

**CAPITAL ROADS RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2014/15 AND ROAD ANNUAL
STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT (ASOR)**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 As Scotland's second largest local authority, our road network extends some 1400 miles and it is the largest and most valuable asset in Argyll and Bute, with an estimated value of over £2.5billion.

Our unique geography, with over a third of our road network on islands, presents challenges to the ongoing maintenance of the network in terms of both costs and logistics, particularly when it comes to resurfacing work, where materials have to be sourced from mainland suppliers then transported to the islands by sea.

The importance of our transport infrastructure has been recognised by our communities in a Citizens Panel survey earlier this year and was also highlighted by key players from local and national government as well as business experts at the recent Argyll and Bute Economic Summit, hosted by the Community Planning Partnership.

The road network is responsible for conveying the vast majority of our visitors and the freight that is crucial to supporting our economy and can provide the ideal tool to market Argyll as a great place to live in, to work in and to visit. Its significance cannot be overstated.

The council has made a major investment of over £23million in the last three financial years, including this one, which improved the overall condition of our road network. This successful investment project has seen a mix of

resurfacing work, patching, surface dressing and in-situ surface recycling throughout the council area.

Using the Road Condition Index (RCI), we can see that the road network has improved, on average, by over 3% because of the roads reconstruction programme. It is worth noting that prior to the investment the RCI was declining, with the investment and treatments that trend has been reversed and we now have a positive direction of travel with further improvements forecast as the lag between surfacing works and condition surveys catch up.

It should, however, be noted that this system, developed by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS), does not necessarily take into account the unique topography of Argyll and Bute and can indicate that some of our roads are in a red condition when they are, in fact, entirely serviceable. The methodology also considers all 'A' designated roads in the same way, whereas in practical terms these roads can differ greatly, from Great Western Road in Glasgow to an 'A' road on Jura.

In practical terms this investment means there are now more roads throughout the council area regarded to be in green or good condition and, more importantly, fewer roads in the red or at risk state. Almost 90% of our 'A' class roads are in good or fair condition. By the end of 2014/15 we will have upgraded almost 360 miles or 25% of our road network, including over a third of our 'A' designated roads.

The ASOR also provides benchmarking data between Argyll and Bute and its family group.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) Notes the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides with regard to the effectiveness of the Council's Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy and associated Roads Reconstruction Programme.
- (ii) Notes the progress of the Roads Reconstruction Programme for 2014–15.

CAPITAL ROADS RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2014/15 AND ROAD ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT (ASOR)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an analysis of some of the data presented in the Roads Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR). The ASOR presents a summary of the Council's road assets as at April 2014. It provides information, based upon current available data, on the condition of the asset and future options which can be considered in terms of investment.
- 1.2 This report advises the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee of the progress being made with regard to the delivery of the Roads Reconstruction Programme for 2014/15. The programme has been delivered in line with the Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy which was approved by Council in October 2012. The strategy aligns with primary outcomes set out within the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) in terms of the economy and infrastructure, and ensures that the Council's financial resources are used wisely to *"fix the roads - not fill the pot holes"*.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee:
- (i) Notes the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides with regard to the effectiveness of the Council's Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy and associated Roads Reconstruction Programme.
 - (ii) Notes the progress of the Roads Reconstruction Programme for 2014-15.

3. DETAIL

Roads Asset Management & Maintenance Strategy

Capital Investment totalling £29.55M

- 3.1 In 2011, following the Roads Operations Service Review, the Council decided to focus investment in upgrading its strategic A class roads, and subsequently delivered a £7M programme of works which made an immediate and positive impact on the roads network. In February 2012, the Council approved a further £21M investment programme for roads reconstruction for 2012-15. Additional Scottish Government funding of £0.35M in 12/13 and £1.20M in 13/14 has been allocated as further investment to the roads reconstruction programme.

Road Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR)

- 3.2 Audit Scotland has provided guidance on the steps councils should consider adopting in terms of effective road asset management. The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation Scotland (SCOTS) has been working with local authorities and Audit Scotland to develop a nationally consistent framework for the development of Road Asset Management Plans (RAMPs) to assist in this process. As a foundation document for future roads asset management planning, the structure of the Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR) was developed through SCOTS and was introduced into local authorities in 2013. The Council's second ASOR (2014), which is at Appendix 1, provides a baseline from which annual asset management reporting and planning can be developed. The ASOR provides a summary of each asset group (Carriageways, Footways, Structures, Street Lighting, Traffic Signals and Street Furniture) in terms of condition and compliance with repair standards. The ASOR reports on the impact of the previous year's investment programme, which along with other relevant data, will inform the Council with regard to the effectiveness of the delivery of its policy objectives, and the development of future roads infrastructure investment options.
- 3.3 The ASOR also provides a detailed analysis of performance for a number of areas including:

Road Condition Index (RCI) – Annual Road Condition Survey

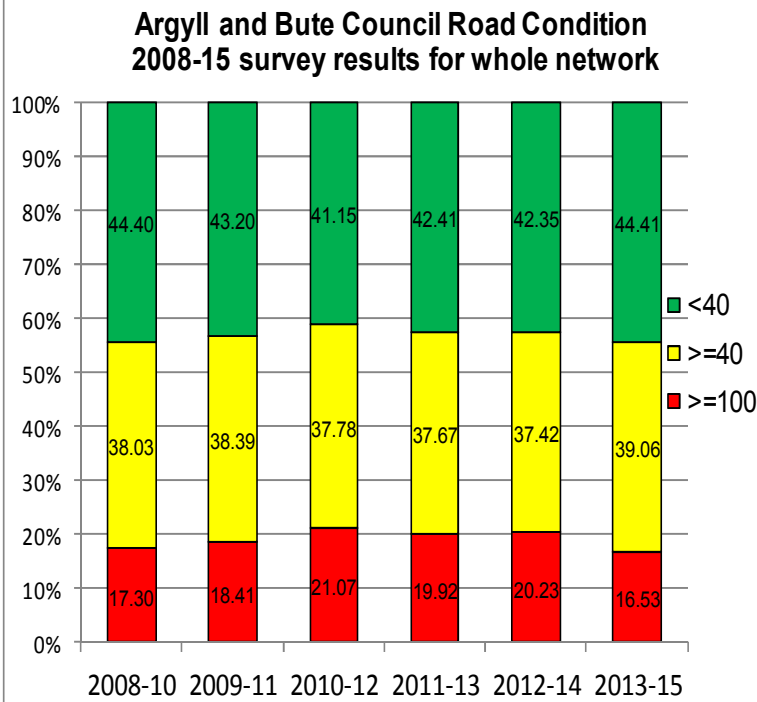
The annual survey of the roads in all the 32 Scottish Authorities scans 100% of the A class in one direction, 50% of the B class, 25% of the C class and 10% of the unclassified roads. The annual survey results are reported based on an average of 2 years results. This 2 year average can distort the actual

condition with recent resurfacing works not being reflected in the result due to a time lag in reporting and averaging.

To provide baseline positions across the entire road network a full network survey of Argyll and Bute's roads was carried out in 2010 and a further full network survey carried out in summer 2014. The full network surveys have been completed to allow more detailed year on year comparisons of network condition to be made.

The survey, which is an automated scanning process carried out with vehicle mounted equipment, collects data for a number of conditions including, rutting, cracking, edge deterioration, longitudinal profile, potholes etc. A road Condition Index (RCI) is allocated to each section of road based on combined results from the elements of the surveys. The RCI has 3 rankings:- Red (in need of works), Amber (preventive works recommended) and Green (good condition). The survey and results do not necessarily take into account the unique topography of Argyll and Bute and can indicate that some of our roads are in a red condition when they are, in fact, entirely serviceable. The methodology also considers all 'A' designated roads in the same way, whereas in practical terms these roads can differ greatly, from Great Western Road in Glasgow to an 'A' road on Jura.

The following table details the red, amber, green and RCI scores for Argyll and Bute between 2008–10 to 2013–15 based on the 2 year average. The table indicates that the RCI was declining. With the investment and treatments that trend has been reversed and we now have a positive direction of travel with further improvements forecast as the lag between surfacing works and condition surveys catch up.



The data represented is collected using a nationally accepted specification. The survey results for A, B, C and U roads are based upon machine surveys.

Not all of the road network is surveyed each year. The survey is carried out on 100% of A Class (in one direction only), 50% B Class, 25% C Class and 10% U Class. The annual results are reported based on an average of 2 years results.

Additional survey works were also undertaken in 2010-12 and 2013-15 to provide full network coverage and direct comparison of condition against roads reconstruction investment. This has provided confirmation of the improvement achieved through investment and delivery of the roads reconstruction programme.

Arrest in the decline in road condition

Table 3.10.3 on page 14 of the ASOP provides a comparison between the 2010 and 2014 surveys. These survey results confirm the reduction in reds and ambers overall and the increase in greens. The number of Category 1 and 2 defects between 2009/10 to 2013/14 has been reported in Table 3.11 of the ASOR. These figures show a reduction overall in the number of reactive repairs carried out since the increased capital investment in 2011 confirming that our approach of “*fixing the roads - not filling the pot holes*” is reducing the amount of reactive work by focusing on the planned more permanent works.

The road condition at 2010/11 was declining rapidly, in part due to the severe winters between 2009–2011. The investment and strategy has been successful in changing the downward trend to an upward one which has seen an overall improvement in the condition and a change from the negative downward trend to a positive upward trend.

Benchmarking

Argyll and Bute are working nationally with both SCOTS and APSE to produce a consistent approach to benchmarking. Currently annual performance data is collated by SCOTS and made available through APSE. However, analysis into the data collection suggests that there is not always a consistent approach with some authorities including items such as central overhead, preparatory works etc. and others not. Work is ongoing nationally to produce the performance data consistently to enable more fitting comparisons to be made.

The ASOR provides benchmarking data between Argyll and Bute and its family group. The RCI results for Scottish Rural Group Authorities (Argyll & Bute, Borders, Angus, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Dumfries & Galloway & Highland) are detailed in the table.

