



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 8 February – 21 March
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.



LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 8 February – 21 March 2021

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING STAFF ROUNDTABLE EVENT, 9 February

On 9 February I attended the first Community Wealth Building (CWB) Staff Roundtable Event, the purpose of which was to welcome and introduce new CWB staff to senior Council officers and to give an overview of their roles in relation to CWB.

The session also enabled attendees to hear about our CWB journey so far including highlights such as the launch of our CWB strategy last May, the signing of our Anchor charter in October 2020 and the inclusion of £3 million in our Ayrshire Growth Deal for CWB-related projects. This will involve taking a regional approach to develop place-based activities focused on procurement, fair work employment, assets and ownership.

Looking forward, we aim to invest £8.8 million in economic recovery and renewal strategies which will look to:

- Maximise a renewable energy generation
- Creation of £0.5m Green Jobs Fund
- Tackling vacant and derelict land
- Tree planting programme for carbon absorption

More of these events will be held in due course enabling all North Ayrshire Council staff to learn more and engage in our CWB work where possible.

COSLA LEADERS, 10 February

I attended COSLA Leaders on 10 February where attendees received an update on the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (IRASC) final report which was published on the 3 February. This report provides an initial analysis of the IRASC findings for consideration by COSLA Leaders in advance of a scheduled Scottish Parliamentary debate in the week commencing 15th February.

The aim of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care is to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland, primarily in terms of the outcomes achieved by and with people who use services, their carers and their families, and the experience of people who work in adult social care.



A further paper will be provided for the COSLA Leaders meeting at the end of February 2021.

ARDROSSAN TASK FORCE, 17 February

On 17 February I attended a further meeting of the Ardrossan Task Force, chaired by Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands. I am not alone in my frustration at the continuing saga of the delays to the Ardrossan Harbour project and the endless problems related to the Glen Sannox boat.

The project is effectively ready to go, it is therefore vital that all parties get the legal agreements finalised and that Minister's sign them off before the 26th March. I reiterated to the Taskforce that it would be wholly unacceptable to let this saga drift further. As North Ayrshire Council Leader I will stand up for the interests of our local communities and that is what I will continue to do over the coming weeks.

Once the project does proceed to construction, the service will be temporarily relocated to Troon. This was a position that we have argued against since the Ardrossan-Troon battle was won in early 2017. We always argued that the default position should be to operate the ferry service from the Irish Berth at Ardrossan during the construction period, an argument that had been agreed by all members of the taskforce. However, like so many things, as the reality comes closer, the impact becomes clearer.

We now know that to operate the ferry service from Ardrossan during the construction works could see a 50% increase in ferry cancellations. It's not a scenario that is acceptable to the Arran ferry committee, nor to the wider island community demonstrated by 80% of respondents to a recent survey by the ferry committee supporting a temporary move to Troon during the construction phase. However disappointing this may be, it remains the priority to ensure a reliable, consistent ferry service for Arran during the project.

Whatever decision was made it would have had an impact on businesses and people on Arran and the mainland. We have been undertaking some economic analysis of the impact and we will be seeking support from the Scottish Government and its agencies to mitigate any negative impact from the short-term move on local businesses, jobs and those who commute from our mainland communities to the island for employment.

SCOTLAND EXCEL EXECUTIVE SUB COMMITTEE , 19 February

I attended the Scotland Excel Executive Sub Committee on 19 February. Attendees discussed a range of subjects including several requests from Housing Associations for Associate



Membership and there was an update on the Contract Delivery Plan for the current financial year. This will see 13 existing contracts renewed and a further eight new contracts awarded.

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE, 22 February

On 22 February, I chaired a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee and was delighted to oversee the approval of the first two Ayrshire Growth Deal projects.

Whilst Growth Deals have tended to focus on big capital projects in Ayrshire, we were determined to ensure that ours had a focus on people. It's not just about big infrastructure investment but also an investment in our region's people. That's why, alongside the capital projects, our Ayrshire Growth Deal includes revenue-funded projects that focus on skills and helping local people into employment. Two such projects were approved last week and will start being delivered very soon.

