

To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board

On: 24th January 2024

Report by: Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure

Heading: Service Update Report

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of key service activities since the last Policy Board report on 8 November 2023 and an update on the services and key projects delivered during this period.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board:

- 2.1 Approves the content of the report, including the charges and arrangements set out in sections 7.5 and 9.5 of the report.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Environment, Housing & Infrastructure provides essential services to every household in Renfrewshire and works in partnership with the local community, other service areas and Community Planning Partners, to deliver key Council priorities and initiatives. A progress update on the main activities delivered by the services in respect of the areas of activity delegated to this Policy Board, is detailed below.
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Updates for Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board

4. Climate Change

4.1 EV Charging Infrastructure

- 4.1.1 Environment, Housing & Infrastructure was successful in its application to the Transport Scotland Local Authority Infrastructure Project. This external grant funding of £73,000 has installed 13 Electric Vehicle charging bays at Brediland Children's Home, Community Meals Service Paisley and Renfrew Care Home for further rollout of our zero emission fleet vehicles.

- 4.1.2 Officers from the service continue to work with the other City Region authorities with a view to taking a regional approach to the next phase roll out of electric charging infrastructure. This will involve engagement with the private sector to decide on the most appropriate model for taking this issue forward across the region.

4.2 Energy Management

ECO4 Flex

- 4.2.1 As outlined within the previous Service Update Report, presented to board on 8 November 2023, ECO4 Flex will allow the Council to approve funding to Renfrewshire's private sector, fuel poor households that do not meet criteria for other schemes, as well as low-income households that are vulnerable to the effects of the cold. ECO-flex, does not apply to Council Housing or Registered Social Landlords.
- 4.2.2 The energy efficiency measures being installed within Renfrewshire include: boilers, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, air source heat pumps, solar panels, heating controls, first time central heating etc. The table below highlights the savings ECO4 Flex has achieved to date based on annually recurring savings:

Financial Year	Value of Grant Funding Requested (£)	Total Annual CO2 Saving in Kg	Total Annual Cost Saving (£)
2023/24	£2,331,004	494,458	£155,250

4.3 Biodiversity

Restoring Renfrewshire's Rivers

- 4.3.1 The Council secured £350k through a competitive strand of the Nature Restoration Fund. This will assist with the delivery of a community-based survey, removal, and biosecurity monitoring of 5 invasive non-native plant species from 5 Renfrewshire watercourses, these are – Calder Burn, Johnstone – Dargavel Burn, Bishopton – Locher Water, Houston – Old Patrick Water, Johnstone and Sergeantlaw Burn, Paisley Southwest. A candidate has recently been appointed to the additional Biodiversity Officer role, this position is temporary, and we await them taking up post.
- 4.3.2 The project will coordinate and fund volunteer training and qualification in best practice invasive non-native plant species control methods along watercourses. The coordinator of Team Up to Clean Up has put forward a list of named volunteers for specific survey and habitat management works within a stated period. Many Team Up to Clean up volunteers have already demonstrated a keen interest in biodiversity and are welcoming the opportunity of green upskilling and improving their potential for future green employability opportunities.
- 4.3.3 Five provisional sites have been selected at headwaters of 5 watercourses within Renfrewshire. The councils existing Biodiversity Officer has undertaken site walkovers over 2 of these provisional sites. The project team are undertaking land ownership/management searches to ensure permissions are granted for site walkovers at the remaining 3 provisional sites.
- 4.3.4 An application - based on Scotland's Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) best practice methodology - has been sent to the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to seek permission for compliant riverbank works as part of the project.