With the lag between surfacing works, the condition surveys and the RCI results, future RCI results are expected to improve and reflect the noticeable improvement to carriageway condition on the ground.

Despite the success of our roads capital programme and the general improvement in our road condition there is continuing need to invest in order to enhance the network further.

Table 3.13 in the ASOP details unit rates for surface treatment types. These rates indicate that costs in Argyll and Bute are broadly comparable to other similar authorities. However, some caution should be given to these costs as there is often a variance in terms of how costs are presented. Argyll and Bute incur additional costs for island and remote working due to logistics.

Roads Reconstruction Programme

- 3.4 The Roads Reconstruction Programme has been structured in accordance with the Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy (2012). The focus of the Roads Reconstruction Programme has been to recover the network through the delivery of a mix of carriageway resurfacing, patching/surface dressing and in situ road surface recycling; designed to seal the road to stop the ingress of water, improve ride quality and reduce the amount of reactive repair required. Proportionate scrub clearance, ditching/drainage works, minor realignments and improvements to sight lines have also been carried out in conjunction with the surfacing works to leave a 'finished' job.

Roads Reconstruction Programme – Works Completed 2011-14

- 3.5 The summary table below highlights the positive and visible impact of the works undertaken to date. On completion of this year's capital programme the Council will have upgraded over a third of its "A" class roads and almost 580km of roads in total since 2011/12.

Table 3.7 Roads Reconstruction Programme – Works Completed 2011-15

Road category	Treatment % 2011/12	Treatment % 2012/13	Treatment % 2013/14	Treatment % 2014/15	Total Treatment Length	Total Treatment as a % of network length 2011-14
A	55.76 km = 10.01%	93.37 km = 16.76%	47.42 km = 8.51%	26.12 km = 4.69%	222.67 km	39.98%
B	26.846 km = 4.37%	58.912 km = 9.60%	25.96 km = 4.23%	68.29 km = 11.13%	180.01 km	29.33%
C	12.374 km = 2.85%	4.008km = 0.92%	7.99 km = 1.84%	14.46 km = 3.33%	38.83 km	8.94%
U	18.860 km = 2.60%	17.553 km = 2.42%	43.60 km = 6.01%	57.52 km = 7.93%	137.53 km	18.97%
					579.04 km	24.85%

Note: for the purposes of comparison, the network length has been left as 2,330.194km, i.e. the section of the A83 that was trunked remains within the total network length.

- 3.6 The current capital investment programme to 2015/16 will allow the Council to upgrade over 45% of its class A roads and 35% of its class B roads by 2016; which in line with the SOA outcomes will make a significant and positive impact upon the local economy, connectivity and the quality of life of our communities.
- 3.7 To date, over the course of the 3 year programme, significant work has been carried out to mainland strategic routes including the: A814, A818 (Helensburgh and Lomond) A815, A886 (Bute and Cowal), A819, A816 (Oban Lorn and the Isles & Mid Argyll), A83 (Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay): and on strategic island routes including A849, A884, A848 (Mull) and A846, A847 (Islay). As part of this financial year's programme we have been successful in securing a match funding grant of some £800,000 to strengthen and provide additional passing places on the B836 Glen Lean route. The grant funding has been provided by the Argyll Timber Transport Group. This improved route will provide access across the Cowal peninsula allowing timber to be harvested and taken to Sandbank for onward transport by sea. Also this financial year over £1M of the OLI capital allocation has been invested in a comprehensive surface dressing programme on Tiree. This treatment has

sealed the road surface and improved the skid resistance of the islands roads and will reduce the amount of reactive maintenance required in future years.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Council's Annual Status and Options Report, provides objective analytical based evidence that confirms that the Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy, approved by Council in October 2012, and the associated targeting of capital and revenue expenditure and focus on productivity, is proving to be effective.
- 4.2 This report advises Members of the good progress being made with regard to the delivery of the Roads Reconstruction Programme for 2014/15. The report also confirms that since its inception in 2011, the overall strategic programme will have upgraded almost 40% of the Class A road network and nearly 30% of the Class B road network by the end of this financial year. This strategic infrastructure investment programme underpins the Single Outcome

5 IMPLICATIONS

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| 5.1 | Policy | Works assessed and carried out under the current Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Plan and delivered in accordance with the principles of the Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy. |
| 5.2 | Financial | Programme based on capital allocation for years 2011 /12 – 2015. |
| 5.3 | Personnel | Reconstruction works delivered by a combination of in-house Roads Operations team, Partnership Contractor and specialist contractors for surface dressing and in-situ recycling. |
| 5.4 | Equalities Impact Assessment | None |
| 5.5 | Legal | None |
| 5.6 | Risk | Completed works will reduce requirement to repair and maintain existing carriageway deterioration. |
| 5.7 | Customer Service in travel | Improved road assets will provide an overall improvement time and quality of driven and walking journeys. |

6 APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Road Annual Status and Options Report 2014

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Policy Lead Councillor Ellen Morton

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