Working for a Healthy Economy is a £5million project which recognises that work and health are inexplicitly linked and aims to remove any health-related barriers to a thriving, inclusive Ayrshire economy. Working can improve health but we know that poor health can be a barrier to people accessing employment opportunities. The Working for a Healthy Economy will be an occupational therapy service that will support unemployed residents to overcome health barriers to entering the labour market, help those in employment but experiencing health problems to retain that employment and to support local businesses to improve retention of their workforce. Over the five years of the project, the aim is to support almost 10,000 Ayrshire citizens.

The second project that was signed off is of great importance to me – Community Wealth Building. North Ayrshire Council has been leading the way on Community Wealth Building in Scotland and a £3million fund was a late addition to the Ayrshire Growth Deal as a result. The £3million fund will allow Community Wealth Building to be rolled out across Ayrshire and help ensure that the benefits of the full £251million Growth Deal are felt by communities across our region. The Growth Deal project will enable us to get more boots on the ground, bringing additional resources on top of the Community Wealth Building team that we have already recruited at North Ayrshire Council, and allow us to build momentum on this exciting agenda.

COSLA LEADERS, 26 February

COSLA Leaders met on 26 February to discuss another packed Agenda. Discussion items included the Scottish Government's Green Growth Accelerator, Councillors Code of Conduct, Local Government Data Platform, Children and Young Peoples' Mental Health Board, Local Government Finance Update and the Place Based Investment Fund.



The 2020-21 Programme for Government announced the creation of a Place Based Investment Programme with £275m of funding to support place-based working and regeneration, including community-led regeneration, town centre revitalisation, Community Wealth Building and 20-minute neighbourhoods. A proposal has been made to distribute £23m per annum in funding to Local Government from this programme. The intention is that this fund would contain high-level criteria similar to the Town Centre Fund but also covering place and 20 minute neighbourhoods, recognising the diversity of Scotland's rural and urban places.

North Ayrshire Council is well-positioned in its strategic approach to place-making with a coordinated approach through its decentralized, democratic structures, Locality Partnerships, working to locally identified priorities and action plans. Also, future delivery under this programme will be informed by our forthcoming Regeneration Delivery Plan and of course, Place making is well embedded in our Local Development Plan (LDP) to deliver quality places.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING EXPERT PANEL, 2 March

On 2 March the Community Wealth Building Expert Panel met to hear updates on our progress with our Community Wealth Building strategy and more specifically, to receive a presentation on North Ayrshire Council's Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy 2021-23.

The Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) has been developed to support the delivery of the Council's priorities and continue to work towards a sustainable environment. The Panel discussed and shared their views on the interconnected opportunities and challenges of tackling climate change and economic development. There was also a useful insight into Panel members thoughts on our Green Economy workstream including our suggested priority actions which will ensure we support and enhance the five pillars of Community Wealth Building through delivery.

My thanks to Yvonne Baulk (Head of Physical Environment at North Ayrshire Council) and her team of officers for their presentations and of course, to my fellow colleague and Cabinet Member for Green New Deal and Sustainability, Councillor Jim Montgomerie for attending the session and his input.

The Panel will meet again in June and as ever, my thanks to them for their contribution and advice on CWB delivery.



NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING, 4 March

On 4 March Elected Members of North Ayrshire Council met to agree our budget for 2021-22. It's a budget that prioritises jobs, not only protecting existing council jobs but creating new ones too, delivering, for the third consecutive year, an increase in council jobs. During an economic downturn, which we are experiencing as a result of Covid, when private sector jobs are lost, the importance of good, well-paid public-sector jobs take on an even greater economic value to local and regional economies. Keeping people in employment, enabling them to continue spending in support of the local economy, becomes fundamental and from day one of the budget process it was a priority for my Administration.

It's a budget that will reduce the cost of the school day, with £500,000 of investment to reduce food, uniform and digital costs for families.

It is a budget that invests in our areas core infrastructure, with an additional £7million of investment in roads, active travel, council buildings and to assist with the transition of the council's vehicle fleet to electric and low emission vehicles.

It is a budget that continues to invest in our area's future, with an extra £1.4million going in to top up the Investment Fund that we created last year. The £8.8million we placed in the Investment Fund last year has been pivotal in supporting our economic recovery and renewal approach and has already invested in our Green Jobs Fund, the tree planting programme and the council owned solar farm at Nethermain, Kilwinning. The additional £1.4million will help with the development of further council-owned solar and wind power projects.

