

Community Planning Partnership Board
Thursday 14 September 2023 at 11.15 am
Via Microsoft Teams



Present

North Ayrshire Council

Cllr Marie Burns, Elected Member (**Chair**)
Cllr John Bell, Elected Member
Cllr Scott Davidson, Elected Member
Cllr Alan Hill, Elected Member
Cllr Shaun Macaulay, Elected Member
Audrey Sutton, Executive Director
Rhonda Leith, Head of Service

Ayrshire College

Angela Cox, Chief Executive & Principal

Department of Work and Pensions

Sheila Lynn, Service Leader

KA Leisure

Ashley Pringle, Chair

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Caroline Cameron, Director

NHS Ayrshire and Arran

Claire Burden, Chief Executive
Ruth Mellor, Consultant in Public Health

Police Scotland

T/Chief Superintendent Raymond Higgins

Scottish Enterprise

Brian Connolly, Engagement Partner

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Ian McMeekin, Local Senior Officer

Scottish Government

Sam Anson, Location Director

Scottish Partnership for Transport

Allan Comrie, Senior Transport Planner

Skills Development Scotland

Shona Mitchell, Head of Operations South-West

The Ayrshire Community Trust

Kaileigh Brown, Executive Director

In Attendance

Jacqui Greenlees (NAC), Jennifer McGee (NAC), Lesley Dunlop (NAC), Laura Neill (NAC), Angela Morrell (NAC)

Apologies

Craig Hatton, Chief Executive (NAC), Vicky Yuill (Arran CVS), Superintendent Derek Frew, Cllr Timothy Billings, Elected Member

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies for absence were noted.

2. Minute of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 June 2023 were approved.

3. LEP Update

The Chair highlighted that today's meeting will focus on the Work Priority and invited Laura Neill to share her presentation on the work of the Local Employability Partnership with the Board.

L Neill advised that as part of the No One Left Behind delivery plan the Partnership was launched in April 2022 with a baseline taken at that time.

L Neill provided the Board with the following information on progress made up until July 2023:

- The current unemployment level is 4.6%. This is a 1.1% reduction.
- The current employment rate is 71.3%. This a 3.5% increase (4,600 more people are in employment in North Ayrshire)
- Weekly wage rate £634.90 (increased by £10.90 - 13th highest rate in Scotland and average of £18.13 hourly rate)

Economic Inactivity

- July 2023: 27.7%. This is a 3.1% reduction from April 2022. (3,800 people): 4th highest economic inactivity rate
- People receiving benefits but wanting a job – 30.3% (increase from 21.6% and 2nd highest rate)

Disability Employment Rate

- April 2023: 64.9%. This is a 15.9% reduction from 2022.

Youth Employment Rate

April 2023: 53.2%. This is a 16.6% reduction from 2022

Participation Measure (16-19 year olds)

- 93.9%. This is an increase of 3.1% with 2nd highest increase in participation in Scotland. This figure is one percent below the national average.

L Neill also highlighted the progress that has been made:

Young People (16-24 year olds)

- Data Hub: Community Animation Team (Barnardos). This project has received great feedback from the parents.
- Engagement: DWP Partnership. Currently working with 140 young people supporting them to engage with the third sector including hospitality, retail and construction and linking into the Step Into Business programme.
- Sector Based Work Academies

Parents

- Enhanced parental employment offer
- Child Poverty Coordination – Parental Employment Team
- Parent Hub (We Work for Families)
- Skills for Life - 85 new places 2023/24 – Council, Third Sector & Anchor Organisations). This involves paid work experience with wraparound support.
- Step into Business
- Care at Home
- Vocational Training – Employed Parents

People with disabilities & long term health conditions

- Equal Programme - Every Friday afternoon, a group of neurodivergent Equal recruits attend the Top Table club for an action-packed gaming session similar to Dungeons and Dragons.
- Employer Engagement

Increase Reach

- Careers Event – School Transitions (March 2023). Over 650 young people attended the event in Ayrshire College. These events will continue as they highlight opportunities for young people.
- Employability Week (May 2023). Next year Employability Week will be the last week in May.
- No One Left Behind Grants Programme (September). This is delivered by The Ayrshire Community Trust working alongside the third sector in our communities.
- Employability Awards (November 2023). The event will celebrate the success of individuals and employers who support us.

L Neill informed the Board that the LEP working group involving partners from across North Ayrshire meet weekly for an hour.

