



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 18 October – 28  
November 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 GARNOCK DAM SITE, 21 October***

On 21 October I had the opportunity to visit the Upper Garnock Flood Protection Scheme. The £18million project involves work at four sites across the Garnock Valley and I visited Area 1 – the upper storage area in Kilbirnie. This section of the work is the biggest part of the project. It involves the construction of the flood storage dam which will temporarily reduce river flow during periods of high rainfall, to reduce flood risk to properties downstream.

So far, a new culvert has been constructed and it was fascinating hearing the team talk me through how it will operate, including how it will allow the salmon to continue travelling along the Garnock unharmed.

The land around the culvert has been built up by around 12 metres, making the scale of the project massive. Currently the culvert simply looks like a concrete structure surrounded by a mound made of sand and stone but by the time the project is complete the area will be landscaped leaving a grassy hill with the concrete just peering out.

We know that the effects of climate change are already being felt by every part of the world and that makes flooding events more likely. Flooding can have a devastating impact on homes and local businesses and this scheme will offer residents and businesses more security going forward.

The learning from this scheme is very important because once complete the Council will almost seamlessly move onto the next flood defence scheme on Cumbrae. Beyond that, we are asking the Scottish Government for funding to develop more schemes including one at the River Irvine and hopefully we will find out the outcome of that soon.

## ***VISIT TO TRAINING STATION AND FORMAL LAUNCH, 25 October***

On 25 October I was delighted to visit the Training Station at Saltcoats Train Station. This has been a fantastic community-led project by the Shibumi Karate Club developed because of the vision of the club's John Deans. John, and the team at Shibumi, have taken a dilapidated part of Saltcoats Train Station and transformed it into a first-class training facility for the Club and the community.

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I was proud to support the project with £50,000 of funding from our Community Investment Fund (CIF). This helped the Club in securing almost £500,000 of funding from other sources, which was a key objective of our vision for the Community Investment Fund back in 2017. It is great to see that with every £1 invested from the CIF so far £2.80 of external funding is being secured for North Ayrshire groups.

I remember visiting the building when we initially awarded the karate club the CIF funding and there were literally buckets on the floor collecting the water pouring in from the ceiling. Visiting now, the transformation is unbelievable.

The Training Station is a great example of what a Community Wealth Building Council is about. The Council enabling people like John, and groups like Shibumi, to realise their dreams by providing support and funding, helping them shift the ownership and use of local assets towards the community and building wealth that is rooted in the community for the community.

### ***LEVELLING UP BID ANNOUNCEMENT, 27 October***

On 27 October, I received a phone call from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the UK Government Scottish Office, Iain Stewart MP, and was delighted to be informed that North Ayrshire Council had been successful in its bid to the Levelling Up fund to upgrade the B714. The upgrade of the B714 will improve our connectivity with the rest of Scotland, particularly to Glasgow, and provide a better gateway to key economic sites such as Ardrossan Harbour, Hunterston and i3. In addition, the upgrade will also resolve concerns around congestion.

The successful Levelling Up bid will allow us to move onto the next stages of the project which will include the design phase. From the outset, I have been clear that the project needs to include active travel infrastructure. In the past, transport authorities have built new roads without including any active travel infrastructure. That is not good enough. With the B714 we are not building a new road, we are upgrading an existing road, but we will include safe cycling lanes along the whole route. We need to make it easier for people to choose to leave the car and that means providing the infrastructure that allows them to do so.

### ***MEETING WITH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT DRUGS MINISTER, 28 October***

On 28 October, together with my Cabinet member for Health and Social Care Partnership, Robert Foster, North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive Craig Hatton and North Ayrshire Council Executive Director for the Health and Social Care Partnership, Caroline Cameron, I attended a meeting with the Scottish Drugs Minister, Angela Constance MSP and Phoenix



Futures. The meeting was to further discuss proposals by the Scottish Government and Phoenix Futures to open a National Specialist Family Rehabilitation facility in Saltcoats. At the meeting I reinforced the importance of engagement with local communities and stakeholders, the important role of our Community Wealth Building principles and ambitions in developing and operating the centre, and the importance of any new service complementing our already established local services.