4.4 **Flooding Update**

- 4.4.1 At the meeting of the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board on 31 August 2022, the Board approved a report titled Winter Maintenance and Severe Weather Plan 2022 – 2027. This report outlined the Council’s response to incidences of severe weather including exceptional rainfall events.
- 4.4.2 Over this period the Service has developed operating processes and procedures to be enacted during these weather incidents and these will be incorporated in a new Weather Plan which will be brought back to the Board for approval in August 2024. The aim of this Plan is to ensure an informed and co-ordinated response by the Council to a flooding incident, focussing on the welfare of those affected, mitigation of property and environmental damage.
- 4.4.3 Prior to revised plan being brought to Board, officers will engage with elected members and communities on the identified flooding locations that create issues for communities during these adverse weather periods in order to ensure the information is as up to date as possible.
- 4.4.4 The Road Operations Team within Climate, Public Protection and Roads are responsible for the maintenance of over 32,000 road gullies and play the lead role in our proactive and reactive maintenance approach to dealing with drainage issues and flooding incidents.
- 4.4.5 As the Road Operations Team has evolved over the last 3 to 4 years the service has made significant improvements in performance in all maintenance activities including pothole response times, however over the last 12 to 18 months the most significant improvement has been to our proactive gulley maintenance.
- 4.4.6 Previously the service worked to a maintenance regime of attending to each road gully once every two years, which in some locations would be adequate but it became apparent that there was a need for an enhanced maintenance regime focussed on proactive rather than reactive responses.
- 4.4.7 In the last year alone the service has attended to almost 30,000 gullies on a proactive basis, in addition to any responses to reactive requests. The service will continue to evolve and in the next year will look to adopt mobile technology to further enhance the service provided.
- 4.4.8 When a flood alert is received of a severe rainfall event, the Roads team implement the flooding operational plan and have defined duties that are carried out within the limited time afforded by the weather alert. The principal duties are:
- Inspection and clearance (where appropriate) of flood prevention schemes and pumping stations,
 - Grids at the priority culverts are cleared,
 - Gully hot spot locations are attended,
 - Priority sweeping routes, particularly those in high leaf fall areas are swept,
 - In severe weather episodes e.g. amber or red alerts communications are issued to elected members and the public, and
 - River levels monitored where appropriate.
- 4.4.9 Our responsiveness was again tested during October 2023 and during the recent festive break with multiple weeks’ worth of rainfall occurring over a 24hour period.

4.4.10 Our teams responded appropriately in line with our emergency procedures enacting road closures to keep the public safe and minimising damage to property.

4.4.11 Linwood Toll

Linwood Toll is an area which regularly experiences flooding and road closures during periods of extended severe wet weather. There is a Council operated pumping station which assists with capacity at peak periods during wet weather and this is operated by the termed contractor during these periods.

There is however an ongoing issue with the capacity of the combined sewer network in the area; gully cleaning and pumping station activity is having no positive impact on the risk of flooding that occurs here.

Council officers have engaged with Scottish Water on the issue here and they are aware of the need to upgrade the sewerage infrastructure at the location. Officers have been pressing Scottish Water officials to prioritise investment at this location as part of their capital investment programme. To date we do not have confirmation when this work will take place.

5. Team Up to Clean Up

5.1.1 Team Up to Clean Up has reached a significant milestone of 5,000 online group members, this equates to 4% of Renfrewshire's entire over 25 population.

5.1.2 The Team Up Team has adapted the programme of secondary school presentations, delivering to smaller groups within PSE setting (Personal Social Education) as opposed to full year assemblies. This creates more opportunity an interactive experience more likely to resonate. 38 presentations have been delivered so far across 6 schools.

5.1.3 The Winter Warriors Campaign has gifted 24 community salt spreaders and snow shovels over the past 3 years. A further 12 salt spreaders and snow shovels are being offered to communities this year, together with a limited supply of salt. Interested individuals agree to use the equipment for the benefit of their local community.

5.2 Environmental Taskforce

5.2.1 The Environmental Taskforce continues to deliver intervention to reduce instances of flytipping. Key statistics for the most recent period are:

Action	1/12/21 – 30/11/22	1/12/22 – 30/11/23
Proactive visits to identified hotspot areas	1,733	2,258
Number of reports investigated	1,390	1,321
Tonnes of flytipping removed	n/a	436
Number of sites secured to prevent further flytipping	n/a	11
Letters to private landowners re flytipping	36	85
Visits to businesses to ensure Waste Disposal Arrangements in place	71	126

Fixed Penalty Notices Issued	40	93
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- 5.2.2 The Scottish Government has announced from 1 January 2024 the Fixed Penalty Notice fine for flytipping offences, under the Environmental Protection Act, will increase from £200 to £500. This update to legislation was made in response to the Litter & Flytipping consultation submitted earlier in the year.

6. Operation and Infrastructure Service Arrangements

The management and service restructure of Operation and Infrastructure will be completed by March 2024, with the last of the officers retiring and revised officer arrangements undertaken by the end of March 2024. The former Streetscene Service has been rebranded as Neighbourhood Services which move this service provision in line with the service delivery model. The Service Managers have responsibility for both strategy & operational delivery splitting strategy and operational responsibility at Team Leader level. There are new members of the services leadership teams who have been promoted from within the Council or joined the organisation. The new management teams have started reviewing service arrangements to ensure services continue to support current and future community and customer outcomes. The service will issue in due course to all elected members an updated structure chart setting out key personnel for Operations & Infrastructure Services.

