



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 4 September – 22
October 2023

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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IRVINE LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP MEETING, 4 September

On 4 September, I attended a meeting of the Irvine Locality Partnership held in Fullarton Connexions. The Partnership discussed and subsequently approved a Community Investment Fund (CIF) application by Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) to enable the provision of outreach venues throughout Irvine for two Advice workers. There were also expressions of CIF interest from Fullarton Community Association (for an Outdoor Gym), Turning Point Scotland (for the creation of a college course for people in recovery) and from Broomlands and Bourtreehill Community Association (BABCA) for funding towards the creation of a community garden. All three expressions of interest were approved and will now proceed to full CIF Applications.

The Partnership also received updates on the progression of the Irvine Chit Chat Poverty Action Plan, an update from Police Scotland, an update from Irvine Community Council and an update from the Irvine Locality Officer.

SPECIAL MEETING OF COSLA LEADERS', 5 September

I attended a special meeting of COSLA Leaders' on 5 September to discuss the Local Government Pay offer.

IRVINE ROYAL ACADEMY PRIZE GIVING, 6 September

On 6 September, I was delighted to be invited along to Irvine Royal Academy Prize giving evening.

It is always great to hear the wonderful achievements of our pupils and I would like to commend the teaching staff and pupils for their hard work during the academic year. Well done and best wishes for the year ahead.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD, 7 September

I attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board on 7 September where partners agreed that I would be appointed Chair of the meetings from September until 31 August 2024.

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Attendees received updates on the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 and the AGD Internal Audit Plan 2023/24. These will now be presented to the Ayrshire Joint Economic Committee for consideration.

There were also further updates on the AGD and an update on the AGD programme risk register.

Signed in November 2020 the AGD is a £251.5 million ten-year investment programme covering the three Ayrshire local authority areas. This funding will support a range of activities across six themes (Aerospace and Space; Economic Infrastructure, Energy, Circular Economy & Environment; Tourism; Digital and Communities). Amongst other outputs, the Deal is projected to unlock private investment and generate up to 7,000 jobs.

AGE SCOTLAND MEETING, 8 September

On 8 September, I had an introductory meeting with representatives from Age Scotland and the Senior Older People's Assembly (SOPA) following my appointment as North Ayrshire Council's Older People's Champion. Discussion focused on the role of the Older People's Champion and the Scottish Older People's Assembly. Age Scotland and SOPA are two organisations which support organisations with their work with our elderly communities.

COSLA BUSINESS GATEWAY BOARD MEETING, 8 September

Later, on 8 September, I attended a meeting of the COSLA Business Gateway Board where attendees received updates on the Marketing and Digital Services and the draft National Service Specification (NSS) that has been developed by a project team comprising members of the business Gateway National Unit and Ambassadors from the wider network.

Since 2016 there have been a number of changes in terms of how Local Government manages and delivers the NSS including work with partners as well as the changes that have been brought forward by the Enterprise Skills Review and, more recently, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, the First Minister's Policy Portfolio and the Verity House Agreement.

NHS HEALTHCARE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING , 11 September

On 11 September, I attended an NHS Healthcare and Governance Committee meeting where attendees received updates on various Patient Safety Reports and a presentation on the Food,

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Fluid and Nutrition action plan. The Committee also received updates on various Corporate Governance reports.

The Committee also discussed Unplanned Activity (UNPAC) Policy and UNPAC Appeals Process Policy and what measures were in place to ensure robust management of the service.

AYRSHIRE SKILLS INVESTMENT FUND SUB COMMITTEE, 11 September

Later on 11 September, I attended an Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund (ASIF) Sub Committee meeting. The ASIF will provide a flexible and responsive skills fund for Ayrshire's businesses and residents and will support inclusive growth and Community Wealth Building principles.

It is aimed at helping employers grow and develop their employees and increase skills for Ayrshire residents, linking them to growth sectors and employment opportunities, with the objectives of reducing unemployment and increasing productivity. The fund supports skills development, where funding currently does not exist. This will fund the gaps in the skills system and contribute to develop the skills needed to support regional, inclusive, economic growth.

