

**MINUTES of MEETING of ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,
LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2024**

Present: Councillor John Armour (Chair)

Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Willie Hume	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Jim Lynch	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Tommy MacPherson	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Ian James MacQuire	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Luna Martin	

Also Present: Councillor Kieron Green

Attending: Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
Stephen Hall, Consultant
Alan Millar, Performance Manager
Hugh O'Neill, Network and Standards Manager
Scott Reid, Marine Operations Manager
Stuart Watson, Assistant Network and Standards Manager
Colin Young, Strategic Transport Delivery Officer
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Colin Buchanan, on behalf of Luing Community Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Kain.

DEPUTATION

The Chair intimated that a request for a deputation to be heard by Luing Community Council had been received. It was unanimously agreed to hear from this deputation.

The Committee heard from Colin Buchanan, Vice Convener of Luing Community Council, in relation to Marine Operations: Mainland Ferry Service which would be dealt with at Item 9 of the Agenda.

The Chair thanked Colin Buchanan and advised that the submission would be considered under item 9 of the Agenda (Marine Operations: Mainland Ferry Service).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 12 September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

4. ROUTE OPTIMISATION UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Route Optimisation project. The Route Optimisation system will enable existing cyclical activities such as bin collection, grass cutting and gritting, to be tested for efficiency and, where possible, routes remodelled to be more efficient and effective.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. considered the progress of the Route Optimisation project;
2. noted the delays to the initial progress plan and the new milestones;
3. noted that monthly progress updates would be provided to Elected Members from January 2025 via the RIS Weekly Briefings; and
4. noted that a further update report would be brought back to the next Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee meeting in March 2025 together with a demonstration of the system.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated December 2024, submitted)

5. CEMETERY ASSET - ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing the annual update on the current Argyll and Bute “active” cemetery portfolio of 63 sites - number of lairs available for sale and operational timescales within the Cemetery Development programme. The report also confirmed the current list of cemeteries subject to restrictions on the pre-sale of lairs.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the annual lairs sales figures and remaining availability;
2. noted the updated comments relevant to the Cemetery Development programme; and
3. agreed the updated list of sites, where the pre-sale of lairs is restricted.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated December 2024, submitted)

6. REVIEW OF ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES - UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on progress and next steps in relation to the Roads and Infrastructure Service Review,

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the content of the report; and
2. agreed to receive a further report on progress of the Roads and Infrastructure Service Review in March 2025

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated December 2024, submitted)

7. SECOND DOMESTIC BIN REVIEW 2024

The Committee gave consideration to a report seeking approval for officers to carry out an online consultation exercise regarding second bins and the criteria that should be considered for these. Paper copies of the consultation will be available in the Council's Customer Service Points for any person who is not able to complete the consultation online. The report also provided an update on the review of second bins.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. agreed that officers carry out an online consultation exercise regarding second bins, over a 4 week period in the new year. The criteria that should be considered for these, with the detail of the consultation, being delegated to the Executive Director with overall responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, in consultation with the Policy Lead for Roads, Transport and Amenity Services;
2. agreed that the second domestic bin review be paused to allow consultation to be undertaken on future eligibility of second bins; and
3. noted that a report on the outcome of the consultation would be brought back to a future Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated December 2024, submitted)

8. WASTE LANDFILL BAN UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the progress towards landfill ban compliance. The report also provided an update on financial implications in respect of the landfill ban and other waste issues.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee considered and noted the content of the report.

(Reference: Report by the Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated December 2024, submitted)

9. MARINE OPERATIONS: MAINLAND FERRY SERVICE

The Committee gave consideration to a report introducing the “Argyll & Bute Council Mainland Ferries Study – Comparative Analysis of Options for Council-run ferries” carried out by Caledonian Economics (Mainland Ferries Study).

