

**REPORT BY THE POLICY LEAD FOR ROADS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AMENITY SERVICES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

This report provides an update to the main focus of work since my last report in November 2015

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that members note the contents of this paper.

**3. DETAIL**

**3.1 Meetings and Events**

**3.1.1 Meeting with Marco Biagi, Minister for Local Government. Helensburgh, 1<sup>st</sup> March.**

Councillor Walsh, Leader, has already reported on our meeting with Marco Biagi, Minister for Local Government, in his April Leaders Report. I would just like to add that I too found this meeting to be very positive and would like to thank him for the time he took to speak with us and listen to what we had to say about Argyll and Bute's unique geography and circumstances.

**3.1.2 Roads Collaboration Meeting, Inverness, 3<sup>rd</sup> March.**

**3.1.2.1** The above meeting in Inverness with Roads Officers was very positive. Perhaps the most notable outcome from the meeting was an agreement that there should be increased collaboration where there was the potential to drive up efficiencies and reduce costs. One example of such an opportunity was that Moray Council have spent millions on a new dredger (for harbours etc) and this could be made available to us and to other council areas, in a mutually beneficial way.

We continue to explore all the possibilities of this partnership and a further meeting is planned. We are using every opportunity to work collaboratively with other Councils where there is potential for mutual benefit.

**3.1.2.2** Another potential opportunity discussed at the meeting was that of the Designated Person for Harbour Authorities. This person cannot be an officer from the same council, as they have to be independent. However, it was agreed that there was scope for a collaborative approach by designating an officer from a different council area and swapping officers between council areas.

**3.1.2.3** Opportunities for Northern collaboration were also identified in relation to joint training ventures. The potential for this shall be explored further, in the interests

of cost saving and any other networking opportunities which may arise.

I attended a further meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> June, which confirmed that good progress was being made. A report will be brought to the council, in due course, in order to decide whether or not to join one of the partnerships which is currently being discussed.

### **3.1.3 Convention of the Highlands and Islands, Western Isles, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016.**

#### **3.1.3.1** I attended the above meeting with Pippa Milne, Executive Director for Development and Infrastructure Services.

The meeting was chaired, as usual, by John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy.

The main agenda items were as follow:-

- Digital Connectivity – Update and key actions from CoHI in October 2015
- Collaborative support for the delivery of UHI vision
- Fuel Poverty
- EU Funds - Post 2020

#### **3.1.3.2 Fergus Ewing, Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism**

As part of the Digital Connectivity discussion at the Convention, I took the opportunity to speak with Fergus Ewing, Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism, in relation to some of the issues we are facing in Argyll and Bute. In particular, I explained the issues faced on Coll and Tiree. I was pleased that he agreed to come and visit Argyll. Dates are currently being sought for this meeting and an agenda is being drawn up. I hope to be able to report further progress with this at the Council Meeting.

#### **3.1.3.3 Clive Mulholland, UHI Principal and Vice-Chancellor**

Clive Mulholland, UHI Principal and Vice-Chancellor, spoke about rationalising UHI to make it more economical. Argyll and Bute has concerns in relation to how UHI courses support the Argyll and Bute local economy and discussions are on-going in relation to Oban as a University Town. There had been further discussion with John Swinney who explained that rationalisation did not have to mean centralisation. There would be benefit in further communication with Clive Mulholland, as rationalisation options are being considered, to ensure that the needs of the Argyll and Bute economy are given consideration as part of these deliberations.

#### **3.1.3.4 Networking**

Unfortunately, a meeting which had been scheduled with Derek MacKay did not take place, however, I made the most of a good networking opportunity. We used the time to hold a meeting with North Ayrshire and Highland Councils where assurances were given that other councils with Islands would be included in any considerations which were being given in relation to the Three Island Councils.

### **3.1.4 COSLA Convention, 11<sup>th</sup> March**

I too attended the COSLA Convention on 11<sup>th</sup> March, which was reported by Councillor Walsh in his Leaders Report. I can confirm that, although many of these items are taken in private session, that the meetings provide an excellent opportunity to network, share ideas and work collaboratively to assist with the shaping of policies and identification of partnership working opportunities.

