



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 17 February 2021

Responses to Questions

Question

- (1) a question by Councillor Donald L. Reid to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:

“In the light of high levels of social isolation and loneliness experienced by many since the beginning of the corona pandemic which began in March 2020, can the Leader (or relevant cabinet member) advise of the number of suicides in North Ayrshire which occurred between 1 January - 31 December 2019 and (if figures are currently available) for the period 1 January – 31 December 2020. (or to period in 2020 for which figures are available) and are any special measures currently in place to support those at risk of committing suicide.”

Response

“We are all acutely aware of the impact of social isolation on our communities which has been exacerbated during the pandemic. In response to the specific question, sadly the number of completed suicides which took place during 2019 were 18 in North Ayrshire. There is no data currently available for 2020, the figures are not expected to be provided by the registrar’s office until mid to late 2021.

To support our communities during the period of the pandemic suicide prevention and mental health resources and information have been made available to all the community support hubs, alongside training provided to the North Ayrshire Council customer contact centre staff at the outset of the lockdown.

In addition, the North Ayrshire Young People’s Suicide Taskforce set up after a number of young people completed suicide, has focussed on prevention for young people including a multi-agency crisis response, targeted social media campaigns, support pathways for those at risk and training for both staff and senior pupils. We also continue to work with NHS Ayrshire and Arran on the Distressed Children’s Pathway.

The Pan Ayrshire Suicide Prevention Group has developed an action plan including identifying key at risk groups from local and national evidence sources, meeting with Police Scotland to create an efficient and safe information sharing protocol and the continuation and expansion of training to continue the programme of suicide prevention training established over many years. There are also crisis response services in place across Ayrshire with North Ayrshire being a key partner, including Distress Brief Interventions (DBI) where individuals in distress who present to key services receive an appropriate response either from a first responder or being linked in with support workers to help them through their immediate crisis and look at future management. This is currently being rolled out in pilot GP surgeries and Penumbra has been commissioned to provide the support service.”

Question

- (2) a question by Councillor Donald L. Reid to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care provide an update on the number of planned operations which have been cancelled at Crosshouse University Hospital between 1 April 2020 and 31 December 2020 due to the Covid pandemic; and what actions are being taken to reduce the operations backlog?”

Response

“The NHS Ayrshire and Arran decision to cancel elective appointments at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic was a necessary step to ensure the safety of the population. A re-mobilisation process commenced over the summer months and supported the re-introduction of some planned and prioritised planned care patient activity on the basis of clinical urgency. The increasing prevalence of COVID-19 during the autumn months however resulted in a decision to again pause planned care.

Public Health Scotland reports key statistics on the number of planned operations, the number cancelled and the reason for cancellations at Hospitals across Scotland, this information is publicly available on the ISD Scotland website. For Crosshouse Hospital from a total of 1,730 scheduled elective operations from April to December 2020, 7.6% of those operations were cancelled either by NHS Ayrshire and Arran or the individual patient. The number of reported planned operations during that period being at a reduced level based on the step down of planned care.

The Health Board Re-mobilisation Plan 3 which will cover the period April 2021 to March 2022 will focus on beginning to recover routine and planned care services, NHS Ayrshire and Arran will publish plans for the recovery of planned operations when fully developed and agreed.

Data for information only:

NB – note that during 2019-20 Crosshouse Hospital averaged at 810 planned operations a month

Health Board / Hospital Name	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
University Hospital Crosshouse									
Total Number of scheduled elective operations in theatre system	23	44	120	227	322	284	326	208	176
Total no of scheduled elective cancellations in theatre systems	2	4	5	23	14	25	24	19	15
Cancellation based on clinical reason by hospital	1	3	4	16	12	16	15	8	8
Cancellation based on capacity or non-clinical reason by hospital	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	1	4
Cancelled by Patient	1	1	1	7	1	5	7	10	3
Other reason	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Question

- (3) a question by Councillor Donald L. Reid to the Cabinet Member for Green New Deal and Sustainability in the following terms:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Green New Deal and Sustainability provide Elected Members with an update on progress with the 2020/21 Roads Repair programme, with particular reference to roads in the Garnock Valley area included in that programme?”

Response

“Despite the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic, the 2020/21 Roads Investment Plan is largely complete. There are two remaining resurfacing projects in Kilwinning outstanding, but these are planned for completion by the end of March 2021 and a small number of projects have been re-scheduled to 2021/22 due to planned utility works.

Projects completed within the Garnock Valley as part of the current year’s investment plan include resurfacing and screeding works. The works within the Garnock Valley were carried out at a total cost of £540,000 from the Council’s overall annual capital investment. Works were completed at the following urban locations: Sycamore Avenue, Beith; Houston Crescent, Blairlands Drive and Baidland Avenue, Dalry; and Fudstone Drive, Mossend Avenue, Glenriddet Avenue, Kilbirnie.

In terms of rural locations, the following works have been completed this year: C69 near Beith, U11/12 near Beith, the U32 Auchengree Road, U53 Sandy Road, U44 at Middleton and improvement works on the C80 Whisky Bond road.

As I mentioned earlier, due to planned utility works taking place, a small number of projects have been rescheduled for early delivery in the 21/22 plan, this includes resurfacing works at the U26 Geirston Road.

