



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 30 August – 17 October
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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VISIT TO MILLPORT TOWN HALL, 1 September

On 1 September I had the pleasure of visiting the charity group, Friends of Millport Town Hall, where we discussed exciting future plans for the renovation of Millport Town Hall.

Following £200,000 investment from the Council's Community Investment Fund (CIF) together with funding from the Scottish Government and the North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVVT), the restoration works will include a new accessible entrance and the creation of multi-use flexible spaces incorporating a Community Hub, Arts and Culture Centre, starter Men's Shed, main staged hall and three holiday-let flats. A second phase will see a Heritage and Conservation Centre in the basement.

The work being done in partnership with our communities is a fine example of Community Wealth Building at its best making the best of our local resources to benefit the local economy

Work should be completed by the summer of 2022, and I am excited to make a return visit next year to see the completed works.

1st TIER JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 2 September

On 2 September I chaired a meeting of the 1st Tier Joint Consultative Committee and the Corporate Health and Safety Group. Health and Safety reports were provided by each Directorate. Attendees were also updated on some of the recent activities being organised by the Livewell Group in each of these 4 areas: PlayWell, BeWell, WorkWell and EatWell. I am particularly pleased to see that "The Cycle to Work Scheme (CTW)" is still proving to be popular with Council employees. Since the scheme opened in 2020, we have seen a total of 119 employees purchase a bike through the scheme and take advantage of savings of up to 32%.

VISIT TO LOCAL BUSINESSES, 10 September

On 10 September I visited local social enterprise TCS eco who offer a sustainable alternative to disposable sanitary products. North Ayrshire Council was the first Local Authority in the UK

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to provide free period products in all our secondary schools in 2017 and then a year later extending that provision to all council buildings.

TCS recently moved into new, bigger premises in Kilwinning having outgrown their last place within a year of moving in. As part of their ambition to grow the business, they recently received financial support from the Business Transition Fund, a fund established by my Cabinet earlier this year, to buy a printing machine enabling them to bring their printing needs inhouse. Not only has that brought down their costs but it is making their products even more sustainable by cutting their freight miles and they are now able to offer reactive dye fabric services to other companies in the UK as there were no existing supplier in the country. Exciting times.

I also took the opportunity to pop in next door and visit Abbey Screen and Digital Print. The company has been going for years but they are trying to keep up with the ever-changing world. Investing in digital services is vital for the future of the company and just days before visiting them, they received their new digital printer which again was supported through a grant from our Business Transition fund. It was good to talk to the team at Abbey about their future ambitions for the company and the importance of the digital printer to that.

VISIT TO THE AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY TRUST, 10 September

I also visited The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) with Provost Ian Clarkson, to help launch their adult volunteer awards. We know how valuable local volunteers have been throughout the pandemic, giving up their own time to make sure others were safe and supported. It is great that TACT is recognising the work of volunteers with their awards.

VISIT TO WINTON CIRCUS PLAY PARK, 10 September

Later on 10 September I visited the playpark at Winton Circus, Saltcoats to announce to volunteers at local community group Saltcoats Active Lifestyle Team (SALT), who have been raising funds for the upgrade of the playpark, that we would be investing a share of my Cabinet's £500,000 coastal playpark fund upgrading this playpark. Working with SALT, we will co-produce plans for the playpark with any funds SALT raise complimenting the Council's investment to enhance the facilities further.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 13 September

I chaired a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee (AEJC) on 13 September. Attendees were provided with updates on

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- Review of Working Arrangements and Development of Regional Economic Strategy
- Ayrshire Growth Deal Programme Update
- Food Procurement Contracts: Supply and Delivery of Fresh/Organic Food Stuffs
- Clean Growth Workstream: Ayrshire Energy Masterplan Submit report by Theresa Corrie, Scottish Enterprise on the development of an Ayrshire Energy Masterplan
- Ayrshire Growth Deal: Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21
- Ayrshire Growth Deal: Internal Audit Plan 2021/22

Under the Terms of Reference for the AEJC, the Chair for forthcoming AEJC meetings will rotate to South Ayrshire Council until September 2022.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH NETWORK EVENT, 15 September

I attended a Political Leaders' Inclusive Growth Network event on 15 September. At this political summit, members reaffirmed their commitment to tackling the climate crisis locally. The aim will be for political leaders to ensure that the transition for environmental change will not have detrimental impacts on our poorest households and therefore a political message will be published in the run up to the COP26 summit, setting out the level of shared ambition, innovation, and scale of local delivery already in progress amongst members of the IGN across the UK.

