



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 22 March – 30 May 2021

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 MICHAEL MATHESON MSP, 24 March

On 24 March, together with our Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I attended a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson to discuss the Strategic Transport Project Review 2(STPR2).

STPR2 is a Scotland-wide review of the strategic transport network across all transport modes, including walking, wheeling, cycling, bus, rail and car, as well as reviewing wider island and rural connectivity and we were meeting the Cabinet Secretary to make the case for investment in North Ayrshire and Ayrshire as a region to be included in STPR2, which will cover the period 2022-2042. We were disappointed that the report issued in February, outlining Phase 1 recommendations for STPR2, failed to mention Ayrshire once in over 100 pages and we made the case strongly that the Phase 2 report cannot repeat that omission.

KILWINNING LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP, 25 March

On 25 March I attended a meeting of the Kilwinning Locality Partnership where attendees discussed and received updates on the following:

- Locality priorities
- Community Investment fund
- Street naming (residential development at West Byre Road)
- Learning Update
- Locality Officer and Locality Plan Update
- HSCP Update
- Grant/Participatory Budget Update

I was pleased that the Partnership agreed to recommend a further application by Kilwinning Rangers to the Community Investment Fund which was subsequently ratified by Cabinet in April. This application is in connection with escalating costs relating to Covid in the previously agreed project to convert a portacabin into a flexible community space to address the capacity issues for youth and other activities in the main clubhouse building.



COSLA CONVENTION, 26 March

I attended the COSLA Convention on 26 March to take part in a packed Agenda which covered the following:

- Local Government Blueprint
- Social Renewal Advisory Board Report – COSLA Response
- COP26
- European Charter of Local Self Government
- Children and Young People – Support During Recovery and Renewal Phase
- COSLA Budget 2021/22 to 2024/25
- COSLA Constitution Update
- Spokespersons Update

COSLA Convention members were updated on details of the forthcoming United Nations Climate summit (COP26) to take place November 1-12 in Glasgow. Tackling Climate Change is a key priority for COSLA and for the last year and a half, COSLA has been working with Glasgow City Council, Local Government partners from the rest of the UK, Europe and worldwide to build a strong Local Government partnership that can have a strong presence in COP26. We hope to press for a Glasgow climate deal that reflects Local Government's role and responsibilities in delivering climate ambition, including financial support from national Government.

COSLA LEADERS, 26 March

Following on from the COSLA Convention I attended a special COSLA Leaders meeting for an update on Local Government Finance and Business Grants.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING COMMISSION, 29 March

Our Community Wealth Building Commission met again on 29 March and received updates on progression of the Commission Workplan by the CWB Commission Lead Officers Working Group (LOWG). The LOWG met in February this year and agreed that a Lead Officer Working Group (LOWG) would be created to take ownership of the Commission Workplan and progress actions as directed by the Commission. The LOWG have identified a lead organisation for each CWB workstream in order to progress actions in collaboration with other Commission members. South Ayrshire Council have agreed to lead the Procurement workstream and Scottish Enterprise will lead on Land and Assets.



The Commission also received a detailed presentation from South Ayrshire Council Procurement team which outlined a roadmap for engagement with all Anchor Institution representatives involved in the workstream. The presentation also covered the following points:

- Update procurement spend analysis and undertake further consideration of the data to assess opportunities for CWB
- Identify opportunities for joint procurement on a regional basis
- Identify opportunities for supplier awareness and development for businesses and the third sector across the Ayrshire region, including raising awareness of potential tender opportunities such as through Quick Quotes (additional support from the AGD CWB Fund may potentially help support the delivery of these ambitions)
- Engage with Scottish Government on the benefits for more local procurement and barriers which may prevent this

My thanks to Zoe Fance and Gavin Cockburn in South Ayrshire Council for delivering this presentation and for identifying these points as key areas to be looked at.

SPECIAL COSLA LEADERS, 16 April

COSLA Leaders met on 16 April for a special meeting to discuss the following:

- Distribution of Additional Funding for Self-Isolation Support Grants
- Tackling Poverty – Further Consideration of Pandemic Payments
- COVID19 Strategic Framework – Local Authority Engagement Protocol

The Scottish Government will continue to engage with COSLA as it monitors the Levels during the varying stages of the Pandemic.

