



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# LEADER'S REPORT

For the period covering: 17 March – 4 May 2025

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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## ***BROOMLANDS AND BOURTREEHILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (BABCA), 17 March***

On 17 March, I visited Towerlands Community Centre and met with members of Broomlands and Bourtreehill Community Association (BABCA).

BABCA received £12,777 Community Investment funding (CIF) in January 2024 for their community garden project and I look forward to seeing the community garden upon completion.

## ***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PLACE AND WELLBEING BOARD MEETING, 18 March***

On 18 March, I attended another meeting of the Scottish Government Place and Wellbeing Board. The Programme Board provides direction, oversight and a decision-making authority for the delivery of the Place and Wellbeing Programme as well as reporting to the Care and Wellbeing Portfolio Board.

Attendees received various updates including an Anchors Workforce Progress report, a Communications Strategy update and an update on the Population Health Framework. The Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and NHS Scotland are working together to harness the power of NHS Anchor institutions to create fair work opportunities to build prosperity in our communities. The Anchors Workforce Strategic Group is leading work to deliver the Anchor Workforce objective – “To empower NHS Boards to provide fair work opportunities to those at most risk of economic disadvantage to support the reduction of health inequalities.”

The Board will meet again on 17 June.

## ***SAVE ARDROSSAN HARBOUR COMMITTEE MEETING, 18 March***

Also on 18 March, together with North Ayrshire Council Chief Executive, Craig Hatton, I met with several members of the “Save Ardrossan Harbour Committee”. This followed a request by the Group’s secretary, Matthew McGowan to meet with them. The Group wanted to ensure

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that their views and concerns be conveyed through existing Ardrossan Task Force (ATF) members at the next ATF scheduled for April.

### ***NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE, 20 March***

On 20 March, I attended an NHS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting where attendees discussed various Internal and External Audit papers. The Committee also received a Counter Fraud Update report.

The Committee also reviewed and approved the ARC Workplan for the year ahead.

### ***NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN ENDOWMENT TRUSTEES MEETING, 25 March***

On 25 March, I attended a meeting of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Endowment Trustees. The Committee discussed and approved the Budget Proposals for 2025/26. Trustees also received various updated valuation reports as part of the Investment Portfolio.

### ***VISIT TO MARRESS HOUSE, 25 March***

Later on 25 March, I was delighted to be asked to take part in the official opening of the recently completed Early Years Centre at Marress House in Irvine. Together with North Ayrshire Council Depute Leader, Shaun Macaulay, Irvine South Councillor, Christina Larsen and North Ayrshire Council Director of Education, Sam Anson, I took part in a guided tour of the facility and had an opportunity to see first-hand the wonderful areas that the children enjoy and thrive in.

Marress House refurbishment work was completed in August 2024 and will also be home to the Council's Public CCTV and Concierge Service in a separate part of the building. It also has a training suite, which will be used to enhance the skillset of the Early Years workforce across the authority.

I would like to thank the Head of Centre, Deborah Gott and her team, for taking the time out to host us, but more importantly for the invaluable work they do daily to ensure the children learn and engage in activities that will help them develop into confident individuals, supporting educational attainment and enhanced social and emotional development.

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### ***COMMUNITY AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEER AWARDS, 27 March***

On 27 March, I attended a very emotional and poignant Community and Learning Development Awards ceremony held at the Ardrossan Civic Centre. The evening celebrated volunteers who are doing some incredible work in our communities. I had the honour of presenting the Shirley Morgan Award.

Shirley Morgan was a passionate and committed Community Worker who lived and worked in North Ayrshire all her life. She was active in making a difference and improving communities across North Ayrshire until her untimely death in 2022. Throughout her life she inspired and encouraged others to do same. The 'Shirely Morgan Award' has been created to commemorate and recognise that same passion and commitment from adults in our communities today.

I would like to thank all the volunteers in North Ayrshire who give up their time freely to help others and do so, with great passion and enthusiasm and of course, our Community, Learning and Development team here in North Ayrshire Council for all their continued work and support.

