

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILAUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE10 November 2016Report by ClerkNATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTMAINTAINING SCOTLAND'S ROADS – A FOLLOW UP REPORT**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide information on the Audit Scotland report *Maintaining Scotland's Roads - A Follow Up Report*.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the Committee considers the report.

BACKGROUND

3. Copies of the Audit Scotland report *Scotland's Roads - A Follow Up Report*, published in August 2016, have already been circulated to all Audit and Scrutiny Committee Members. Under the Committee's specialisation arrangements, the Members who are leading the review of the report are Councillor Robertson and Councillor McCaskill. In accordance with arrangements established by the Committee for dealing with such reports, the Head of Environment (Operations) has provided comments on it. A copy of the feedback is attached (see Appendix 1).

RECOMMENDATION

4. It is recommended that the Committee considers the report.

Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Background Papers:-

1. Audit Scotland Report *Scotland's Roads - A Follow Up Report*

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILAUDIT COMMITTEE10 November 2016Head of Environment (Operations)POSITION STATEMENT ON THE REPORT - MAINTAINING SCOTLANDS ROADS
(A FOLLOW-UP REPORT) AUGUST 2016 – BY AUDIT SCOTLAND

1. In August 2016 Audit Scotland published a Maintaining Scotland's Roads (A follow-up report) to evaluate the extent to which previous recommendations in Reports from 2004, 2011 and 2013 had been adhered to.
2. The Roads Service has reported previously to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on its progress in relation to the 2011 and 2013 reports.
3. The high level findings of the report include:
 - Roads authorities, locally and nationally, urgently need to demonstrate a much greater commitment to innovation, comparing relative efficiency and being clearer with the public about the impact on road condition of agreed spending levels.
 - The condition of council maintained roads has remained stable at around 63 per cent in acceptable condition over the period 2011/12 to 2014/15.
 - Fifty-seven per cent of users report that road condition is a major concern.
 - National council expenditure on roads maintenance continues to decrease, from £302 million in 2011/12 to £259 million in 2014/15 (14 per cent).
 - *The condition of trunk roads (mainly motorways) declined from 90% in acceptable condition in 2011/12 to 87% in 2014/15.*
 - *The use of cheaper treatment options for road surfacing repairs to stretch budgets may not deliver value for money longer term.*
 - *Progress with introducing a shared service approach to roads maintenance has been disappointingly slow.*
4. The Recommendations within the Report which are pertinent to Local Authorities are as follows:

The Strategic Action Group* should:

- Ensure that the Roads Collaboration Board works with regional group partners to determine a clear plan and timetable for:
 - supporting the development of regional arrangements for roads services to secure the benefits arising, such as efficiencies, increased service resilience and professional skills, while also preserving local accountability
 - making decisions on the extent of shared services at an operational level
 - learning lessons from existing shared service models such as the Ayrshire Roads Alliance, Tayside Contracts and further afield
 - establishing a baseline position, so that roads authorities can measure the expected benefits from collaboration over time
 - develop outcome measures which demonstrate the contribution of well-maintained roads to Scotland's economy.

*The Strategic Action Group is co-chaired by the minister for Transport and Islands and COSLA's spokesperson for Development, Economy and Sustainability, and includes representatives from SCOTS, Transport Scotland, SOLACE and the Improvement Service

Councils should:

- Ensure that they work closely with the Roads Collaboration Programme and regional group partners to determine the extent of shared service models for roads maintenance operations
- Ensure that they implement the findings of the consultant's review of Roads Asset Management Plans (RAMPs) where relevant
- Implement methods for assessing and comparing Councils' roads maintenance efficiency with the aim of identifying and learning from councils delivering services more efficiently
- Use the National Highways & Transport (NHT) Network Survey, or similar, to obtain user views and perceptions of roads services consistently
- Use the results of user surveys to develop more proactive ways of engaging with the public over roads maintenance issues, and to help inform scrutiny and challenge of roads maintenance budgetary proposals.

Councils and Transport Scotland should:

- Ensure that they use their RAMPs to inform Elected Members and Scottish Ministers of long-term investment plans for maintaining roads that take into account the whole-life costing of treatment options
- Ensure that the consequences of spending less than that necessary to maintain current road condition adequately features in budget-setting processes to allow Elected Members and Scottish ministers to make informed choices which take account of competing demands and priorities.

East Renfrewshire Council

5. East Renfrewshire Council undertakes the following measures to ensure compliance with both this and previous reports:

- Annual report to Cabinet outlining Roads Condition Indicator performance, backlog repairs figure and roads maintenance expenditure
- Completion of Roads Asset Management Plan by the end of 2011

- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of Roads Asset Management Plan
- Submission of APSE, SOLACE and SCOTS benchmarking data
- The Council is an active participant in the Clyde Valley Roads Alliance
- Uses Citizen's Panel results to gauge local customer views on standards of roads maintenance
- The Council has performed relatively well when comparing performance nationally. The Table below shows that the Council has improved its position from 32nd overall in 2006 to 20th overall in 2015. Our performance in A class roads has generally been in the top 13 over the past 10 years.

Year	A Class (Position in Scotland in brackets)	B Class (Position In Scotland in brackets)	C Class (Position In Scotland in brackets)	Uncl (Position In Scotland in brackets)	All	Overall Position in Scotland
2006	27.6	66.2	38.1	61.8	54.6	32
2007	30.7	54.6	64.4	65.6	61.7	32
2008	24.4(13)	47.5(30)	36.7(22)	54.2(29)	48.1	30
2009	23.7(12)	49.6(31)	36.7(20)	47.3(26)	44.0	28
2010	24.2(10)	42.1(29)	37.2(24)	48.3(29)	43.9	26
2011	30.7(22)	41.6(27)	38.9(21)	57 (31)	50.1	30
2012	23.7(8)	41.5(24)	37.0(17)	50.1(29)	45.1	27
2013	18.2(2)	28.2(20)	34.5(16)	51.6(27)	43.3	26
2014	21.6(8)	28.0(11)	36.7(16)	50.3(27)	43.5	27
2015	23.9(12)	32.9(16)	36.2(15)	42.5(22)	39.1	20

Clyde Valley Roads Alliance

6. The Clyde Valley Roads Alliance (CVRA) was set up in August 2015 by participating Councils within City Deal. In June of 2016 an Outline Business Case was presented to the Chief Executives of all 8 participating authorities. There was a mixed response to the Report, but it was eventually referred to the Transport & Connectivity Group, which informs future transport policy on behalf of the City Deal councils. Since then, and as approved by the Transport & Connectivity Group, the CVRA has continued to meet and will focus on a more detailed Outline Business Case while working on minor collaborative projects to demonstrate how common working may be deliverable across Councils.

Conclusion

7. The Council is taking all appropriate steps to continue to ensure compliance with Audit Scotland's recommendations. Whilst we will continue to participate with the Clyde Valley Roads Alliance in pursuing national aims we will do so with the best interests of the Council's Roads Service and the residents of East Renfrewshire.

8. The Roads service will report to Cabinet on current Road Condition Indicator (RCI), Roads Asset Management Plan (RAMP) and current backlog figure, in line with the Report recommendations.

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November 2016

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