

Agenda Item	6
Report No	RDB-03-23

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Redesign Board

Date: 30 March 2023

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 previous update to the Redesign Board on the 28 th of November 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 to modernise it and ensure efficient processes are in place. This is to identify improvements for the effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of all Engineering and Roads Operations. 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.
1.3	Progress has been made on the work reviewing Permit Applications, Temporary and Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders and Compensation Claims, as well as researching topics for the next phase.
1.4	A programme of works has been established covering policies, processes, financial resources and workforce planning. The project team will continue to follow LEAN principles, specifically the structure provided by DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control) for reviews. In February 2023, assigned Redesign Members were updated on progress made and consulted on prioritising the list of tasks within the project.
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.	Progress Update
4.1	A Project Plan detailing tasks, timescales and resources was drafted and presented to the Working Group Members in February 2023. Assigned Redesign Members and Senior Management were consulted in order to identify priorities. The Project Plan will be kept up to date by the Project Manager as a living document in response to prioritised project objectives.
4.2	The delivery of review outcomes will be monitored by the project team, however there may be slippages or delays due to the Council's ongoing budget constraints. For example, acquiring and updating software requires an initial spend in order to redesign the process and improve future efficiency.
4.3	As reviews and policies are finalised, updates will be given to the Project Board and Working Group. Policy changes and charging amendments will be brought to future E & I Committees for approval. Where sensitive information prevents publishing the reviews, a summary of outcomes will be added as appendices to Redesign Board reports.
5.	Project Objectives – Progress Update
5.1	Strategy, Governance and Project Management Improved road condition and strategic Road Asset Management Plan.
5.1.1	During the E & I Committee on the 2nd February 2023 the Speed Limit Policy was approved by Members.

5.1.2	The Verge Maintenance guidance document is currently being reviewed by primary stakeholders prior to releasing the document to the Working Group for discussion. Generally, the work on policies has continued with a few policies coming to the point where Working Group Members will be consulted, with a view to taking them to committee later in the year.
5.1.3	The Working Group has requested that a workshop is organised to discuss the current budget distribution formula used for Roads and possible alternatives. The team requires time to undertake the review so it is likely to be programmed for the end of 2023. The workshop will present Members with the opportunity to discuss findings and agree an updated method to be used.
5.2	Integration and Communication A more responsive service and improved communication with our stakeholders.
5.2.1	The project team is working on preparing communications for staff in order to provide an update on progress as well as create interest in the project. This will complement the My Council project communications and the new staff intranet will be used to disseminate the information. Potentially, staff will be impacted by the changes suggested through the project reviews and it is important that their involvement is recognised and encouraged.
5.2.2	Each Roads Redesign project will be looked at from the customer's perspective and improvements made to communications, where required, taking cognisance of the My Council's project objectives.
5.3	Financial Resources A more efficient use of resources and value for money.
5.3.1	The project team has completed the rapid review to assess the utilisation of materials from Sconser Quarry. The review considered various aspects such as production, capacity, haulage and storage. Where our reports hold commercially confidential or customer related information, the team will publish summary points to be noted at committee.
5.4	Workforce Planning and Operations Improving cross functional and service collaboration. Using LEAN to improve service delivery.
5.4.1	As reported in November 2022, the Project is currently focusing on the following LEAN reviews in order to suggest improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit Applications • Temporary and Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders • Compensation Claims
5.4.2	The LEAN review for Permit Applications has been concluded and the list of recommendations is being reviewed by Senior Management.
5.4.3	The LEAN review for Temporary and Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders is in its final stage. The data collected and process maps created are currently being collated into a report and recommendations identified in order to improve the process. A review into events and parades has been triggered by this project to enable further improvements.

5.4.4	The Compensation Claims review is progressing, with work commenced on the report. The project team is finalising guidance for staff, which will include using SharePoint to manage claims. This will enable more efficient reporting with data recorded in a consistent manner.
6.	Benefits
6.1	As the redesign reviews are concluded, benefits to staff and customers should be realised, with some being immediate and others evolving over time.
6.2	Policies, such as the Speed Limit one already approved, will provide staff and customers with a modernised Roads service with clear service levels. As they are updated, policies will be published on the relevant page on the Council's website.
6.3	<p>The other reviews are likely to have cost avoidance and non-cashable benefits such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing staff and/ or customer time dealing with applications or requests for information, • improved response times to applications as all pertinent information should be included in forms, • improved ability to report on performance, and • Council website updated to reflect agreed recommendations from reviews, providing customers with relevant information.
7.	Next Steps
7.1	<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. • Complete reviews of customer based online applications (following on from the permit review). • Initiation of the road construction consent process improvement project. • Initiation of investigation work on alternatives to the current methodology used for the Roads Budget Distribution formula. • Continue policy revisions, including one for Events, Marches and Parades. • Review opportunities for how operational based functions are managed. • As stated in paragraph 5.1.3 above, a workshop with Members will be held later in 2023 on the Roads budget distribution formula and potential alternatives.
	<p>Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy</p> <p>Date: 16 March 2023</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 RDB/09/22 Roads Improvement Project - Update</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	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.