IRVINE TENNIS CLUB OFFICIAL OPENING, 11 September

On the evening of 11 September, I was delighted to be invited along to the official opening of the Irvine Tennis Club refurbished courts at Thornhouse Avenue. It was also a pleasure to welcome Judy Murray to do the official opening ceremony.

The Irvine Tennis Club received £100,000 from the North Ayrshire Council Community Investment Fund last summer and together with funding from sportscotland, have brought the courts back to life. Well done to all those involved.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD, 14 September

On 14 September, I chaired a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership which focused on the theme of "Work". Community Planning Partners discussed what support they could provide to improve work outcomes for the communities of North Ayrshire.

CPP Partners also received an update on the work being done to combat Child Poverty and the Cost of Living by North Ayrshire Council Executive Director for Education and Communities, Audrey Sutton.

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VISIT TO INVERCLYDE SPORTS CENTRE, 15 September

On 15 September, together with my colleague, North Ayrshire Council Depute Leader, Councillor Shaun Macaulay and Rhonda Leith, Head of Connected Communities at North Ayrshire Council, I visited sportscotland Inverclyde Sports Centre.

The visit was primarily to meet with the team there and hear about some of great work they are involved in. The centre offers a range of facilities with inclusivity at its heart. They offer residential stays that provide powerful learning opportunities within a sports setting which help young people develop the skills they need to become successful, confident, effective and responsible individuals.

My thanks to Barry Fleeting for facilitating the visit and for taking the time to show us round.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING AND AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING, 18 September

On 18 September, I chaired a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board (AEPB) meeting immediately followed by a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee (AEJC). The AEPB received a presentation on the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan and were asked to endorse the draft Year One delivery plan. This was endorsed and subsequently submitted to the AEJC for their approval.

It was also agreed that future Delivery Plans for future years', would be brought before the AEPB and AEJC for approval.

BOURTREEHILL PARK STAKEHOLDERS MEETING, 18 September

Later on 18 September, I attended a meeting of the Broomlands and Bourtreehill Community Association at Towerlands Community Centre. Attendees received updates on the Farm Basket community larder, garden issues and older people's Christmas update.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS' MEETING, 19 September

On 19 September, I attended another COSLA Special Leaders' meeting to discuss the Local Government Pay Offer.

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CUNNINGHAME HOUSING ASSOCIATION GARVEN ROAD GROUNDBREAKING, 20 September

On 20 September, I was invited along to the Cunninghame Housing Association groundbreaking event at Garven Road in Stevenston. North Ayrshire Council has supported the development at Garven Road which is at the site of the former Ardeer Primary School.

The £4.46m project, which is supported by £3.2m Scottish Government grant funding, will provide 20 new homes including the provision of one amenity home and one wheelchair liveable home helping to address the particular needs of North Ayrshire residents and promote independent living. The development is due for completion by September 2024.

IMPROVEMENT SERVICE – ANCHOR CWB EVENT, 20 September

Also on the 20 September, I attended an online workshop delivered by The Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland (PHS), to discuss the role of Anchor Institutions in relation to improving local economies and delivering Community Wealth Building.

Local authorities are well-placed to recognise and respond to the particular economic challenges and opportunities within our communities and are therefore, key in bringing partners together to address these challenges. As Chair of the CWB Commission, North Ayrshire Council has played a leading role in driving CWB in Ayrshire. We were able to capitalise on our strong relationships with our Community Planning Partners to bring together the CWB Commission, which has a key remit of encouraging Anchors to share their experiences and learning of implementing CWB.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS' MEETING, 21 September

On 21 September, I attended another COSLA Special Leaders' meeting to discuss the Local Government Pay Offer.

OPENING OF WILLIE MACKIE HUB AT AYRSHIRE COLLEGE, 21 September

Also on 21 September, I was delighted to be invited to attend the official opening of the Willie Mackie Hub at Ayrshire College campus in Kilwinning.