Further detailed discussions are planned to take place and information will be shared with communities and stakeholders as these plans progress.

### ***COSLA LEADERS, 29 October***

On 29 October I attended COSLA Leaders to discuss a packed agenda including some of the following items:

- Revised COSLA Constitution
- COP26 Update
- COSLA Response to the National Care Services Consultation
- Local Government Finance Update
- UK/Scottish Government Fiscal Framework Review

COSLA has been working with Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Government, the UK Government and local government partners from the rest of the UK, Europe and worldwide to build a partnership that had a strong presence at the COP26 summit. There were opportunities to actively participate and learn about climate actions. In preparation for COP26 North Ayrshire Council is progressing with raising COP26 and climate change awareness in North Ayrshire. The Energy and Sustainability team are liaising with Corporate Communications to provide content to the corporate communication plan for COP26, including events, surveys and information displays. The programme is linked to the seven themes of our third Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy: 'Affordable Warmth', 'Green Economy', 'Transport and Travel', 'Natural Environment', 'Sustainable Operations', 'Carbon Absorption', and 'Climate Change Adaptation'; and five COP26 campaign themes: 'Clean Energy', 'Clean Transport', 'Nature-based solutions (actions that protect, manage and restore ecosystems)', 'Adaptation and resilience'; and 'Climate Finance'

### ***JOINT YOUTH CABINET, 2 November***

On 2 November, together with my Cabinet members, we held another successful Joint Youth Cabinets with representation from various schools throughout North Ayrshire and young people from our North Ayrshire Youth Services. More than 140 people took part in topical discussions covering subjects such as cost of the school day, alcohol and drugs education,



positive working relationships with Police and Fire Scotland. Of course, there was also much discussion about Climate Change. I am grateful to all the young people who took part and my Cabinet are always interested in hearing their views and issues that are important to them.

### ***HOUSING SITE VISITS, 3 November***

It was great to visit more housing development sites which will deliver state of the art and environmentally-friendly social housing for the communities of North Ayrshire. The sites at Irvine Harbourside and Towerlands in Irvine will see more than 120 homes built. I have said on numerous occasions in the past, that the investment we are putting into our Housing portfolio is the biggest in decades which will benefit many in our communities. This includes sheltered housing and adapted housing to cater for those with disabilities while at the same time maintaining environmentally friendly and cost-effective measures.

My thanks to Yvonne Bauk, Head of Physical Environment and Executive Director for PLACE, Russell McCutcheon for accompanying me on the visits.

### ***VISIT TO LOCAL BUSINESSES, 10, 15 and 22 November***

I am immensely proud of what we have achieved being the first Community Wealth Building in Scotland therefore, it was great to get the opportunity to visit some of the local businesses who are at the heart of our CWB journey. James Frew, Core Timber Systems and Ayrshire Blinds all represent the best of the Ayrshire economy. All local businesses that are committed to our region, bringing investment and jobs to the local area. Each are being supported by the Council's excellent Business Team, and they offer real examples of what Community Wealth Building looks like on the ground - local businesses supporting local jobs

It was great to have the opportunity to go along with our Executive Director for PLACE, Russell McCutcheon and physically meet with the companies to hear what it has been like for them the past 18 months during Covid, how they have adapted and their aspirations for the future.

Also, my thanks to our fantastic Business Team for the help and support they have provided to all our businesses here in North Ayrshire.

### ***COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING EXPERT PANEL MEETING, 12 November***

I attended a meeting of our Community Wealth Building Expert Panel on 12 November to discuss primarily the work around our Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter which was launched in October 2020 during Challenge Poverty Week. The purpose of the Charter is to encourage Ayrshire Anchor Institutions to support the principles of CWB by



committing to several pledges aligned to the five pillars of CWB and a sixth “pillar” of Climate Action. In 2020, seven Anchors signed up to the Charter: North, South and East Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise and The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT). Most recently during Challenge Poverty Week 2021, the Integration Joint Boards of East, South and North Ayrshire Councils agreed to sign the Anchor Charter

Earlier in October 2021, marking one year since the launch of the Charter, all Anchor Charter signatories completed a template outlining progress against the Anchor Charter pledges. Although Police Scotland have not yet signed the Charter, officers have undertaken a partial progress update against the pledges.

