

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVENUE AND CAPITAL UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Roads and Infrastructure team deliver a wide range of works including street cleansing, the upkeep of public conveniences, grass cutting, refuse collection, burials, road maintenance and street lighting marine activities, fleet, waste disposal and engineering design. The service redesign introduced in December 2018 refocused the Network and Standards team who now support Operations with programming, obtaining consents and permissions and co-ordinating a support mechanism which enables the Operations team to focus on delivering works safely, to specification, to programme and within budget. As part of the wider support a control HUB has been established. The HUB will not only provide support to the operations team but also provides support to Elected Members by providing information and briefings.
- 1.2 This report provides an update of the Roads and Infrastructure Services operational capital and revenue matters relating to roads and grounds maintenance activities in the Bute and Cowal area.
- 1.3 It is recommended that Members note and consider the update.

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVENUE AND CAPITAL UPDATE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report provides a summary of activity carried out by the operations team across the Bute and Cowal Area Committee Area.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Members note and consider the update.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Much of the cyclic and 'normal' works carried out by our teams for the first months of this financial year has been reprioritised following Scotland entering lockdown on 23rd March 2020.

4.2 As we entered lockdown, service delivery was reprioritised to ensure that our teams could safely deliver a reduced set of services. These services included: amended refuse collection routes, provision of burial and cremation services, continued inspection of key infrastructure with appropriate repairs, a reduced ferry service etc. None essential works were stopped in line with government guidance.

Revenue Roads Maintenance

4.3 Following the announcement of lockdown, as mentioned above activities carried out by the operations team were reprioritised. This meant that roads teams were responding to any dangerous defects which were found, these being dealt with by teams of two going out in pickups and trucks making good any defects as well as jetpatchers being utilised where it was appropriate. The normal schedule of road safety inspections continued throughout lockdown and these inspections, together with any representation from elected members/members of the public were used to remove dangerous defects. There was also additional training carried out for roads colleagues to ensure that we had an increased resilience for grave digging etc. Roads colleagues also provided support to the refuse collection service to enable service continuity.

Capital Programme – Roads Reconstruction

- 4.4 The 2020/21 Capital Programme was restarted in the latter part of July and has been revised with a number of preparatory schemes being carried out which will enable surface dressing to be applied in 2021. The revised programme has been issued to Members and is also attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The annual Capital programme of work for Roads due to COVID-19 was postponed however as of 20 July 2020 and in line with Scottish Government phased route plan and the Scottish Road Works Commissionaire guidance we began Capital Works week commencing 20 July 2020. The capital programme has been modified by moving the surface dressing works into next financial year and focusing on a reduced resurfacing programme which includes a mix of traditional resurfacing, surface dressing preparatory works and insitu recycling. Surface dressing is not being delivered this year as there would have been insufficient time for the stone chips to adequately embed into the receiving road surface. The embedment of surface dressing chips requires the warmer summer temperatures which soften the underlying road material allowing the chips to become bedded in with the action of passing traffic.
- 4.6 Additional Funding has been secured through working in partnership with the Strategic Timber Transport Fund which will enable us to deliver over £1million pounds of additional work on Timber Transport Routes within Argyll and Bute. The additional works will benefit both ABC, as a Roads Authority, the Timber industry and all road users within our network. This additional funding will be used as match funding to existing surfacing schemes where timber extraction is planned. The allocation of this funding comes with the condition that it is invested in line with a pre agreed plan which focuses on core timber extraction routes.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

- 4.7 All funding is currently provided by Transport Scotland via the Local Authority Installation Programme. The funding for the current financial year 2020/21 has been allocated with work due to start in Quarter 4 of this financial year. Future years funding is expected to continue, this however is at the discretion of the Scottish Government.
- 4.8 At present we do not take bids from local communities. However we have received contact from various community councils as well as individuals and community groups requesting charging points. We have recorded these and will ultimately look to deliver EV charging points in the best location to support our roads infrastructure.
- 4.9 We have been successful in securing grant funding for 40 hybrid cars and vans, 20 of which have already been delivered and now utilised as part of the council's fleet. These vehicles have been part funded by Transport Scotland and will be used to replace a number of council owned vehicles reaching the end of their useful life and also reducing the number of vehicles which have previously been on hire. Currently the council is operating more vehicles than we would have pre-covid due to limiting the number of operatives within vehicles to comply with

social distancing requirements.

Network and Standards Control HUB

- 4.10 The HUB has proven invaluable to our Service through the COVID-19 Pandemic with staff assisting both internally and externally with advice and support. I am pleased to update that feedback from members has been positive and outstanding correspondence continues to remain at a manageable level.

