



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 13 June – 9 September
2022

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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GREENWOOD ACADEMY PRIZEGIVING, 15 June

I was delighted to be invited along to junior Prizegiving at Greenwood Academy on 15 June and to meet staff and pupils there. It was wonderful to see our pupils be acknowledged for their achievements over the past year, even more special considering how well they have adapted to changes in the delivery of classes due to the Covid pandemic.

I wish all our pupils a great academic year ahead.

COSLA CONVENTION, 17 June

On 17 June, I travelled through to Edinburgh to attend the COSLA Convention where a new President and Vice President were elected. Congratulations to Councillor Shona Morrison from Moray Council who was duly elected as President and to Councillor Steven Heddle from Orkney Islands Council who was elected to the position of Vice President.

COSLA LEADERS, 17 June

Later on 17 June, I attended a special meeting of COSLA Leaders in Edinburgh, to discuss a packed agenda including:

- the Children's Care and Justice Bill Consultation
- Supporting Communities – Poverty and Cost of Living

In North Ayrshire Council, we are committed to working to support our communities as much as possible to help them combat the escalating cost of living. North Ayrshire Cabinet approved the Child Action Poverty Plan in June and we have established our Child Poverty Action Board which will work with Community Partners to deliver outcomes for families. North Ayrshire Cabinet has also approved a package of measures worth £4m to support our residents with energy, food and transport costs.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING, 20 June

On 20 June, I joined a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee together with Council Leaders from South and East Ayrshire Council to discuss the benefits, implementation and financial plans arising from the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

Signed in November 2020 the Ayrshire Growth Deal (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 & Space; Economic Infrastructure; Energy, Circular Economy & Environment; Tourism; Digital; and Communities). Amongst other outputs, the Deal is projected to unlock private investment of at least £300 million and generate 7,000 jobs.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING EXPERT PANEL MEETING, 21 June

I had an introductory meeting with members of the Community Wealth Building (CWB) Expert Panel on 21 June. Chaired by Sarah Deas, from the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (Scotland), the discussion focused on CWB in North Ayrshire and regionally, following the £3m set aside from the Ayrshire Growth Deal for CWB activity.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 23 June

I chaired a meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board on 23 June. Partners received presentations on the following:

- Spatial Planning
- KA Leisure Update
- Community Engagement Centre of Excellence

This was followed by community partner discussions and sharing on key developments and opportunities within their respective organisations.

ARDROSSAN TASKFORCE MEETING, 28 June

I jointly chaired a meeting of the Ardrossan Task Force meeting together with the Scottish Government Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth on 28 June. Attendees were provided with an update from the Ardrossan Steering Group, a Vessel update and an update on the Troon Infrastructure Project.

CHILD POVERTY ACTION BOARD MEETING, 29 June

I chaired the first meeting of the Child Poverty Action Board on 29 June. The Board, comprising of members from NHS Ayrshire & Arran, The Ayrshire Community Trust, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Arran Community Voluntary Service as well as officers from North Ayrshire Council, will provide leadership in the development and delivery of the Tackling Child Poverty Strategy for North Ayrshire.

The Board will also oversee the implementation of the Child Poverty Action Plan to tackle the inequalities affecting the outcomes for children and families, with a clear focus on early intervention and prevention and a whole system approach.

My thanks to Doctor Audrey Sutton, Director of Education and Communities and, of course, to the partners involved in progressing this valuable work.

VISIT TO IRVINE LIBRARY, 29 June

I was delighted to visit Irvine Library on 29 June following the refurbishment of some of the spaces inside. It was great to meet with the team and hear more about the work and services they provide to our community.

FÈIS ARAINN FESTIVAL, 29 July

On 29 July, I accompanied Provost Anthea Dickson to the Fèis Arainn festival held in Arran High School. It was a wonderful day out and enjoyable to see the array of arts, crafts and Gaelic traditions being celebrated.

NHS HEALTHCARE GOVERNANCE MEETING, 1 August

I attended my first NHS Ayrshire and Arran Healthcare Governance meeting on 1 August as a non-Executive Director of NHS Ayrshire and Arran Health Board. I look forward to working with colleagues there in the coming months to deliver on health outcomes for the people of North Ayrshire.

CABINET SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT VISIT, 4 August

On 4 August, the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, Shona Robison visited North Ayrshire, to see round some of our new affordable, energy-efficient homes recently built at the Flatt Road development in Largs and St Beya Gardens in Millport.

The Council has committed to building 1,625 new homes throughout North Ayrshire by 2027. Flatt Road is the single largest council house building development to be undertaken in North Ayrshire for many years. The £20.2 million project supported by a Scottish Government grant of £7.3 million has enabled 123 new homes to be built which have biomass district heating systems, heat interface units, smart dual zone temperature controls, solar photovoltaic panel installations, water saving taps, low energy LED lighting and mechanical ventilation systems.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 5 August

I attended a meeting of COSLA Leader on 5 August to mainly discuss a report on Ukrainian Displaced People. North Ayrshire Council continues to work with the UK and Scottish Governments to provide the best possible support to displaced people from Ukraine who wish to seek safety in Scotland.

