

## ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

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### 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 continue with Covid precautions in place to reduce the spread. The service currently have several staff absent due to the virus and we hope they make a quick and full recovery.

#### Capital Roads Reconstruction Programme

- 3.2 This year Roads and Infrastructure Services are delivering one of the largest capital programmes in roads reconstruction which includes £10M worth of capital investment announced as part of the budget process in February, £1.29M of Strategic Timber Transport Funding and £900k of active travel and footway improvement schemes. Please see the full programme and details on progress here: [Roads Capital Programme \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/roads-capital-programme) In summary, the carriageway works are largely complete and works are underway with the footway programme. Information on the progress of footway schemes is also available online at: [Footways Capital Funding Programme \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/footways-capital-funding-programme)

#### Waste Strategy

- 3.3 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.

### **Winter Policy Update**

- 3.4 Winter maintenance standby rotas commenced on Friday 29 October. This follows the current in season policy agreed at the September meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee. At the time of writing at the beginning of November, we have over 10,500 tonnes of rock salt, which is our normal start of season operating tonnage.
- 3.5 Members will be very much aware of the national shortage of HGV drivers. Whilst we have not lost a significant number of drivers, this does have an impact on recruitment of HGV drivers. This is being compounded by some absence being experienced through Covid.

### **Public Transport**

- 3.6 Officers are currently liaising with West Coast Motors on roll out and implementation of Pingo app-bookable bus service. The Pingo app funding is provided by HITRANS for up to a year's trial, however, the app is being tested on two Council contracted demand responsive services- Cowal DAB and Kintyre Ring n Ride. Subject to a satisfactory trial, this system is likely to be rolled out more widely. One of the key considerations for the potential future of this service is how members and users can be consulted in terms of the review of the pilot and the possible next steps. Certainly we will try where possible to provide Members with updates on any changes to bus services which need to be made for operational reasons. Members will note from the recent briefing note on public transport though, that services can change on an almost daily basis across the 80 different services managed by our small public transport team, so it may not always be possible to provide real-time updates.

### **Bridge Inspections**

- 3.7 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.

### **White lining**

- 3.8 In response to recent enquires from local members a proactive briefing note on white lining work was issued to all members which provided answers to various FAQs. In particular there have been a number of enquiries about the reason for delays, and these can be summarised as follows:
- There are a multitude of reasons that can result in delays being experienced for road markings being laid. These include but are not limited to:

- availability of the lining contractor along with availability of their accommodation, availability of ferries (this has been a particular issue for us for Islay and Mull this year),
- weather conditions (road markings are dependent on dry road surfaces). The increase in staycation this year has been an added pressure for contractors trying to complete work in the area with less accommodation availability.

There also needs to be a certain period of time following surface dressing to allow the new surface to bed in before lining can be applied – this will vary on the specification of surface dressing and the volume of traffic. Essentially what this means is that the chips need to be fully embedded prior to the lining being applied, on roads with limited traffic volumes, this embedment will take longer than on roads with higher volumes of traffic. Some notable progress has been made in Bute and Cowal in recent weeks despite challenging weather conditions. Of course, like any other area of work, schemes are prioritized in accordance with the road hierarchy and roads asset management plan, so outstanding lining schemes on high speed strategic routes will be prioritised ahead of refreshing give way markings in quiet residential streets, for example. An update on recently completed and outstanding schemes will be provided ahead of the Area Committee meeting.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 This report provides 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

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