

Agenda Item	19
Report No	EDI/81/10

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Environment Development and Infrastructure

Date: 7 November 2019

Report Title: Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report updates Members on the progress of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee and the work currently being taken within the Scottish public roads sector to explore and develop opportunities for greater collaboration between Northern Roads Authorities.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to :

- i. consider the Annual report from the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee as attached at **Appendix 1**;
- ii. note the continued role of Highland Council in providing the Finance Officer for the Joint Committee; and
- iii. note that it is intended that EDI committee will continue to receive an annual report on performance activities annual achievements of the Joint Committee.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – There are limited staffing and financial implications associated with participation in the Joint Committee including the cost of Highland Council providing the Financial Officer to the Joint Committee. These costs are covered by service budgets.
- 3.2 Legal – Participation in the Joint Committee does not oblige Highland Council to enter into any sharing or collaboration agreements.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – There are no direct equality, poverty or rural implications arising from these proposals
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – There are no Climate or Carbon clever implications

3.5 Risk – As this report is an annual summary report identifying events that have already occurred there are no risks in terms of Corporate or Service Risk registers. The ongoing participation in the Joint committee is designed to eliminate risk of sharing/collaborating which does not conform to EU procurement rules.

3.6 Gaelic – There are no Gaelic implications arising for this report.

4. Background

4.1 At its meeting on 29 June 2017 (Item 17) Council agreed to the formation of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee. Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Argyll and Bute Council, The Moray Council and Western Isles Council are joint participants in this Committee. The council agreed that the lead Authority for the year would be Aberdeenshire Council and that the Chair and Vice-chair of the EDI Committee be appointed to the Joint Committee.

4.2 Whilst the first formal meeting of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee was not held until 18 May 2018, the Joint Committee met four times in 2018/19 with a similar number of meeting scheduled for 2019/20.

4.3 At its meeting on 16 August 2018 (Item 25) EDI Committee received the first annual report on the progress of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee.

4.4 At its meeting on 21 June 2019 in Forfar, the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee approved the annual report with the recommendation that each of the partner authorities take the report back to the most relevant Committee within their Authority. The Annual Report of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee is attached at **Appendix 1**.

4.5 Decisions to participate in collaborative projects will be taken by each Council, who would then be required to allocate resources to the project. Once a project is initiated, the Joint Committee will oversee the delivery of the project.

5. Progress to date

5.1 Since its inaugural meeting on 18 May 2018 the Joint Committee continued to meet quarterly; 31 August 2018 at Argyll and Bute Council in Lochgilphead, 23 November 2018 at Aberdeen City Council, 1 March 2019 at Moray Council in Elgin, 21 June 2019 at Angus Council in Forfar and most recently on 6 September 2019 hosted by Highland Council in Inverness. The next meeting of the Joint Committee is scheduled for 29 November in Aberdeen with meetings quarterly thereafter.

5.2 At the Joint Committee on 21 June 2019 the option to retain the current Chair through to May 2020 was discussed and the role of Lead Authority was confirmed as being retained by Aberdeenshire Council. All committee agendas, reports and minutes are accessible directly on the Aberdeenshire Council website at :

<http://committees.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=511>

5.3 During the previous 12 months the Joint committee has been working on a range of initiatives including:

- joint contract for the procurement of road surface friction testing (SCRIM);
- Coring Services for the National Coring Programme;
- alternative surfacing materials including the use of recycled plastic in roads;
- Road Safety Plan development and sharing of resources;
- Joint Designated Person (DP) functions for marine activity;
- procurement and use of a dredging unit owned by Moray Council;
- sharing good practice for the Port Marine Safety code;
- joint working with Transport Scotland and their operating companies;
- shared use of technical design staff;
- joint training, establishing a training academy, mainly through third party suppliers; and
- joint authority officer workshops.

5.4 The Roads and Transportation Service is currently working with Moray Council to identify Roads and Transport activities with potential for collaboration.

5.5 Having formally adopted the Joint Committee this does not preclude any other joint working with say Transport Scotland, or other local authorities. Council Officers continue to review activities and regularly discuss collaborative opportunities with a range of partners.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities

Date: 28 October 2019

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