

ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT 2019

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR) presents a summary of the Council's road assets as at April 2019. The report provides information, based upon current available data, on the condition of the asset and future options which can be considered in terms of investment. The report sets out the current road and associated infrastructure condition and forecasts future condition based on different proposed levels of investment.
- 1.2 The ASOR demonstrates investment in the Roads Reconstruction Programme over the last year which has provided a slight improvement to the overall Road Condition Index (RCI). Whilst the condition has only improved slightly, without the recent increased investment agreed in the capital programme, the road condition would have continued to deteriorate, resulting in our road network being in an extremely poor condition. The extended programme of resurfacing, edge strengthening and surface dressing has ensured the available increase in allocated money has been invested wisely and had a positive impact on the overall road network. The condition surveys carried out nationally have a lag of 2 – 4 years (due to not all of the network being surveyed in one year). Currently Argyll and Bute Council, although having improved slightly in the last year, are listed as having the highest RCI (most roads in need of maintenance) within our family group, effectively our roads index is the poorest of the 8 family group members for rural authorities in Scotland due to a number of factors but including the high proportion of peat founded roads. Peat founded roads are susceptible to move up and down depending on the ground water content. Not only does this mean that the roads can be bumpy and need more maintenance to fix any defects caused through movement, but also one of the measures in the RCI survey focuses on longitudinal profile which has a negative impact on the council's RCI score.
- 1.3 The ASOR links into the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) which forms part of the overall Capital budget decision making process. The ASOR is a useful tool in assisting Members make informed strategic decisions regarding investment of our limited Capital resources.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-

- Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides with regard to the improvement of the Council's Road Condition Index as a result of the ongoing investment in roads reconstruction works.
- Note that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Roads and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan that in turn informs the budget setting process.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report introduces the Annual Status and Options Report which makes an analytical assessment of the condition of the Council's road network and associated infrastructure as well as setting out projected conditions based on varying levels of investment.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:

- Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides with regard to the improvement of the Council's Road Condition Index as a result of the ongoing investment in roads reconstruction works.
- Note that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Roads and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan that in turn informs the budget setting process.

4.0 DETAIL

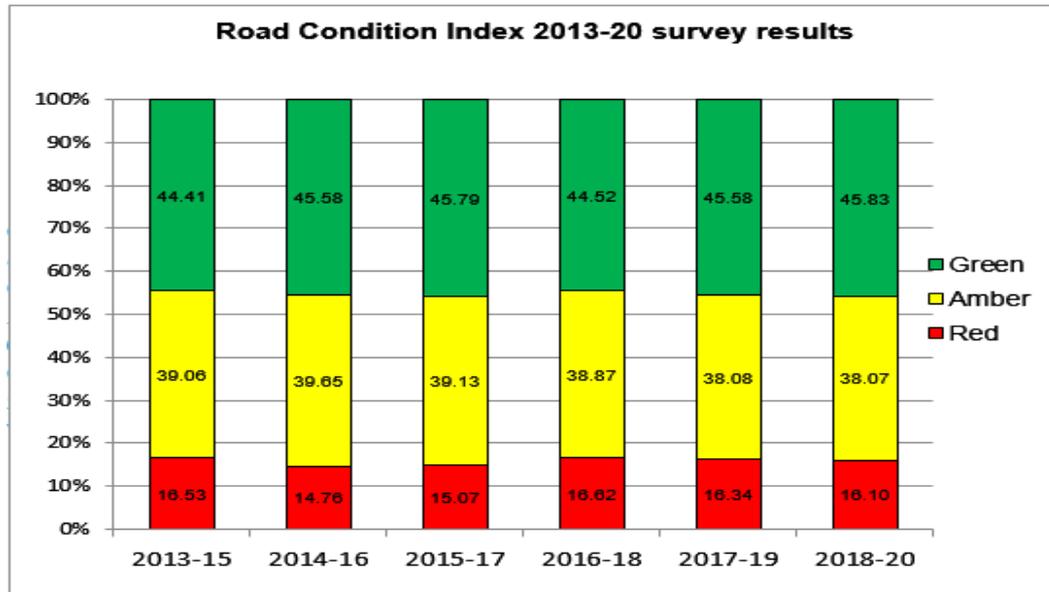
4.1 At the Argyll and Bute Council Budget Meeting in February 2018, a £16m investment programme for roads reconstruction was approved over the next two years. This recent capital reconstruction programme has already delivered a welcome improvement to the road network in terms of the Road Condition Index (RCI) as can be seen below and referenced in Table 1.