7. Fleet, Roads and Transportation

7.1 Fleet Services

- 7.1.1 Within Fleet Services the new Vehicle and Driver Compliance team is now fully embedded. In addition to the driver training and other daily monitoring tasks they have carried out gatehouse compliance checks on 20 vehicles this month, with a further 10 vehicles having been checked at the roadside for compliance spot checks. During these audits, the vehicles driver walk-round check and driver's tachograph compliance are being audited.
- 7.1.2 A successful trial has been conducted within social transport fleet vehicles to update the vehicle defect reporting system. The weekly check sheet has been replaced with a daily defect sheet which also incorporates the daily walk round check and NIL defect reporting system. This new system was shared with operational departments during the most recent vehicle users meeting and was implemented in December 2023.
- 7.1.3 Fleet Services are in the final stages of the transfer of the fleet tracker system to the new supplier UK telematics. 415 operational fleet vehicles have been added to the system with a fresh review of fleet drivers and registrations. This will improve all reporting for operational departments.
- 7.1.4 The fleet maintenance & repair workshop engineers have moved onto the 4 on 4 off shift pattern, this better aligns them with the Frontline Operational Services that they support that are also mostly based in the depot. Two members of staff already working within this area have recently been promoted to the position of Engineering Officers.

7.2 Roads & Transportation

Roads Capital Investment Programme

- 7.2.1 The service has concluded the roads resurfacing programme for the year with focus now being on completing the remaining 26 footways due to be resurfaced by the end of March 2024. There may be some amendments required to the remainder of the programme as a result of the first ranked contractor on the roads framework going into liquidation. The service has contingency arrangements in place to mitigate the impacts of this and the remaining programme will be completed as planned.
- 7.2.2 Within Infrastructure & Assets we have recently recruited two invest trainees, one as a trainee Inspector and the other as a trainee vegetation officer. Within Road Operations, two trainee roadworkers, a trainee clerical assistant and a trainee flooding officer have been recruited.

7.3 **Active Travel & Infrastructure Improvement Update**

- 7.3.1 Village Traffic Calming measures have started to be installed in Bridge of Weir, Howwood, Houston and Kilbarchan and officers are in regular engagement with Community Councils as we progress with the construction phase. The overall package of traffic calming measures was estimated to be over £2 Million and a prioritised approach was taken in agreement with Community Councils to construct over a 3-year period. Measures in Year 1 include the installation of gateway features on the entrances to the villages with signage, road markings and carriageway buildouts to reduce speeds.
- 7.3.2 The junction improvement at the hairpin bend junction of Bowfield Rd/Midton Rd, Howwood is complete. It includes features requested by the local community, including a widening of the footway, kerb and guardrail protection to pedestrians and new signs and lines.
- 7.3.3 The next phase of the Paisley to Renfrew active travel route including upgraded shared footways at New Sneddon Street and lighting section of B&M to Wright Street has been completed. Contracts have been awarded to upgrade pedestrian crossings at Gilmour Street and Niddry Street to Toucan crossings during 2024.
- 7.3.4 Investment of £540,000 has been secured from Active Travel Transformation Funding for a segregated shared active travel route on Barnsford Road to Inchinnan Drive. Works started in January with completion scheduled for May 2024. This is an important element in the Council's active travel network and will connect to existing routes around Glasgow Airport.
- 7.3.5 A new pedestrian crossing on Houston Road at junction with Warlock Road Bridge of Weir has been installed. This crossing is part of SPT funded programme to address concerns over crossing safety and speeding at locations around schools, nurseries and key junctions in towns and villages.
- 7.3.6 Works started in November 2023 for the refurbishments of three signalised junctions from "old" technology to more efficient LED systems and to install Bus Prioritisation technology. The junctions along Glasgow Road include Lacy Street, Penilee Road and Hawkhead Road will be upgraded over next few months. This project is fully funded by Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund.
- 7.3.7 Construction of a replacement Plymuir Bridge in Gleniffer Braes Paisley started in October 2023 and although weather and ground conditions have not been favourable, the project is progressing well for re-opening in February 2024. This will bring the last council-owned bridge up to national requirement of being able to carry 40 tonnes, when complete.
- 7.3.8 Renfrewshire Council have been successful in their application for a feasibility study for public realm improvements and connecting NCN route on Main Road Elderslie.