VISIT TO ARRAN, 16-17 September

On 16 and 17 September I visited Arran together with the Cabinet Member for Islands, Alex Gallagher and our Chief Executive, Craig Hatton. I was pleased to take part in two Ministerial meetings, one with the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, Mairi Gougeon and a separate one with the Transport Minister, Graeme Dey. Both meetings were also attended by members of the Arran Recovery Group and Arran Ferry Committee.

After having held meetings online for the past 18 months it was fantastic to be able to visit The Arran Outdoor Centre and catch up with the team there. The Centre has been at the heart of the island's response to Covid-19 and was interesting to discuss their experience of supporting the island's communities throughout the pandemic. The Centre and staff hope to be able to welcome schools back for their residential week soon.

We had an excellent meeting with Arran Eco Savvy, a group that is a great asset to the island. As a Council we have set ambitious climate targets to be a net-zero region by 2030 and Arran Eco Savvy share that ambition. It was exciting to be discussing ambitions ranging from community-owned renewable energy, low-carbon transport solutions, to making the island's housing stock more energy efficient. The Council are here to facilitate and enable groups like

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Eco Savvy to drive change from the ground up and we have taken away a long list of actions to explore opportunities to work with Eco Savvy going forward.

Straight after meeting Arran Eco Savvy, Councillor Alex Gallagher and I travelled over to visit Arran Youth Foundation. They are the first group on the island to benefit from my Administration's Community Investment Fund, a fund that we created to support community-led initiatives. Their mental health project, run in association with the High School, is up and running and it was great to hear it's already making a positive impact.

Whilst on the island, I was keen to visit Woodside Farm in Kildonan. Woodside Farm is a social enterprise that use organic farming methods to produce seasonal food. During the first lockdown, Woodside Farm helped support the island's community to access fresh food and now they are supplying local produce for the Council's school meals on the island. This is exactly what Community Wealth Building is all about – using the Council's procurement spend to support local businesses, and, where possible, to support social enterprises and other forms of progressive business ownership models.

We couldn't go to Arran and not visit Brathwic Terrace, the first Council houses to be built on the island for decades. The Council's development at Brathwic Terrace, which is nearly complete, will provide 34 new Council houses on the island and my Administration's local letting initiative means that most of the houses have been allocated to island residents, helping us tackle the problems outlined above.

The rents are the same as those the Council charge on the mainland, resulting in the lowest rents you will find anywhere on the island, whilst the energy efficiency measures that the Council includes in our new-build houses, such as solar panels, mean that the homes will be some of the most energy efficient and low carbon on the island.

We hadn't arranged it in advance, but whilst on the island we had the opportunity to speak to someone who has been allocated one of the houses. Listening to what the new house meant to him, and his wife, was an excellent moment for us all as it demonstrated the difference building Council houses on the island will make.

HUNTERSTON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNING, 21 September

It was a landmark day on 21 September when I had the pleasure to sign a Memorandum of Understanding together with representatives from Peel Ports and Scottish Enterprise. The MOU will see ambitious plans for Hunterston come to fruition as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

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The agreement sets out the roles of each of the organisations and how the partnership will secure further investment that will help stimulate development at the site. An initial focus for the partners will be developing a business incubator space within the existing buildings on the site, providing facilities for local firms to grow and collaborate. The ambition is to create a centre for innovation to support both the blue and circular economy, including research and development facilities.

The development of Hunterston PARC, which is one of Scotland's largest brownfield sites (320 acres) and its largest deep-water port, is a key site in the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) to which the UK Government has committed £18 million over a 10-year period.

