Place); A. Sutton, Executive Director, A. McClelland, Head of Service and K. Herron, Senior Manager (Education) (Communities & Education); A. Craig, Head of Service, M. McColm, Senior Manager (Communications), S. Wilson and C. Stewart, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Apologies

Lay Members Rev. Mark Goodman and Elizabeth Turbet.

Chair

Marie Burns in the Chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 May 2023 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. School Attainment Results 2022

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the overall performance of the 2022 North Ayrshire Council school leavers as highlighted in the INSIGHT benchmarking tool and Curriculum for Excellence attainment levels in literacy and numeracy for 2022. Supporting statistics were attached at Appendices 1-5 to the report.

The Cabinet expressed its thanks to the staff and pupils for the achievements demonstrated in the report and noted the strong ethos in learning establishments across North Ayrshire.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- how the pupil destinations data was gathered and monitored by working alongside Ayrshire College and the local employability partnership; and
- the impact on attainment levels caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the work undertaken to close this gap; and

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the measures being taken to make further improvements to attainment and achievement levels across all schools; and (b) otherwise note the content of the report, including the progress being made by learners, specifically in literacy and numeracy and the achievements of school leavers in SQA examinations in 2022.

4. Educational Achievement of Care Experienced Learners in North Ayrshire in 2022

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the Curriculum for Excellence Broad General Education (BGE) attainment levels of care experienced learners in 2022, Senior Phase attainment of care experienced school leavers in 2022 and post-school participation of care experienced learners. Supporting statistics were attached at Appendices 1-6 to the report.

The Cabinet acknowledged the challenge for care experienced young people and noted their achievements exceeded the national comparisons. Councillor Macaulay highlighted that this work was not limited to learning establishments and thanked both Education and the wider team.

Noted.

5. Proposal to amend the primary school catchment boundary between Saltcoats and Stevenston

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the outcome of the Statutory Public Consultation and seeking approval to amend the primary school catchment boundary between Mayfield and Glencairn, St Anthony's and St John's Primary Schools. The Consultation Report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the content of the Consultation Report at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) amend the primary school catchment boundary lines between Mayfield and Glencairn, St Anthony's and St John's Primary Schools from August 2023, as referred to in the report and illustrated in the location plan at Appendix 6 of the Consultation Report.

6. Equality Mainstreaming Report 2020-22 and Outcomes 2021-2025 Mid-Term Report

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) presenting the Equality Mainstreaming Report 2020-22 and Outcomes 2021-2025 Mid-Term Report (encompassing the Education Authority) Mid-Term Report. This was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

On behalf of the Cabinet, Councillor Macaulay highlighted the huge amount of work undertaken, noting that there was a range of different measures to support equal rights in North Ayrshire and a lengthy process had been undertaken to produce this report.

Lay Member Jacqui McKenzie highlighted that Arran Pride Month took place in June 2022 as part of LGBT History Month and requested that this be corrected in the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) the content of Equality Mainstreaming Report 2020-22 and Outcomes 2021-2025 Mid-Term Report set out at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the minor correction highlighted in terms of the 2022 Arran Pride event; and (b) publication of the report on the Council's website as required under the Equality Act 2010.

7. Appointment of Older People's Champion

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on the appointment of an Older People's Champion following the resignation of the previous representative.

Councillor Larsen, seconded by Councillor Macaulay, formally nominated Councillor Burns to be appointed as the Older People's Champion. There being no other nominations, Councillor Burns was duly appointed.

The Cabinet congratulated Councillor Burns on her appointment.

In terms of Standing Order 6.8 (vii), Councillor Burns, Chair, agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 3.25 p.m. to resolve a technical issue affecting audio broadcast of the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 3.35 p.m. with the same Members and officers present and in attendance, with the exception of Lay Members Andrew Bruce and Jacqui McKenzie.

8. Revenue Budget 2022/23 : Financial Performance to 31 March 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the financial performance of the Council for 2022/23.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to ongoing monitoring of key areas and emerging risks, how these were addressed when closing accounts for the financial year and the proposed earmarking which sought to mitigate these risks.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the earmarking of £3.524m identified at section 2.5 of the report to meet future year commitments; and (b) otherwise note (i) the information and financial outturn position outlined in the report, (ii) the transfer of the net in-year underspend of £1.524m to support the Roads Maintenance budget and the Energy Smart scheme, as approved by Council, (iii) the financial performance of the Health and Social Care Partnership highlighted at section 2.6 of the report, (iv) the deficit position of KA Leisure and (v) the virements detailed in Appendix 7 to the report.

9. Capital Programme Performance to 31 March 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme for 2022/23.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to current treasury advice and the possibility of interest rates against borrowing reducing in the near future.

Noted.