SCOTLAND EXCEL COMMITTEE MEETING, 23 April

I attended a meeting of the Scotland Excel Executive Committee on 23 April. Attendees received an update on Digital developments including, the Social Care Case Management System, also on a Dynamic Purchasing System which is currently being developed and should be ready for Councils to use by the end of April 2021.

Updates were also provided on the Care and Support and Housing frameworks. The Care and Support framework was re-opened in late 2020 to enable new participants to join and it is anticipated that 42 new providers will be added to the framework. With regards to Housing, seven new Housing Associations have become associated members of Scotland Excel giving



them access to the frameworks and five further projects totalling £46m. There have been 2244 new homes awarded under the framework.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 29 April

On 29 April I attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board with Elected Members and senior officers attending from the three Ayrshire Councils. Attendees received updates and presentations on the following:

- The Ayrshire Growth Deal including the various workstreams
- The Maritime Mile in Irvine
- National Economic Opportunities
- Update on 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)

Attendees received an informative presentation from Scottish Enterprise on National Economic Opportunities which looked at the various themes where economic opportunities can be developed into collaborative outcome driven actions which will create new, green jobs in the future. These cover the following themes:

- **Climate and Net Zero** (Energy Transition & Heat, Blue and Green Economies, Low Carbon Transport, Sustainable Tourism)
- **Health and Wellbeing** (including Digital Health Care, Life Sciences, Precision Medicine, Personal Nutrition)
- **Advanced Manufacturing** (Food & Drink Innovation, Construction & Infrastructure, Aerospace & Transport)
- **Digital and Data** (including Cyber technology, Artificial Intelligence, digital retail, travel & mobility technology. Advanced technology for Government agencies)

The Partnership Board will continue to work with partners such as Scottish Enterprise to look to develop job opportunities in each of these sectors to make Ayrshire more economically resilient.

COSLA LEADERS, 30 April

COSLA Leaders met again on 30 April to discuss a packed agenda covering the following areas:

- UK Levelling-Up Fund
- Learning Estate Investment Programme
- Edinburgh Declaration



- Heat and Energy Policy
- New Plan for Immigration
- Hong Kong British National (Visa)

The draft Heat in Buildings Strategy updates the 2018 Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map and the 2015 Heat Policy Statement. The strategy will outline the steps the Scottish Government (SG) will take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Scotland's homes, workplaces and community buildings, and to remove poor energy performance as a driver of fuel poverty.

The draft Strategy will build on the policies and actions set out in the 2020 Climate Change Plan Update and will set a pathway to zero emissions buildings by 2045 with the following aims:

- By 2030 around 50% of homes, or over a million households, converted to a zero or low-emissions heating system, including the majority of the 167,000 off-gas homes that currently use oil, LPG and solid fuels.
- By 2030, an estimated 50,000 (25% of the overall stock of non-domestic buildings) of Scotland's non-domestic properties converted to zero emissions sources of heat.

North Ayrshire Council aim to be net-zero carbon by 2030 and so welcomes new regulations and standards to achieve lower emission buildings, both existing and new. The Council is also currently participating in the Scottish Government's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) pilot to identify areas where heat networks would be most appropriate and target energy efficiency measures across domestic and non-domestic buildings. The data presented from the pilot will support the Council's duty to consider heat network zoning, and Planning Services are considering supplementary planning guidance to support zero carbon developments

GROUNDBREAKING EVENT MARRESS HOUSE, 20 May

On 20 May I was delighted to attend the first groundbreaking event in over a year and the first of many to come in 2021. Marress House, the former Inland Revenue Tax Office will be turned into an Early Years Centre as part of the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme (ELCEP). North Ayrshire Council is leading the way in Scotland for Community Wealth Building and this was an excellent opportunity to bring a local asset back into productive use. The many benefits of new early years facilities include the creation of jobs and the welcome boost it will bring to the local economy.



As more children will be spending more time in an early years setting, it is essential that the learning environment is fit for purpose and is suitable to support positive outcomes and improve learning outcomes for children in North Ayrshire.

