

ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT 2022

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR) provides an overview of road infrastructure assets within Argyll and Bute Council based on 2021-22 data for asset condition, previous investment, asset valuation and other relevant information. It provides indicative future investment options for consideration within each asset group based on available information and resource levels to develop same.

The ASOR provides details on each of the following assets:

- Roads
- Footways
- Structures such as Bridges
- Street Lighting and Traffic Signals
- Street Furniture
- EV Chargers

Roads:

- 1.2 Our roads support thousands of journeys every day and are a vital component of a thriving economy for our remote communities. Road transport infrastructure benefits everyone by providing access socially, commercially, educationally and enabling service access for energy supply, communications and the digital network (i.e. service ducts, maintenance).

Each year sections of our road network have a Road Condition Index (RCI) Survey carried. The RCI provides information about which sections of a network should be considered for planned maintenance, which sections should be investigated to determine the optimum time for maintenance and which sections are generally in a good state of repair.

The covid-19 pandemic interrupted the 2019-20 and 2020-21 annual road condition assessment programmes which meant island roads were unable to be surveyed. However this year's survey results show a marked improvement in overall condition since the last normal survey from 54.4% to 49.8%. The

results also show, for the first time in the last 8 years of reporting, that more than half our road network is within the green or good condition band, which demonstrates the success road maintenance teams have achieved across the authority.

Footways:

- 1.3 The Argyll and Bute footway asset is approx. 520km in length. Footways investment of £1m over the previous 3 years has tackled some of the worst identified sections of the network aimed at reducing reactive maintenance demands. The ASOR lists annual investment of approximately £950k is required to keep our footways from deteriorating based on the known asset condition.

Street Lighting:

- 1.4 Argyll and Bute Council have 14299 Street Luminaires. The condition of street lighting assets is normally determined based on the age of assets. Unfortunately there is no available historic data on the installation dates for the majority of street lighting assets. However following the recent investment in replacement of luminaires with new low energy LED Lanterns data has been collected on the condition of columns and apparatus across the network. This dated infrastructure is a source of regular failure requiring the electricity supply company to attend and repair outages. As an example in October 2022 there were 19 power supply defects requiring attention with repair costs to date in Bute and Cowal at almost £20k representing almost 30% of the annual maintenance budget for the area.

Structures:

- 1.5 Our bridges and structures are inspected and assessed to comply with the Management of Highway Structures Code of Practice. The condition results since 2012/13 show a steady decline in overall bridge stock condition from a reduction in capital investment with revenue investment being prioritised towards reactive repairs. The current depreciation costs for our bridges is just over £1.3M per year.

There are currently 53 structures subject to special monitoring precautions and 28 bridges which have failed the European standard assessment (prior to restrictions). 15 bridges are currently subject to acceptable weight restrictions. Bridges are subject to regular inspections with principal inspections every 6 years and general inspections every 2 years.

Additional funding of £5.45m has been secured by our Infrastructure Design Service from Scottish Government's Local Bridge Maintenance Fund. This was secured for replacing 4 bridges and replacing 5 (9 total) critical infrastructure bridges in Argyll and Bute which is expected to be delivered over the following 4 years.

Flood Prevention:

- 1.6 Argyll and Bute Council has a statutory duty under the Flood Risk Management Act (Scotland) 2009 to reduce the overall flood risk. These works are undertaken in conjunction with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) using local historical data to assess the risk and impact of flooding events. The current maintenance backlog for flood prevention assets is estimated at Circa £250k per annum.

Campbeltown Flood Protection Scheme is a £15million major engineering scheme which will put measures in place to reduce the impact of flooding on residents and businesses in Campbeltown, the town has suffered flooding at various times in recent decades. This investment will take forward a number of different pieces of work to address the various causes of flooding in the town.

