

Agenda Item	7
Report No	RDB/09/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Redesign Board

Date: 28 November 2022

Report Title: Roads Improvement Project – Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Economy, Infrastructure & Environment

1.	Purpose/Executive Summary
1.1	This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the Roads Improvement Project following the approval by the Redesign Board on the 18 th February 2022. The Roads Improvement project is part of the Council's Business Change programme.
1.2	The Project's purpose is to redesign the service where necessary. This is to identify improvements for the effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of all Engineering and Roads Operations while aspiring to improve road condition across the Highlands.
1.3	The Roads Improvement Project is underpinned by the Council's Corporate and Community objectives. It is fundamental to the delivery of efficient, quality services that continue to deliver value for money and meet the needs of all those who use them. According to an annual survey on Council services and life in Highland, by the Council's citizens panel, the most important aspects provided were 'Roads and Potholes' and 'Winter Road Maintenance'.
1.4	The project team has been successfully established, with all posts filled by October 2022. An initial period of information gathering and comparison with other Roads Authorities has commenced. It is expected that the first 3-6 months will produce a programme of policy renewal, several initial LEAN reviews of priority work streams and instigation of the Road Construction Consent Process Improvement project.
1.5	After a Redesign Workshop was held in October 2022, three Members have been assigned to the Roads Redesign Working Group. Details are in the Redesign of Highland Council – Work Programme Update paper presented at this committee, but have been restated here for clarity: Councillor Raymond Bremner Councillor Russell Jones

	Councillor Trish Robertson
2.	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the progress of the Roads Improvement Project.
3.	Implications
3.1	Resource Where necessary, the project will consider relevant resourcing issues including workforce, plant, materials, income generation and community capacity to develop sustainable proposals for Members to consider. For the duration of the project, the team will be funded from the Roads revenue budget.
3.2	Legal Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, the Council is the local Roads Authority and has a duty to manage and maintain all publicly adopted local roads within its area, noting Transport Scotland is the Roads Authority for the trunk road network.
3.3	Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) There are no known implications, however the project will consider them as necessary.
3.4	Climate Change / Carbon Clever There are no known implications, however the project will consider implications for the Council's carbon footprint and other environmental impacts.
3.5	Risk There are no known implications, however the project will ensure that the Council's exposure to legal and reputational risk is considered. The project risk register will be reviewed at each working group meeting (Appendix 1).
3.6	Gaelic There are no known Gaelic implications identified.
4.	Project Initiation
4.1	The Roads Improvement project has been established in accordance with project management principles. The project will be managed using work packages which will then be linked to each project objective.
4.2	A Project Plan detailing tasks, timescales and resources is being drafted. It will be presented to the Project Board in January 2023 and subsequently to the Working Group Members. The Project Plan will be updated and maintained by the Project Manager as a living document in response to project objectives.
4.3	The project will be delivered in a staged approach. Towards the end of each milestone, the Project Board will meet to agree the tasks to be actioned during the next stage of the project.
4.4	An additional 5 temporary posts were created to form the base Roads Redesign Team, managed by the existing Principal Engineer (Transport Planning/ Road Asset Management and Policy), and supported by the Project Manager (Business

Change Team). The additional 5 posts and Project Manager (listed in the table below) are resourced for 23 months through the Roads revenue budget. The project team therefore consists of the following roles:

Role	Service Function
Project Manager	Transformation
Principal Engineer	Roads & Infrastructure
Senior Engineer	Roads & Infrastructure
Senior Technician	Roads & Infrastructure
Technician	Roads & Infrastructure
Operational Support Officer x2	Roads & Infrastructure

The posts have been successfully recruited, with all staff having started by the middle of October 2022.

4.5 The delivery of project outcomes will be monitored but there may be slippages or delays due to the Council's ongoing budget constraints and recruitment scrutiny.

4.6 The Roads Improvement Project Board has been established and, at the time of writing this paper, had scheduled its initial meeting for the 16th November 2022. It is recognised that the composition of the Project Board will change through time and will be dependent on the project stage being delivered. The Project Board members are shown below (note that Finance and Human Resources subject matter experts will be included as necessary):

Role	Service Role / Function
Sponsor:	ECO, I, E & E
Lead:	Head of Service, Roads & Infrastructure
Project Manager:	Transformation
Project Assurance:	Transformation
Subject Matter Expert:	Road Operations Manager Representative
Subject Matter Expert:	Roads Strategy Representative
Subject Matter Expert:	Project Design Unit

5. Project Objectives – Progress Update

5.1 **Strategy, Governance and Project Management**
Improved road condition and strategic Road Asset Management Plan.

5.1.1 A programme of work to review policies and guidance currently in place is being developed. Work has started on reviewing the Verge Maintenance guidance document. Future redesign workshops will be required to support the project in delivering policy updates.