Bins, Grounds, Cleansing and Burials Programme of Work

- 4.11 As previously highlighted, only essential works have been carried out by officers for the majority of the Lockdown period as we have had to protect our staff and deliver work in a very different way. In the initial stages we reviewed our bin service as physical distancing meant we could not allow more than two members of staff within our bin vehicles. A joint working approach with our fleet colleagues saw extra vehicles used to support our bin uplifts where vehicles followed the bin wagons with other members of staff. When Scotland moved into phase 3 we returned to our agreed bin uplift programme, however we currently still require extra vehicles to follow bin wagons with staff to ensure appropriate physical distancing. Through the networking we carry out via the waste managers group our approach aligns with the majority of other Scottish LAs who are delivering refuse services in a similar way.
- 4.12 All Household Waste sites were closed in line with lockdown requirements to protect our staff and communities. As we moved into phase 3 of the route map, we carried out extensive planning including traffic management work for our waste sites to ensure when we opened our sites after nearly three months of closure there was limited risk to our communities from queuing on access roads as members of the public tried to get rid of their waste. This included a phased introduction of certain types of waste to ensure we limited numbers attending to a manageable level.
- 4.13 We encountered some issues at the Dunoon Waste site where due to its geography and the limit of 4 vehicles only being allowed into the site, this caused some queuing onto the local road network. Our staff provided advice to motorists not to queue onto the main road however were subjected to abuse. In order to ensure safety, the site was temporarily closed on at least two occasions. Communications were sent out for the local community to be aware of the dangers.
- 4.14 In line with other Local Authorities in Scotland we also took the decision to close all of our public toilets to protect both our own staff and our communities during the lockdown period. As we moved into phase 3 of the Scottish Government Route Map we gradually opened public toilets on a staged programme which saw the busier toilets opened first in early July 2020. At present we still have some toilets closed due to concerns for safety, however the toilets have a low footfall, we are also in discussions with external agencies regarding toilets being taken over, however we need to fully consult and ensure appropriate measures are in place regarding safety and public liability. The remobilisation of public

conveniences was considered by the BCC in August. The Committee agreed to absorb the cost pressure of around £50,000 to keep those PCs currently open available until the end of October to take in the main tourist season. Thereafter, following engagement with area committees, we will revert to a core set which can stay open within the available budget while complying with national guidance.

- 4.15 Grass cutting was also suspended during COVID-19. Again this was reviewed in line with the Scottish Government route map and since May we restarted amenity grass cutting and in the first week of June we have restarted our rural roads grass cutting. One of the first priorities for the grass cutting was to resume cuts in cemeteries. Additional measures were put in place to help ensure social distancing and facilitate safe lone working, this included closing the gates on some cemeteries during grass cutting operations to ensure this could be carried out safely.
- 4.16 Our roads cyclic works including jet patching, gully emptying and find and fix for pot-holes was maintained as much as possible within the constraints of physical distancing and health and safety. Our roads inspectors worked throughout the period of restrictions to ensure dangers on the roads network were highlighted.
- 4.17 Officers are in the process of carrying out our headstone safety inspections as required under the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016
- 4.18 Extensive work in relation to planning for a spike in deaths related to COVID-19 was carried out by our Operations Manager who linked in on a weekly basis with the Scottish Government/neighbouring Local Authorities and Funeral Directors to ensure we delivered a safe, respectful and dignified service for the dead and their families. This proved challenging with Scottish Government Guidance on limiting numbers attending funerals, however we have been able to maintain our services throughout this period and continue to deliver in line with ever changing guidance.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report provides an update on operational matters in the Bute and Cowal Area.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – works carried out in accordance with relevant policies, some of which were amended during the pandemic as agreed by the Leadership Group.
- 6.2 Financial – the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted cost pressures on the service. Information has been collated into a cost template and submitted to COSLA for discussion with Scottish Government and the Council have created a cross party informal working group to consider how to deal with the estimated budget gap.

6.3 Legal – none known

6.4 HR – delivered by a combination of council employees, national contractors and SMEs

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. Risk– None Known– none known

6.7 Customer Service– none known

Executive Director with Responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services:

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August 2020

Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services: Jim Smith

Policy Lead: Cllr Robin Currie

For further information contact: Hugh O'Neill, Network and Standards Manager

Appendix 1 – Revised Capital Programme

BUTE

Route	Scheme Name	Estimated Cost	Proposed Scheme Details***	Duration Weeks	Start Month
A844	Craigmore - Bogany Point	£11,600	A844 Bogany selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	1	Aug
B878	Barone Road	£19,000	B878 Barone road - selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	1	Aug
B875	Colmac - Drumachloy	£48,000	B875 Colmac - selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	1	Aug
		£78,600			

COWAL

Route	Scheme Name	Estimated Cost	Proposed Scheme Details***	Duration Weeks	Start Month
B8000	Otter Ferry - Kilfinnan	£100,000	Regulate & Overlay (STTS) Plus STTS = £233k	9	July
A815	Dalinlogart - Sandbank	£43,500	A815 Sandhaven - selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	2	Sept
A880	Strone - Blairmore	£10,500	A880 Strone - selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	1	Oct
A815	Strachurmore - Invernoaden	£81,000	A815 Stachurmore- selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	3	Oct
C10	Port Lamont - Toward	£149,500	C10 Port Lamont - selected patching - PSD for SD 2021	3	Oct
		£384,500			
B & C value planned =		£463,100			