

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report format and frequency for these reports were agreed as part of the previous Council. The purpose of the report is to provide a general update on key activities of the Service over recent months and to enable a discussion on key, high level topics and projects. As part of developing future committee structure and workplans the purpose and effectiveness of this standing item should be reviewed.
- 1.2 As part of the Member Induction Programme the Head of Roads and Infrastructure gave a brief overview of the huge range of work ongoing across the Service area to Members at the Corran Halls in Oban on 17th May. The slides from that presentation are available on the Member Zone system.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Area Committee note and consider the contents of this report, and provide feedback on the content, format and frequency.

3.0 DETAIL

COVID absence

- 3.1 For the period of the previous report in March, although we were seeing some easing of COVID restrictions, absence rates as a result of self-isolation requirements remained high. With the recent changes to COVID restrictions, absence rates are now more in line with pre-COVID trends.

Capital Roads Reconstruction Programme

- 3.2 The focus of the roads reconstruction programme is to recover the network through the delivery of a mix of carriageway resurfacing schemes, patching/surface dressing and in-situ road surface recycling, which follow the principles set out within the Roads Asset Management Plan.
- 3.3 This Council has approximately £100m of backlog maintenance in the road

network. This means that over £100m would need to be invested to bring the road network up to an A1 standard. Most councils are in a very similar position. Clearly in the current financial climate we are not going to see the level of investment required to bring the road network up to an A1 condition. However, over the last decade there has been a carefully applied strategy of delivering revenue and capital funding collectively and delivering a series of works designed to minimise reactive work, carry out right first time repairs wherever possible and to deliver surfacing techniques and specifications which maximizes the amount of repairs and resurfacing which is delivered. As with almost all council services there is insufficient funding available to treat all the sections of road that we'd like to do, the focus being on treating sections where we can maximise the financial return and in so doing reduce the amount of reactive repairs varied out. Unfortunately, the available funding means that almost all roads authorities, including Argyll and Bute, are unable to treat every section of road they would like to do.

- 3.4 The total programme for this financial year for roads reconstruction is £8m Council capital allocation and £1.6m from the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme, which is used to match fund existing schemes on the council network where timber extraction is programmed to be carried out.
- 3.5 Oil and bitumen prices have increased significantly over recent months. Coated roadstone used for surfacing our road and footways has increased by approximately 20%. This will impact our programmes of work. A report detailing the implications of the recent price increases will be presented to the June Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.
- 3.6 The Council capital allocation for the Bute and Cowal area is £1,406,200 and details of individual schemes are available on the Council website at: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/roads-capital-programme-202223>

Winter Maintenance

- 3.7 This winter maintenance season ran from Friday 29th October 2021 to Friday 15th April 2022. The annual policy is presented to Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in September. When freezing conditions are forecast our teams pre-treat over 750 miles of road, which is roughly the equivalent of driving from Lochgilphead to Paris.
- 3.8 Key facts from this winter season:
- 65 full fleet runs
 - 2,049 individual vehicle runs
 - Highest turned out route A819 Inveraray to Dalmally
 - Total distance travelled 105,024 miles
 - Salt used 11,030 tonnes
 - Total spend £2,258,228.59.

Bridge Inspections and Capital Works

- 3.9 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 necessary remedial works which are programmed for delivery.
- 3.10 The team were also successful in a highly competitive bidding process for the Scottish Government's £32m Local Bridge Maintenance Fund, receiving a funding award of £5.5m. We are currently in the process of putting a capital programme in place to utilise this welcome funding. The fund will be used to undertake proportionate works on bridges in need of repair, identified through our inspection programme/records.

Bute sea wall

- 3.11 Following an allocation in the recent budget process of £1m, good progress is being made and a detailed design process is underway for a permanent repair to the damaged sea wall on in Rothesay. We are performing a number of surveys at the moment which will inform the design work. Various permissions and consents are also being obtained to carry out the permanent repairs. These permissions were not needed for the temporary emergency repairs that were carried out to save the road, utility services and land beyond the road corridor. The temporary works continue to work well and are being regularly monitored. It is too early to say what the timescales for the permanent works will be.

Rothesay outer Harbour berthing facility project

- 3.12 We have received an updated plan from the contractor and are in the process of having their revised design solution appraised by an external marine engineering specialist.
- 3.13 All the necessary consents such as Marine Licences are now in place and, once a design is agreed and accepted, works can progress.
- 3.14 Progress on this scheme will continue to be provided in regular briefings to Members and key stakeholders.

Rothesay Victoriana Public Convenience

- 3.15 Following the natural conclusion of the partnership with Bute Victoriana, this public convenience is now operated directly by the Council, and is open and available for use.

Hunter's Quay traffic order

- 3.16 This order has been in place since the beginning of March, Unfortunately there was a delay in arranging the road markings, but these were completed on 22nd March. Seven fines were issued in the early stages of the new Order being in place but none recently – the No Waiting restriction appears to be working well.

As with any new traffic management scheme, we will monitor its effectiveness and then look to formally review it after it has had a reasonable period to bed in, which is likely to be around a year.

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 – the Council has various statutory obligations, which are the responsibility of RIS and set out in various Acts, such as the Roads Scotland Act 1984. The services provided are in line with our statutory obligations

5.4 HR – none known

5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known

5.5.3 Islands – none known

5.6 Climate Change – none

5.7 Risk – none known

5.8 Customer Service - none

Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services:

Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead for Roads and Transport: Councillor Andrew Kain

Policy Lead for Climate Change and Environment Services: Councillor Ross Moreland

May 2022

For further information contact:

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