

Roads

Road Condition Assessment

North Ayrshire Council

Contact for Enquiries

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To improve road conditions, North Ayrshire Council developed and implemented a robust condition assessment process and prioritisation matrix, These look at the condition of the Council's full road network, including the unclassified road network.

Background

North Ayrshire Council examined its work practices within its Roads Service to identify where efficiencies could be made. This highlighted the need for new technology and the expansion of management systems to reduce volume of paperwork and duplication of input. Specific areas of the service were targeted for improvement: road condition, procurement, benchmarking and performance, training and system developments.

To improve road condition, the council looked to effectively allocate investment and provide an improved roads service to the community, which would support economic regeneration, and attract business and employment into North Ayrshire.

Key Activities

Historically, the Roads Service budget was allocated equally across the council area. Road maintenance schemes were identified by Road Inspectors based on their knowledge of the locality and any specific community concerns. The results of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) gave cause for concern as NAC was continually in the 4th quartile. A robust condition assessment process and prioritisation matrix was developed and implemented by NAC to make effective use of available budgets, targeting investment at those areas most in need.

Although SRMCS results give an indication of overall condition comparable with all Scottish authorities, only 10% of the unclassified road network is assessed annually through this process. The unclassified road network accounts for 55% of North Ayrshire's road network, so it was important that the prioritisation methodology took into account the overall condition of the road network, not just what is assessed by SRMCS. To ensure that the full road network is internally assessed and prioritised, supplementary condition assessments are carried out independently by North Ayrshire Council's Road Inspectors on all carriageways and footways annually. These assessments are based upon a methodology developed through the SCOTS asset

management project.

Locations requiring treatment are then prioritised based on condition, route hierarchy, and additional community requirements. Road Inspectors were trained to undertake condition assessments as part of their routine inspections negating the need for additional resources. Assessments are checked and validated by technical staff to ensure the prioritisation process is effective.

Community requirements are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with council objectives.

Benefits and Impact

The implementation of the condition assessment and prioritisation process has, through effective targeting of resources, improved the council's RCI by 7.1% since 2011, resulting in North Ayrshire being the 5th most improved authority over that period. This has resulted in North Ayrshire improving its position from 25th to 21st out of the 32 Scottish authorities. This improvement has been achieved despite the allocated budget for carriageway improvements being 17% below that required to maintain steady state.

The condition assessment and prioritisation process implemented by North Ayrshire Council has been circulated to other Scottish and Welsh authorities interested in using a similar approach as it requires no additional resource requirements and provides a transparent and effective method of allocating investment.