The capital programme has been increased to £373million of investment over the next decade. It includes over £100million to improve our school estate including the new Ardrossan Campus, new Moorpark Primary School, the new ASN school - Lockhart Campus in Stevenston - the planned new Primary and Early Years Centre at Montgomerie Park and includes an extra £6.25million in school ICT infrastructure.

The Roads investment programme has been increased to £38million, an additional £15.6million from last year's capital programme. A further £6million will be invested in Active Travel projects, with investment in walking and cycling routes.

There will also be £10.5million invested in street lighting, £3.2m for new cemeteries, £3million for a new seawall at Largs promenade and £26.5million on the Millport Flood Defence Scheme.

The capital programme also includes £68million of investment that will support the £250million Ayrshire Growth Deal. This investment comes off the back of the UK Government, previously,



announcing that their investment in the Ayrshire Growth Deal will be compressed into a 10-year period rather than their original intention to stagger it over 15 years. This was something that the three Ayrshire Councils pressed the UK Government on and means that the full Growth Deal investment programme is now aligned over a 10-year period.

Whilst we carry many Covid-related risks into the next financial year, this was a budget that will help North Ayrshire recover, renew and reform from the pandemic. It is a budget that will deliver for local people and one we are proud of in these most challenging of times.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 11 March

On 11 March I chaired a meeting of Community Planning Partners where attendees received presentations and updates on the following:

- Draft Local Police Plan
- Community Justice Ayrshire
- Cost of the School Day
- Children's Services Planning
- Community Food System
- Step Change for North Ayrshire CPP
- Multi Agency Locality Working
- Locality hubs, centres and libraries consultation

I am delighted with the work we are progressing as part of our community food system strategy ensuring that all North Ayrshire residents have access to good food provisions with dignity. By using the Community Wealth Building principles we are able to use local businesses and third sector organisations to provide low cost or free food to local people who need it. It is hoped that each of the localities will eventually have one of the following available for them to access:

- Food Co-op
- Community Larder/Pantry
- Community Shop
- Box Scheme
- Community Fridge

I know that our first Pantry opened at Whitlees Community Centre in Ardrossan just before Christmas and I am delighted to see another one open on 9 March at Cranberry Moss in Kilwinning. Both projects are an example of community work at its finest. My thanks to all those involved in setting these up and for their continued work and dedication to helping our North Ayrshire communities.



Finally, I would like to thank Barbara Hastings from The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) and Kenneth Hankinson from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service who will be retiring soon. Both of them have been involved with North Ayrshire CPP for a number of years and have been great supporters of our work. My best wishes to both of them for the future.

SPECIAL COSLA LEADERS, 12 March

I attended a Special COSLA Leaders meeting on 12 March where discussion focused primarily on the UK and Scottish Budgets.

Following the UK government budget announcement, further consequentials of £1.2 billion were identified. The majority of these have been applied to extend the proposed Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Non-domestic rates (NDR) relief from the three months included in the Scottish budget to a full 12 month relief. We await final details of the eligibility and application process for the additional relief.

In addition, investment programmes to be made available across the UK on a bid basis were announced including: Community Renewal Fund of £220million; Levelling Up Fund of £4.8billion over 4 years and a Community Ownership Fund of £150 million. Again, we are awaiting full details and these will be discussed at a future meeting of COSLA Leaders.

NORTH AYRSHIRE FOOD FORUM, 18 March

I attended a meeting of the North Ayrshire Food Forum on 18 March. I have already mentioned some of the outstanding work we are doing throughout North Ayrshire as part of our food strategy and this was outlined again at this meeting. There was also an update from the North Ayrshire Rangers about the work being done in our community garden.

SCOTLAND EXCEL EXECUTIVE SUB COMMITTEE , 19 March

I attended another meeting of the Scotland Excel Executive Sub Committee on 19 March. Attendees received an update on the revenue budget and discussed several requests for Associate Membership, one from a Housing Association and another from the University of Glasgow. Attendees also received an update from the Scotland Excel Chief Executive on contracts within the care portfolio and on the potential impact of the recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care. The Fostering and Continuing Care framework renewal is being finalised for publication, having been postponed due to Covid19. It is anticipated that the outcome of the process will be presented at the June Executive Sub Committee for approval.

LEADER'S REPORT



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

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader North Ayrshire Council