

ROADS CAPITAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2024/25

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Roads Reconstruction Programme has been structured in line with the Roads Asset Management and Maintenance Strategy. The focus has been to arrest the rate of decline and provide an overall improvement in condition as has been demonstrated in the Annual Status and Options Report. In previous years this has been achieved through the delivery of a mix of carriageway resurfacing, edge strengthening, patching/surface dressing and in-situ road surface recycling. These treatments have been designed to seal the road to stop the ingress of water, improve ride quality and reduce the number of reactive repairs. This has resulted in an overall improvement in road conditions. Without this investment and works there would have been a significant deterioration in condition and a detriment to the travelling public, economic opportunity and tourism.
- 1.2 Attached to this report is a draft programme for roads reconstruction schemes for 2024/25. This programme has been designed using the current Road Condition Index (RCI) which is produced by the national road condition survey data. In addition to the RCI data, information such as road traffic collisions, known development, activities such as timber harvesting and skid condition (of the carriageways surface) which is measured by a separate survey are also considered together with information brought forward from Elected Members during agreed Area Business Days with officers from Roads and Infrastructure Service. This information is considered at officer level when appropriate engineering judgement is also applied to ensure that maximum benefit can be derived from the available investment.
- 1.3 As per previous years any post winter deterioration may result in some adjustment to the programme to ensure that the best rates of return in terms of whole life costs can be achieved.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
- Endorses the proposed programme of capital works for 2024/25
 - Agrees that details of each area committee's programme will be forwarded on to individual Elected Members.

ROADS CAPITAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2024/25

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides details of the proposed roads reconstruction programme for 2024/25. The programme is based on the 2024/25 allocation of a total of £8.0M.
- 2.2 The additional funding allocated at the Council meeting on 23 February 2023 meant that there was an £8M programme for both this financial year and for last year. This level of investment is welcomed and enables substantial programmes of works to be delivered across the road network focusing on arresting deterioration and where possible improving road condition.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
- Endorses the proposed programme of capital works for 2024/25
 - Agrees that details of each area committee's programme will be forwarded on to individual Elected Members.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The focus of the roads reconstruction programme has been to recover the network through the delivery of a mix of carriageway resurfacing schemes, patching/surface dressing and in-situ road surface recycling, which follow the principles set out within the Roads Asset Management Plan.
- 4.2 This Council has approximately £122M of backlog maintenance (based on figures produced by SCOTS) across the road network. This means that over £122M would need to be invested to bring the road network up to an 'A1' standard. Most councils are in a very similar position. During these challenging financial times, it is very unlikely we will benefit from the level of investment required to bring the road network up to an 'A1' condition. However, over the last decade there has been a carefully applied strategy of delivering revenue and capital funding collectively and delivering a series of works designed to minimise reactive work, carry out right first time repairs wherever possible and to deliver surfacing

techniques and specifications which maximises the amount of repairs and resurfacing which is delivered. As with almost all council services there is insufficient funding available to treat all the sections of road that we would like to do, the focus being on treating sections where we can maximise the financial return and in so doing reduce the amount of reactive repairs carried out. However, the investment levels that the Council has made over a number of years have made a positive impact on the council's road condition. This has been detailed in the Road Condition Index which is included in the Annual Status and Options report.

- 4.3 As in previous years, the proposed schemes have been selected using the Councils Roads Asset database WDM Pavement Management System (PMS) using the information collected from the SCANNER Survey carried out in summer months, other information mentioned above and engineering judgement. The SCANNER surveys are carried out by a single contract for all 32 Councils in Argyll and Bute. Unfortunately, this year a small number of councils, including Argyll and Bute, have not received a full network survey. In Argyll and Bute, the majority of the islands have not been surveyed and this means that previous year's data has been used and qualified from safety inspection intelligence. Whilst this is not ideal, Members should note that full network surveys are not carried out on an annual basis, the frequency of surveys is detailed below:

100% of the A Class roads are surveyed (in one direction)

50% of the B Class roads

25% of the C Class roads

10% of the Unclassified road network

- 4.4 The survey data will categorise roads from red to green, with red being in worst condition and green not requiring attention. In-line with industry best practice, investment is not necessarily concentrated on all the red roads but instead has been aligned to focus on a combination of red and amber roads to arrest deterioration. This effectively provides a stitch in time approach and ensures that we get the best rate of return from the investment available. Red roads are roads requiring attention currently, amber roads are roads which will require attention in the not too distant future and green roads are roads which require no attention. By progressing schemes which will provide the best rate of return, taking consideration of the survey results and associated data, the Council is able to deliver a programme of schemes which maximises the benefits to the travelling public from the available investment. There is also a consideration applied that reflects route classification and hierarchy together with the Road Condition Index.
- 4.5 Surface dressing schemes are selected on the basis that, either the skid resistance of the road surface is poor, or the road surface requires sealing before it fails. Surface dressing can range from a standard binder with 6mm chippings through to polymer modified binders with more than one layer of chippings.
- 4.6 Following a presentation to Members in January 2023 and reports to EDI Committee in June 2023, officers carried out Members Business days in October/November 2023 to enable opportunity for Members to bring forward priorities for consideration in the 2024-25 Capital Roads Programme.

