

Ayrshire Roads Alliance 10 Year Review – Recommendations and Next Steps

Ref	Action
Section 4: Service Overview	
1.	Strategic Accommodation Review: Continue to undertake a comprehensive assessment of all ARA office and depot facilities, including Coylton and Girvan, to prioritise improvements in line with evolving workforce needs.
2.	Inclusive Design and Accessibility: Continue to embed health, safety, and equality standards in all facilities, consulting with staff to meet a diverse range of needs and support well-being.
3.	Ongoing Engagement and Monitoring: Implement regular feedback mechanisms specific to accommodation to guide continuous improvements and adapt to changing work patterns as well as providing support during transitions and clear communication about available resources.
4.	Facility Maintenance Programme: Work with colleagues in both East and South Ayrshire Councils to consider a phased capital and maintenance plan targeting the upgrade of facilities, where resources allow.
5.	Enhance Digital Infrastructure: Continue to work with colleagues in SAC to explore potential solutions to the challenges around data sharing and ICT access.
Section 5: Governance and Accountability	
6.	Shared Service Joint Committee Remit: It is recommended that the Shared Service Joint Committee remit be reviewed and updated to ensure the committee can make operational and strategic decisions that do not have a direct impact on budget, without the need for separate approval from partner Councils. This would improve efficiency, reduce administrative delays, and strengthen the committee's ability to provide timely responsive governance within the existing shared service framework. Recommendations from the review will be reported to each Council.

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7.	<p>Corporate Support Arrangements: The Review highlights an opportunity for EAC and SAC to jointly reassess and realign corporate support arrangements to ensure they remain proportionate, resilient and fit for purpose. Evidence from the review indicates that the current level of corporate support no longer fully reflects the scale, complexity and operational demands of the shared service and therefore requires a review in its own right.</p>
8.	<p>Strategic and Local Service Delivery Split: Adopt the revised staff alignment of strategic and local service delivery split as outlined in Table 2 as approved previously by both Council's in 2021. This reflects the current operational requirements, improves clarity and governance, and provides a more modern and efficient structure for service delivery across East and South Ayrshire.</p>
9.	<p>Income Allocation: Allocate income through fees within each LA directly to the respective LA rather than being received at a strategic level. This approach will improve financial transparency, ensure income accurately reflects local activity levels, and support clearer accountability for budget management within each area.</p>
10.	<p>Shared Service Expansion: If NAC agree to join the Alliance this would allow for expansion subject to financial remodelling, governance design, workforce alignment, and operational impact assessment. The structure has been designed to be adaptable, but further detailed analysis and discussions would be essential before any regional expansion could be progressed. This would include detailed scoping of the financial impact on each partner.</p>
<p>Section 6: Financial and Resource Performance</p>	
11.	<p>External Funding: ARA should explore options for creating dedicated, permanent capacity to support externally funded programmes, potentially through pooled or shared roles across the partnership, aligned workforce planning, and earlier integration of support services into the funding and delivery cycle. This would improve organisational resilience, strengthen governance and contract management, and enable a more strategic and efficient response to future funding opportunities.</p>
12.	<p>Inter-Service Delivery: Review the cost-effectiveness of inter-service delivery arrangements, balancing potential savings against service resilience.</p>

