

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Roads and Infrastructure Service activities in recent months.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Area Committee note and consider the contents of this report.

3.0 DETAIL

Response to Covid

- 3.1 Roads and Infrastructure Services have spent the last year mostly operating to pre-Covid specification/schedule and timetables taking into account Covid secure measures as appropriate. We continue to adapt these services as restrictions are eased.

Capital Roads Reconstruction Programme

- 3.2 The £10M Roads Capital Programme is well underway and updates on individual schemes can be viewed on the Council website. The programme will see 229.3km of roadway treated which is equivalent to 10.16% of the total adopted network. Whilst the programme is currently on target for completion this financial year, Members should note that we are starting to see some disruption in material supplies, for example cement supplies in many local builders merchants have been depleted due in part to demands from other large UK construction projects, the ability for some European cement production to be maintained on reported logistical challenges due mainly to limited numbers of truck drivers. In addition to this, key materials such as cement and bitumen have seen double figure percentage increases in cost which is reflected in the actual costs of works.

Bin Collections and Civic Amenity Sites

- 3.3 Bin collections continue to full schedules. As of 9 August 2021 the requirement for additional vehicles to ensure we have no more than 2 people per vehicle is no longer required. All civic amenity sites are fully open and operating well with no significant issues to note.

Waste Strategy

- 3.4 Work continues on the Council's Waste Strategy which is taking into consideration the BMW ban which comes into place at the end of 2025, the 25 year PPP contract with Renewi which ends in September 2026, the deposit Return Scheme and the Household Waste Recycling Charter. Discussions continue with civil servants from Scottish Government regarding the above and discussion continue with neighbouring local authorities with a view to maximising collaboration opportunities.

Correspondence and Information

- 3.5 There has been a vacant post within the Central Correspondence Team since May which may have caused some delays in responses to Members. This vacant post has been successfully recruited to with a new member of the team commencing on 2 August.
- 3.6 A Members Development Day has been arranged to provide a detailed overview of the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy which was considered by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in June.

Winter Policy Update

- 3.7 The Winter Service Policy 2021/22 is due to be considered at the September meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee. The current draft of the Winter Policy doesn't propose any route changes, the proposed routes being as per those delivered for the last number of years.

Operations Works Programmes

- 3.8 Cyclic operational activities such as road inspections, repairs, gully cleansing, ditching, grass and verge cutting are all largely running to schedule and being delivered with Covid secure specifications in place to ensure that both the workforce and members of the public remain safe. The operational teams have seen a small number of people requiring to self-isolate which has delayed progress in some areas. This is an area that the RIS Leadership Team are monitoring and managing on a daily basis.

School and Public Transport

- 3.9 The School Transport Team have been working closely with colleagues in Education making arrangements for pupil transport ahead of the new school term commencing in August.

- 3.10 As part of the budget process we carried out a review of public transport which has resulted in an action plan which has been considered by the Budget Working Group and a number of these are being progressed.

Bridge Inspections

- 3.11 The Infrastructure Design team continue to carry out bridge inspections to all approx 900 structures on a rolling programme across Argyll and Bute to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose. This inspection regime identifies remedial works which are programmed for delivery.

Rothesay Pontoons

- 3.12 Additional ground investigation works are ongoing at the time of writing and we expect the results of that work to be available by the end of August. The ground investigation works will help determine how the project is completed.
- 3.13 The West Arm remains available for cruise ships as an alternative arrangement should cruise ships be able to resume visits.

Bus Services in Bute and Cowal

- 3.14 Bus services in Bute and Cowal are provided by West Coast Motors (WCM). These services would not be commercially viable in their own right, so they are subsidised in order for them to be sustainable.
- 3.15 It should be noted that:
- a) Staffing resources – at present 100% of the WCM workforce are being utilised, with a significant increase in cleaning and safety requirements having a consequential impact on staff tasks/commitments
 - b) Fleet resources – the fleet is being fully utilised but, due to COVID requirements like enhanced cleaning between drives and limitations on the number of drivers using the same vehicle throughout the day means the fleet cannot be operated as efficiently as it was pre-COVID
 - c) Fare income – down as a result of reduced patronage which is around 60% of pre-COVID levels.
- 3.16 At present WCM are operating 87% of pre-COVID mileage which does not include the additional mileage as operated on the Pingo service. This service accounts for an additional 3500 miles per month, compared with a very low mileage pre-COVID. Taking this in to account, the mileage WCM are operating is at 93% of the pre-COVID mileage.
- 3.17 Overall officers are satisfied that the changes made by WCM are reasonable in the circumstances and balance supply to actual demand, and that they continue to provide a safe and sensible level of provision.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report gives a general update to local members on recent Roads and Infrastructure activities.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – various policies referred to within the body of the report
- 5.2 Financial – none
- 5.3 Legal – none known
- 5.4 HR – none known
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: (please refer to guidance on Hub)
- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known
- 5.5.3 Islands – none known
- 5.6. Risk – none known
- 5.7 Customer Service - none

Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services
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