



**North Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 22 June 2022

Responses to Supplementary Questions  
Submitted following the Meeting

Standing Order 14.4 provides that “If a Member does not have the opportunity to seek a supplementary question because no time remains, they can submit it in writing to the Chief Executive by 10am on the morning immediately following the meeting who will arrange for a written answer to be provided.”

Please find below a number of supplementary questions submitted in terms of Standing Order 14.4, together with responses:

### **Supplementary Question**

- (15) a supplementary question by Councillor McDonald to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Islands in the following terms:

“Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that in order to support communities to play their role in our drive to net-zero, this cannot be a one-off PB initiative and the Council should look to identify funding further Green PB Initiatives over the course of this term?”

### **Response**

“As stated in my response to the original question, research into potential delivery models and best practice examples is being undertaken in respect of designing options for a Participatory Budgeting approach to Environmental Works.

Once the research is done and projects commence, environmental outcomes will be monitored and evaluated. This work, and its outcomes, will be considered as part of the budget process.”

### **Supplementary Question**

- (16) a supplementary question by Councillor Donald Reid to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

“North Ayrshire Council is financially contributing to Ayrshire College’s Future Skills Hub project in Kilwinning. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the project?”

This is a future skills hub, focusing on the future skills needs of the Ayrshire economy which is a positive. The Cabinet Member will be aware though that some of the existing courses offered at Nethermains, such as brickwork, will not be included in the hubs curriculum. These are still crucial skills for the local economy.

Will the Cabinet Member commit to continuing working with Ayrshire College and other partners to ensure that local residents can still access courses and training in these important areas?”

## Response

“A number of meetings have been held on between Council officers and the college to discuss course provision at the skills hub. The college provided information and analysis to inform the type of courses that will be provided. The focus for the new facility is on future skills and carpentry ( which has the highest demand) which they will now offer to MA level for the first time in North Ayrshire. The Skills hub was not designed to be a like-for-like replacement for Nethermains but the College will continue discussions with the Council, Council members and other partners to ensure residents can still access the training and courses most relevant to the local and wider economy.”

## Supplementary Question

(18) a supplementary question by Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Climate Change in the following terms:

“Over the last few years, the Council has allocated Vacant and Derelict Land funding to support ambitions to regenerate the Harbour Masters Office as a key part of the Great Harbour project. I am aware of interest in the building from commercial businesses, can the Cabinet Member tell us whether he believes any future commercial agreement should retain the Harbour Masters Office in Council ownership?”

## Response

“Expressions of interest have assisted the project development team to understand the potential re-use of the building within the Greater Harbour programme. The preferred option has still to be determined.”

## Supplementary Question

(19) a supplementary question by Councillor Montgomerie to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

“Can the Portfolio holder tell me where in Saltcoats and Stevenston the benches, picnic benches, bins and water signage will be put? It is also important that we don't muddy the waters so to speak with the signage I got put up for our Coastguard, although I absolutely welcome the water safety signage. We just have to be careful”

## Response

“The location of new benches, picnic benches and bins are primarily on the coastal frontage of each town as these are the areas of higher footfall.

Investment at Stevenston Shore in terms of the new “hub” and regeneration of the playpark has identified a requirement for additional seating and a picnic area which are included in our plans at Stevenston Point.

Contd.

Water Safety signage will also be located in coastal areas and the new signage will be in line with a national campaign to standardise the content/messaging in line with Water Safety Scotland Guidelines and the National Water Safety Forum. These guidelines on content/messaging will supersede existing coastal water safety advice and messaging.

We will liaise with the local Coastguard Team on the identification of suitable locations for the signs.”

### **Supplementary Question**

(20) a supplementary question by Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

“Can the Member advise on the planned start and completion dates for the 50 houses on the site?”

### **Response**

“It is anticipated that the project will commence on site early 2023 with completion during Spring/Summer 2024. The delay in the project starting on-site has been attributable to a review of site capacity and housing mix, which has increased from 15 to 50 housing units.”

### **Supplementary Question**

(21) a supplementary question by Councillor Kerr to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“The Taskforce meeting was due to take place in May, but my understanding is that it was cancelled (again) because the Minister had other commitments. Just like the Ardrossan Harbour project itself – this is not the first time that a Taskforce meeting has been delayed by SNP Ministers.

As the new Co-Chair of the Taskforce, I am sure the Leader of the Council will agree with me that we cannot have more delays to the Harbour Project, and they will share my concerns in that the longer this project drags on, the greater the threat that the ferry service moves permanently to Troon.

On the presumption that the Council Leader is fully committed to the retention of the Ardrossan to Brodick route, does she agree with the Labour Group that should Transport Scotland and Peel Ports fail to reach a commercial agreement on this project soon, we must be prepared to pursue option B – bringing the Harbour into public ownership, as was put on the table last year by the previous administration?”