MINISTERIAL MEETING, 22 September

On 22 September I attended a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, Shona Robison MSP, and the Minister for Public Finance, Planning & Community Wealth, Tom Arthur MSP. Also in attendance were senior officers from North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, Head of Democratic Services, Aileen Campbell and Head of Finance, Mark Boyd. Discussion points included the following:

- Covid Recovery
- Spending Review
- PfG commitments
- Priorities for local government

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING COMMISSION, 22 September

I chaired a further meeting of Ayrshire's Community Wealth Building Commission on 22 September to discuss a packed agenda covering the following items:

- Scottish Land Commission – Presentation and discussion on CWB and Land & Assets
- Update from Lead Officers Working Group
- Update on Fair Employment workstream
- Update on Community Wealth Building Act.
- Ayrshire Growth Deal, Community Wealth Building Fund update

Following agreement by Commission members, I have written to the Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth about the development of the recently announced Community Wealth Building Act. The Commission felt that Ayrshire was in a good position to share reflections from its experience of implementing Community Wealth Building in the region and consideration of what is required at a national level to enable long term economic transformation. In the year of COP26, Community Wealth Building could be a key tool in



supporting the achievement of net zero and that Ayrshire partners are already advancing activity in this area. The Commission has already undertaken early consideration of the potential of a Community Wealth Building Act and plan further work with officers across the region, including with the input of the Community Wealth Building Expert Advisory Panel chaired by Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland.

CLIMATE CHANGE FRINGE EVENT (FAIRTRADE), 22 September

Later on 22 September I took part in an online Climate Change Fringe Event, organised by the North Ayrshire Fair Trade Zone Group, a community-based organisation which works to raise awareness of how purchasing and supporting Fair Trade goods can help improve living standards in the developing world and at the same time help in responding to major issues such as climate change.

The event was one of many organised by “Stop Climate Chaos Coalition Scotland” as part of Climate Fringe Week of Action which aims to raise awareness about the United Nations Climate Change Conference taking place in Glasgow in November .

COSLA LEADERS, 24 September

On 24 September I attended COSLA Leaders to discuss a packed agenda including some of the following items:

- Social Renewal Advisory Board
- Tackling Poverty – COSLA Role and Contributions
- EU Exit Local Impacts

The Social Renewal Advisory Board was established in June 2020 by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People. North Ayrshire Council held a programme of six community listening events with its localities, young people and Fair For All Commission in August 2020 via Zoom. Nine Policy Circles, convened by Scottish Government and COSLA, ran a programme of in-depth discussions with a panel of experts and interest groups. Two senior officers of North Ayrshire Council were invited to join Policy Circles looking at Place Based Renewal and Volunteering.

North Ayrshire Council is well positioned in its strategic approach to the first theme of Money and Work, with the launch of the Community Wealth Building Strategy. The Minimum Income Guarantee commitment within the 2021/22 Programme for Government will be closely followed given North Ayrshire's early work on Citizen's Basic Income. Policies supporting Fair Work, the



Living Wage and the well-established network of Employability Hubs have been enhanced by the Financial Advice Demonstrator Hub. The North Ayrshire Fair Work Programme Manager has been recruited to take forward locally, aligned with CWB Strategy.

MOORPARK PRIMARY SCHOOL GROUNDBREAKING, 27 September

I attended the Moorpark Primary School Groundbreaking ceremony in Kilbirnie on 27 September. This is one of many schools that will be benefitting from over £100 million investment in our school estate, some of the others include Lockhart Campus, Kilwinning Academy, Irvine Royal Academy and Auchendarvie Academy. We also have plans for Ardrossan Academy and Montgomerie Park in Irvine. I am immensely proud of the investment we are making in our schools which will ensure that our pupils in North Ayrshire receive education in the best facilities possible.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD, 30 September

I was pleased to chair a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board on 30 September. Partners received updates on the following:

- The Role of the Third Sector Interface – presentation from The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT)
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's UFAS Consultation
- Local Employability Partnership
- Partner Discussion and Sharing on Key Developments and Opportunities

Following these updates two workshops were delivered, the first on how partners can deliver on locality priorities and the second on how partners can develop the Locality Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) from 2022.

My thanks to the Community Planning Team and of course to the Partners for delivering updates on behalf of their organisations.

HOUSING SITE VISITS, 30 September

Together with the Head of Housing at North Ayrshire Council, Yvonne Baulk, I visited some of the sites where we have exciting plans to deliver more housing for our communities in North Ayrshire. These included Flatt Road and St Colms in Largs, Caley Court in Stevenston and St Michael's Wynd.