Sustrans NCN Urban team will work in partnership with Renfrewshire Council to engage with the local community to develop a concept design.

- 7.3.9 Work continues in association with Sustrans to improve accessibility to the National Cycle Route Network. A successful application to extend active travel improvements northwards in Jenny's Well, parallel with Cartha Crescent, to the footbridge into the ex-BASF housing development will see works starting in early 2024.
- 7.3.10 Following the withdrawal of McGills Bus service 64 in Gallowhill Paisley, engagement between Renfrewshire Council and the bus operator noted that congestion of the road network was a factor in their decision to remove the service. A public consultation for a one-way system in the Gallowhill loop area concluded in November. The results of the consultation noted that 54% of the 197 responders were in favour re-instating 64 bus service however, 63% were against the introduction of a one-way system.
- 7.3.11 The construction phase for a bus turning circle at Linburn Road in Erskine is due to start in February 2024. The works will include working with public utility companies' (BT Openreach, Virgin Media and SGN) diversionary work programme which requires tying into the Contractors submitted schedule.
- 7.3.12 As part of the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Fund programme, Roads and Transportation team have been working in partnership with Council's Regeneration team to deliver architectural lighting improvements in Linwood and Paisley. Contracts have been awarded for architectural lighting projects to install colour changing LED lights for the exteriors of Paisley Abbey and Tweedie Hall Linwood. Works are due to start in February 2024.

7.4 **Pavement Parking Ban**

Legislation was passed in December 2023 to enact the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 to ban pavement parking. Whilst some authorities decided to start using the powers without having made the required exemptions, Renfrewshire will continue the process of identifying areas exempt from the ban. Once the assessment process concludes in April 2024, the Council will promote a Traffic Regulation Order which will ensure communities are aware of which streets in Renfrewshire will be exempt from the ban. Once the consultation concludes it is anticipated that the Council will be able to enforce the ban from around November 2024, with progress updates being brought back to the Board. During this period of time, Council officers will work with communities to address areas where pavement parking is causing an obstruction and will encourage awareness of the implementation of the formal enforcement powers.

7.5 **Roads Related Fees and Charges**

7.5.1 Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff

The Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board meeting of 25 January 2023 approved the introduction of charges for publicly accessible electric vehicle charge points across Renfrewshire.

During the interim period, the Council has been working with the Glasgow City Region authorities with a view to taking forward a regional approach to electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Future reports will be brought back to the Policy Board as this issue progresses through to a procurement process and an agreed way forward.

In relation to charging tariffs, the consensus among the authorities is for the partner authorities to have a standardised approach to tariff setting across the region.

For Renfrewshire this would mean a slight increase in the tariff for standard and fast chargers with a bigger increase in the tariff associated with rapid chargers. The current and proposed tariffs are set out below. The overstay fees have been amended to keep them in line with penalty charge notices for parking offences. These will be implemented from the 1st February 2024:

Charger	Current Renfrewshire Tariff	Current Overstay Fee	Proposed Renfrewshire Tariff	Proposed Overstay Fee
7KW	£0.36	£30	£0.45	£50
22KW	£0.36	£30	£0.45	£50
50KW	£0.50	£30	£0.75	£50

These charges will also support the increases in electricity costs expected for 24/25. Going forward it is anticipated that the tariffs would be subject to inflationary increases going forward in agreement with each of the partner authorities.

8. Neighbourhood Services (formerly Streetscene Services)

8.1 Play Parks/ Parks

- 8.1.1 Refurbishment of Howwood Park Toddler / Junior, Houston Public Park and Inchinnan Playing Field play areas is ongoing at present with completion of all sites anticipated by the end of March 2024.
- 8.1.2 Contracts have also been awarded for a further 6 play area renewals. These are Miller Street, Johnstone; Anne Avenue, Renfrew; Netherhill Road, Paisley; Victory Gardens, Renfrew, Tannahill Crescent, Johnstone and Urquhart Crescent, Renfrew. Installation of these sites will start around March / April 2024.
- 8.1.3 Refurbishment of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Netherhill Road in Gallowhill is now complete.
- 8.1.4 A second phase of repair and improvement works at Renfrew Skatepark was completed in December 2023. This second phase concentrated on improving poor drainage in sections of the skatepark and installation of some new seating.
- 8.1.5 The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) funded project to upgrade the tennis courts at 3 locations, reached an advanced stage in December 2023. These are Brodie Park, Paisley, Robertson Park, Renfrew and Park Road, Johnstone. Unfortunately, completion of the surfaces late in the year meant that painting and line marking of the courts could not be completed immediately, due to the cold and wet weather. The courts at all 3 locations will be painted at the earliest opportunity from around April / May 2024.