EV Charging:

- 1.7 Argyll and Bute Council currently has 28 public Electric Vehicle charging points which are now part of our financial charging regime. There is a growing demand for installation of more charging points as electric vehicle numbers on our road network rise. This drives greater demand for availability of charging points in line with customer expectations. The existing and proposed new network installations will also require adequate maintenance aligned with regular inspection regime to ensure charging points are functioning properly to meet growing demand. This will require resource and budget moving forward and likely staff training due to the specialist technical nature of the apparatus.

Vehicle Restraint Systems:

- 1.8 Vehicle barriers – A general appraisal / condition survey of our safety barrier inventory was carried out in August / September 2015. The survey identified almost 14km (18.5%) of our barriers were considered to be in poor condition and requiring to be replaced at an estimated cost of circa £2M. The barriers in poorest condition and those that are Non -Compliant because of their construction have been prioritised for replacement/repair within the confines of existing revenue funding at circa £100k/year since 2016/17. The replacement of our barrier stock through utilising the current funding allocation will take up to 20 years dependant on the locus.

Barrier replacement and maintenance is underfunded and major investment is required across the whole network. It is vital that the Council maintains and upgrades its safety/crash barrier and bridge parapet stock to ensure the safety of road users. Policy, Assessment and Inspection processes need to be revised and at the moment we are currently reliant on specialist contractors and consultants to maintain our barrier stock.

Strategic Timber Transport Scheme:

- 1.9 Argyll and Bute Council has consistently secured significant funding support from the Strategic Timber Transport Fund (STTF). The past decade has seen over £9M additional investment from STTS to support the road reconstruction programme.

The STTS is an agreed standard bidding process across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities, with a final decision being made by STTS. The STTS funding is earmarked for projects which minimise the impact of timber lorries on our rural road network. It means that for every £1 Argyll and Bute Council spend the STTS funding support, on average, more than doubles this investment. Over the last decade the Council has been successful in leveraging in approximately £10M of investment through the STTS.

Climate Change:

- 1.10 Climate change is global but can be evidenced locally through more frequent severe weather events and greater annual rainfall. This requires action to ensure drainage assets are functioning properly and have the capacity to deal with these more regular events. Water is road infrastructures greatest enemy and is capable of destroying structures and transportation links very quickly.

Good drainage management is vital to protect valuable assets from the effects of water. Lack of investment in drainage assets impacts the outcome and benefits realised from the original resurfacing works undermining the substantial investment made and incurring further avoidable expense in repair of the defect.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-

- i. Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides.
- ii. Note that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Development and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report introduces the Annual Status and Options Report which makes an analytical assessment of the condition of the Council's road network and associated infrastructure as well as setting out projected conditions based on varying levels of investment.