I have said many times before that our Strategic Housing Investment Plan is one of the most ambitious plans seen in years and I am proud that this Administration is delivering much needed, energy efficient homes for the people of North Ayrshire.

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK, 4-10 October

Food Larder Visits

In the run up to Challenge Poverty Week, the national campaign organised by the Poverty Alliance which aims to highlight what is being done to tackle poverty, together with Councillor Robert Foster, Cabinet Member for Poverty, I visited ten of our food larders throughout North Ayrshire. These included:

- The “Wee Shoap” at the Woodwynd in Kilwinning
- Cranberry’s Community Larder at Cranberry Moss in Kilwinning
- Whitlees Quaint Larder in Ardrossan
- Tap End Larder in Stevenston
- Choices Community Shop in Fullarton, Irvine
- The Farm Basket at Towerlands Community Centre in Irvine
- Dalry Community Larder
- The Village Larder in West Kilbride
- Ardeer Food Larder in Stevenston
- South Ardrossan Food Larder

I am proud of the work our Council has done in working with community groups to establish these larders during the Covid pandemic. With another four larders to open in the coming months in Beith, Saltcoats, Springside and Kilbirnie and with food support for our islands being coordinated locally, including food contingency stores at Arran Outdoor Education Centre, our food network continues to go from strength to strength.

Publication of our Community Wealth Building Strategy Annual Report

I am also immensely proud of the work our Council has done in the past 24 months on our Community Wealth Building (CWB) journey. It is truly incredible when you read about all the great achievements we have made in the past year since we became the first CWB Local Authority in Scotland in May last year. I am grateful to all those involved but would like to say a special word of thanks to Julie McLachlan, our Senior Manager in the Economic team who has



been instrumental in our CWB journey from the start. Sadly, Julie will be leaving us in a few weeks, but I would like to wish her all the best for the future.

Ayrshire Integration Boards – Signing of CWB Anchor Charter

Also, as part of Challenge Poverty Week, it was announced that the three Ayrshire Integration Joint Boards (IJB) will be signing up to our Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter. The IJB which is the strategic commissioning body of the Health and Social Care Partnership, are responsible for developing and managing the delivery of community health and social care services across Ayrshire, therefore in a significant position to influence a considerable amount in our region. This in turn will help support and strengthen our local economy.

SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION CONFERENCE, 5 October

On 5 October I was delighted to speak at the Scottish Land Commission Conference on Community Wealth Building and talk about our journey here in Ayrshire as a whole. The focus was of course on the importance land and property can play in achieving the aims of Community Wealth Building and how it can enable diversity of land ownership. I also spoke about the community ownership of buildings and how community wealth funding can be used to build back better and greener.

REGENERATION VISITS, 6 October

On 6 October, together with officers from our Estates team, I was able to visit some of the areas throughout North Ayrshire that have benefitted from our 10-year Estate Based Regeneration Programme, a programme approved by my Cabinet in January 2019. The Estate Based Regeneration Plan looks to address pockets of low demand stock; antisocial behaviour; external appearance, parking provision; road and footpath condition; fencing; landscaping as well as general ground and maintenance issues,

This approach complements the Council's ambitious housing development programme via the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-2026 and was developed through a comprehensive map-based review of our estates, which identified a variety of potential improvements within our estates, including the need for demolition and redevelopment of low demand stock, external improvements to existing stock, additional parking provision, new fencing, new lighting and bin stores.

I was extremely impressed by the work that has already been carried out at Bourtreehill and Castlepark in Irvine and I am looking forward to seeing the completed works at Dirrans in Kilwinning which will also look to enhance local parking as well as provide new fencing and other work to improve the visual amenity of the area.



Great work by our teams and a huge benefit to our communities.

POLICY ADVISORY PANEL, 7 October

On 7 October I attended a meeting of the Policy Advisory Panel where the main item for discussion was the Streetscene Volunteering Strategy and “Adopt a Spot” initiative. North Ayrshire currently benefits from an impressive network of volunteers across our localities who give willingly of their time to provide valuable services for their communities. One of the most significant areas of volunteer activity is in support of the Council’s Streetscene service where many active volunteers are working to improve and enhance their local natural environment through activities such as litter picking, floral displays and environmental/sand dune management.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Joe Cullinane".

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader North Ayrshire Council