### **3.1.5 Attendance at Area Committee and Business Days**

I attended the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee recently, where I was pleased to see good progress being made with the development of the North Pier Maritime Reception Centre and transit berthing facility. This exciting project promises to add great value to the local economy of Oban and wider Lorn area, by providing up to date marine infrastructure to cater for transiting yachts, kayaks, commercial boats, day trip boats and cruise passengers. It is hoped that this facility, which is of strategic importance, will help stimulate further investment in communities such as Tobermory. During my visit to Oban I also had the opportunity to see the public realm works that are making great progress in Oban Town Centre, as reported below.

I also attended a Bute and Cowal Business Meeting to discuss and agree priorities in relation to a number of Capital Projects including the Queens Hall in Dunoon, a CHORD project that is currently at the tender stage and also the Pavilion project, which I have reported in more detail below.

### **3.1.6 Drumhead Service; Battle of Jutland. Helensburgh, 14th May.**

I attended the above commemoration event to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Jutland which is credited with changing the outcome of the First World War. Again, I would like to thank all the council staff, members and, of course, the British Legion, for making the event such a huge success.

## **3.2 Up-date on Special Projects, Including CHORD, by Area.**

### **3.2.1 Campbeltown**

The Campbeltown CHORD projects have been delivered under budget, the amount of surplus remaining is £197,625. At the MAKI AC on 6 April 2016, £15k was allocated for a street sweeper machine, the request for this was approved by the Council.

#### **3.2.1.1 Campbeltown Town Hall**

It was good to see the completion of the former Campbeltown Town Hall in May. This tremendous community led project, with assistance from both the Council and HIE, has restored to its former glory a magnificent listed building in the centre of Campbeltown's historic town centre. Equipped to modern standards, the restored building can offer a range of facilities, including a fully equipped function room that can accommodate conferences and functions such as weddings; which it has already done to great success.

#### **3.2.1.2 50 Main Street**

Another great project that has now been completed in Campbeltown is "50 Main Street"; the last of the THI priority projects to be delivered. This listed

tenement was in a very poor condition prior to its restoration and indeed it was very close to demolition. Now opened on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June and fully restored to form four one person flats and two commercial properties for rent.

Importantly, both the former Town Hall and 50 Main Street were restored by local building firms helping to sustain these businesses and improve their building skills for future work.

### **3.2.1.3 Campbeltown Berthing Facility Up-date**

Campbeltown Berthing Facility continues from strength to strength with over 800 boats using the facility in less than a full season and with over 2,700 people taking advantage of the new facility, helping to boost the local economy and create an important stepping stone for yachts to access other parts of Argyll and Bute.

The council will continue to work with the operator to market and promote this facility and encourage greater use. The facility also hosts a number of other commercial operators including the Kintyre Express that connects Campbeltown to Ballycastle and Port Ellen on Islay by fast passenger RIB.

## **3.2.2 Helensburgh**

### **3.2.2.1 Helensburgh CHORD**

The Helensburgh CHORD project has been delivered under budget. The amount of surplus funds remaining is £653,119. To date, this project has been nominated for six prestigious national awards. At the Scottish Design Awards, which rewards top architecture firms and design agencies for their contribution to the country's historic and contemporary design culture, I was absolutely delighted when it was announced that we had won the category for Public Realm/Landscaping.

I have listed below all the awards that the CHORD project in Helensburgh has been shortlisted for:

- 2016 Scottish Design Awards – Public Realm/Landscaping
- 2016 RIAS Awards – won on 16<sup>th</sup> June – see further information below
- 2016 RICS Awards - Regeneration
- 2016 Civic Trust Awards -
- 2016 Scottish Property Awards – Town Centre Regeneration Project of the Year
- 2015 FX International Design Awards – Museum/Exhibition Space

It is clearly evident from activity in the enhanced Colquhoun Square and Esplanade, especially in good weather, that the local community, businesses and visitors have embraced the improvements to the town. In terms of businesses, this is seen by the increased café culture and take-up of the Shopfronts Grants, with just under 17 businesses enhancing their shopfronts in the first round with, approximately, a further twenty five applications received for round two.