The building will also house the relocation of the Concierge Service to a central location in advance of the demolition of the Fullarton high flats in Irvine.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 24 May

On 24 May the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee met to receive updates and reports on the following:

- Ayrshire Growth Deal
- i3 Advanced Manufacturing Space Project
- Great Harbour, Irvine

The i3 Irvine Enterprise Area is one of North Ayrshire's key strategic sites where investment is being targeted as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal. The Ayrshire Growth Deal documents were signed in November last year and included £21M of investment for i3. This will support two major projects which will help to create employment, raise the profile of i3 and attract new inward investment:

- construction of new advanced manufacturing business space (or flexible space)
- the development of a Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC).

The £21M allocation comprises of £15M towards new commercial or employment space at i3, with £11M from the Scottish Government and £4M from North Ayrshire Council. The project is part of a wider programme of new employment space across Ayrshire with East and South Ayrshire Councils' developing similar projects funded from the Growth Deal.

The overall aim is to meet an identified demand for modern business space where there has been a longstanding issue of market failure, to help grow local businesses and to attract inward investment.

JOINT YOUTH CABINET, 25 May

On 25 May I was delighted to take part in a Joint Youth Cabinet session with my fellow Cabinet members. An incredible nine schools were able to join the session and we were also joined by our Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) and the Youth Council Executive.

Conversation themes included:



- Climate Change
- COVID Recovery
- Cost of the School Day
- Sexism and Violence (including Violence against women)

I would like to thank all our young people for participating in these Joint Youth Cabinets. It has always been important to me and my fellow Cabinet members to hear the thoughts and any areas of concern that our young people may have. As a Cabinet, we are only too aware how difficult and unsettling this past year has been with a disrupted school year and of course, concern of the exam diet and subsequent grading. The resilience our young people have shown throughout the COVID pandemic has been truly remarkable.

I would also like to thank our MSYPs and Youth Executive members who spoke about North Ayrshire's Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-2025. The voices of young people remain at the heart of the endeavours of the Community Planning Partnership and the Council in North Ayrshire, however, the last year has been like no other. The Strategy has been updated and refreshed to reflect the learning from the Year of Young People, the experiences of young people during the Covid pandemic, and the growing confidence of young people to speak up about their needs in a changing world. The pandemic brought to the fore the need for increased support for young people's mental health, improved digital access for home schooling, and the resilience and value of young people across Scotland as they played their part as volunteers in the community response.

WEST BYREHILL ROAD GROUNDBREAKING EVENT, 26 May

On 26 May I was invited along by Cunninghame Housing Association to their groundbreaking event at West Byrehill Road in Kilwinning. Work on this new housing development began on site on 12 April 2021 and it is estimated that the work will take approximately 95 weeks with completion scheduled for February 2023.

The main contractor is McTaggart Construction who are based in Dalry and will deliver the works under a Design & Build contract. The development will see a total of 72 new homes. They are predominantly two and three-bedroom houses as well as eight bungalows designed for older people and three bungalows designed specifically for wheelchair users.

With total development costs of £11.8 million, the project has benefitted from £6.351 million in Housing Association grant awarded from the Scottish Government.



COSLA LEADERS, 28 May

COSLA Leaders met again on 28 May to discuss the following Agenda items:

- EU Settlement Scheme
- Local Government Finance Update
- Early Learning and Childcare: Funding from 2022/23
- Strategic Commissioning and Grant Aided Schools
- Joint Policy/Funding – Scottish Healthy Milk Snack Scheme
- Independent Review of Adult Social Care
- Financial Support for the Adult Social Care Sector
- Relocation of Afghan Nationals to the UK
- Local Government Approach to UK Immigration Policy
- Implications of Emerging Policy for Local Government
- School Clothing Grant

The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) allows applicable EU/EEA citizens living in the UK before 31st December 2020 to maintain their rights to live and work in the UK. The EUSS closes on 30th June 2021. COSLA and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) have been working in partnership to assist Scottish local authorities in identifying vulnerable citizens who may need additional support to complete their applications.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Cullinane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader North Ayrshire Council