The new Hub will replace the College's existing workshop facilities at Nethermains and enable the College to offer a dynamic and flexible curriculum aligned to the needs of local and national skills priorities. The low carbon two-storey building will provide a flexible learning space that

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can respond to emerging technologies to upskill the workforce of the future in Engineering, Construction and SMART Technologies. The College facility will be supported by green technologies using air source heat pumps for the building's heating systems.

NHS AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING, 27 September

On 27 September, I attended a meeting of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Audit and Risk Committee meeting. Attendees received a presentation from the Head of Counter Fraud Services, Mr Gordon Young, on the Counter Fraud Liaison Report. There were also updates on several internal Audit reports as well as an update from Audit Scotland on their Adult Mental Health report.

The next meeting will be held on 16 November.

COSLA CONFERENCE AND CONVENTION, 28 & 29 September

On 28 and 29 September, I attended COSLA Conference and COSLA Convention held at the Crieff Hydro in Perthshire.

Convention Agenda items included an audited financial statement for Year ending 31 March 2023, Fiscal Framework for Local Government, Human Rights Bill Consultation and an update on the Verity House Agreement.

The Verity House Agreement (VHA) was approved by COSLA and the Scottish Government in June 2023 and forms part of the "New Deal for Local Government" and though not legally binding, is a public statement on how the Scottish and local governments will work together to support communities.

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK, 2 – 9 October

Between 2 and 9 October, the Council once again supported the Poverty Alliance's Challenge Poverty Campaign. This is the eighth year we have taken part and the week provided the opportunity to highlight some of the outstanding work undertaken by our communities in providing food and help to our residents in need, financial support provided to household tenants, help given by our financial inclusion team and sustainable ways of travel promoted by our Active Travel team.

I was also delighted to attend a lunch hosted by the Friends of Redburn, highlighting some of the great work they do to provide low cost, nutritious meals for our communities, using produce

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donated by volunteer organisations in North Ayrshire. My thanks also to the pupils from Greenwood Academy and Irvine Royal Academy who came along on the day to help out and to gain some skills that will be used towards an SQA qualification. Also, thanks to all our community larders and growers/groups who provide nutritious and fresh produce to our volunteer groups.

Thank you to all the teams who took part and helped to promote some of the great work being carried out in North Ayrshire to combat poverty.

CAFÉ MELBOURNE, 2 October

On 2 October, I was invited along to Café Melbourne in Saltcoats by Age Scotland in Saltcoats to attend the Three Towns Veterans Breakfast Club award presentation .

It was a pleasure to go along and hear about some of the great work the group have been doing in and around the local community.

A SPOTLIGHT ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 2 October

Later, on 2 October, I attended “A Spotlight on Climate Change” engagement event held at Lanfine Community Centre in Irvine. This was one in a series of events organised by our Sustainable team throughout each of our localities in North Ayrshire. These events are looking to have useful conversations with our communities to help North Ayrshire Council understand local priorities for action and to then, use this information to help us refresh our current Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

Tackling climate change is one of the key priorities in North Ayrshire Council’s Plan for the next five years. My thanks to David Hammond, Head of Service and the Sustainability team for all their hard work in putting these events together and for their continued work.

COST OF LIVING FUND WORKSHOP, 4 October

On 4 October, as part of the continued work of “The Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board”, I attended a workshop held at Redburn Community Centre.

During the past year, The Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board has welcomed the support of our partners and communities through our mini enquiries. This has been extremely valuable, and this event gave partners an opportunity to discuss the findings and gage their initial thoughts as to where they thought funds should be allocated.

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My thanks to everyone who attended and took part in the discussion.

STEM TRAIL LAUNCH, EGLINTON COUNTRY PARK, 6 October

On 6 October, I was delighted to attend the official opening of the North Ayrshire STEM trail at Eglinton Country Park. North Ayrshire Council's STEM Education Team has formed a unique partnership with the Countryside Rangers on the project, which is aimed at educating young people about their surroundings in a fun way.

My thanks to Tim Dreyer, North Ayrshire Council's STEM Co-ordinator and our Ranger Service for their great collaboration.



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

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council