### ***COSLA MINI CONFERENCE AND CONVENTION, 28 March***

On 28 March, I attended COSLA Mini-Conference and Convention. At Convention, COSLA Leaders held useful discussion on a range of subjects including the following:

- COSLA Plan Annual Report
- Verity House Agreement
- General Power of Competence for Local Government – Consultation response
- Support for Ukraine
- Preparing for and responding to threats to community cohesion
- COSLA Budget 2025/26 and Membership subscription

One of the excellent and informative speakers at the Mini Conference was Katie Kelly, previously Deputy Chief Executive at East Ayrshire Council but who is now Chair of New Local, an independent think tank and network of councils with a mission to transform public services and unlock community power.

### ***NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN BOARD MEETING, 31 March***

On 31 March, I attended an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board meeting where attendees received updates on various Patient Safety Reports. The Board also received and discussed reports

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relating to Performance Governance, Healthcare Governance and Board Governance, including a report on the Climate Emergency and sustainability annual report for 2023-24. Board members also approved the NHS A&A Revenue Plan for 2025-26 and the Minutes from Integration Joint Board meetings held for East, South and North Ayrshire Councils in December 2024

### ***COSLA SPECIAL LEADERS' MEETING, 31 March***

Also on 31 March, I attended a special meeting of COSLA Leaders' following to discuss the National Care Service Advisory Board.

Work on the establishment of the National Care Service Advisory Board is underway on the basis that the Board can advise Ministers as well as Leaders, Health Board and Integration Authorities. There is disagreement on the scope of the Board, particularly regarding its relationship with children's services, justice social work services and homelessness services. Leaders previously agreed in February that a joint approach was required and that this should include agreement that the above services would not be overseen by the Board to avoid any unnecessary confusion and duplication of leadership.

### ***JOINT YOUTH CABINET, 1 April***

On 1 April, I was delighted to take part in the Joint Youth Cabinet held at Saltcoats Town Hall. Together with Cabinet members and senior officers from North Ayrshire Council, we were able to engage with young people from various localities in North Ayrshire, including the Youth Council Executive and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Joint Cabinet is a vital part of the Council's Youth Participation Strategy, it allows young people to learn more about how their local authority operates while, at the same time, share their views on a range of subjects. Discussions focused on:

- Equalities in Health
- Community Wealth Building
- UNCRC
- Positive Relationships
- Cyber Resilience

Thank you to all the young people who took part from a range of schools throughout North Ayrshire and a big thank you to our MSYPs, Adam Johnson, Rhyan Gorrie, Freya Fitzsimmons and Emma Burns for attending the meeting as Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

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### ***DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD CEREMONY, 2 April***

On 2 April, I was delighted to attend the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Awards ceremony held at St Matthew's Secondary school in Saltcoats. It was another wonderful evening with more young people having taken part this past year than in previous years. Currently we have nine secondary schools and six youth and community groups involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in North Ayrshire all of whom are involved in doing some fantastic activities and giving up their own free time to volunteer at various organisations.

It is wonderful to hear about the varied programme of activities that the young people undertake which build confidence, skills, resilience, physical fitness and prepare them for life and work as they enter the next chapter of their lives.

I would like to congratulate all the young people who took part in the DofE and of course, I would like to thank all the teachers, parents, guardians, carers and DofE staff who do an incredible job of supporting the young people at every stage. Congratulations to you all.

### ***OLDER PEOPLE'S CHAMPION NETWORK MEETING, 4 April***

On 4 April, in my role as Older People's Champion for North Ayrshire, I joined a meeting of the Older People's Champion Network organised by Age Scotland. As Leader of North Ayrshire Council and Older People's Champion, it is crucial that the voice of our elderly communities is heard at all levels of decision making within the Council. That is why North Ayrshire Council has in place its Older Peoples Voice Participation Strategy, made up the Older People's Voice Network, Executive Older People's Council and the Conference – is in place to help support older people.

### ***VISIT TO RADIO CITY ASSOCIATION, 11 April***

On 11 April, I visited the new community café set up by Radio City Association (RCA) in Kilbirnie. The recently completed café has been part of the Association's regeneration phase of the Knox Institute building.

