

COUNCIL: 11 NOVEMBER 2020

RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Please find below a response to a request for some supplementary information at the last Council meeting.

Further information arising from information requests will be circulated to Members in due course.

9. North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CP) Board: Minutes of Meeting Held on 9 September 2020

Councillor Miller took the opportunity to ask whether any reply had been received in respect of his motion to the last meeting of the Council on the subject of free TV licences for the over 75s. The Chief Executive undertook to advise all Members as soon as a response was received.

Response:

10. Questions

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

“Flooding at the rear entrance to Garnock Campus in heavy rain has been a recurring issue since the school was built. On 29 October 2020 pupils leaving the school had once again to wade through flood waters. Often pupils entering the school at the start of day have also to wade through flood water.

Can an update be provided on any proposed actions by NAC to rectify this unacceptable situation with a likely timescale for work to be carried out?”

Following a response to the above question, as a supplementary question Councillor Donald L. Reid requested that, in the interests of pupils, PMI continue to pursue this matter proactively.

Councillor Montgomerie responded by expressing confidence in PMI and undertaking to advise the Member of the outcome.

Response:

- (5) a question by Councillor Burns to the Cabinet Members for Green New Deal and Sustainability in the following terms:

“Earlier this year, council agreed a budget proposal from the SNP group to fund the planting of 100,000 trees to assist with carbon sequestration and support our net zero

emissions target. Can the portfolio holder confirm what steps have been taken to develop a strategy to take this work forward?"

Following a response to the above question, as a supplementation question, Councillor Burns asked the Cabinet Member to consider how the tree-planting initiative might be made a public endeavour, allowing communities to see progress being made and understand how they could contribute to meeting the target.

Councillor Montgomerie responded by undertaking to discuss with the Council's Corporate Communications team options for awareness-raising and encouraging community involvement. The Cabinet Member also indicated his willingness to discuss this further with Councillor Burns.

Response:

(6) a question by Councillor Billings to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care in the following terms:

"It was reported in a national newspaper last week that the routine testing of elderly people whilst in Ayrshire and Arran's hospitals was stopped at the beginning of October, following guidance issued by civil servants in Edinburgh. It was some relief to read that the Health Board intended to restart testing from 2nd November.

Testing programmes are there to identify Covid infections and to help minimise the risk of an outbreak of infection. It, therefore, must have been quite a shock to the people of North Ayrshire to learn that official guidelines were to reduce testing in spite of rising Covid levels in Scotland. We need to ensure that everybody who uses our wonderful health service has the fullest confidence that whilst they are using the NHS they are being kept safe.

Would the Cabinet Member be able to obtain assurance from Ayrshire and Arran Health Board that the routine testing of elderly people whilst in Ayrshire and Arran's hospitals has indeed restarted? Could he also provide assurance that no other routine testing, such as that for people being discharged into a care setting, and for residents and staff in care settings, was neither stopped nor reduced?"

Following a response to the above question, as a supplementation question, Councillor Billings referred to the potential for mobile testing, which would be particularly relevant for Arran as winter approached, and asked the Cabinet Member to provide an update on this.

Councillor Foster responded by advising that he would be happy to look into this matter and provide a response to all Members.

Response:

At the moment, Public Health are strengthening the testing capabilities on Arran which allows the tests to be analysed within the NHS Ayrshire and Arran laboratories. This is a quality-controlled Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) process, which allows Public Health to monitor and manage the outbreak in a more effective manner.

The Mobile Testing Units are available from NSS (National Services Scotland) and one can be accessed and would be made available within 24 hours if we require this. This would be the case during the current outbreak and over the winter period if required. These tests are analysed at the Glasgow Lighthouse laboratory therefore, NHS Ayrshire and Arran would have no oversight of these results.

During the current outbreak, Public Health are monitoring the situation closely and robust contact tracing is in place to ensure everyone who has to self-isolate is doing so and symptomatic contacts are being identified quickly and tested on the island. If the number of cases increases and trigger a higher level in the Community Outbreak Plan, then Public Health will stand up the Mobile Testing Unit.