L Neill highlighted the strategies that the LEP are involved in with partner agencies:

- No One Left Behind
- Ayrshire Regional Working Strategy
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Ayrshire Growth Deal
- Child Poverty Action Plan
- Ayrshire Regional Skills Investment Plan

L Neill shared details of the Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund:

- £3.5 million
- September 2023 – March 2028
- Launch applications for grant support - FE/HE & Employers
- Priority Sectors - Engineering, Digital, Visitor Economy, Clean Growth
- Priority Groups - Young People, females, people with long term health conditions, people in low paid employment

The aim is to work alongside 500 employed and 500 unemployed participants, assist 300 participants to gain an accredited qualification and assist 300 businesses with workforce skills development.

L Neill highlighted the Working for a Healthy Economy

- £5 million funding available.
- It has been contracted to NHS Salus
- The programme begun in May 2021 and is a 6 year programme.
- Health Interventions
- Aim is to support 2871 employed and 4629 unemployed participants. 1218 people have been supported to date.
- Regional Approach
- Integrated – Employability Services & Pipelines

- Employer Engagement

The Chair invited comments and questions from the Board.

Councillor Bell advised that it is great to see the amount of work going on and the opportunities available. He enquired about reasons for non-engagement. L Neill advised that Covid had a huge impact on young people disengaging. The Community Animation Project with Barnardos has been utilised to re-engage young people. The LEP hold data which has information on young people who are not engaging, and they can try to contact them personally. This has helped with engagement levels, which are now increasing. 140 young people are involved in joint working with the DWP, with a series of programmes and opportunities available. With regards to the Young Person's Guarantee this has been incorporated into the No One Left Behind programme.

Ian McMeekin enquired what is happening to support the infrastructure as well as employment. Agencies such as the Coastguard, RNLI and SFRS rely on volunteers and it is an increasing problem trying to recruit. Sheila Lynn advised that recruitment across the spectrum is affected by mental health. A lot of young people are not interacting with society as a whole. In North Ayrshire in the last month seven support funds have been put in place regarding mental health. The Kickstart initiative previously worked very well however the places were for one year so this could impact on the numbers of people not engaging as the places come to an end. There is an increase in those aged 50 and over not engaging. Another area of concern is transport in rural areas. S Lynn highlighted previous work undertaken with I McMeekin and agreed that this was very helpful. Volunteering can increase confidence and skills and help get people back into work.

Allan Comrie highlighted that the ageing population can have an impact on employment and also employment opportunities. The Chair advised that the Council is aware of the declining population in North Ayrshire and measures are being put in place to attract more people to the area. Caroline Cameron highlighted that the older population needs care, and a large number are remaining at home and there has been a huge recruitment drive undertaken by the HSCP. There are also alternative supports are being explored where people can be assisted with technology which reduces the demand on staff.

The Chair thanked L Neill for her presentation and acknowledged the opportunity for joint working.

4. Job Centre Plus

Sheila Lynn provided the Board with an update on the work of Job Centre Plus.

S Lynn highlighted:

- The efforts to encourage the older generation, who may have retired early, back into the workforce. They often have many transferable skills and can share these skills with the younger workforce.
- The DWP have a segmentation tool which highlights the areas where people are looking for jobs in North Ayrshire – these are retail, admin, construction and food industry. From the employer's perspective they are looking for workers in the tourism sector, finance and business sector and construction.
- The recent closure of Wilko in Irvine saw a loss of 18 jobs. Potentially 14 staff have been offered alternative employment. In the Kilbirnie/Saltcoats/Irvine area there are currently 19 retail jobs available so in theory these could be matched with the staff from Wilko or they could change jobs altogether. A drop-in session is being held on Monday with Job Coaches available to assist.
- A Jobs Fair was held at Prestwick Airport on 11 August which included a wide range of employers. This was a Pan- Ayrshire event with 1391 people attending. As a result of this event, 100 people have been offered work with 27 of these receiving an offer on the day and 14 people have returned to full time education.

- The Universal Credit Childcare payment has increased. This will hopefully encourage parents into work with up to 85% of the costs being covered. They will have the funds available to pay the first month in advance.
- Increased Job Coach support is being made available with the DWP recruiting additional coaches to assist people with health conditions to get into work.
- The move to Universal Credit is ongoing. It began in the West of Scotland on 7 August with support available via telephone, citizens advice and online. The first group of customers has moved over slowly with support. Of the almost 23,000 people to move over 7,800 have currently made a claim with 4930 being awarded transitional protection. S Lynn has two colleagues who are experts in Universal Credit who she is happy to invite to a future meeting if more information is required.
- A new project - Access to Work Plus - is being launched and it will also have grants available to assist employers to make their buildings accessible.

