

**ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE**

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**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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 with additional monies 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 on weak roads. The Council bid for seven schemes and were successful in four of those bids – none of these schemes were for the Helensburgh and Lomond area, which compared to the rest of Argyll and Bute has less timber extraction.
- 3.5 Oil and bitumen prices have increased significantly over the 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 is proposed for the June ED&I Committee.
- 3.6 The Council capital allocation for the Helensburgh and Lomond area is, £999,340 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 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The annual policy is presented to ED&I in September. When freezing conditions are forecast our teams pre-treat over 750miles 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.

### **Faslane Cemetery Partnership**

- 3.9 We were approached by the Garelochhead Community Council late last year with a view to entering into a partnership scheme where the CC raised funds to have the old Faslane Cemetery gates, which has fallen into a state of disrepair, replaced.
- 3.10 The CC raised funds and at the time of writing new gates have been produced by a local blacksmith and are ready for installation. We arranged to have one of the pillars at the entranceway removed to improve pedestrian and vehicular access to the cemetery, and are in the process of having the remaining entranceway stonework sandblasted. Once the sandblasting is complete the gates can be installed. It is likely that a small event will be organised to commemorate the occasion and the good work of the community to improve this local asset. The partnership is now gathering pace and we are exploring options, with the support of our colleagues from HMNB Clyde, to make some other improvements to the cemetery which are beyond the Council's budgets/capabilities/resources. This is likely to involve some shrub cutting and general tidy up.
- 3.11 This is another example of a small but significant community partnership to improve a public asset and augment the services/maintenance that the Council can offer.

### **Luss TRO**

- 3.12 The Reporter has asked for multiple pieces of information and the review continues. Officers have written to all extant objections asking how they wish to proceed i.e. wish to withdraw their objection; wish to maintain their objection and be heard by the Reporter at a Hearing; and wish to maintain their objection but do not wish to be heard by the Reporter at a Hearing. The closing date for responses is 13<sup>th</sup> June.
- 3.13 Background to the Luss TRO is available in the most recent specification Committee update here at Item 8: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=244&MId=14330&Ver=4>

## **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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