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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

**ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**20 MARCH 2025**

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**REVIEW OF ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES - UPDATE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee with an update on progress and next steps in relation to the Roads and Infrastructure Service Review (RIS Review).
- 1.2 In providing this update reference is made to information contained in the previous report to this Committee in relation to the RIS Review dated 19 December 2024 and to the actions taken in the intervening period.
- 1.3 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
- a) note the content of this report.
  - b) agree to endorse the priority improvement actions set out within this report.
  - c) agree to receive a further report on progress of the RIS Review in June 2025.

## REVIEW OF ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES - UPDATE

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an update to Members of this Committee on progress of the Roads and Infrastructure Service Review (RIS Review).

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
- a) note the content of this report.
  - b) agree to endorse the priority improvement actions set out within this report.
  - c) agree to receive a further report on progress of the RIS Review in June 2025.

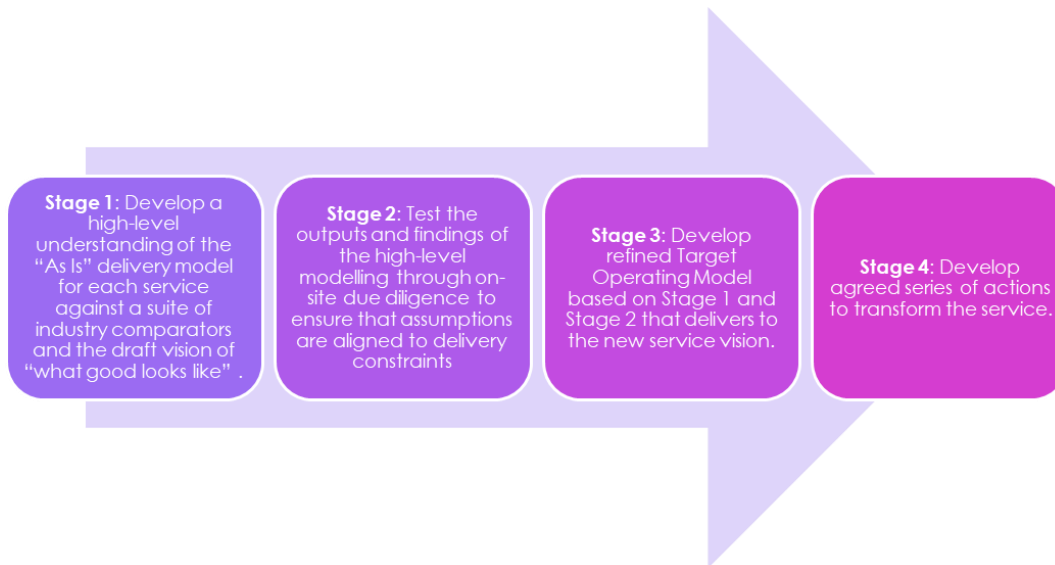
### 4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 At the December 2024 meeting of this Committee, Members received a report entitled "Review of Roads and Infrastructure Services - Update". That report provided a summary of key aspects of Stage 1 of the RIS Review and provided an update on progress with the further development and implementation of these. The report in December 2024 set out that progress with the RIS Review was being overseen by the RIS Review Project Board Chaired by Executive Director Kirsty Flanagan with Vice Chair Executive Director Douglas Hendry and this remains the case. The report in December 2024 also set out that a review of the Stage 1 recommendations had been completed and that the work required to conclude Stage 2 of the review process would be completed shortly and result

in the development of a set of priority improvement actions with the intention of delivering change in a phased and prioritised manner.

4.2 The report in December 2024 set out that a consultant had been appointed in November 2024 to take forward the next phase of the RIS Review. Following the departure of the previous Head of Service in December 2024, the consultant has been appointed as Interim Head of Service and is fulfilling both this role and leading the implementation of the RIS Review while recruitment for the substantive Head of Service takes place. The recruitment process for the new Head of Service has commenced with interviews scheduled for 27 March 2025.

4.3 The RIS Review has been structured around 4 stages of activity as illustrated below:



4.4 Stage 2 of the RIS Review has now been completed. Having reviewed the activities required in stages 3 and 4 an opportunity has been identified to move both these stages forward at the same time. Taking this "twin track" approach to stages 3 and 4 will enable the improvements identified by the RIS Review to be delivered more quickly. As noted above the key output from Stage 3 is a revised target operating model for the service, this has been designed in the form of a new organisation structure for the service which has now matured to the point that formal engagement with Trade Unions and the affected staff is ready to commence. Stage 4 of the RIS Review process entails the development and implementation of an agreed set of actions to transform the service. The table below sets out these actions which have been called "Priority Improvement Actions". The first of the priority improvement actions is to "develop and implement a revised organisation structure for Roads and Infrastructure Services", delivering this will in effect complete Stage 3 of the process. Implementing a revised organisation structure for the service is a key enabler to ensure the success of the other Priority Improvement Actions, but as illustrated in the table below work to begin progressing many of the other actions has already commenced. A total of 12 Priority Improvement Actions have been identified and these are summarised in the table below:

