

ROTHESAY TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE SCHEME DECEMBER 2023 UPDATE

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress of Rothesay Townscape Heritage (TH) as the programme nears completion on 31st December 2023.
- 1.2. The 5 year programme which started in September 2017 was due to complete in September 2022. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on the construction industry, completion was extended until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to allow for regeneration projects to complete as planned.
- 1.3. The programme has made a transformational difference to the town centre of Rothesay including:
  - 4 priority buildings** restored with a **5<sup>th</sup>** due to complete by end of December 2023. This includes the new Argyll and Bute Council Customer Service hub at 37 Victoria Street.
  - 4 shopfronts** restored with a **5<sup>th</sup>** due to complete by end of December 2023.
  - 9 traditional window projects** completed.
  - 14** training and community engagement events held involving School Pupils and Homeowners.
  - 1** Community pop-up shop and innovation space created.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That members of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee note and consider the content of the report.

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**3. INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress of Rothesay Townscape Heritage (TH) as the programme nears completion on 31st December 2023.
- 3.2. The 5 year programme which started in September 2017 was due to complete in September 2022. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on the construction industry, completion was extended until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to allow for regeneration projects to complete as planned.
- 3.3. The Rothesay Townscape Heritage (TH2) Project is a £2.8m jointly funded grant programme focusing on the regeneration of historic buildings.



**Built Heritage Information Sessions** 244 school pupils learnt about common building problems and the importance of maintenance through a range of educational tools and workshops. A range of practical workshops were also held for homeowners, including the repair and maintenance of timber windows, and working with lime render.

**Environmental Arts Project** An audio tour of Rothesay, entitled, "*If these stones could talk*" encouraged an audience of 22 to discover the hidden delights of Rothesay and what makes it a great place to live, work and visit.

**Audience Development** The work sought to engage with the local community to understand how best to market Bute to visitors. Targeted segments including: heritage, wildlife and active tourism were recommended as a result of the exercise, and which form the basis of a toolkit that is available to businesses island-wide, and which has been shared with Visit Bute as a resource that can be further developed by the organisation.

**Digital Strategy** Further analysis explored the digital journey that visitors make from first visit to return visit. The analysis identified key touchpoints and opportunities for engagement throughout the visitor journey.

A two day event that projected on to the castle wall, mural projects, based on the maritime past of Bute and the colours, textures and materials that make up the townscape.

## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. Programme staff are now working closely with owners and their respective architects to ensure the successful completion of the remaining building projects.
- 5.2. The 5 year programme has delivered a transformational benefit to the town centre of Rothesay. This has complemented previous investment by the focused on the eastern side of the town.
- 5.3. With works now well underway with the restoration of Rothesay Pavilion. There may be potential for a future regeneration programme that would focus on the western side of Rothesay not covered by current or previous programme. This would then see a full restoration of the sea front in Rothesay enhancing the town for future generations to live, work and visit.
- 5.4. Following completion of the programme at the end of December 2023 the evaluation report will be finalised providing key outputs. A further report will be submitted to the next area committee meeting to provide a final update.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. **Policy** - The Outcome Improvement Plan, Local Development Plan, Economic Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan support town centre regeneration and a diverse and thriving economy.
- 6.2. **Financial** - Argyll and Bute Council funding of £200,000 is committed. In addition, Rothesay TH is also made up of the following:

National Lottery Heritage Fund	£1,888,500
Historic Environment Scotland	£500,000
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	£70,249
LEADER	£65,800
Smarter Choices Smarter Places	£21,500

- 6.3. **Legal** - Grant contracts were provided to third parties.