RCI for 2016-18 = 54.48% of roads needing improvement

RCI for 2017-19 = 54.42% of roads needing improvement

RCI for 2018-20 = 54.20% of roads needing improvement

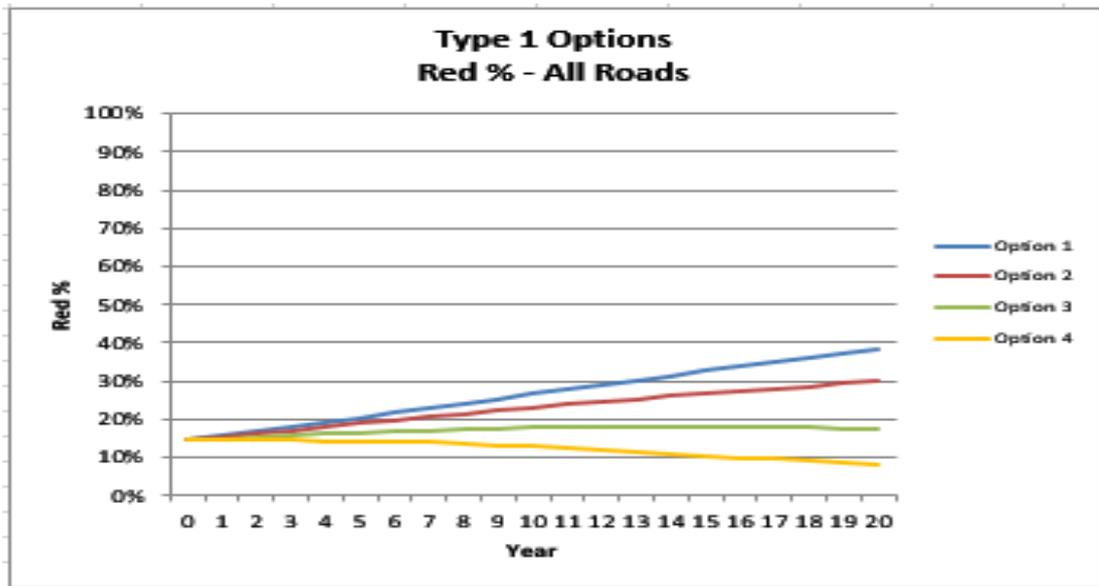
Table 1



Whilst the improvements above might seem quite modest, without the level of investment made, the road condition would have deteriorated significantly and this would have been reflected in the RCI scores. Previous levels of investment have halted the deterioration of the surfacing, began to improve network condition and acted as a contributory factor in reducing the number of CAT 1 & 2 defects. The latest RCI survey results (listed above) clearly reflect the positive impact previous investment has made whilst contributing to achieving the corporate goals and objectives.

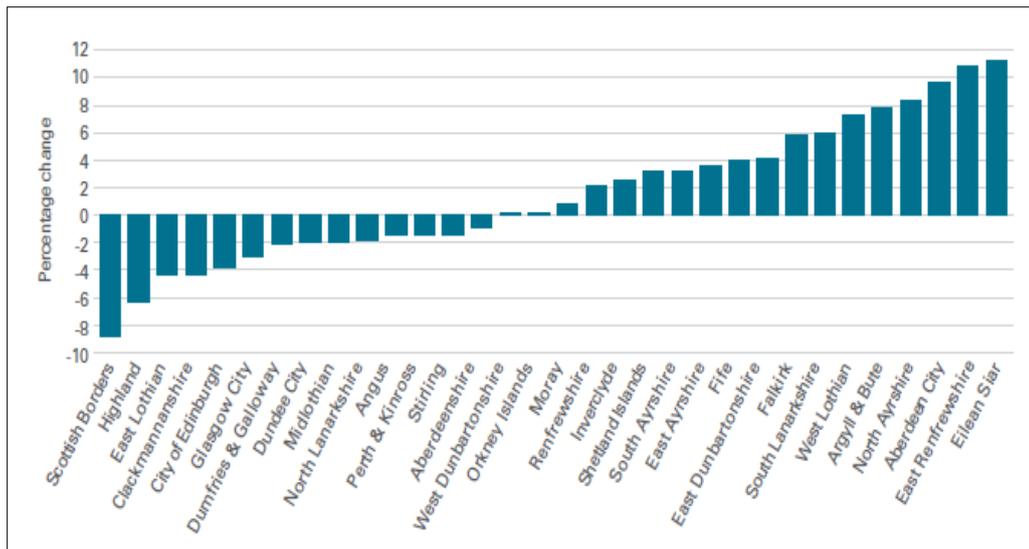
- 4.2 The overall indicative block allocation for 2020-21 for the whole of Roads and infrastructure, excluding marine works, is £6.6M. This would allocate just under £5M for roads reconstruction, based on the modelling below in Table 2, we would likely end up in a scenario of Option 2 where we would experience a year on year deterioration in road condition.
- 4.3 The graph below shows various funding scenarios which forecast the road condition over a 20 year period. The various options equate to annual monetary investment with Option 1 - £3M, Options 2 - £5M, Options 3 - £8M and Options 4 - £11M. We are currently in the second year of an overall £16M investment which has been supplemented by additional external funding covering strategic timber transport routes.