Workstream	Priority Improvement Action	Rationale and Detail
Organisational Design and People	Develop and implement a revised organisation structure for Roads and Infrastructure Services.	<p>This action will deliver Stage 3 of the RIS Review process and is fundamental to enabling the success of all other improvement related activities and will form the foundations for a refreshed Roads and Infrastructure Service. The existing organisation structure does not provide optimal levels of clarity and accountability and in some areas appears to lack the capacity required to effectively respond to near term challenges. The need for change to the management structure is not universal with some teams requiring only limited change.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> A new organisation structure has been produced to the level of maturity necessary to enable engagement with Trade Unions and affected staff to commence. Draft revised Job Descriptions and Person Specifications have been produced and the process of job evaluation in relation to these is progressing. The intention is to take forward the reshaping exercise in two stages. Stage 1 will see changes implemented at tier 3 (Service Managers), following this those changes required at subsequent tiers will be taken forward. Taking a 2 stage approach ensures that service managers can be actively involved in the implementation of the revised organisation structure and operating model for the service. The intention is to commence formal engagement in relation to stage 1 of the reshaping as soon as the job evaluation process for the tier 3 posts is completed and it is hoped that this will be possible no later than April 2025.</p>
Data, Digital and Customer	Review the scope and effectiveness of service specific technology systems used for asset & works management and the interface between these and core corporate systems.	Stage 1 and 2 of the review process identified that the core asset and information management system used by the service in relation to roads, amenities and environmental assets is not optimally configured and is not offering the maximum value possible. This system also interacts with a service specific finance system which is coming to its end of life and with the corporate customer relationship

		<p>management system. This Priority Improvement Action will see these systems reviewed with targeted improvements made to maximise benefit and ensure a replacement for the finance element is in place prior to the expiry of the existing product.</p> <p>This work will include reviewing the opportunities for artificial intelligence to add greater value and enable staff to spend a greater proportion of their time on higher value-added activities.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> Significant progress has been made since this issue was identified at stage 1 of the RIS Review. The existing system has been successfully migrated onto cloud hosting which has enabled a number of improvements in functionality. Key areas of improvement that have been delivered include: bridges and structures management, road inspections, road works instructions, accessibility of asset data and overall user experience of the system. Further improvement activity will target 4 priority areas: 1) customer relationship management, 2) financial recording and reporting, 3) improving the functionality of the system for amenity services and 4) utilisation of the system for the management of land and environment maintenance. An Officer Steering Group has been established and a Project Manager identified to lead this work.</p>
<p>Organisation Design and People Workstream</p>	<p>Drive forward the selection and development, by the Council, of the organisational arrangements to come into place for waste disposal at the end of the current PPP contract.</p>	<p>With the current PPP contract expiring in September 2026, a key area of focus is to increase the pace at which the organisational arrangements that will be required after the end of the contract are developed and put into operation. In the short-term additional capacity is being added to the Council's existing waste team through external specialist consultancies. As the future arrangements become clearer the capacity of the Council's waste team will be further reviewed.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> external consultants have been appointed to lead the Options</p>

		Appraisal for future organisational arrangements and to add capacity to the Council's waste team as we prepare for the end of the PPP contract. A number of existing commercial and contractual matters in relation to the PPP contract are being progressed along with matters that relate to the impact of the upcoming ban on Municipal Bio-degradable Waste to Landfill.
Organisation Design and People Workstream	Improve consistency of approach to project management.	<p>While there is a strong emphasis on managing the design and construction phases of projects the process of business case development and assurance within RIS can be improved and strengthened and brought into better alignment with the Council wide approach of the Project Pipeline and adoption of best practice through the Treasury Green Book business case approach.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> This improvement action has begun with the approach applied to the proposed Helensburgh Waste Transfer Station project. The outcomes of a project review using this methodology is the subject of another report on today's agenda. All current and potential future projects from RIS are being reviewed in line with the Council's "project pipeline" approach. In addition the organisational re-shape described earlier in this table will embed specific project management roles more clearly within the structure.</p>
Organisation Design and People Workstream	Review the impact of a potential future reduction in roads maintenance capital budget on the overall operating approach and of the service.	This action was initially developed in response to the anticipated significant reduction in the level of capital funding for 2025/26. The decision at Council to award a capital budget of £10m for roads reconstruction in 2025/26 has reduced the urgency of this action. However with ongoing pressure to Council budgets and no guarantee that the current level of capital funding can be maintained in future years, it remains necessary for the service to review how a potential future reduction in the capital budget would impact on the current operating model and balance between activities delivered by in-house resource and those delivered by contractors.