#### **3.2.2.2 Helensburgh Town Centre – Public Realm RIAS Award**

I am delighted to report that I attended this high profile awards ceremony at the Hilton Hotel, Glasgow, on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, when Helensburgh's Revitalised Town Centre Public Realm, designed by Austin-Smith:Lord (on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council) won a prestigious Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) award. A full news report was posted on 17<sup>th</sup> June and is available on Argyll and Bute Council's website. As a result of this success, Helensburgh Town Centre will now be part of the short-list for the RIAS Doolan Award for Architecture.

#### **3.2.2.3 Helensburgh Waterfront Development**

Over the last few months the design team and cost consultants, along with the Regeneration Project and Programme Managers, have been reviewing the design specification for the new swimming pool and leisure facility in consultation with officers in Leisure Services. They have also been reviewing the options for the flood defence works and pier head improvements. A position paper was presented at the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June. The decision was made to support officers' recommendations to move forward with appointing a design team to progress the PID. The council issued a full press release on 15<sup>th</sup> June to announce that this "ambitious multi-million pound waterfront development scheme" was now gathering momentum following the above decision. I am absolutely delighted that we are now in a position to drive this project forward. I feel that it will really improve the town and I look forward to updating members further, as this project progresses.

#### **3.2.2.4 The Hermitage Park Project, Helensburgh**

The Hermitage Park project, an excellent example of partnership working with the community, funding partners and the council, has now secured all the necessary funding to proceed to tender stage, following agreement by the HLF to allow the project to start. Following my last report, funding has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £2.3million, £253k from the MoD Covenant fund and most recently Sustrans with an additional £250k to allow the park to become an important cycle hub for Helensburgh, subject to final design approval.

Melissa Simpson has now been appointed as the project manager for the project as it enters the tender stage and on to implementation.

#### **3.2.2.5 Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre Opening, 1st March.**

Councillor Walsh, Leader, also reported on the above event in his April Leaders Report. However, I would like to add my comments to his, that I too was delighted and rather proud to join with other local members for the official opening of this fabulous new facility. I realise what a large investment the building was for the Council but I feel that the people of Helensburgh and our hard working staff deserve this state of the art, all-encompassing facility, which I know will be of huge benefit to the area, as part of the regeneration work which has been transformational in Helensburgh.

I would like to thank Gordon Reid, the Helensburgh tennis player, former minister Marco Biagi (also a Helensburgh lad) and our Provost, Len Scoullar,

for the parts they played in the opening ceremony. I am also grateful to all the council officers and members who attended the event, making it such a special day.

### **3.2.3 Oban**

#### **3.2.3.1 Transit Berthing Facility**

A location has now been agreed for this on the North side of North Pier and it is hoped that pontoons for visiting boats could be in place by 2017.

Some really positive discussions took place between Oban Bay Marine and the council over the summer. A deliverable scheme to provide a permanent transit berthing facility, in a technically suitable location, in a financially viable manner, was the result of these talks. The council now has sights set on gathering all the information needed to produce detailed designs for a long term facility which will bring economic benefits to our area. Once a Full Business Case has been considered by members, the council will then work on securing a suitable contractor to carry out these important works.

I am delighted that, again, through a commitment to working in partnership, a solution has been found which is deliverable.

A report was taken to the June OLI Area Committee to seek support for development funding to take the project forward to tender stage. Members have agreed, in principle, to go forward to detail design stage. A further paper will now be submitted to P&R, in August for approval. It is anticipated the FBC will subsequently be presented to OLI AC and then to P&R for approval to tender the works. It is intended that the works will start on site early 2017 and be completed for the summer.

#### **3.2.3.2 Maritime Visitor Facility**

Following a review of the previously approved design to take account of objections from an adjacent business, OLI members were presented with design options at the April 2016 Area Committee which focused primarily on the function of the building and its relationship with surrounding uses. Members agreed to proceed with the option containing three commercial spaces. The revised design has been shared with adjacent businesses and planning approval for the revised design is currently underway. The Full Business Case is due to be presented to the OLI AC in September 2016 and P&R in October 2016 for approval, following which, the works will be tendered in November and completed in the summer of 2017.

