

## We're in the money

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CHRISTMAS has come early for Campbeltown with £6.5 million in the town's Christmas stocking.

s to go ahead in the centre of Campbeltown to regenerate parts of the town centre and make the area more attractive to visitors and investors.

Political rivalries in Argyll and Bute Council were suspended as councillors united behind proposals, which will see a £30m investment in the five main towns in Argyll.

Councillors also backed an £8 million investment in Oban and £6.6m for Helensburgh. Dunoon was given £8.5m and Rothesay was given £2.5m for plans for town centre and waterfront improvements.

In Campbeltown three projects will share the money. These include a plan to revitalise the strategic Kinloch Road area, providing commercial premises and improving the housing stock. The town's strip of pontoons is to be developed into a marina and improvements made to heritage and conservation sites.

Over the past year £400,000 has been spent by the council on business cases for each town.

This threatened to pit town against town in a head-to-head battle to win a share of the £10 million of funding for a waterfront project which 'scored' the highest in consultants' reports.

But following a series of meetings between council leaders, council area committee representatives and political groupings within the council, a deal was hammered out that will see all five towns get a share of a larger pot.

Councillors decided to add £20m to the £10m already set aside for the projects. The money will come from the council's capital budgets over the next five years and a loan of a further £7m from the Treasury.

Kintyre South Councillor John Semple said: 'For this community it is very much an opportunity for a transition from being somewhere that's always struggling with things coming and things going.

'There are so many things on the cusp; there is the potential for the Vestas factory to be taken over, the air base at Machrihanish is up for sale and there is a potential new Irish ferry. All these things will significantly benefit from a waterfront development in the town centre. A more prosperous looking town centre will be important in bringing people to Campbeltown.'

Councillor Donald Kelly said: 'I'm absolutely delighted that Campbeltown has secured the funding for the town centre and waterfront. We have to lever in as much external funding as possible to ensure that we give Campbeltown the best facilities. I also think that any construction work should involve local contractors where possible.'

Councillor Rory Colville said: 'Campbeltown is ready to go now. I'm confident that we will be able to work our business cases up very quickly and receive our full allocation of funding. There is a real potential to turn the economic situation around and Campbeltown will once again become one of the dominant towns in Argyll and Bute.'