		<p><b>Progress to date:</b> an initial high-level review has been undertaken outlining the types of both capital and revenue works that would be prioritised under different funding scenarios – this work will be further progressed over the coming year.</p>
Policy and Procedure Workstream	Commence programme of strategic change to parking and enforcement related activity.	<p>A strategic review of parking services and options for change should be developed for consideration by Members as a co-ordinated package of service changes.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> this work has not progressed beyond the Stage 1 recommendations and Stage 2 due diligence at this time due to capacity.</p>
Policy and Procedure Workstream	Develop and implement a package of changes to school transport including ASN transport.	<p>This is a policy area that, nationally, has been under significant financial strain for a number of years as a result of increases in demand. A package of changes will be developed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the approach to procurement in targeted areas.</li> <li>• Strengthening co-ordination between Council services in education and RIS in relation to planning for the transport requirements of children and young people with ASN.</li> </ul> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> Initial scoping meeting has been held between senior officers in education and RIS to map out potential improvements.</p> <p>A significant study into the future proprieties for public transport across Argyll and Bute has been commissioned and will shortly move the stage of public and stakeholder engagement. There is a very significant overlap between public bus transport and school transport which means the results of this study are likely to have a significant influence on future models for school transport including ASN transport in the future.</p>
Commercial Opportunities Workstream	Further review the options for increased commercial activity in the fleet	<p>Stage 1 of the review reached conclusions in relation to the potential to generate additional income through fleet services. The Stage 2 due diligence did not fully support the conclusion as they did not take account of the local context of Argyll and</p>

	<p>maintenance workshops.</p>	<p>Bute including our highly rural nature, topography and long distances between vehicle operating centres (depots). However opportunities are believed to exist to further review medium to long term options to increase efficiency and / or generate additional commercial income.</p> <p>A further and more detailed review of capacity that involves looking at both existing capacity available for commercial work will be progressed.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> This work will be progressed when officer capacity allows following the back-filling of a key vacancy in the fleet team, recruitment to which is currently ongoing.</p>
<p>Policy and Procedure Workstream</p>	<p>Continue to progress route optimisation project.</p>	<p>This project is fundamental to having improved customer service and performance metrics to drive efficiency in the waste collection service.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> Staff training and installation of the in-cab technology is progressing well.</p>
<p>Organisation Design and People Workstream</p>	<p>Project Gateway Review of the Helensburgh Waste Transfer Station (WTS) Project.</p>	<p>This priority improvement action is the subject of a separate report on Committee's agenda today.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> Subject to decision of this Committee – Complete.</p>
<p>Commercial Opportunities Workstream</p>	<p>Progress a review of commercial waste services to ensure optimum efficiency, service consistency and income generation.</p>	<p>A review of back-office and operational procedures will be implemented to provide assurance that this area of service is operating to optimum levels.</p> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> a project team has been identified and has started to review the scope for improvements.</p>
<p>Policy and Procedure Workstream</p>	<p>Continue to progress the second domestic waste bin review and seek to reduce residual waste collection in line with the volume recommended in the Code of</p>	<p>To reduce waste disposal volumes and increase recycling and re-use, thereby supporting achievement of environmental strategies and targets and reducing revenue cost of waste disposal and waste collection services. This work, alongside the route optimisation project will be driven forward with increased pace to deliver improvements in both efficiency and customer service.</p>



	Practice for Household Recycling while also increasing the rate of recycling across the area.	<b>Progress to date:</b> A public survey has been prepared in order to gauge the views of the public to inform the next steps in this project – this will be live mid-March.
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## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 This report provides an update on the implementation of Stage 2 of the RIS Review process.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – No direct policy implications within this report. A number of the priority improvement actions may result in changes to existing policies, where this is the case further reports seeking approval for new or changed policies will come to Committee.

6.2 Financial – A number of the priority improvement actions aim to increase efficiency and deliver financial benefits to the Council.

6.3 Legal – Legal aspects are being reviewed as part of each of the priority improvement actions.

6.4 HR – The proposals to reshape the organisation structure of the Roads and Infrastructure Service have implications for staff. All relevant Council policies and procedures are being followed in this regard.

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities – Will be considered as part of each of the priority improvement actions as these progress.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None identified at this time.

6.5.3 Islands – None identified at this time.

6.6 Climate Change – None identified at this time.

6.7 Risk – Risks are being managed in relation to each of the priority improvement actions.

6.8 Customer Service – A number of the priority improvement actions aim to improve customer experience.

6.9 Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – None arising directly from this report.

**Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure**

**Councillor John Armour, Policy Lead for Roads, Transport and Amenity  
Services**

**March 2025**

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**APPENDICES**

N/A