#### **3.2.3.3 Public Realm George St – Station Square (Ph2)**

Work is continuing to progress well with Oban phase 2, with updates to a wide range of stakeholders being presented every week. The quality of the work to date has been outstanding and once finished, will make a hugely positive contribution to the attractiveness of the town. The biggest challenge facing contractors now is how busy Oban is getting with tourists taking advantage of the cheaper fares on offer to visit Mull, Barra, Iona and Lismore, the five trains a day to Oban from Glasgow, superb events to attend and the many things to

see and do in Oban and wider Lorn area. The great weather we have enjoyed over a sustained period has also helped deliver an excellent start to the tourist season.

Both the phase 1 and phase 2 works continue to be well received and are expected to be delivered on time (summer) and within budget.

### **3.2.4 Rothesay**

#### **3.2.4.1 Rothesay Pavilion**

Following the closure of the Pavilion at the end of September 2015, various surveys were undertaken which prompted the decision to let an enabling works contract on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016; contract value £488,908. This commission, to a local firm, to undertake stabilisation and investigation works to the fabric of the pavilion, has involved the removal of all the internal ceilings exposing the reinforced concrete structural frame, which unfortunately is in a worse condition than was anticipated. The architect and structural engineer are working closely with the specialist concrete sub-contractor to establish options for repair. This is not an unusual situation with buildings of this age and type. A report is to be forward to the Council for consideration.

In terms of the main works, the intention is to tender these in August with a tender return in October 2016. This will allow an application for additional funds to HLF in November which will be assessed by their Board in January 17. It is anticipated that works will start on site in April 2017 and completed in July 2018.

Meanwhile, fund raising for the Pavilion continues, with Officers of the Council and members of the Trust looking at funding opportunities to add to the project and the external funding that has already been attracted. As part of this effort, the Rothesay Pavilion Charity continue to submit grant applications and, since January 2016, they have raised circa £90k. They are also currently pulling together an activities programme to engage with local people on their heritage.

### **3.2.5 Dunoon**

#### **3.2.5.1 Dunoon Queens Hall**

Since the building was closed, various surveys have been undertaken, resulting in two contracts being let. Enabling works started on site on the 30 May, for approximately three weeks, followed by asbestos removal works, which will start on site on the 27 June, for 8 weeks.

The tenders for the main works are currently being evaluated. A report will come to Bute & Cowal AC and P&R in August, followed by Council in September. The contract is expected to be awarded in October, with works being completed around March 2018.

#### **3.2.5.2 Dunoon Wooden Pier**

Work has successfully been completed on phases 1a and 1b of the Dunoon Wooden Pier, again, on time and within the available budget. We are now

actively considering how we can best take forward the second phase of this project.

### **3.2.5.3 Regeneration Up-dates**

Further information is available on many of the above developments in the Major Capital Regeneration Update Report presented to Policy & Resources Committee on the 17 March 2016. A further update report will be presented to P&R on the 18 August 2016.

### **3.3 Roads and Amenity Services**

Roads and Amenity Services are currently busy considering how best to implement the budget decisions around the best possible delivery of services. A lot of my time has been spent working with Amenity Services officers to ensure a smooth roll out of new schedules. At the same time, work continues on a number of projects and I have reported on some of these below.

#### **3.3.1 Furnace Coastal Protection**

Roads and Amenity's design team have designed, tendered and supervised the delivery of coastal protection works at Furnace, Mid Argyll. The works are part of a collaborative approach the council has taken forward with Scottish Water who have part funded the works. The council's involvement has been as both land owner and coastal protection authority. The coastal protection works were completed ahead of time, to specification and to budget and provide protection to council owned land as well as garden ground to several properties.

#### **3.3.2 Roads Capital Programme**

The Roads Capital Programme is well underway for this current financial year with a mixed economy delivery model, utilising our in house surfacing squads, who carry out fantastic work, a national surface dressing contractor and a number of SMEs. Over the last 5 years capital investment of over £35M has seen an arrest in the deterioration of the Road Condition Index (RCI) which is now on an improving trajectory.

#### **3.3.3 Members Seminar**

The roads team and Transport Scotland gave a broad range of informative presentations at the Members Seminar held in the Council Chamber on 6 June. The presentations gave clear and concise information detailing how road condition surveys are carried out, how the survey information is used to draw up scheme lists, types of surface treatments used and a comparison of the surface areas that can be achieved from the various different treatments available. Transport Scotland spoke about recent and proposed works on the Rest and be Thankful as well as their wider programme of works. The seminar was well attended and members took the opportunity of asking a number of questions.