## **Response**

"I cannot comment on the cancellation of Task Force meetings under the previous Administration. I am concerned about further delay but I do not think it helps for a local Member to speculate about the ferry remaining in Troon. I am fully committed to the retention of the Ardrossan to Brodick route and I agree that every option should remain on the table."

## **Supplementary Question**

(22) a supplementary question by Councillor McDonald to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

"Bellway's housing development is already underway. With the delay in the school project, does the Cabinet Member envisage the population of Montgomerie Park increasing before the school is complete and what impact is that likely to have on the pupil roll at the existing primary schools in the area which are already struggling with capacity?"

## **Response**

"I can confirm that officers reviewed the projected school roll for Annick PS (the current catchment primary school for the Montgomerie Park area) as soon as the extent of the delay in the delivery of the new primary school was confirmed. The review considered the build rate of the housing as well as the available space within the school, which includes additional modular accommodation, and concluded that there will be sufficient capacity at Annick PS through to the anticipated handover date for the new school at Montgomerie Park"

## **Supplementary Question**

(23) a supplementary question by Councillor Cullinane to the Cabinet Member for Finance in the following terms:

"The Scottish Government's spending review involves a reduction in public sector jobs in Scotland of between 17,000 and 40,000 jobs. Will the Cabinet Member commit now to a no compulsory redundancies policy for the duration of this Council term?"

## **Response**

"We will operate a policy of no compulsory redundancies, as did the previous SNP Administration."

### **Supplementary Question**

- (24) a supplementary question by Councillor Donald Reid to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

“The Scottish Government’s spending review involves a reduction in public sector jobs in Scotland of between 17,000 and 40,000 jobs. Will the Cabinet Member commit now to a no compulsory redundancies policy for the duration of this Council term?”

### **Response**

“We have been actively supporting our NHS partners regarding the future delivery of health services in the Kilwinning area. The former Housing office in Howgate has been identified as a potential location for this. To ensure the most advantageous outcome for this critical service, the building will not be disposed of until a decision has been reached. This work is well advanced, and the outcome will be progressed through NHS governance processes.

In addition, the North Ayrshire Regeneration Delivery Plan seeks to support town centre living, and lead on a response to derelict sites. As such, a feasibility study, funded by the Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme, is currently underway to identify viable options for the Council owned property at 32-34 Howgate, Kilwinning, known as the former Kilwinning Housing Office, and adjacent area.

The feasibility study is due to be completed by September 2022, and will consider feedback from the Oxenward online consultation as part of this process.”

### **Supplementary Question**

- (26) a supplementary question by Councillor Montgomerie to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Climate Change in the following terms:

“I am disappointed that the privately owned vacant units is not mentioned in the Portfolios response. Does the Cabinet member with me that as the Place Frameworks move from design to delivery, initiatives to bring these units into Council or community ownership should be a priority and if he does when are you going to act on it for the benefit of Saltcoats because as you will agree with me Hamilton St badly needs done, not just a few thousand pounds thrown at it. From top to bottom it needs lots of investment and also do you agree with me that the best way forward is to have numerous public meetings in Saltcoats with yourself, Officers and myself to get as much input as possible from Saltcoats residents?”

### **Response**

“Place Frameworks are key to identifying and prioritising physical improvements and Community Wealth Building opportunities to support recovery and development within town centres. They are informed by extensive community and stakeholder consultation and engagement to ensure that they reflect local priorities and ambitions.

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For Saltcoats this has included:

- Drop in design workshops
- On-street ideas stalls
- Charette and Future Priorities workshops
- Town centre walk, wheel and talk tours
- Future funding workshops
- Community Chit Chat and ideas sessions
- On-line and hard copy consultation information and feedback forms
- One to one meetings with groups to discuss priorities and projects

These sessions were well attended and supported by the communities. They looked at the main areas in each town centre including Hamilton Street and Dockhead Street in Saltcoats. The output from the sessions is informing the Place Frameworks' development. These will report in late August 2022. The Frameworks will identify short, medium and long term priorities to inform future implementation and expenditure. Further briefing sessions will be provided to Elected Members in advance of their launch and delivery in partnership with the community.

A small capital and revenue allocation is available under the Community Renewal Fund award to support implementation of the Largs and Saltcoats Place Frameworks. A further small allocation is also available for Kilwinning through the Place Based Investment programme (PBIP) allocation. This will be used to support small scale short and medium term recommendations through grants to groups and direct delivery by the Council.

The funding allocations proposed under the Place Based Investment Programme for the implementation of the three Place Frameworks will be considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2022. The funding allocations could also be used as match funding and help secure external funding where appropriate to maximise the reach of the funding. If the funding allocation is reallocated alternative sources of funding will require to be sought to support implementation.

Delivery could involve the purchase of properties or provision of support to communities to progress ownership where:

- The purchase is identified as a priority through the Place Framework process; and
- A deliverable solution is available for the repurposing of the property.

