

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to: Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 16th August, 2012

Subject: Leader's Briefing

Report by: Council Leader

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to advise all elected members of a range of issues and activities which I have been engaged with in the past quarter. It is also intended to assist in raising awareness amongst members of a number of matters which affect the Council or the area and, as such, inform future workstreams.
- 1.2 Should any member of the Council wish to discuss any of the issues in this report in more detail, I will be happy to meet with them.
- 1.3 The report covers the period May-July, 2012.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council notes this report.

3.0 National Issues Affecting Clackmannanshire

- 3.1 I attended the COSLA Leaders' Group in May and, along with the Depute Leader, the COSLA Convention in June. Items discussed were:
- Health and Social Care Integration
 - Rural Broadband
 - Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill
 - Scotland's Creative Industries Partnership Action Plan 2012
 - Consumer Protection Landscape
 - Business Gateway Website and Scottish Business Portal
 - Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements
 - National Information and Communications Technology Strategy
 - Roads Maintenance Review
 - Planning Reform
 - Commission on Women Offenders
 - Consumer Protection Task Group
 - COSLA Final Accounts 2011/12
- 3.2 Associated papers for the above meetings have been placed on the members' portal for members to access.

- 3.3 Along with the Leaders of all 32 Councils, I also attended a seminar on Community Planning, led by the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment & Sustainable Growth. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the ongoing national review of community planning and potential implications for local authorities and their partners.

4.0 Supporting Communities

- 4.1 I am pleased to report to Council that the transfer of the Alva Pool to OLE has been concluded and the agreed resource transferred to the organisation.
- 4.2 The contract for the Tillicoultry Hub was awarded to Marshall Construction providing a further boost to the local economy and also ensuring that local people will be creating facilities within their own communities. The Hub will include a new library and community access point, space for young people's activities, meeting space for toddlers' and young mums' groups and multifunctional meeting and community space. It is expected that the Hub will open in November.
- 4.3 I was delighted, as were the Depute Leader, Provost and Depute Provosts, to directly participate in Clackmannanshire Volunteer Week. The voluntary groups and events we were privileged to work with were: WISH Drop-In Food Bank, C-MEE, Reshaping Care of Older People and Youth Services.

5.0 Partnership Working

- 5.1 Further to Council's decision to reconfigure its Care & Repair Service, I have written to the Chair of the management committee of Ochilview Housing Association requesting a meeting to discuss a number of important issues, including our ongoing partnership working.
- 5.2 Together with the Chief Executive and Customer Services Manager, I met with the chair of Clackmannanshire Credit Union to discuss how we might work together more effectively. Further to the relocation of Alloa Library to the Speirs Centre, the Council has been able to provide alternative accommodation for the Credit Union in the town (at Bank St). Officers will also be discussing with the Credit Union how the Council might be able to assist in raising the profile of the work which the organisation carries out.

6.0 Caring For People

- 6.1 The launch of the Scottish Government Insulation Scheme & Fuel Poverty Initiative at Alloa Town Hall followed an award of £315,000 to the Council to help and support vulnerable people in fuel poverty and to improve energy efficiency in the homes of local people by providing free loft and cavity wall insulation. A further £3.4M has also now been secured by the Council from the Community Energy Savings Programme which will provide grants for an additional 697 new central heating systems for Council tenants.
- 6.2 In May I welcomed the Scottish Government Minister for Children & Families to Woodside Residential Unit. The Council takes its role as corporate parent very seriously and the visit was an excellent opportunity for the young people to tell the Minister about life at Woodside. The Minister was very impressed

with the "first class" support the young people looked after there receive.

- 6.3 Further to Council formally considering the report of the independent review of social services, I have also written to the Minister requesting a meeting to discuss the findings, how it is intended to remediate identified failings and how improvement actions can be monitored. I have also written in similar terms to the chair of the Care Inspectorate. The Chief Executive has informed me that she has received supportive letters from officials of the Scottish Government and the Care Inspectorate and that a meeting has been set up to discuss potential support that these organisations might be able to provide to assist the Council in the implementation and monitoring of its Improvement Plan.

7.0 Supporting Business & Employability

- 7.1 I have been pleased to engage with the business community in Clackmannanshire and spoke at an event at Alloa Town Hall and have attended a meeting of Clackmannanshire Business.
- 7.2 I have been delighted that the Council is supporting young people by offering a number of modern apprenticeships. On behalf of the Council I supported Modern Apprentices Week and also presented a number of well-earned certificates to seven young people.

8.0 Young People

- 8.1 I was also delighted to represent the Council at a Young Scot event in Alloa at the end of May when a partnership agreement was signed. The agreement covers supporting young people on key issues including health, employment and accessing local services. The Council will also be supporting the development of Young Scot's national reward scheme (National Entitlement Card for Young People) which entitles young people to discounts and benefits in services such as transport, leisure and libraries.

9.0 Events

- 9.1 The Olympic Torch Relay through Clackmannanshire was a resounding success and an event which will be remembered for many years to come. The thousands of local people who turned out to witness this historic occasion did Clackmannanshire proud and the management of the event by the Council and its partners was superb. I was delighted to speak at the civic event which followed at the Town Hall.

10.0 Staff Visits

- 10.1 Since May I have undertaken a number of informal visits to Council services. I intend formalising a schedule of visits and will report back to Council on this.



Councillor Gary Womersley
Council Leader
August, 2012