It was agreed the Charter progress templates would be analysed further to extract key areas for collaboration and engagement. Progress on the Charter pledges will be presented to the CWB Commission at its next meeting on 10 December 2021.

### ***SCOTLAND EXCEL SUB COMMITTEE, 19 November***

On 19 November I attended a meeting of the Scotland Excel Sub Committee to discuss the following:

- Corporate Services (Including Digital)
- Supply Teacher Booking system (SEEMIS)
- Technology Enabled Care Framework –
- Other ICT development activity
- Corporate Developments
- Care Services
- Children's Services
- Construction Transport and Environment
- Contract Delivery Plan Update
- Supply Chain Disruption

It is worth noting some of the concerns around Supply Chain disruption due to the following:

- Economic growth accelerating as covid restrictions ease.
- Increase demand and shortages of construction materials, packaging, ship containers and food
- Energy and fuel rapid inflation – in last 12 months crude oil up 50%, packaging 70%, overall inflation 2.1% to 2.5%. Consensus is it will continue to rise.
- Shortage of material key driver to slowing recovery
- Second fastest inflation rate in 25 years (goods-based frameworks, building and timber materials greatest degree of disruption).



However, working groups with suppliers have now been set up to mitigate any potential risks.

### ***COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING EVENTS, 19, 20 & 23 November***

I was delighted to take part in three separate events about Community Wealth Building and Participatory Budgeting. These were important events where I was able to highlight the importance of community power and the part it has to play in CWB. The three events were:

- Centre for Local Economic Strategies Community Wealth Building Summit on 19 November
- Co-operative Party Local Government conference on 20 November
- PB Works and Development NI webinar on 23 November

### ***COSLA LEADERS, 26 November***

On 26 November I attended COSLA Leaders to discuss a packed agenda including some of the following items:

- Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- Draft National Planning Framework
- Local Government Finance Update
- Employability Funding
- Expansion of Universal Free School Meals
- Education Scotland and Scottish Qualifications Authority: Consultation
- 20% Car Km Reduction by 2030 Joint
- COSLA-Scottish Government Route map
- Support for Destitute People with No Recourse to Public Funds
- National Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care

### ***COSLA CONVENTION, 26 November***

Following on from COSLA Leaders, I attended the COSLA Convention to receive updates on the following:

- COSLA's Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 March 2021
- COSLA Constitution Update
- COP 26
- Councillor Safety
- Incorporation of the European Charter of Local Self Government

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During COP26 COSLA ran a social media campaign #LocalGovScot to highlight the work of Scottish local authorities in leading the just transition to net zero. The campaign aimed to demonstrate the extensive efforts of local authorities in tackling climate change across a wide range of service areas and promote the importance of Local Government in the context of COP26 talks. The campaign involved video statements from all COSLA spokespersons which were played during the COSLA event at the Lighthouse. I am pleased to say that North Ayrshire Council was included in the social media campaign and are aiming to be net zero by 2030.

### **FINALLY**

It has been another difficult year for many of us; starting the year in lockdown, students doing much of their schoolwork from home and many businesses struggling to stay afloat.

I believe that despite difficulties and changes, North Ayrshire Council has adapted well to continue to deliver much-needed services and to continue to help those in our communities.

Every year I thank Council staff for their hard work and dedication but again this year they have gone over and beyond. On behalf of all the Elected Members here in North Ayrshire, I would like to thank you all for continuing to deliver vital services and support to our communities under the most difficult circumstances. It has been truly incredible.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and hope that this year, unlike last, you will be able to spend it with family, friends and loved ones.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Joe Cullinane". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Councillor Joe Cullinane  
**Leader North Ayrshire Council**