The Repurposing Property Grant Fund (RPGF) was developed in 2021 to help support landowners and community groups to bring back vacant land and properties to use. The funding package is comprised of allocations from the 2021/22 PBIP, VDLF and North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVT). Funding is allocated to projects from the overall funding package informed by the constituent funds' constraints. This provides funding to landowners and community groups to undertake feasibility studies to identify potential options for the sites and their viability.

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The second round of the Repurposing Property Grant Fund is open until late July 2022. The Regeneration team are actively engaging with landowners and communities to support applications to the Fund. It is envisaged that further stages of the Fund will be developed to support project delivery following the feasibility stage. The approach to this will be informed by the outcome of Stage 1 and further funding applications in support of the Fund.

This approach aims to complement existing sources of funding such as the Scottish Land Fund and not replace these. This aims to maximise the impact of the fund. It is important to note that costs associated with repurposing town centre properties are not unsubstantial. A recent feasibility study for a 335m<sup>2</sup> town centre property in the Three Towns has identified cost estimates of circa £0.826m subject to substantial caveats. This illustrates the potential levels of resource required to repurpose properties of this nature and the importance of developing a strong strategic approach that can support the development of future proposals and funding bids.”

### **Supplementary Question**

(29) a supplementary question by Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Climate Change in the following terms:

“The recent Cabinet paper on regeneration funding did not reference this Levelling Up bid so it is good to hear that the project will be submitted for the next round of the fund.

The paper did however agree to remove North Shore from the Clyde Gateway bid – can the Cabinet Member advise what impact this decision may have on the regeneration of North Shore and how the Cabinet intends to secure alternative sources of funding to support the transformational regeneration of that part of the Member’s own ward?”

### **Response**

“The Ardrossan Coastal Regeneration programme is a transformational regeneration programme of national scale and is attracting significant funds from multiple sources. As plans develop, additional potential funders are being identified and proactively explored to secure the funding required to deliver the programme.”

### **Supplementary Question**

(30) a supplementary question by Councillor McDonald to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

“Once the report is published, will the Cabinet Member make funding available to deliver on the report’s recommendations and opportunities?”



## Response

“The Remakeries report and its recommendations will be considered over the summer months amongst other service priorities and current commitments to determine funding opportunities, deliverability and strategic implications to determine what next steps are appropriate. This will include consideration of appropriate proposals for inclusion in our Shared Prosperity Funding Investment Plan that officers are currently working on.”

## Supplementary Question

(31) a supplementary question by Councillor Foster to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“Based on the Council Leader’s response, she must be delighted to have inherited North Ayrshire Labour’s council-owned renewable energy projects.

I note the Leader’s comment about diverting resources and wonder if that will apply to any Council delegation that travels to Westminster to attend the planned Parliamentary reception in support of the Ardeer STEP bid, to be hosted by her dear colleague Patricia Gibson MP.

Whilst I am not surprised at how quickly scepticism can fade after votes have been cast, maybe the Leader of the Council could tell us whether the administration will be seeking to influence her own Government’s forthcoming Energy Policy review to include support for fusion power, given that it is widely accepted that the SNP’s current ambiguity on fusion, and their longstanding opposition to traditional fission generation, is the greatest risk to the Ardeer bid?”

## Response

“I am delighted that renewable energy has remained a priority for North Ayrshire regardless of the party in administration. To say otherwise would be indulging in petty politics. Patricia Gibson has been asked, as the local MP, to host a reception which she has agreed to do and there will be an NAC presence in attendance. I am sure Councillor Foster is well aware of the meaning of my reference to diverting resources in relation to any future funding requirements for the STEP project. I am not sure I understand Councillor Foster’s reference to scepticism fading after votes have been cast. I do understand that, after votes were cast, Councillor Foster’s party fell to third place so he may want to reflect on his own approach. I am not a member of the Scottish Government but I welcome further information on the review of energy policy.”

## Supplementary Question

(33) a question by Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Place in the following terms:

“The Cabinet Member should be aware that the last iteration of the strategic housing investment plan, that was approved by the Labour Cabinet late last year, increased the house building programme by 50 houses to 1625.

I say the Cabinet Member *should* be aware because it happens to be the case that his own election leaflet said an SNP Council would build 1575 council houses.

Can the Cabinet Member advise us whether they simply made a mistake in pressing copy and paste on an outdated version of the SHIP when trying to copy Labour’s policies or does he actually intend on cutting the council house building programme by 50 houses?”

## Response

“As Cllr Foster is aware, the previous SNP administration revitalised North Ayrshire’s house building programme, making it one of the best in the country. That is what the previous Labour administration inherited. We can continue to play tit-for-tat politics or Cllr Foster can accept the fact that, at the very minimum, the SNP will deliver the commitment made in the current SHIP.

Our focus is on building and delivering excellent quality and energy efficient homes for the people of North Ayrshire.

This is done in partnership with the Scottish Government who have committed over £3.5billion to the housing programme.”