

Annual Status and Options Report 2020

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 2020. 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 gives an RCI score, the **higher** the RCI score means the **poorer** the road condition is in.
- 1.2 It should be noted that due to COVID-19 the external Road Condition Index (RCI) Report has been delayed and will not be sent on to Argyll and Bute Council until 2021, we have therefore used last year's figures. The report sets out the 2019 road and associated infrastructure condition and forecasts future condition based on different proposed levels of investment.
- 1.3 The ASOR demonstrates previous investment in the Roads Reconstruction Programme in 2018-19 which provided a slight improvement to the overall Road Condition Index (RCI) from 2017-18. Whilst the condition has only improved slightly, without the increased investment from Elected Members, the road condition would have continued to deteriorate, resulting in our road network being in an extremely poor condition. Due to COVID-19 the 2020-21 budget for surface dressing has been moved to the next financial year to allow prioritisation of the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) projects which must be completed prior to an STTS audit in February 2021. 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). Argyll and Bute's condition survey is indicating a smaller percentage in the 'red' and this position is anticipated to worsen should there be a reduction in available investment. Currently Argyll and Bute Council, although having improved slightly in the last surveyed year, were listed as having the highest RCI within our family group consisting of roads authorities with similar roads networks, effectively our roads index is the poorest of the 8 family group members for rural authorities in Scotland.
- 1.4 Within the ASOR report, the respective asset groups are identified with four investment options presented to allow members to consider appropriate future funding which will allow a more informed budget setting process for the

maintenance and improvement of Roads and Infrastructure assets.

- 1.5 The ASOR links into the Service 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.
- 1.6 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
 - 1.6.1 Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides.
 - 1.6.2 Note that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Development and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

Annual Status and Options Report 2020

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:
- 3.1.1 Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides.
- 3.1.2 Note that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Development and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 SCOTS have focused on carriageway condition including backlog value and steady state figures due to carriageways being the single most valuable Council asset.
- 4.3 The ASOR is also a tool which elected members can use to help set priorities for investing the limited resources available to the Council.

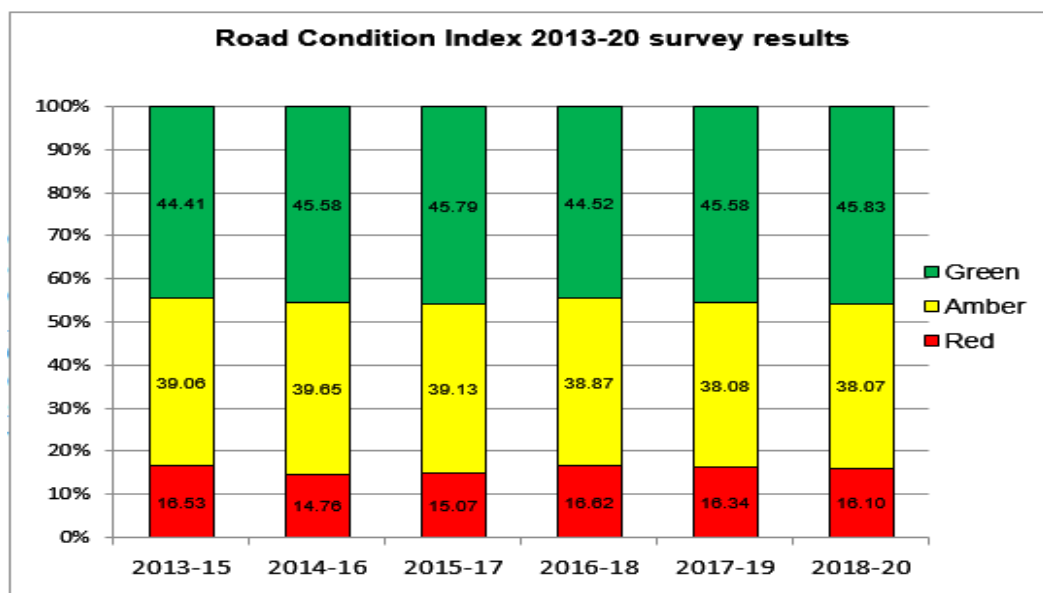
4.4 At the Argyll and Bute Council Budget Meeting in February 2020, a £6.2m investment programme for roads reconstruction was approved. This was further enhanced by a successful bid to the Scottish Timber Transport Scheme of £1.227m, giving an overall investment on our roads of approx. £7.5m. This continued investment coupled with the level of revenue investment is helping to keep a steady state road condition. Previous capital reconstruction programmes have delivered a welcome improvement to the road network in terms of the Road Condition Index (RCI) as can be seen below:

