



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

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday 9 June 2021

Responses to Questions

## Question

(1) a question by Councillor Gurney to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

"How many North Ayrshire Council contracts are let with British Gas?"

## Response

"On examination of corporate procurement records there are currently no active contracts in place with British Gas. We currently use the Scottish Government framework for gas and electricity with the gas supply contract through Total Gas and Power and the electricity contract through EDF Energy."

## Question

(2) a question by Councillor Larsen to the Cabinet Member for Education in the following terms:

"Can the Cabinet Member confirm the position with regard to Early years provision at the new Lockhart Campus?"

## Response

"The new Lockhart Campus, which will open for children and young people in August 2021, has been designed to meet the complex and significant additional support needs of children and young people in North Ayrshire. It has been built and designed to accommodate approximately 200 children and can cater for children from the age of 3 to 18.

At the start of every new school session, we consider the children and young people who will be in receipt of our services. This includes pre-school children. Working with our partner agencies, we review assessments and other information, carry out observations and hold planning meetings which involve parents and carers. The plans include the additional support required to enable a child or young person to access the service. For some this will be accessing a specialist resource of which there are several in our schools as well as in the new campus.

Presently, from August 2021, 203 children aged 5 to 18+ will attend the campus following appropriate assessment and planning having taken place.

For the forthcoming session, through the above individual assessments, our local early years centres and classes can meet the needs of the children beginning this stage of their education. Further information about the recent development of early years provision is included below.

The Lockhart campus can and will continue to be able to accommodate early years children who are assessed as requiring to access this facility in the future and this will continue to be determined on an individual basis as at present."

## Question

- (3) a question by Councillor McClung to the Cabinet Member for Participatory Democracy in the following terms:

"Having been approached by a number of constituents who had been unaware of the recently-held Consultation on Halls and Libraries I would like to ask the Cabinet Member for Participatory Democracy what steps were taken to ensure that the residents of Saltcoats knew this consultation was taking place, and what measures were employed to make it viable for interested parties to contribute their views, given that a large number of those who may have wished to do so do not have internet access, or the technical wherewithal to give responses other than in writing."

## Response

"The public consultation was in regard to the future delivery of services relating to libraries, halls and community centres through the development of the community hub approach. The consultation was based on two previous engagements which established, firstly, which services were valued for delivery locally by communities and, secondly, a range of options for delivery. The purpose of the consultation was to gather the opinions of the local communities on the proposals around community hubs and the future roles of libraries, halls and community centres.

Throughout the process North Ayrshire Council has continued to work closely with NAFCO and individual Community Associations. The proposal for each building has been informed and shaped through the community engagements and with the knowledge of each individual Community Association's aims and future aspirations.

This most recent consultation process ran from 5th March 2021 until 5th May 2021 offering nine weeks for the community to get involved and have their say.

The principles behind the new proposals were to:

1. Develop the Community Hub approach to reflect the learning from COVID. This is based on the success of a local, multi-agency approach, bringing access to service with dignity; and
2. Retain valued services and activities where possible, in partnership with community partners, whilst also having the advantage of reducing the Council's property portfolio to reduce financial commitments and carbon emissions.

In line with The Consultation Institute's best practice recommendations, a stakeholder reference group was identified to represent key interests, and the methodology was agreed. The Stakeholder Reference Group was chaired by an independent chair, Billy Brotherston, the Chair of the North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. Its membership included representatives from the North Ayrshire Access Panel, the North Ayrshire Federation of Community Organisations (NAFCO), community representatives of older people, community representatives of young people, the two third sector interfaces (The Ayrshire Community Trust and Arran CVS) and community organisations not in membership of NAFCO.

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The role of the Stakeholder Reference Group was set out in its Terms of Reference – this is in Appendix 1 of the Council Paper. The Group identified the consultation purpose and mandate, the methodology and definitions of terms and frequently-asked questions for the public and community organisations.

The mixed methodology was developed with the Stakeholder Reference Group and offered both online, written and telephone access to record individual and group views.

Mailing alerts were included with paper Council Tax bills and links were included in electronic Council Tax bills. This ensured that notification of the consultation went to every household in North Ayrshire.

The consultation process was conducted on the Consul platform, supported by CoSLA.

The Council's Communications department issued two separate press releases which were covered by local newspapers across North Ayrshire.

A video was developed to explain the consultation and was shared widely across social media.

Social media posts have been circulated using Twitter, Facebook and Linked-in by the Council, the Community Planning Partnership and Locality Partnerships. In addition, these were shared and reposted by a wide range of partner organisations.

