

At the full Council on 25th April the new administration was formed as a coalition between SNP, Lib Dems, Greens, Labour and some independents. Now in opposition, I sit on the same committees as before with the addition of the Bute and Cowal community planning group, which I attended on the 30th April. It was very interesting to hear updates from all the partner organisations on the work they are doing across the Bute & Cowal area.

Also at full council, it was agreed that the Learning Estate Investment Programme campus project on Mull should progress to the next stage. This programme requires a significant capital investment from the council with the aim of delivering a modern fit-for-purpose school campus on the island. The project will attract support from the Scottish Government of up to 50% of eligible costs, however because this is funded in arrears over the life of the school, significant borrowing will be required with the council responsible for up to 85% of the total project costs.

The tender prices for Stages 2 and 3 of works at Rothesay Pavilion have now been received resulting in an anticipated final cost almost £1.75M greater than the February estimates. Council officers are now undertaking a scrutiny and value engineering process, examining line by line costs to ensure the tender correctly reflects the specification and does not include anything that is “over specified,” so this is considered to be a ‘worst case’ scenario. Officers also continue to engage with partner funders to try and secure additional funding for the project. It is proposed a detailed report be brought for consideration and decision by the Council at its meeting on 27 June 2024.

Following representations I made at the Environment Development and Infrastructure committee and with officers about road conditions here on Bute, I am pleased to report that areas of particular concern that were highlighted are being addressed which will benefit all road users and allow the cycling event later in the year to go ahead safely. Preparatory works are also underway for other capital road schemes.

The new door entry system for the public toilets at Port Bannatyne did not operate as expected so this has been deactivated again pending a return visit from the contractor.

In addition to attending Council meetings I continue to deal with other casework on behalf of individuals and groups across the island to provide support on a variety of issues.