5.2 **Integration and Communication**
A more responsive service and improved communication with our stakeholders.

5.2.1 An important aspect of the Redesign project will be improving communication, both with staff and customers. For example, for each work package, the Council's related webpages will be reviewed and updated with pertinent information as necessary.

5.2.2	<p>The following priorities have been identified and are currently undergoing a LEAN review to suggest improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit Applications • Temporary and Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders • Compensation Claims <p>In addition to the above, a rapid review of the Utilisation of Materials from Sconser Quarry has begun and the Road Construction Consent process review will be commenced in the near future.</p>
5.2.3	<p>As the Project Plan develops and evolves, the further areas for improvement will be mapped, assessed and reviewed. Where appropriate, the project will use LEAN methodologies following the structure provided by DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control). The Action Plan included in the May 2022 Member's Briefing will also be updated.</p>
5.3	<p>Financial Resources A more efficient use of resources and value for money.</p>
5.3.1	<p>The project team has begun working on a rapid review to assess the utilisation of materials from Sconser Quarry. The review will consider various aspects including production capacity, haulage and storage.</p>
5.4	<p>Workforce Planning and Operations Improving cross functional and service collaboration. Using LEAN to improve service delivery.</p>
5.4.1	<p>LEAN reviews are currently focused on improving customer-based applications; however, these include processes that are cross functional and improve service collaboration, whilst making it efficient for staff to deal with. The assessment of software used for the processes should also provide a more efficient service.</p>
5.5	<p>Partnership Working Leveraging partnerships to improve our value proposition.</p>
5.5.1	<p>The Roads Service is already engaged in partnership working with other Roads Authorities through the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee, as well as the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS). Collaboration is undertaken in many forms from participation on working groups to shared Procurement Services. Any improvement actions which may result in new opportunities for collaboration will be identified.</p>
6.	<p>Next Steps</p>
6.1	<p>As the project is in the early stages, below are the expected next phases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of information gathering and comparison with other Roads Authorities. • Produce a detailed Project Plan for the next stage of project delivery (including updating the Action Plan). • Compile a programme of policy renewal. • Complete review of customer based online applications. • Initiation of the road construction consent process improvement project.

	<p>Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy</p> <p>Date: 14 November 2022</p> <p>Authors: Elizabeth Maciver, Principal Engineer (Transport Planning/ Road Asset Management and Policy) Elias Gilbert, Corporate Improvement Project Manager (Business Change Team)</p> <p>Background Papers: RDB-01-22 Roads Improvement Project – Project Brief</p>

Appendix 1 – Risk Register

Risk	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigation & Management Action
Revenue allocation and impact on the winter maintenance delivery and cyclical maintenance	High	Review revenue allocations and identify efficiencies in operations. Short term and seasonal workers. Communication strategy. Develop and implement a risk-based approach.
Staffing levels, including impact of HGV driver availability and impact of Covid	High	Determine adequate resourcing levels – and consider recruitment including seasonal workers.
Compliance with driving legislation and impact on resourcing levels and service	High	Establish legislative requirements and develop clear guidance and monitoring, review resourcing requirements.
Capital allocation and impact on road condition and road structures	High	Review capital allocation on an ongoing basis, as agreed at Council in December 2021 prioritisation of funding based on asset management principals.
Fleet availability and reliability	High	Improve communication between Roads and Fleet. Consider levels of service and associated revenue and capital allocations.
Increase in customer contacts, complaints and claims	Medium	Provide a better and more durable road condition. Develop the communication strategy and customer contact system.
Decrease in staff wellbeing and trade union relations	Medium	Develop engagement and communication. Consider workload allocations, overtime provision and standby. Publicise support available to staff.
Staff recruitment and retention	Medium	Work with HR to publicise and market recruitment opportunities. Provide training and clear career pathway opportunities. Utilisation of graduate and modern apprentices.

Appendix 2 – Working Group Membership

Purpose: provide direct input to the project work areas, including researching, developing, and accessing options, and shaping the approach being taken to deliver the stated objectives of the overall project

Membership:

Role	
Sponsor	ECO, Infrastructure & Environment
Lead	Head of Service, Roads & Infrastructure
Project Manager	Project Manager: Transformation
Project Assurance	Team Manager: Transformation
Redesign Board Representative	Councillor
Redesign Board Representative	Councillor
Redesign Board Representative	Councillor
Redesign Board Representative	Trade Union
Subject Matter Expert	Road Operations Manager Representative
Subject Matter Expert	Roads Strategy Representative
Subject Matter Expert	Project Design Unit Representative
Subject Matter Expert	Finance Representative
Subject Matter Expert	HR Representative