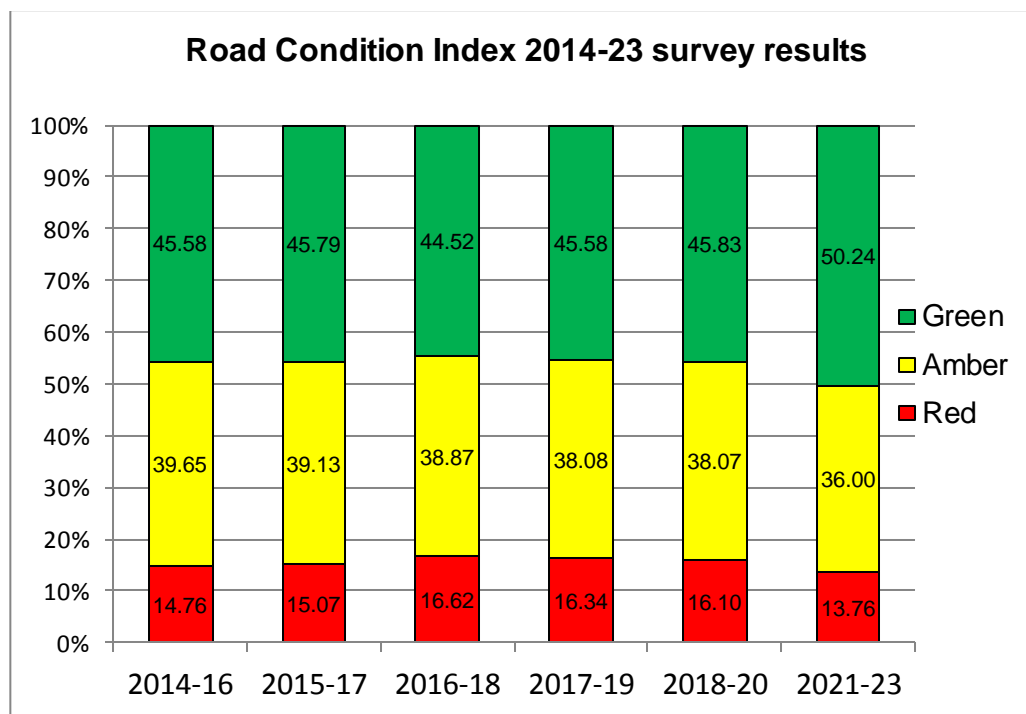
3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:
- 3.1.1 Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides.
- 3.1.2 Note that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Development and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The ASOR is a report which forms part of a suite of documents which are recommended by SCOTS for local authorities use. The documents have been developed in collaboration with all Scottish and Welsh authorities and aim to improve processes and continue the development and implementation of the wider use of recognised asset management techniques. When authorities have fully developed the use of these documents they will enable better value for money to be delivered and prudent stewardship of the road asset to be demonstrated.
- 4.2 SCOTS have focused on carriageway condition including backlog value and steady state figures due to carriageways being the single most valuable Council asset.
- 4.3 The ASOR is also a tool which elected members can use to help set priorities for investing the limited resources available to the Council.

4.4 At the Argyll and Bute Council Budget Meeting in February 2022, a £8M investment programme for roads reconstruction was approved. This was further enhanced by a successful bid to the Scottish Timber Transport Scheme of £1.025M, giving an overall investment on our roads of approx. £9.5Mm. This continued investment coupled with the level of revenue investment over the last few years has helped to improve the steady state road condition and for the first time in the last 8 years of reporting we have achieved over 50% of our road network in a Green Condition.



4.5 The table above details the positive improvement in the Road Condition Index (RCI) following the significant capital investment in the last few years. Without this investment, we would have had significant deterioration occur with the RCI having fallen significantly.

4.6 The RCI survey data is utilised along with other relevant available data such as SCRIM (sideway-force coefficient routine investigation machine), Accident Statistics, Road Hierarchy, Inspection data and local engineering judgement to develop an initial list of suitable schemes for inclusion in the road reconstruction programme. The WDM pavement management system interrogates all the available data to identify and rank potential schemes. Once a draft list is compiled further analysis is carried out by local staff to establish scheme costs, treatment options etc. this is then matched to available funding. The selection process is under regular review and has been steadily improved over time.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 This ASOR report has been developed in line with the SCOTS Asset Management Project and provides a useful resource aimed at providing

relevant decision makers with information which will allow a more informed choice to be made in respect of future investment options.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – None known.
- 6.2 Financial – Current investment levels do not support the delivery of a sustainable road network maintenance regime.
- 6.3 Legal – None known.
- 6.4 HR – None known.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None known.
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None known.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.
 - 6.5.3 Islands – The reduction in the Ferry Prices (RET) has increased numbers of vehicles on island roads which has caused more damage to the island road network.
- 6.6 Climate Change – none from this report.
- 6.7. Risk – Road Network will deteriorate due to underfunding, as such we need to prioritise roads which may well affect island and more rural communities more.
- 6.8 Customer Service – None known.

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure:
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Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services: Jim Smith

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15 December 2022

For further information contact:

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – ASOR Report