

I welcome the additional £20 Million funding for Argyll & Bute which the Chancellor announced in the Autumn Statement as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Partnerships. These partnerships see the council work closely with the UK Government and relevant officials to secure UK Government funding for Argyll and Bute's communities, and this funding is testament to the hard work put in by the Council and officials.

I would like to thank the local Council Staff who worked hard to protect premises and deal with the flooding that occurred in Rothesay on 27th December following significant rainfall. I have raised this with the service to see what actions can be taken to minimise future disruptions of this nature.

I am disappointed that there have been further delays to getting the Rothesay Pier Lifts operational again for the travelling public. I continue to engage with the service to pursue a resolution to this issue.

I attended the Council's Housing Emergency Summit which brought together housing associations, developers and construction industry representatives with government and other stakeholders to look at ways to address the current housing crisis faced in Argyll & Bute. This was a positive day which sought to identify actions and interventions that would have the most impact, which can only be achieved by working together. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan is looking at potential projects that would deliver 1000 affordable homes over the next 5 years in Argyll & Bute, including 96 on Bute.

I attended the Rothesay Castle Stakeholder Engagement and was pleased to hear that action would be completed on the high level masonry risks allowing the castle to reopen in the Spring, ahead of this year's holiday season.

I attended the Environment, Development and Infrastructure committee which reported that new measures to deal with Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) were now in place following a change in SEPA guidance which will see soft furnishings separated at recycling sites.

The Area Committee heard about the ongoing challenges and lack of options for the former Rothesay Academy lower building, despite it being marketed for over a decade. Officers will now submit a pre-application to consider the potential demolition and redevelopment of the site. Fyne Homes is looking at creating a master plan for the redevelopment of their adjacent site along with the lower site to create new homes for the area.

I was pleased to be able to take part in the Positive Pedals presentation of certificates for cycle maintenance before Christmas, as well as supporting the excellent work done by Bute Oasis by delivering some Christmas Hampers.

I also attended meetings of the Pavilion Lobby Group; the PPSL committee and civic government hearings; members' seminars covering a range of topics including winter maintenance, single authority model and SG Energy Consent Unit; and COSLA budget seminar ahead of the Scottish Government budget announcements.

Councillor Peter Wallace
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