- 4.7 As in previous years, the roads reconstruction programme will be delivered by a mixed economy model with the Councils in-house team delivering carriageway reconstruction and patching works. The surface dressing element of the programme will be delivered by an external contractor. This enables the maximum surface area to be covered which will help to seal carriageway cracks, prevent the ingress of water and reduce the amount of reactive maintenance for potholes.
- 4.8 The table below details the total of the 2024/25 allocation following the 2023 February Budget meeting. The capital budget allocation for 2024/25 has been split in line with the pre-agreed percentage formula which is based on road area and population. There are a number of schemes being carried forward for various reasons including ferry availability to transport materials. These have been shown at the bottom of the area programmes and are in addition to the £8M funding for 2024-25.

Area	Area Total
OLI (35%)	£2,800,000
MAKI (31%)	£2,480,000
B&C (20%)	£1,600,000
H&L (14%)	£1,120,000
Total	£8,000,000

- 4.9 As can be demonstrated in the below table, over the last 10 years, where the Council has seen average investment of at least £8 Million on Roads Reconstruction, Road and Infrastructure Services have been able to improve the road condition which in turn improves visitor numbers/local businesses as well as supporting our communities daily commute. Last year for the first time since we have been recording road conditions we were able to improve our roads to have over 50% in the good condition category. This is purely down to investment and the support provided by members allowing the Service to manage the network effectively.

Year	Capital & Revenue	Survey year	RCI
2014-15	£8,896,996	2014-16	54.4
2015-16	£6,799,499	2015-17	55.3
2016-17	£5,821,104	2016-18	55.5

2017-18	£5,233,219	2017-19	54.4
2018-19	£11,502,343	2018-20	54.17
2019-20	£9,472,398	2019-21	54.2
2020-21	£8,426,346	2020-22	52.5
2021-2022	£12,415,060	2021-23	49.8
2022-2023	£10,809,660	2022-24	TBC
Average Spend	£8,920,309	Average	53.99

- 4.10 In 2023/24 there was also a grant from the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) totaling £387k. This grant was significantly less than in previous years and officers expect this to continue in the current frugal economic climate. This funding was used to match fund existing schemes on the council network where timber extraction was programmed to be carried out. It is officers' intention to make further bids to the STTS for 2024/25 which, if successful, will provide additional investment for the road network.
- 4.11 The capital programme presented is based on carriageway condition late autumn/early winter. With the effect of winter this programme may need to be adjusted to ensure that any investment takes into consideration any winter deterioration.
- 4.12 The programme for each of the administrative areas will be forwarded to Area Committee Members and updates to Area Committees as the programme progresses. The programme will also be available on the council website with key scheme status and dates.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report provides details of the proposed roads reconstruction programme for 2024/25.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - works assessed and carried out under the current Roads Asset Management Plan.
- 6.2 Financial - programme will be based on capital allocation for year 2024/25.
- 6.3 Legal – None known.

- 6.4 HR - reconstruction works delivered by a combination of in-house roads operations team and sub-contractors.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None known.
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None known.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.
 - 6.5.3 Islands – None known.
- 6.6 Climate Change – due regard will be given to climate change with a view to minimising any climate change impact and these will be considered as and when they arise.
- 6.7 Risk - completed works will reduce requirement to repair roads and will arrest the carriageway/footway deterioration.
- 6.8 Customer Service - overall improvement in road surfaces and the quality of driven journeys.
- 6.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – the investment to improve our road network will contribute to a safer environment for young people to thrive in.

Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure: Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead for Roads and Transportation: Councillor Andrew Kain

February 2024

For further information contact:

Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Service
jim.smith@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Hugh O'Neill, Network and Standards Manager
hugh.oneill@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Tom Murphy, Operations Manager
tom.murphy@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – MAKI Proposed Roads Reconstruction Programme 2024/25

Appendix 2 – OLI Proposed Roads Reconstruction Programme 2024/25

Appendix 3 – B&C Proposed Roads Reconstruction Programme 2024/25

Appendix 4 – H&L Proposed Roads Reconstruction Programme 2024/25