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. thanked the Easdale and Luing Community Council representatives and residents for the high level of engagement and return regarding the questionnaires;
2. discussed the contents and implications of the Mainland Ferries Study, detailed at Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
3. approved the continuation of the feasibility study to progress a business case for the provision of infrastructure options to Easdale, including fixed links;
4. approved the inclusion of options to Luing in the feasibility study to continue to take advantage of economy of scale; and
5. acknowledged the ongoing need to continue to engage with residents and representatives of the communities on the Isle of Luing, Isle of Seil, and Easdale, in relation to council run ferry services and infrastructure.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated November 2024, submitted)

10. 20MPH SPEED LIMITS REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report detailing the support offered by Transport Scotland to progress the 20mph speed limit project.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee-

1. noted the Scottish Government had committed to creating a healthier, greener and safer Scotland and their aspiration is that the introduction of 20mph restrictions could help to contribute to these objectives – this is a national aspiration to be managed through local powers to amend speed limits rather than changing the national legislation;
2. welcomed the additional funding confirmed by Transport Scotland on 14 October 2024 for a Project Officer which would help to gather data necessary to allow the Council to make informed decisions going forward;
3. agreed that no decision would be made regarding the implementation of any speed restrictions at this time; and
4. agreed that as more detailed information becomes available, a further report would be provided to update Elected Members via Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated 16 November 2024, submitted)

11. TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2019, PART 6 PARKING PROHIBITIONS UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the introduction of enforcement of the parking prohibitions contained in Part 6 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and seeking agreement to revise the timescales from December 2024 to 3 March 2025.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. agreed the revised timescale from December 2024 to 3 March 2025;
2. noted the amended process as outlined in paragraph 4.8 of the submitted report; and
3. requested that Officers explore options to identify areas where enforcement may cause traffic management problems and if possible report back to this Committee options to mitigate, including exemptions.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated 11 November 2024, submitted).

12. ROADS RECONSTRUCTION BUDGET

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on future forecast capital funding for roads reconstruction and improvements.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the content of the report including the allocation of the provisional budget set out in the table at paragraph 3.6 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated November 2024, submitted)

13. DRAFT ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

The Committee gave consideration to a report requesting approval to progress to consultation on the draft of the Council's Active Travel Strategy. The draft Active Travel Strategy has been developed by Officers as instructed by this Committee on 1 June 2023.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. considered and approved the draft Active Travel Strategy for a period of consultation; and

2. instructed Officers to provide a further report to this Committee on completion of the consultation for members to consider and approve.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated December 2024, submitted)

14. ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee workplan was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the content of the workplan.

(Reference: Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee workplan dated December 2024, submitted)

VALEDICTORY

The Chair acknowledged that Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure, had left the Council and noted his thanks on behalf of the Committee for all the work he had carried out during his time with the Council. The Chair recorded his personal thanks for Mr Smith's support during his term as Shadow Policy Lead, and latterly as Policy Lead.

He then welcomed Stephen Hall to the meeting. Mr Hall will take up post as the Interim Head of Roads and Infrastructure from 6 January 2025.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion Under Standing Order 13 was before the Committee for consideration –

At its meeting on the 20th September 2024, the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS) Joint Committee approved a new fare structure to come into effect from 1st April 2025. The new model based on half standard fare, with a fare cap set at £2.50 for a single and £4.00 for a return, is applied for wholly rural rail journeys and all ferry journeys.

Currently, rail and ferry journeys under approximately 10 (nautical) miles are charged at £1.00 single and £1.50 return. This represents a fare increase of up to 165%, including on lifeline ferry routes and disproportionately impact on the elderly and most vulnerable members of our community.

This Council:

1. Expresses deep concern about the fare increases that have been agreed, noting that residents of Argyll and Bute already face higher cost of living associated with rural and island life, and these changes disproportionately impact on the elderly and most vulnerable members of our community.

2. Acknowledges demand and increasing operator fares will require SCTS funding reserves of £0.836M by the end of this current financial year 2024/2025 and that Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme reimbursement costs continue to increase sharply.
3. Urges the Scottish Government to provide additional funding for the SCTS to support older and disabled residents traveling and phase in changes to the pricing over a number of years to mitigate the impact of changing to the new model.
4. Agrees that the Policy Lead for Roads & Infrastructure write to the First Minister, John Swinney MSP to highlight these concerns and request action to support elderly and vulnerable service users.

Moved by Councillor Peter Wallace, seconded by Councillor John Armour.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee agreed the terms of the Motion and resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Notice of Motion by Councillor Peter Wallace, seconded by Councillor John Armour, submitted)