8.2 Clyde Muirshiel

- 8.2.1 Regional Park staff deliver many recreational, conservation and health and wellbeing services to benefit the environment, visitors and locals alike.
- 8.2.2 In partnership with the Scottish Ornithology Club (SOC) one osprey chick was ringed this year, seasonal wildlife and habitat monitoring, and maintenance completed and a public consultation for Parkhill Wood for the next Woods In and Around Town (WIAT) application is being finalised.
- 8.2.3 Winter opening hours are in operation at both Country Parks, Castle Semple has hosted 'Christmas Markets' with Lochwinnoch retail businesses and 'Dark Sky' activities with Coats Observatory will take in the first quarter of 2024.

9. Waste and Recycling Services

- 9.1 The enhanced programme of driver training mentioned in previous board reports is progressing well but continues to have an impact on service delivery. The training delivery schedule shows an expected completion date of the end of February 2024.
- 9.2 Following the agreed motion at Council, a review has commenced of the Garden Waste Permit Scheme and Charities and Churches waste arrangements, with a report being brought forward to board for consideration before the summer recess.
- 9.3 Since the improvements made to the Household Waste Recycling Centres that was funded by the Recycling Improvement Fund, and, the training provided to onsite operatives, the council has seen a considerable increase in the amount of material being recycled. For example, green waste has increased by 45%, cardboard by 41%, scrap metal by 26%, wood by 25% and rubble by 13%, this has resulted in a 10% reduction in the amount of residual / mixed waste going for processing. Also, the implementation of recycling paint has proven very popular with residents, from January to October 2023 we have collected 110 tonnes of paint, this has gone for specialist processing rather going into mixed / residual waste. In the springtime the service plans to review these streams and explore what more can be done to further increase recycling and reduce residual / mixed waste in the future.
- 9.4 In conjunction with Legal Services and the Corporate Procurement Unit the service has terminated the contract for the Routing and In Cab system within Waste Services, this was due to contractual issues. Work is underway to identify and procure a new system, in the meantime the service has reverted to the paper back up system.
- 9.5 Currently the last entry time for customers to access the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCS) is 6pm. It is proposed to bring the last customer entry time forward to 5.45pm with the centres closing at 6pm to allow for continuity of service provision. Communications and noticeboards will be updated to reflect the change. There will be no change to service availability with the continuation of 70 hours of recycling time at each site in Renfrewshire per week.

10. #YouDecide

- 10.1 Fifteen #YouDecide projects are now complete. Additionally, contracts have been awarded to deliver the successful 15 Lighting projects and 2 paths in parks at Langbank and Houston. Lighting and path works should be complete by 31 March 2024. The 4 play area upgrades and 3 outdoor gym contacts have also been awarded and we anticipate work will commence March/April 2024. Works have also started to improve paths and signage within the Gleniffer Braes. We aim to deliver the remaining projects before summer 2024 and we continue to work with communities, ensuring projects are supported and as envisaged.
- 10.2 Contracts have been awarded for four play areas to be renewed as part of the #YouDecide project. These are Jenny's Well, Paisley; South Candren Village Green, Paisley; Glebe Street, Renfrew, and Station Road, Langbank. Installation of these sites will start around March / April 2024.
- 10.3 The campaign received national recognition in December 2023 by being awarded the Community Engagement Award at the Public Service Awards, for the team's stellar efforts to empower communities to have their say on infrastructure projects that they wanted to see in their local area. This award for Community Engagement is an endorsement of a collaborative team effort to make the #YouDecide initiative a success.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Any financial elements referenced in this report will be progressed through the Council’s financial & budget planning process. Specifically in relation to the EV charging fees, this additional income will be used to offset the costs of ongoing maintenance and electricity charges.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – As mentioned in 6.1.4 2 x Fleet Engineers have achieved promotion to Engineering Officers & the driver training highlighted in 8.1 will improve driver knowledge of the compliance requirements etc.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – The report details a range of activities which reflect local community and council planning themes.
4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** –None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals’ human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council’s website.
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** – None
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – None
13. **Climate Change** – there are a range of actions and activities throughout the Service Update Report which support the Council’s Plan for Net Zero.

List of Background Papers: None

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