The Chair invited comments and questions from the Board which included:

- Ruth Mellor thanked S Lynn for her update and enquired about the use of sanctions. S Lynn informed that there has not been a strong focus on sanctions rather on wellbeing and making sure people are safe. The main focus has been around failure to attend and non-engagement however sanctions are the last resort. There are currently more jobs than people. It is not just about jobs, it is also about supporting people as they move into work.

The Chair thanked S Lynn for her presentation and acknowledged the opportunity for joint working.

5. Community Learning and Development

Angela Morrell provided the Board with a presentation on the work of the Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan.

A Morrell informed that the HMIE will be conducting a progress visit for three days from 18th September and thanked all partners who will be assisting with this.

A Morrell highlighted that as part of the strategy there is a working group involving Officers, Elected Members and Partners looking at how people participate in North Ayrshire not just the partners. Mapping was also undertaken which gave people the opportunity to have their voice and also have an influence. This highlighted 200 different groups and opportunities that are available.

A Morrell highlighted the following:

Youth Work

- Two Joint Cabinets have been held which, as a result of self-evaluation from the young people, were more interactive. They worked really well and resulted in a more detailed action plan. More Council services were invited to the meeting which allowed the young people to speak to them about issues directly.
- One Joint Cabinet solely for care experienced young people was held with support from the Promise Team. The action plan is being finalised and the young people will be brought together to hear answers to their questions.
- The Summer Youth Services Programme was focussed on wellbeing.
- Holiday meals and activities were organised alongside Facilities Management and other community teams.
- 391 national awards being carried out through the CLD team's locality and thematic work including PDA in Youth Work, Hi 5 Awards, John Muir and SVQ Level 2 and 3 in Youth Work
- 264 young people completed their Duke of Edinburgh Awards with an additional 174 completing sectional towards their DofE, working through their bronze, silver and gold awards through school and community groups.

- Over 90 young people have received certificates through the Mental Health and Wellbeing Mini Ambassador programme and Drama for Wellbeing

Adult Work

- Number of adults engaged in CLD activity (adult learning and capacity building) 6,314. Courses such as larder volunteers undertaking REHIS, literacy and health & safety were undertaken.
- Community Based Adult Learning: ESOL CLD community development tutors currently provide 25 ESOL support activities a week. Videos were shared to show examples of programmes in Towerlands and the Maritime Museum.
- The Multiply Project: As part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), this project aims to boost people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and targets learners who are 19+ that have not previously attained a level 2 SCQF, level 5 or higher maths qualification. The Multiply team have used summer 2023 to promote and increase visibility for the project and engaged with 1500 in terms of promotion events.
- Funding has been identified for 3rd Sector partners utilising the 3rd Sector and working with TACT.

Community Capacity

Food Insecurities

- Currently 14 food ladders across North Ayrshire support over 3000 households with dignified food provision. Increasingly moving towards a "No wrong Door Ethos"
- Wee School Pantry in Kilbirnie has been trialling a stock management system co-produced with the full network
- The food forum has been reestablished and now meets every 6 weeks with great attendance
- Established links between the Growers and the ladders to support use of produce.

Community Benefit List

- 11 wishes have been delivered this quarter, bringing the total in 2023 to 28 wishes.
- A total of 61 wishes have been delivered through the Community Benefits Wish List since it launched in October 2021.

Community Capacity and Unmet Need

- Mapping and consultations have been completed with older people and draft structure to be agreed at the November Conference.
- 29 activities running across 4 hubs.
- Three entertainment committees have been established within the engagement hubs in Saltcoats, Irvine and Kilbirnie with a fourth underway in Dalry.
- MS and Disability committee were recently awarded £10,500 secured from the Social Isolation and Loneliness funding for three years full sustainability for the group.
- The Leader of the Council is welcomed as the new Older Peoples Champion.

Overall Highlights

- The Holiday Meals programme was successful. An example of 4945 meals served in Irvine over the 4 week period was shared. The locations were increased from 17-20.

The Chair invited comments and questions from the Board.

I McMeekin highlighted that an increase in accidental fires from cooking can occur. He would like to link in with the Food Forum. A Morrell agreed to facilitate this.