10. Cost of Living Crisis

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) providing a second progress report in relation to the North Ayrshire Council responses to the current cost-of-living crisis and associated investments and funds. The Cost of Living Themes & Updates paper was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet expressed thanks to all involved in the work undertaken and highlighted the efforts to tackle poverty and embed support to people in North Ayrshire.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) accept future progress reports on the investments, funds and activity associated with the cost-of-living crisis; and (b) otherwise note the progress the Council had made in developing support in relation to the cost-of-living crisis.

11. Regeneration Delivery Plan Action Programme and Funding Proposals

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the proposed Regeneration Delivery Plan action programme and funding proposals.

The Cabinet recognised the success of the Council and congratulated the team on the extent of the funding attracted.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the Garrison House and Arran Dyemill Park projects and the positive impact funding had had on both projects; and
- the importance of reviewing and updating the Regeneration Delivery Plan to reflect changing circumstances across localities.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve (i) the draft Action Programme as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, (ii) the Regeneration Delivery Plan funding proposals as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report and (iii) the granting of delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place) to agree changes to the funding allocations in consultation with the Portfolio Lead as required; and (b) otherwise to note the progress made on the implementation of the Regeneration Delivery Plan.

12. North Ayrshire Community Transport Pathfinder

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) setting out initial proposals for a Community Transport Pathfinder project in North Ayrshire.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the positive impact day trips and excursions would have on people facing social isolation; and
- the support model being agreed with Coalfield Community Transport noted at section 2.13 to the report and an example of what this would look like.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the next steps for the Community Transport Pathfinder set out at sections 2.11 to 2.14 of the report.

13. Decarbonisation of the Council's Fleet

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the decarbonisation journey to date and further proposals to decarbonise the Council's vehicle fleet.

The Cabinet welcomed the recommendation that the purchase of new passenger and light commercial vehicles would be zero emission only, resulting in phasing out the purchase of petrol and diesel vehicles 2 years earlier than required, and thanked the team for their proactive approach.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information in relation to the role green hydrogen was expected to have in addressing emissions and the anticipated timescale for this.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the proposals and recommendations set out at section 2.31 of the report; and (b) otherwise to note the decarbonisation routemap work summarised within the report.

14. Ardrossan Harbour Redevelopment Procurement Agreement

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking agreement to enter a procurement agreement with Ardrossan Harbour Company Limited to allow the Ardrossan Harbour Redevelopment tender process to proceed.

The Cabinet agreed to enter into a procurement co-operation agreement with the Ardrossan Harbour Company Limited [AHCL] to enable Peel Ports Group to lead a procurement process to secure contractors to undertake the proposed redevelopment works at Ardrossan Harbour.

15. UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Communities and Place Fund

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and seeking approval of the proposed approach to the Communities and Place Grant Fund.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information in relation to engagement undertaken with locality partnerships and Elected Members.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the proposed approach to the Communities & Place Grant fund provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

The meeting ended at 4:35 p.m.

Cabinet
13 June 2023

IRVINE, 13 June 2023 - At a Special Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Marie Burns, Tony Gurney, Alan Hill, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen and Shaun Macaulay.

Also Present

Cameron Inglis, Davina McTiernan and Eleanor Collier.

In Attendance

C. Hatton, Chief Executive, M. Boyd, Head of Service and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance) and F. Walker, Head of Service (People & ICT) (Chief Executive's Service); A. Sutton, Executive Director (Communities & Education); C. Cameron, Director and E. Stewart, Interim Head of Service (Children, Families & Justice) (Health & Social Care Partnership); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, T. Reaney, Head of Service (Neighbourhood Services), Y. Baulk, Head of Service and A. Elliot, Senior Manager (Housing and Public Protection), N. McIlvanney, Interim Head of Service (Growth, Investment and Employability) and M. Ritchie, Interim Senior Manager (Growth & Investment) (Place); A. Craig, Head of Service, I. Hardy, Team Manager and N. Sugden, Policy Officer (Policy, Performance & Elections), J. Hutcheson, Senior Communications Officer (Communications), S. Wilson and C. Stewart, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services).

Chair

Marie Burns in the Chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2. Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) providing an update on the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information in relation to the powers afforded to the Council and appropriate use of the Act.

Noted.

3. Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) seeking approval of the revised Discretionary Housing Payment policy. The revised policy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet acknowledged that a key priority for the Council was addressing child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, noting that the increased allocation of £315,000 in the budget for 2023/24 ensured support would continue to be provided to those in need.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the revised policy for the administration of Discretionary Housing Payments, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Please note – the following item was heard by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 27 June 2023, please refer to the minute of that Committee for the decision.

