

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.
- 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 was presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee (EDI) at its meeting in June.
- 3.6 The Council capital allocation for the OLI area is £2,972,850, 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 will be presented to EDI 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.

LED project

- 3.11 Argyll and Bute Council has 14462 street lights as part of the adopted network of public roads. The vast majority of these have been changed over to LED. The final stages of the project were paused as a result of the COVID pandemic (falling into the non-essential works category). When restrictions were lifted we encountered resourcing issues associated to staff turnover, and a backlog of streetlighting maintenance meaning we were unable to run our normal maintenance works concurrently with the LED scheme. We intend to complete the remainder of the scheme utilising external labour. The final stage of the LED installations will be completed this year. This will see the final 1,000 old-style luminaries mainly in the Oban area changed over to LED. We expect our contractor to start on site by the beginning of June and work through the programme which is expected to take between six and eight weeks.

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 Infrastructure Services – Councillor Andrew Kain
Policy Lead for Climate Change and Environment Services – Councillor Ross
Moreland

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For further information contact:

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