Separately, approximately £130,000 will be invested in improvements to Beith Main Street, funded from the Town Centre Regeneration Fund, with these works scheduled to commence next month.

The proposed Roads Investment Plan for 2021/22 is currently being finalised and is scheduled for Cabinet consideration on 23 March 2021.”

Question

- (4) a question by Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:

"The report by Derek Feeley on the independent review of adult social care in Scotland was published this month.

Amongst other recommendations it suggested the formation of a National Care Service.

Does the portfolio holder agree that:

- a. the Scottish Government's overhaul of Social Care 5 years ago, which was supposed to integrate Council community support services with the NHS through the setting up of Integrated Joint Boards, has failed?
- b. the formation of a National Care Service is yet another example of the Nationalist Government pursuing its Central Command and Control Policies to the exclusion of Local Councils?"

Response

Councillor Marshall was not present at the meeting and no other Member indicated that they wished, in terms of Standing Order 12.5, to move this question in his absence. Accordingly, the question was withdrawn.

Question

- (5) a question by Councillor Murdoch to the Chair of the Planning Committee in the following terms:

"Can the Chair of Planning please confirm how many people have formally asked in writing to speak at the Planning Committee when it considers the Rigghill Wind Farm Application and confirm the date they were received?"

Response

"I can confirm that Skelmorlie Community Council, Fairlie Community Council and Cllr Murdoch have all requested to address the Planning Committee on the Righill application. The dates of the requests are:

Fairlie Community Council – 4 November 2020 is the date of their formal written request although they were in discussion with planning officers from May 2020
Skelmorlie Community Council – 5 November 2020
Cllr Murdoch – 8 June 2020."

(6) a question by Councillor Murdoch to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“Can the Leader of the Council please confirm what action North Ayrshire Council has taken regarding the incident at Hunterston Jetty on Tuesday 2nd February 2021 involving DS4 & DS8 Drilling Ships and will there be a full investigation?”

Response

“As the incident involving the two drill ships occurred off-shore, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) were the lead agency for this incident. The MCA officially informed us of the incident the next morning and have since provided regular updates. At no time was Council assistance requested.

It will be for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Marine Accident Investigation Board to determine what, if any, investigation is required into this incident. In relation to the operation of the jetty at Hunterston, this is the responsibility of Clydeport as harbour authority.”

Question

(7) a question by Councillor Barr to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“In my Ward, I noticed electric car charging points have been installed in car parks in West Kilbride and Dalry. Can I ask the Leader who paid for these installations.”

Response

“We had installed one rapid EV Charger at Main Street Car Park, West Kilbride in July 2019 and one rapid EV charger in Smith Street Car Park, Dalry in January 2021.

The capital cost for both EV chargers are funded in full by Transport Scotland’s Local Authority Installation Programme. The electricity cost associated with operating the EV chargers are paid for by the Council.

Officers are currently finalising an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet shortly and will provide details of how we intend to encourage and facilitate the increased use of electric vehicles across North Ayrshire as part of our commitment towards becoming carbon net zero by 2030.”

Question

- (8) a question by Councillor Gallacher to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“What percentage of goods and services paid for by NAC actually comes from businesses or suppliers with their headquarters or place of business within North Ayrshire?”

Response

“The Annual Public Performance Report includes an indicator for % of procurement spent on local enterprises. For 2019-20 it was 19.18%, an increase of 1.75% from 2018-19 (17.43%) and the highest percentage for ten years.

Procurement is of course one of the key pillars of our Community Wealth Building strategy. The aspiration as reflected in the Council Plan’s performance management framework is that we work towards a target of 26% by 2024. We must achieve that within current procurement guidelines and legislation, but we have made immediate changes to some of our procurement processes, such as on Quick Quotes and Wave Planning, to help achieve that. Fundamental to any success will be ensuring that the Business team builds capacity within the local market so that local businesses are able to bid for contracts and to be competitive when they do so. That’s why we allocated resources in last year’s budget to increase the business team’s capacity and to recruit a procurement development officer to work on Community Wealth Building.

It is important to emphasise that our Community Wealth Building strategy is not about the work of the Council in isolation from the rest of the public, private and third sector. We are taking an anchor approach to Community Wealth Building and already East and South Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise and TACT have signed our Anchor Charter which commits them to a number of pledges, including some on procurement.”

Question

- (9) a question by Councillor Murdoch to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“During the discussion on setting the Hunterston DEPZ (Detailed Emergency Planning Zone), you said, “I have read the papers and listened for a year now to the advice we are getting and don’t see how we, within the framework that’s set for us as a Council, can make any other decision than the one that is recommended within the paper.” Does the Leader of the Council think that the whole process of being given the responsibility and then making the decision was fair and unrestricted and is he happy with the outcome?”

Response

“The report to December Council fully explained the extent of the discretion available to Council in setting the DEPZ. If Councillor Murdoch needs more clarity, he only needs to re-read the report presented to Members.

Given that the DEPZ was unanimously approved, I would assume that all Members are satisfied that the Council has exercised its responsibility to set DEPZ within the powers that Parliament has given us.”