4. Council Tax for Second and Empty Homes, and Non-Domestic Rates Thresholds: Consultation

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) outlining the proposed response from North Ayrshire Council to the Scottish Government's consultation on Council Tax for second and empty homes, and non-domestic rates thresholds. The Respondent Information Form was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the proposed response to the Scottish Government consultation;
- support for the Council having the powers to decide whether to apply a premium Council Tax on second and empty homes; and
- decisions taken based on supporting evidence and the consequences of applying a premium rate.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the proposed consultation response at Appendix 1 to the report, for submission to the Scottish Government by the consultation deadline of 11 July 2023.

5. North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26

Submitted a report by the Director (Health & Social Care Partnership) presenting the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26. This was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Burns thanked officers of the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership and the young people involved in the first joint Cabinet for care experienced young people which took place on 13 June 2023.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the services and outcomes delivered for families through the expanded Family Centred Wellbeing Service; and
- available resources and additional funding from the Scottish Government ensuring best use of these to improve outcomes for children and families.

The Cabinet agreed to endorse the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26 attached at Appendix 1 to the report for submission to the Scottish Government.

6. Corporate Parenting Plan and The Promise 3 Years On

Submitted a report by the Director (Health & Social Care Partnership) providing an update on the ongoing work within North Ayrshire to develop the Corporate Parenting Plan and to deliver "The Promise". The Summary Report on Progress and the Corporate Parenting Plan were attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

The Cabinet acknowledged and thanked the team involved for the considerable work undertaken in this area and highlighted the benefits that came from "The Promise" in terms of putting young people at the heart of the system.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the impact on services and young people amid growing demand for continuing care in placement; and
- the criteria used by the Council to measure success in "The Promise".

Noted.

7. Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26; Progress report 2022-23 and Action Plan 2023-24.

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities & Education) on the draft North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy covering the period 2023-26, the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Report 2022-23 and the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-24 set out in the appendix to the report. The report sought approval to submit the report to the Scottish Government and publish it on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website.

The Cabinet noted the importance of highlighting the cause of poverty and thanked the Employability team for the considerable work undertaken.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- addressing the risks exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, specifically to children on the Islands and rural communities; and
- how the reports presented to Cabinet linked into the Child Poverty Strategy.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy covering the period 2023-26 and the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Report 2022-23 and Action Plan 2023-24 set out in the appendix to the report; and (b) submission of the report to the Scottish Government in addition to being published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website.

8. Children's Rights Report 2020/23

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities & Education) seeking approval of the North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020/23 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020/23 set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

9. Dundonald Crescent, Auchengate.

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) on the outcome of the Member/Officer Working Group on Dundonald Crescent, Auchengate.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information in relation to how often the Council received requests to adopt a private road and the process undertaken when a request was received.

The Cabinet thanked all involved for the work undertaken to reassess the costs, as noted within the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) not to undertake the upgrade works at Dundonald Crescent, Auchengate to bring the private road and associated infrastructure up to an adoptable standard; and (b) otherwise to note (i) the findings of the Member/Officer Working Group and (ii) that the maintenance responsibility for the road and associated infrastructure lay with the owners.

10. I3 – Sale of Land at Strategic Investment Campus

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for a minor increase to the size of an area of land at i3 in Irvine that Cabinet had previously approved to be sold, subject to appropriate conditions. The proposed site location and layout plan were attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, respectively.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to ensuring the Council maximised the potential of the i3 site.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the increase from 2 acres to 2.498 acres of the area of land to be sold to System Five Off Site Ltd. at the Strategic Investment Campus at i3 Irvine and (b) grant authority to the Executive Director of Place to negotiate the terms of the sale, including a price proportionate to the revised area of land.

11. Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval of the proposed Local Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028 and associated action plan attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, respectively.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the use of North Ayrshire Council's internal architects for the development at Irvine Harbour and whether this would be the preferred process for future developments;
- the percentage of new build houses that were built with accessible needs in mind and whether this had alleviated pressure to adapt current housing stock;
- whether the target number of new dwellings would still be achievable by 2028; and
- what powers and resources the Council had to take action in terms of private buildings in disrepair.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve (i) the Local Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 at Appendix 1 to the report and (ii) the associated action plan at Appendix 2; and (b) that these be published and submitted to the Scottish Government.

12. North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan 2023

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval of the amended Visitor Management Plan, to support ongoing actions to manage domestic tourism in North Ayrshire during 2023. The Visitor Management Plan was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet thanked the team and all involved in the working group for the excellent work undertaken on the Visitor Management Plan.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the draft North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan for 2023 set out at attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

13. Housing Services' Customer Participation Strategy 2023-2028

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) presenting the draft Customer Participation Strategy 2023-2028 for approval. The Strategy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked a question and were provided with further information in relation to different routes, such as social platforms, that were worth exploring to ensure as wide a range of people as possible was reached.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the content of the draft Customer Participation Strategy 2023-2028 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The meeting ended at 4.35 p.m.