Table 2



- 4.4 The condition surveys carried out nationally have a lag of 2 – 4 years (due to not all of the network being surveyed in one year). Currently Argyll and Bute’s condition survey is indicating a smaller percentage in the ‘red’ (red condition equals road that have failed, amber equals roads that are in need of maintenance to keep them from becoming ‘red’ and green equals roads which are fit for purpose requiring no structural maintenance). It is worth noting that we still have a higher overall percentage of our roads in the ‘green’ (See graph below). In Appendix 1, section 1.2 on page 7, the first graph shows the correlation between investment and road condition over a period of time.
- 4.5 A scrutiny review of roads resurfacing was carried and a report presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in September 2019. The Panel reached the overall conclusion that the Council’s approach to roads maintenance is robust and is focused on delivering an effective service within the constraints of the available resources. “The Panel were satisfied that the Council has a robust approach to scheme development which utilises an appropriate balance of data and professional judgement to create a programme of works.” Officers determine treatment types in part based on available budget, road condition and anticipated future budget levels. This helps to ensure that the most affordable and appropriate treatment is carried out to provide the best rate of return. The Audit and Scrutiny Report is being reported separately to this meeting by the Chief Internal Auditor.
- 4.6 The 2019-20 road reconstruction budget has been prioritised towards the use of cost effective treatments such as surface dressing to maximise network coverage. This type of treatment targets areas in the earlier stages of deterioration and helps seal cracks and prevent water ingress (main cause of deterioration) which in turn will protect previous investment and extend pavement life until such times as more robust treatments can be afforded.

Table 3



4.7 Table 3 above shows Argyll and Bute Council to be the fifth most improving authority when measured by RCI. This reflects the investment the council has made in roads resurfacing in recent years.

4.8 The RCI survey data is utilised along with other relevant available data such as SCRIM (sideway-force coefficient routine investigation machine), accident statistics, road hierarchy, inspection data and local engineering judgement to develop an initial list of suitable schemes for inclusion in the road reconstruction programme. The software system (WDM) used to manage our roads infrastructure interrogates all the available data to identify and rank potential schemes. Once a draft list is compiled further analysis is carried out by local staff to establish scheme costs, treatment options etc. this is then matched to available funding. The selection process is under regular review and has been steadily improved over time.

4.9 The ASOR is a report which forms part of a suite of documents which are recommended by SCOTS for local authorities use. The documents have been developed in collaboration with all Scottish and Welsh authorities and aim to improve processes and continue the development and implementation of the wider use of recognised asset management techniques. When authorities have fully developed the use of these documents they will enable better value for money to be delivered and prudent stewardship of the road asset to be demonstrated.

4.10 SCOTS have focused on carriageway condition including backlog value and steady state figures due to carriageways being the single most valuable Council asset.

4.11 The ASOR is also a tool which elected members can use to help set priorities for investing the limited resources available to the Council.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This ASOR report has been developed in line with the SCOTS Asset Management Project and provides a useful resource aimed at providing relevant decision makers with information which will allow a more informed choice to be made in respect of future investment options.
- 5.2 The deterioration modelling and condition values reported in the ASOR are used to help forward plan the types and scope for treatment that are required across the road network. This helps to ensure that the most appropriate treatment types are delivered within the available budget and that the best rate of return is achieved.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The ASOR forms part of the asset management policy suite of documents for Roads and Infrastructure assets
- 6.2 Financial – The works identified through this report are funded through the capital programme. The types of treatment carried out will be dependent on the overall available budget.
- 6.3 Legal – None
- 6.4 HR – None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None
 - 6.5.3 Islands – None
- 6.6 Risk – Reductions in capital spending may impact on revenue repairs and customer satisfaction.
- 6.7 Customer Service – None

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October 2019

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Annual Status and Options Report