I am grateful to our teams in North Ayrshire Council for the work and support they have shown to our Ukrainian friends.

MINISTER IVAN McKEE VISIT TO NORTH AYRSHIRE, 9 August

On 9 August, I was pleased to attend a meeting with the Scottish Government Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise, Ivan McKee together with the Leaders from South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils. The meeting was principally to hold discussions on continued Scottish Government economic support for Ayrshire and to hear about some of our latest projects involving support offered to local businesses.

MARYMASS FESTIVAL OPENING CEREMONY, 11 August

I attended the Marymass Festival Opening Ceremony on 11 August at the Townhouse in Irvine. After two years of the pandemic, it was great to see everyone enthusiastic about this year's festival.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 12 August

On 12 August, I attended another meeting of COSLA Leaders to discuss pay claims and ongoing discussions with Trade Unions.

NHS BOARD MEETING, 15 August

On 15 August, I attended an NHS Board meeting at Ailsa Hospital in Ayr. The meeting covered mainly Corporate Governance issues arising from various committees and there was also a presentation on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services delivered by Caroline Cameron, Director of the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

ANDREW O'HAGAN BOOK READING, 17 August

I was delighted to go along to the Andrew O'Hagan book reading at the Irvine Burns Club on 17 August. The book "Mayflies" is partly based in Irvine and will be made into a film in the coming months.

VISIT TO HUNTERSTON, 18 August

On 18 August, together with North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive, Craig Hatton and North Ayrshire Council Executive Director, Karen Yeomans, I visited Hunterston to meet with Directors from the XLCC Company, who are proposing to develop a cable manufacturing facility located on the former coal handing site at Hunterston Port. XLCC are committed to working with local suppliers wherever possible and are actively engaged with the NAC Business team to discuss this. Furthermore, several training opportunities for local people have been developed. XLCC is working with Ayrshire College to ensure the specialist jointing skills they require are developed locally and in time for the project. The first cohort of students will take up courses in the coming academic year, 2022/23, and will also have a three-month placement in a German facility to learn about cable manufacturing.

IRVINE LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP MEETING, 18 August

I attended a meeting of the Irvine Locality Partnership on 18 August to review applications by Community Representatives. I am pleased to say there was huge interest by a wide and varied cross section of our community.

MEETING WITH STAGECOACH, 19 August

On 19 August, I attended a meeting with Stagecoach (West Coast) Chief Executive, Fiona Doherty together with North Ayrshire Council senior officers and fellow Cabinet member, Councillor Tony Gurney. The meeting was to discuss reduced Stagecoach bus services in North Ayrshire but in particular the Garnock Valley. Both Stagecoach and North Ayrshire Council, will look to work together to see what can be done to keep as many of our bus routes in operation and provide much-needed transport routes for our communities.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 19 August

Later on 19 August, I attended a COSLA Special Leaders meeting to discuss ongoing pay claims for Local Government workers.

MARYMASS SATURDAY, 20 August

I was delighted to go along to Marymass Saturday on 20 August and see the crowning ceremony and take part in the parade up to Irvine Moor.

MARYMASS CHURCH SERVICES, 21 August

On 21 August, I attended two separate Church services, one at the Old Parish Church in the morning and an evening service at St Mary's.

MEETING WITH UKRAINIAN REFUGEES, 25 August

On 25 August, I was very humbled to go along and meet with some of our Ukrainian refugees at the Irvine Harbour Arts Centre. Together with North Ayrshire Council Cabinet Member, Councillor Scott Davidson, we were able to hear some of the struggles that our Ukrainian friends have had to endure these past months, leaving their war-torn homeland.

Scotland has become home to thousands of Ukrainians and North Ayrshire has welcomed more than 200 men, women and children with more families expected in the coming months. North Ayrshire Council's Refugee Task Force has been coordinating the local effort to provide support and to ensure they receive the help needed to feel welcome in their new homes.

I would like to give a special thanks to Yvonne Baulk, Head of Housing at North Ayrshire Council and to staff, for co-ordinating this work and for providing the invaluable support much needed by our Ukrainian friends.

COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS, 26 August

I attended another meeting of COSLA Leaders on 26 August for ongoing pay claim discussions.

“NO WRONG DOOR” WORKSHOP, 30 August

On 30 August I attended a workshop held at Redburn Community Centre, on the ‘No Wrong Door’ theme, the first of the themes to be investigated by the Child Poverty Board. It was attended by representatives from a range of NAC and Health Board services as well as the third sector. Discussions focused on how, when and where people in need can access our services and how we work together to provide support and ensure that there is ‘No Wrong Door’.

My thanks again to all those who took part and to their valuable contribution to the session.