An invitation to take part in the consultation was printed in the Housing Matters Newsletter and sent to all North Ayrshire Council tenants.

The North Ayrshire Federation of Community Organisations, the Community Facilities Service and the Library Service directly contacted member organisations, Community Associations and library user groups and asked for their communication to be shared with local contacts unavailable to the Council.

Elected Members were briefed in December 2020 and January 2021.

The Connected Communities team publicised and hosted locality stakeholder discussion meetings.

The team continued to promote and provide a telephone call-back service, which enabled those without digital access to make their views known.

E-mail submissions were invited and petition submissions were received.

The Consultation closed on 5<sup>th</sup> May, after being open for 9 weeks.”

## Question

- (4) a question by Councillor Billings to the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms:

“South Ayrshire Council's Siobhian Brown and East Ayrshire Council's Elena Whitham were elected to the Scottish Parliament last month. Both have decided to remain as serving councillors. The Daily Record of 19 May 2021 states that Ms. Brown insisted the cost of a by-election to the public purse made any such move prohibitive. She is quoted as saying: "A by-election (in normal times) has a cost of around £45,000 to the public purse and three-month notice period." "After careful consideration, it is my intention to stand down from my current portfolio but remain as a councillor serving the constituents of Ayr West until the local government elections in May 2022.”

Subsequently Councillor Joy Brahim, SNP councillor for Dalry and West Kilbride resigned her post of councillor stating that her work base has moved to Edinburgh. This will trigger a North Ayrshire Council by-election, presumably at similar cost to the public purse as that quoted by Siobhian Brown MSP, followed by another election in May 2022. As Leader of the Opposition, did Councillor Burns try to persuade Councillor Brahim to see out the remainder of her term to avoid the cost to the public purse of a by-election. Can Councillor Burns cast any light on whether this was a consideration in Councillor Brahim's decision?"

## Response

Councillor Burns will respond.

## Question

- (5) a question by Councillor Murdoch to the Cabinet Member for Post-Covid Renewal/the Islands in the following terms:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Islands please give exact details of what Shore Based Street Furniture, Footway and Lighting improvements will be provided over and above the Scottish Governments Funding of the Millport Flood Defence and how will it be funded?"

## Response

“The latest public consultation in relation to the Millport Coastal Flood Protection Scheme has just been completed. This consultation included a comprehensive update on the project including the landscape and heritage aspects and sought community feedback regarding choice of material colour and finish for aspects of the scheme.

The exact details and funding package for shore-based street furniture, footway and lighting improvements will therefore be confirmed once all consultation feedback is gathered and prior to the construction procurement exercise which is scheduled to take place early next year. The £27m funding already allocated to the scheme includes provision for public realm elements which form part of the flood defence measures however there is an opportunity to attract external grant funding, for example via the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is being actively explored for complementary improvements.”

## Question

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

“Can the Leader of the Council please provide details of how North Ayrshire Council will finance the future maintenance of the Maritime Mile/Great Harbour project?”

## Response

“Cabinet recently approved proposals for investment in the Maritime Mile project at Irvine Harbourside. These proposals are at concept stage.

While these concept plans and the outline business case process have allowed significant levels of funding to be secured through the Ayrshire Growth Deal, more detailed proposals are yet to be developed and these are required to allow analysis of ongoing maintenance costs. The further development of proposals will also require a programme of public engagement.

Ongoing maintenance implications will therefore be considered at the more detailed full business case stage.

It should be recognised that the area is currently maintained by the Council and therefore not all costs will be additional.”

## Question

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

“Can the Leader of the Council please provide details of any current and future North Ayrshire Council initiatives to generate general income?”

## Response

“North Ayrshire Council currently generates around £7million annually from a range of external fees and charges. In recognition of the ongoing impact of the pandemic on citizens and businesses, at the Budget meeting of 4 March 2021, Council chose to freeze fees and charges at 2020/21 levels and not apply the 5% inflationary increase which had previously been planned before the pandemic impacted our lives. With that said however, the Council continues to explore and develop areas of income generation and has a well-established commitment to maximising the use of its assets, including for the generation of income, as part of our Community Wealth Building Strategy published in May last year. Officers are continuing to progress existing initiatives and develop new business cases with a particular focus on those which can contribute to the recovery phase of the pandemic.

