



Autumn Break Update!

As we approach the autumn half term break, I know that so much of this fantastic community will be looking forward to what will probably be: their last break before the winter. I therefore wanted to update everyone on some of what has been going on in South Lanarkshire Council since I returned to my councillor duties after the summer recess.

New Council Housing in Kirk Street Strathaven!

This has been a project that I know all three Ward-5 (Avondale) Councillors have been working on, however: I was delighted to support in September, the approval of a council project that will see the first council apartments built in Strathaven for a very long time. So, what is the town getting: 20 Council 1- and 2-bedroom apartments at the gap site on Kirk Street, Strathaven. Six of these apartments (running along Kirk Street) will be amenity apartments and therefore safe, secure living accommodation for the elderly. The other 14 apartments (to the back of the site) will be for general council housing stock. This is a fantastic project for Strathaven, where all credit must go to the awesome team within SLC Housing & Technical Services, who made this project a reality, and which will deliver badly needed council housing to Strathaven by March/April 2020.

SLC still has plans to deliver 33 council houses (3-and-4 bed family homes) at the East Overton Development on Glassford Road. This forms part of the section-75 agreement and therefore will take longer to become a reality due to the phasing of this site development.

Proposed Stonehouse Non-Denominational Primary School Catchment Change

After more than two years work, I'm delighted to report that the public consolidation, which forms part of a formal Scottish Government legislative process: is now underway to change the non-denominational primary school catchment area in Stonehouse.

Over the last 24+ months, I've been inundated with complaints from constituents living in the new Barrett Development on Strathaven Road (Stonehouse). Believe it or not: their catchment primary school is currently Stonehouse and not Newfield, which is much closer. After some great work from the SLC Education team: the long legislative process, designed to bring the catchment area of primary schools in Stonehouse in line with village development is now underway.

Kirkland Park Nursery

Also, in September: SLC approved the planning application to erect a state-of-the-art nursery facility beside Kirkland Park Primary School (Strathaven). This forms part of the 1140-hour Scottish legislation, which will more than double the required nursery capacity in Strathaven needed to deliver 1140-hours provision. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the excellent work of the SLC Education team to bring this project to life, in time for August 2020.

I'd also like to advise that work will soon start at Newfield Primary School in Stonehouse to add capacity for 1140 hours there also.

New SLC CEO!

As most of you who read my columns and follow me on social media know: I had little respect for the outgoing South Lanarkshire Chief Executive. In my opinion, a council CEO should put those who live in our council area first, along-side the council staff tasked with delivering our vital services; something I felt the outgoing CEO simply failed to do! I'm therefore delighted that during late September 2019, SLC appointed a new Chief Executive: "Mr. Cleland Sneddon." I look forward to Cleland starting his new position in SLC and I look forward to working with him, hopefully in a positive manor, supporting and delivering the council services across Avondale and the wider South Lanarkshire.

The Climate Emergency!

Finally, I'd like to congratulate Climate Action Strathaven on a week of fantastic events which coincided with the UN Climate Change conference in New York. I was also proud to support CLLR Julia Marrs and CLLR Peter Craig at the September meeting of the full council, where every South Lanarkshire Councillor present (including me): recognised the climate emergency we all face and agreed to put in place a committee to consider what changes we need to make locally, to meet and potentially exceed climate change targets, that we all need to meet if we're going to leave this planet, we all call home: in a fit state for future generations.

As a locally elected member for 12 years, I have done my best to stay away from politics and focus on delivering local services across Avondale and South Lanarkshire. I'm therefore I'm going to focus on what we all need to do here in Avondale and across South Lanarkshire, leaving my colleagues in Edinburgh and Westminster to focus on the national & international climate change agenda.

In-Fact this week: I asked my Conservative Colleague (CLLR Richard Nelson) and group business manager, if I could take a Conservative seat on the SLC Climate Change Committee. I'm not going to discuss yet what needs to be done but I hope to bring regular updates to the wider Avondale community as this new committee takes policy decisions that in-turn implement projects that deliver a real-term reduction in carbon imitations across South Lanarkshire. As you all know: I'm about action and therefore I will focus to ensure this committee (if I get on it) isn't just another talking-shop but a vehicle for change!

In conclusion: I hope this update has been useful? These projects listed above are just the highlights from te last six weeks and therefore since the end of the 2019 summer recess. I continue to manage multiple constituent cases I could never discuss publicly and I continue to stand up for this incredible community here in Avondale in what I've always called: "A Common-Sense Approach to local Government."

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SLC Ward-5, Avondale & Stonehouse