MINISTERIAL VISIT, TOM ARTHUR, 31 August

On 31 August, I was delighted to welcome Scottish Government Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth, Tom Arthur MSP, to Ayrshire and to showcase some of the excellent projects which are being supported and delivered by Community Wealth Building. I was also pleased to welcome East Ayrshire Council Leader, Councillor Douglas Reid and Councillor Kenny Bell from South Ayrshire Council.

Ayrshire is leading the way with CWB in Scotland as demonstrated by the Ayrshire-wide CWB Commission which formed in 2020 and is a partnership of all three Ayrshire Councils, Community Planning Partners and wider regional partners – all of whom are committed to driving forward this new approach by investing and spending locally to support businesses and communities to prosper.

The visit began at the Lochshore Park on the outskirts of Kilbirnie which is an excellent example of CWB in action and a key project within North Ayrshire's Community Wealth Building Strategy.

Lochshore is a long-term and strategic regeneration project which seeks to bring 64.73 hectares of vacant and derelict land back into productive use. It was the site of a former steelworks and was purchased from Scottish Enterprise in 2021.

Our collaborative approach to CWB in Ayrshire is further driven by the £3m Community Wealth Building Fund as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal, a project which seeks to enhance wealth, ensure fair and meaningful employment and create successful places across Ayrshire. The three-year programme commenced in spring 2021

Following on from Lochshore, the Minister, was taken on a tour of various businesses and projects across Ayrshire which have been supported by the Ayrshire Growth Deal CWB fund – including Ayrshire Blinds, a family run business in Irvine.

IRVINE LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP, 31 August

I attended an informal meeting of the Irvine Locality Partnership on 31 August at the Redburn Community Centre. The evening provided the opportunity for Locality Partnership Members to meet our newly elected Community Representatives.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 1 September

I chaired a meeting of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board on 1 September. Partners received updates on Community Wealth Building, the Local Employability Partnership, Caring for Ayrshire (NHS presentation), our Child Poverty Strategy and an update on our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Workshop. Again, I would like to thank Community Partners for their input and continued support.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD, 1 September

On 1 September, the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board met again to receive updates on the Ayrshire regional economic strategy and latest developments. Also discussed, was the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

To access UKSPF funding, lead local authorities are being asked to complete an Investment Plan, setting out how they intend to use and deliver the funding. These plans should align with relevant national priorities and policies including the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and the Scottish National Transport Strategy 2 (SNTP2). Investments under this Fund should also demonstrate the extent of contribution to net zero and nature recovery objectives. The Investment Plans will form a contract with the UK Government which will allow SPF funding to be drawn down.

BOURTREEHILL AND BROOMLANDS WALKABOUT, 6 September

On 6 September, together with other Elected Members for Irvine, I attended a walkabout around the Bourtreehill and Broomlands estates, with North Ayrshire council officers to see first hand issues of concern for residents in the area.

VISIT TO FAIRER FOOD NETWORK, 7 September

On 7 September, together with the Cabinet member for Communities and Islands, Councillor Alan Hill, I had a series of informative visits to some of our Fairer Food network larders. These included:

- "Choice Community Matters", Fullarton, Irvine
- "The Wee Shoap", Woodwynd Community Centre, Kilwinning
- "The Village Larder", West Kilbride Community Centre, West Kilbride

The North Ayrshire Fairer Food offers local people access to an affordable, dignified shopping experience, designed to boost their budget and top up their weekly shop. The first locations in the network opened in November 2020, and as of August 2022 there are 13 locations.

All of the Fairer Food locations operate autonomously in partnership with North Ayrshire Council's Connected Communities team. Membership of the network has grown significantly since October 2021, when more households began to feel the impact of rising costs. My thanks to Laura Taylor, from North Ayrshire Council's Connected Communities team and of course, to all the volunteers who give their time to work in our Fairer Food network for spending the day with myself and Councillor Hill.

IRVINE ROYAL ACADEMY SENIOR PRIZE GIVING, 7 September

I was delighted to attend Irvine Royal Academy senior prize giving on 7 September and to take part in the evening's celebrations. It was great to see the pupils being acknowledged for all their achievements during the past year, especially considering the setbacks they have had to overcome during the covid pandemic. I wish all the pupils the best of luck in the year ahead.

SPECIAL AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 8 September

On the morning of 8 September, I attended a special meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee. Attendees were given updates on digital projects from the Ayrshire Growth Deal. It was also agreed by attendees, that the new Chair of the Committee up until September 2023, would be Councillor Douglas Reid, Leader of East Ayrshire Council.

FINALLY, 8 September

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden passing of her Majesty, the Queen, on the evening of 8 September. It was all more poignant, given the Queen died peacefully at her beloved home in the Balmoral estate, here in Scotland, a place she held dear to her heart.

I would like to convey my deepest condolences to the Royal Family on behalf of the Elected Members of North Ayrshire Council.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marie Burns". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Councillor Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council