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Some examples of the Council's current initiatives in relation to the generation of income include:

- Renewable energy from the recently approved solar PV Farm at Nethermans former landfill site
- Catering
- Cleaning
- Commercial Waste
- Property related initiatives
- Grounds maintenance
- Car parking charges as part of the agreed implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.

Furthermore, a report will be considered by Cabinet later this month to provide an update on the Council's proposed roundabout advertising pilot which had been delayed due to Covid but will now progress, as well as details of a further Grounds Maintenance related income generation project."

### **Question**

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

"Can the Leader of the Council please provide a specific date for the introduction of (DPE) Decriminalised Parking Enforcement?"

### **Response**

"In September 2019, full Council agreed that an application seeking the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) across the North Ayrshire Council area should be prepared and submitted to Scottish Government.

A draft DPE application was thereafter submitted to Transport Scotland for assessment in March 2020. Progress of our application has been significantly delayed due to the ongoing pandemic. As a result, we do not anticipate approval of the application and subsequent implementation of DPE in North Ayrshire this term."

## Question

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

"Can the Leader of the Council please provide an update on the motion to write to the HSE & MAIB regarding an investigation in to the incident at Hunterston Parc Jetty on 2nd February 2021?"

## Response

"The resolution agreed at the Council meeting on 31 March 2021 was as follows:-

"North Ayrshire Council calls on the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB)/Health & Safety Executive (HSE) to carry out a full investigation into the incident on Tuesday 2nd February 2021 at Hunterston Parc where DS4 & DS8 broke free from their secure attachment to the Jetty.

Such an investigation should consider both the health & safety implications of the incident and the suitability of the Pier/Jetty and associated infrastructure for the permanent mooring of vessels of this size or type both now or in the future."

The Head of Democratic Services emailed all Members on 23 April to update us on the responses received from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB). He subsequently confirmed to Councillor Murdoch that he could share this response more widely should he so wish. In summary, the position as previously detailed to Members, remains:-

- Both MAIB and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) have clarified that of the two vessels concerned only DS4 broke free from its secure attachment to the jetty and was then held by its anchor, which had been pre-deployed as a mitigation measure for such an event. DS8 remained alongside the jetty, albeit with tug assistance, so at no point was either vessel 'adrift'.
- The port operators, Peel Ports, have completed their investigation and have forwarded a copy of their report to MAIB. The vessel's Flag State, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) has commenced an independent safety investigation into the incident, with the aim of learning lessons to help prevent a reoccurrence. The UK is declared as a Substantially Interested State in that investigation, and MAIB Inspectors are working closely with and supporting the RMI.
- MAIB will not carry out its own investigation of this incident. However, in addition to supporting the RMI investigation they will review its investigation report when available. Based on its findings they reserve the right, if necessary, to issue a Chief Inspector's letter and recommendations to any parties whose action or inaction may have contributed to the incident.
- The MCA has confirmed that the vessels do not meet the definition of 'permanently moored' and that the MCA, rather than the HSE will take the lead for enforcement of health, safety and welfare provisions on board. The MCA has inspected the vessels. It is understood that enforcement action was taken by the MCA to address specific health, safety and welfare issues on board both ships.
- HSE does not intend to investigate this incident further."



## Question

(10) a question by McNicol to the Leader of the Council in the following terms:

“Will the Leader inform Members of the number of all incidents recorded by Operators of North Ayrshire CCTV service in the financial year 2020/21 ? The numbers to include responses to contact from North Ayrshire Shopkeepers by Radiolink, observation/review requests by Police Scotland to monitor and record an incident they are attending.”

## Response

Question	Figure	Comment
The number of all incidents recorded by Operators of North Ayrshire CCTV service in the financial year 2020/21	5249	This figure represents the number of times cameras are used to support the actions below. It is high as one incident can be spread across a number of cameras and the CCTV will follow the incident and support Police Scotland either in their response or evidence collection
Responses to contact from North Ayrshire Shopkeepers by Radiolink,	3907	We do not record the exact number of incidents relating to the Shoplink as much of the reporting is between local shopkeepers making each other aware of known local offenders in the area. This figure includes the reports from the Shoplink transmissions passed to Locality Police Officers where there is a confirmed crime has taken place and the requests made via the Police Radio Airwave from the Glasgow Control Room.
Further evidence Review Requests by Police Scotland to monitor and record an incident they are attending	258	These reviews are carried out by investigating officers looking into enquiries (CID etc)
Discs Produced for Police Scotland to be used as evidence of Crime and Antisocial behaviour	185	These are the images of crime and antisocial behaviour which Police Scotland can present in court as evidence.