

ROTHESAY TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE SCHEME DECEMBER 2023 UPDATE

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 31st 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 **5th** 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 **5th** 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 31st 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 in the town.

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.