RCA is a community organisation and a registered charity, with the overall objective of developing the social, environmental and economic prospects of the Garnock Valley via it's 'Electric Valley' Project. They describe their vision as to establish Radio City's Electric Valley to develop a vibrant community of partnership, growing opportunities for lifestyle change across health, learning and employability to enable inclusive economic growth and sustainability.

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The Electric Valley concept, has seven areas of focus, targets strategic investment funds to foster inclusive economic growth and address local inequalities in health, wealth, and education.

My thanks to the Association for inviting me along and for sharing some of their ideas for the future.

### ***ARDROSSAN TASK FORCE MEETING, 17 April***

On 17 April, I travelled to Arran to co-chair a meeting of the Ardrossan Task Force (ATF) together with the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP. The meeting was held at the Auchrannie and was well attended by various stakeholders. Negotiations are well underway and continue to progress between Peel Ports and the Scottish Government on the purchase of Ardrossan Harbour.

All parties agree on the need for the ferry to remain at Ardrossan and for the negotiations to be concluded as soon as possible.

### ***MEETING WITH ENABLE SCOTLAND, 22 April***

On 22 April, together with North Ayrshire Council's Director of Education, Sam Anson and North Ayrshire Council's Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership, Caroline Cameron, I attended a meeting in Cunninghame House with Jamie Cooke, Head of Policy at Enable Scotland, one of Scotland's largest social care charities.

The meeting was to share information about North Ayrshire Council's pioneering role in driving forward the Collaboration for Health Equity work. Jamie is familiar with some of the other pioneering work that North Ayrshire Council has been involved in including work around the Basic Income pilot and Community Wealth Building (CWB).

### ***NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING TEAM, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS EVENT FOR CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE, 23 April***

On 23 April, I went along to the Irvine Volunteer Rooms and visited the first ever Employment and Skills event for Care Experienced people which was hosted by North Ayrshire Council Corporate Parenting Team. The event had useful information for parents, carers, extended family members and Corporate Parents on a range of issues including:

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- Entitlements
- General rights
- Services and supports available throughout North Ayrshire to enhance employability and skills

The event will be included in The Promise's upcoming Halfway to 2030 highlights and I am delighted to hear that various organisations were represented at the event including Skills Development Scotland, Equal, Community ESOL Team, Locality Teams, Money Matters, Welfare Rights Officers, the Local Employability Partnership, Developing the Young Workforce, Modern Apprenticeships Team, Kando, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Active Schools, Ayrshire College, MCR Pathways and CEIS Ayrshire.

Thank you to everyone involved in organising this informative event.

### ***PAN AYRSHIRE MEETING WITH AYRSHIRE COLLEGE, 24 April***

On 24 April, together with Council Leaders from South and East Ayrshire Councils, I attended a meeting at Ayrshire College, Ayr Campus to discuss the Ayrshire Regional economy and the possibility of a reduction in funding by the Scottish Funding Council which could impact Ayrshire College and future delivery of courses.

It was agreed that this would be considered further by a future meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board and an approach agreed on how best to tackle this.

### ***AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 24 April***

Later on 24 April, I attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board where attendees were updated on the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Regional Economic Strategy including the draft implementation plan for 2025-26. Attendees were also provided with an update on the AGD Programme Risk Register and an update on AGD Governance. progress report on one of the projects from the AGD, the Ayrshire Innovation Park.

### ***COSLA LEADERS', 25 April***

On 25 April, I attended a meeting of COSLA Leaders to discuss a packed agenda including the following items:

- National Care Service/Social Care Reform
- National Social Work Agency
- Reduction in Class Contact Time



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- Presentation from Scotland Excel
- Scottish Social Work Partnership – Memorandum of Understanding
- Pay Claims
- Verity House Agreement
- Barriers to Elected Office – Councillor Safety and Civility in Public Life

Leaders were asked to agree to sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that has been drafted to support the development of the Scottish Social Work Partnership (SSWP). At a high level, the MoU is between Scottish Government (Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor), COSLA and Social Work Scotland and sets out the parameters of the partnership to enhance the Social Work profession through shared accountability and coordinated efforts. The partnership will focus on enhancing professional leadership, education, workforce planning, and policy implementation.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marie Burns".

Councillor Marie Burns  
Leader of North Ayrshire Council