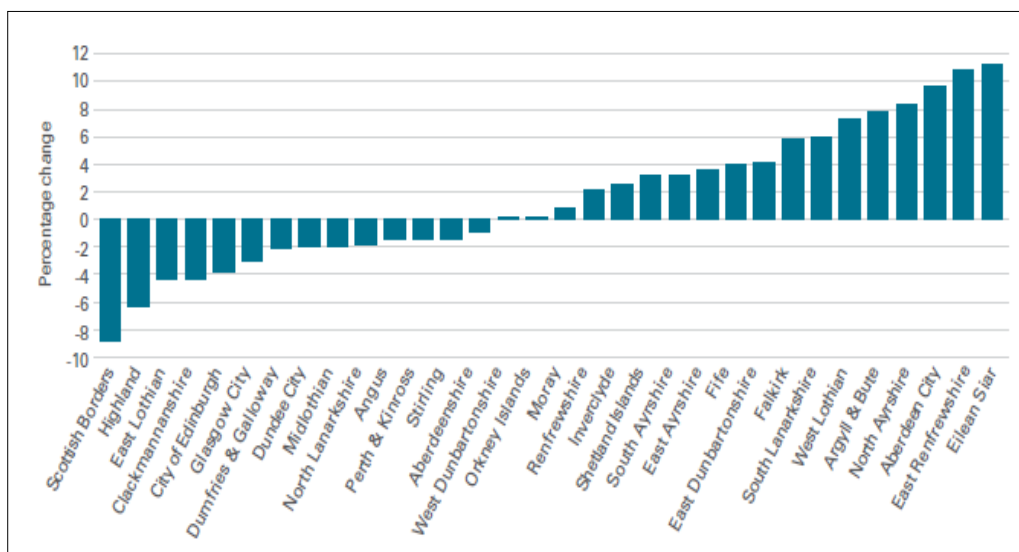
RCI for 2016-18 = 54.48% of roads needing improvement
 RCI for 2017-19 = 54.42% of roads needing improvement
 RCI for 2018-20 = 54.20% of roads needing improvement

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.

4.5 The previous reduction in available budget in 2016/17 and 2017/18 had resulted in a corresponding reduction in works carried out on the ground. 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). Argyll and Bute’s condition survey from 2019 is indicating a smaller percentage in the ‘red’ and this position is anticipated to worsen with any reduction in available investment. It is worth noting that we still have a higher overall percentage of our roads in the ‘green’ (See graph below).

4.6 The 2020-21 road reconstruction budget has been prioritised towards STTS works as COVID-19 delayed our works programme by three months. As such Surface Dressing Works have been delayed to 2021-22 to allow officers to surface dress our network in the most efficient way (Surface dressing laid in the latter part of the year is often affected by a colder wetter climate which would prevent the surface dressing materials being as effective and we run the risk of wasting the budget). We have however ensured officers treat the poorer conditioned surfaces to protect further damage over the winter period.





4.7 The graph above details the positive improvement in the Road Condition Index (RCI) following the significant capital investment in the last few years. Without this investment, we would have had significant deterioration occur with the RCI having fallen significantly. Instead as can be seen in the graph we are in the top 5 most improved.

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 WDM pavement management system 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.

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.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – None Known

6.2 Financial – Current investment levels do not support the delivery of a

sustainable road network maintenance regime.

- 6.3 Legal – None known
- 6.4 HR – None known
- 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 – The reduction in the Ferry Prices (RET) has increased numbers of vehicles on island roads which has caused more damage to the island road network.
- 6.6. Risk – Road Network will deteriorate due to underfunding, as such we need to prioritise roads which may well affect island and more rural communities more.
- 6.7 Customer Service – None Known.

Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure, Kirsty Flanagan

Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services Jim Smith

Policy Lead Rory Colville

4 November 2020

For further information contact:

Hugh O'Neill, Network and Standards Manager, Roads and Infrastructure Services

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 ASOR Report (Separate Attachment)