Action: A Morrell

The Chair thanked A Morrell for her presentation.

6. Child Poverty and Cost of Living

Audrey Sutton provided the Board with an update on Child Poverty and Cost of Living.

A Sutton highlighted two Child Poverty funding opportunities from the Scottish Government and thanked all partners who have been involved in the application process. A Sutton informed the Board that the applications focus on improving our use of data to improve reach across North Ayrshire. The recent mini enquiries highlighted the range of help that is available however it needs to be coordinated and targeted in the correct areas.

Child Poverty Cash First Fund

The fund promotes direct access to cash and eventual discontinuation of foodbanks. Partnerships will be provided with a total of up to £200,000 over 24-months for activities linked to the Fund's objective. North Ayrshire's application looks to enhance urgent access to cash by developing a team to lead North Ayrshire Single Shared Assessment (NASSA) and embed a No Wrong Door approach across North Ayrshire, to ensure that those contacting NAC will only need to complete a single assessment form to access support to maximise income from employment; maximise income from benefits; and access cost of living support. This will enable more accurate and useful data to be collected to target support to those most in need, including the six priority family groups.

To provide key resources to enable upskilling of professionals and volunteers across North Ayrshire agencies to guarantee that those who require urgent access to cash can do this as a priority through a 'No Wrong Door' approach, to ensure ongoing support including money management, budgeting and support, thus helping residents get out of the cycle of debt, health and wellbeing support.

Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund

The fund aims to enhance an area's approach to tackling child poverty. It will support small scale projects to generate evidence on a known problem, adapt a promising approach from elsewhere to work in your area, or re-design a service or services to deliver greater impact on child poverty. The budget for CPAF activities is expected to be up to £80,000 per grant. North Ayrshire's application looks to use this funding to recruit a project manager and part-time business improvement officer who will coordinate and support a range of innovative projects in this area with key activities including: scoping out the current data landscape; implementing a single shared assessment; working in partnership with Scottish Government and the Department for Work and Pensions to modify data reuse permissions; and participating in a pilot with Social Security Scotland, the Improvement Service, and Glasgow City Council on the ethical use of data to target support.

A Sutton advised that the applications have been submitted on behalf of the partnership comprising North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and TSI. A complementary application has been application submitted by NHS Ayrshire and Arran with the purpose of evaluating current and planned work and identifying what works.

A Sutton provided the Board with an update on Cost of Living including:

- The next six-monthly update will go to the Council's Cabinet in November 2023.
- Performance measures have been identified for discussion at the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board
- Workshop will be held on 4th October to identify opportunities for investment through the Early Intervention Child Poverty and Cost of Living Fund
- Further investment has been allocated by Scottish Government through the Islands Cost of Living Crisis Emergency Fund (£57k). The previous allocation funds Money Matters, Energy Smart, school activities, Third Sector initiatives and equipment for health and wellbeing activities. The £30,000 third sector fund will be topped up with a new allocation from the additional £57,000. A presentation will be taken to the Locality Partnerships. A Sutton is happy to share this at a future meeting.

- After commitment to digital devices and cancelling school meal debt there is £170,000 remaining in the budget. A meeting will be held on 4 October to assess where the funding can be utilised.

The Chair thanked A Sutton for her update.

7. Partner Updates

Sam Anson highlighted that the Programme for Government was published last week. It is pro-growth and anti-poverty taking the Team Scotland approach. The UK Government budget statement will be made on 22 November therefore the Scottish Budget will be announced in December. Work on RAAC is ongoing at this time.

Brian Connolly highlighted work by OECD rural innovation and how the Garnock Valley acted as a best practice example in that area. Findings will be published re the work undertaken.

Ian McMeekin advised that the local fire plan reviews are coming to an end and that he would be keen to bring them to the Board for feedback. The Chair supported this.

Action: L Dunlop

Jacqui Greenlees highlighted that the work on the CPP website and Community Directory has begun with the developer this week. Board members may be contacted to assist with testing.

Allan Comrie highlighted the suspension of peak rail fares from 2 October as part of a 6 month pilot. The Chair replied that this is a welcome initiative, and it will be interesting to see how it impacts travel. There will be a midterm update and then the full report at the end of the pilot. It will be interesting to see the impact on the use of cars and other public transport.

8. AOCB

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting of the North Ayrshire CPP Board will be held on **Thursday 7 December at 11.15 am via Microsoft Teams.**