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13.	Delivery Models: Maintain a balanced delivery model that prioritises in-house capability while using external contractors only where specialist expertise or short-term capacity is required. This approach ensures that ARA retain control over quality, responsiveness, and long-term cost management, A continued commitment to developing and investing in the internal workforce will safeguard against potential cost escalation that could occur if outsourcing were pursued, while still allowing flexibility to engage the private sector where it demonstrably delivers best value.
14.	Street Lighting: Continue with the current model and also explore the lighting outputs from the focus group, for example, introducing planned maintenance on the structure of lighting columns.
15.	Line Markings: Explore targeted investment in training and equipment to expand in-house capability for line markings. This could reduce dependency on contractors and potentially deliver efficiency savings.
Section 7: Workforce Profile and Development	
16.	Strengthen Workforce Planning: Despite a decade of workforce reductions, ARA has delivered on its priorities. However, it is recommended that ARA review vacant posts, particularly in operations which has seen the largest decrease and further that ARA continue to strengthen workforce planning, including ensuring resilience during peak winter periods, reducing reliance on overtime. This will be done alongside a review of the budget, ensuring that the service remains within budget.
17.	Strategic Management: it is recommended that Strategic Management arrangements are kept under review aligned with the potential expansion of the service to include NAC.
18.	Training Programme: It would be beneficial if a training programme could be developed to improve resilience where there may be gaps in staff knowledge and ensure succession pathways.
19.	Wellbeing Interventions: Strengthening occupational health and wellbeing interventions, with a focus on preventative support for musculoskeletal health.

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20.	Supporting Attendance Benchmarking: Continue to regularly benchmark absence performance through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and APSE, setting a target to bring ARA's absence levels in line with Council averages over the next three years.
21.	Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions: Undertake a review to assess whether full harmonisation of terms and conditions could now be successfully achieved through negotiation, phased alignment, or alternative workforce agreements. This would simplify workforce management, safeguard operational needs and service sustainability and reduce administrative complexity.
22.	Review of Job Descriptions: It is recommended that ARA continues the review of job descriptions and concludes this exercise in 2026/27. This should include consultation with EAC/SAC on the potential budget impacts of this review and embedding a rolling three-year cycle thereafter. This will ensure all roles remain aligned with organisational priorities, legislative changes, and the skills required to deliver a modern, resilient roads service.
23.	Invest in Apprenticeships: Continue the Modern Apprentice and Technician opportunities, supported by structured mentoring, to ensure skills transfer and improve retention.
24.	Trainee Roadworker Programme: Continue with the Trainee Roadworker programme, investing in the young workforce and providing the opportunity to bring a younger workforce into the roads operational team.
25.	Strategic Lead: It has been recommended that the temporary Strategic Lead post currently funded by EAC only is made permanent with funding of the post coming from both EAC and SAC.
26.	Digital Technology: Continue investing in digital systems to reduce time spent on administrative tasks and free up Officers' time to focus on project delivery.
27.	Link Workforce to Strategic Priorities: Ensure that staffing structures align with future opportunities such as climate change, decarbonisation, and digital transformation, so that ARA is equipped to deliver on both local and national priorities.

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28.	<p>Staff Workshops: Going forward, staff workshops should be embedded as a regular feature of service development. This will ensure the workforce remains engaged, empowered, and aligned with organisational goals, while also providing a structured channel for innovative ideas and practical solutions to be fed directly into strategic planning. In addition, workforce renewal should be a recurring theme within these sessions with a focus on continued succession planning, apprenticeship pathways, and upskilling opportunities to strengthen the Service’s capacity to deliver sustainable outcomes over the next decade and beyond.</p>
<p>Section 10: Environmental and Strategic Analysis</p>	
29.	<p>Digital Transformation: Continue with the development of future modules for RoadsOnline to ensure process efficiency. Continue to develop the WDM interface to enable automatic updates to customers when reported defects have been inspected or repaired. This improvement would provide real time communication, reduce manual administration and enhance transparency and public confidence in service responsiveness.</p>
30.	<p>Fleet Decarbonisation Roadmap: Establish a three-year replacement and decarbonisation strategy, aligning investment with funding opportunities.</p>
31.	<p>Performance and Transparency: Develop a live performance dashboard for Elected Members and the public, highlighting works undertaken and response times.</p>
32.	<p>Predictive Operations and Collaborative Planning: Enhance operational planning to reduce network disruption by focusing on quicker contractor turnaround and providing control of works on the network. The introduction of the new traffic signal permits and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders systems will strengthen oversight and coordination, helping to ensure that contractors are removed from the network more efficiently. These measures support a proactive data driven approach to managing works minimising delays and improving overall journey reliability for road users.</p>