#### **3.3.4 Parking Reviews**

I have been involved in discussion in relation to the progress of parking reviews, which are well under way. I have summarised this progress below:-



## **MAKI**

- Public engagement complete
- Briefing note circulated to MAKI Councillors
- Detailed analysis underway to complete full recommendations
- Final proposals to MAKI Area Committee for approval

## **OLI**

- Recommendations presented to OLI Business Day
- Councillors have requested more information about the proposals in other areas – to be circulated via briefing note
- Meeting with Councillors McCuish and Robertson to take place shortly to agree next steps.

## **H&L**

### Helensburgh RPZ

- Traffic Order Public Consultation completed 27th May
- We have received 14 objections
- Objections acknowledged and being assessed
- Final Proposals will go to H&L area committee for approval

### Luss RPZ

- Public engagement complete
- Now in consultation phase, plans being finalised
- Proposal to introduce on street charges and Restricted Parking Zone in village.

## **B&C**

- Proposals discussed and agreed by Councillors at a workshop on 3rd May
- Consultation leaflet to be modified to reflect changes, final proposals to go to B&C area committee for approval.

### **3.3.5 The Service Choices 3 Weekly Refuse Collection**

I have been involved in discussions in relation to the above. A paper has been prepared for the Council with a recommendation that members endorse the Operational Service Procedure appended to it.

### **3.3.6 The Energy Efficient Lighting Scheme**

To enable an interest free loan from SALIX to be utilised (the loan has a requirement that phase one of the Lantern Change is completed by September) the lighting design for Helensburgh has been completed and lanterns procured through a framework contract. Phase one of the lighting replacement will be delivered with in house resource. Design work is also ongoing across other areas in Argyll and Bute which will be followed by lantern replacement phased over the next 18 to 24 months.

### **3.3.7 Cardross Cremator**

The existing equipment is being replaced with a new unit which meets the Mercury Abatement Requirements. The new unit is replacing an old obsolete

unit which was decommissioned some while ago. The current unit is being left in situ to provide back up and resilience alongside the new unit.

### **3.3.8 Roads Inspection Manual**

The Roads Inspection Manual was launched in April this year. This collaborative piece of work between eleven West Coast Scottish local authorities provides a consistent approach to statutory road safety inspections, ensuring the road network is maintained to a safe and consistent standard and a robust defence mechanism is in place to defend any third party claims through the court system.

## **3.4 Regulatory Services**

### **3.4.1 Safe and Successful Events**

The Council continues to support “**safe and successful events**”. Multi-agency Event Safety Groups have been, or are in place for significant events (Tiree Music Festival, Hinterland, ObanLive, Mull Rally; ButeFest, Mach 1, etc). These arrangements are working well, and we have been able to manage risks to the Council.

The Project Team is working to deliver its agreed remit (papers are available via this [link](#)) and they are working hard to resolve specific issues and difficulties which have arisen.

Key Objectives -

- To establish a system for managing events that is consistent with the needs of national partner agencies (i.e. Safety Advisory Groups).
- To ensure that Council Services have an integrated approach to event safety, and we are aware of their collective roles and responsibilities, and consistent systems in place in respect of event safety group.
- To support and provide guidance to event organisers, who may wish to organise events, including a self-help guide for small events, which may not require significant local authority input.
- To have a consistent approach across all administrative areas of the Council including fees and charges, licensing.
- To develop a one-stop shop approach to booking Council facilities

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This year is turning out to be very exciting in terms of the developments on the ground in Argyll and Bute, as we change the face of our towns to be more interesting and accommodating places to spend time; for local residents and Businesses alike. This and some of the other special projects will increase confidence in the area, attracting people and businesses here to live and work. I

am looking forward to seeing many projects taking shape and being completed as we head towards 2017.

**Councillor Name:** Councillor Ellen Morton  
**Policy Lead for:** Roads, Infrastructure, Amenity Services and Special Projects  
**Date:** 21st June 2016