

DRAFT - WARD 5 ROADS MEETING – MONDAY 27th MARCH 2023

Present: Cllr Biz Campbell (Chair); Cllr Chris Birt; Cllr Patrick Logue; Iain Moncrieff (ROM); Andrew Bone (RO); Julie Wileman (AWM); Alasdair Wright; Anne Macrae; Ann Macleod; Ian Hay; Kenny Maclean; Lochcarron CC; Peter Mackenzie; Ron McAulay; Sue Whiting; Theresa Ross; Willie Scambler.

1	Apologies	Cllr Liz Kraft, Dot Ferguson (Snr Ward Manger)	Action
2	Agenda Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining of Priority of Need – No simple process of determining local needs. These can vary on what's being assessed and could be a 1 person decision up to 4/5 engineers and Cllrs making decisions. There is also a balance between resources and risk, when looking at the complete Ward 5 Road network. • Explanation on the differences with Capital and Revenue Funding – Revenue Budget is the budget for the 'Day to day' operations, and usually covers all Ross & Cromarty operations which are delivered by 3 Roads Officers. It was noted these costs are not separated into specific areas and not carried forward into the new financial year. Capital Budget is the budget received for repairs of the road system within the Ross and Cromarty area. These can include surfacing, surface dressing or/and lining. This budget can also be used to purchase specialised plant equipment or cattle grids, weather stations depending on need. • Ward 5 Roads Budget 2023/2024 - Budget not been set yet and is usually known in May/June in the current financial year, this means current budgets are planned by using a prior year's figures, which in 2022/23 were £3.77 million revenue, and £1 million for all capital works. This capital budget is a share of the total £7.2 million given for the Highland Region. It was noted as things move through the year there could be changes to the capital budgets, where extra monies could be available for extra tasks. • Common Road Themes – IM went through some common themes and caused throughout the road network within the WRSL area, some of these themes will determine any priority of need, throughout the year. E.g., during the winter the priority to grit roads, other plans are not generally made further than 2/3 days ahead due to weather conditions. It was noted that due to severity of road conditions sometimes, temporary repairs must be made until a proper repair can be carried out. During the milder months the patching programme is put into operation beginning with the preparation and completion of surface dressing sites, during late June. Inspections are also carried out monthly, quarterly, or annually depending on the importance of the road. E.g., U-class roads are inspected on an annual basis and the A832 would be monthly. These inspections pick up defects such as potholes, as well as the severity and location on the carriageway. Each recorded defect has a time window attached to it, e.g. some are 21 days, and others can be up to 2 hours depending on their position and severity. Bridges are on a three year inspection program, any works will be carried out via outside contractors. Many issues are limited by budget constraints and manpower issues. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads Programme 2023/2024 – This is dependant on the priority of need and usually begins mid-summer. The process begins with the network being split in to strategic or local roads, due to costs strategic roads are usually surface dressed, rather than overlay as longer stretched can be completed. Local roads are approached differently as repairs, so these are more expensive to repair on a regular basis. The main issue is how much the annual budget can afford. All potential schemes are taken from local knowledge, members, and inspections. This programme is taken to the local monthly Ward Business meeting, then forward for a final decision at the Area Committee, which it can then be approved, changed, or rejected. IM went through the recently approved Roads Programme for 2023/23. 	
3	Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request on any update on the 5 km stretch of the Torridon Glen Road, which was scheduled for 2021/22 but was deferred due to an damaged culvert, which would not have been completed in time. It was noted this culvert is now repaired and any works should be completed by August 2023. Lots of work has been done in this area, with a 10km stretch of surface dressing being scheduled for 2023/24. Concerns were raised over the strategic nature and this road's high level of traffic and loads, as well as being part of the NC500. • It was asked with the current level of funding will the department be able to cope with the extra funding with the noted limited resources and is this thought to be a new baseline in the area or simply a one-off investment. The situation is currently fluid, as there are no actual figures have been set from the Highland budget figures to date. It is felt the budget figures are inadequate and should there be further lobbying to increase funds for this vital infrastructure. It was noted local members are constantly pressuring local MSPs to increase local budgets to recognise the importance of local infrastructure. • It was asked if budgets are being used appropriately, as that there was plant machinery left unused at the side of the road for approximately six months, it was noted that the Highland Council receive discounts on long term hire, and plant operators are sometimes on leave or sick throughout this period. It was assured, this piece of plant was not sitting idle for this amount of time as if it not used it is removed from the field. Monthly hire plant analysis ensures no equipment is idle at any time. IM will review this to ensure this is not the case. • Request to find out how much if an underspend was achieved through 2021/22. There was neither a revenue or capital underspend in 21/22. • Concerns were raised over the lack of information on other issues such as signage, white lining, and drainage. It was noted these costs are a mixture of both revenue and capital budgets. • Concerns were raised on the HC's ability to spend the increased budget in a year, especially with the process beginning in the summer. It was suggested this begins sooner; it was noted this would be difficult due to fund allocation, equipment and materials, with budget and time restrictions. 	IM

- A request was made to find out how the new higher budget will be allocated. Decisions like this will be taken at HQ and based on engineering need which will be assessed via a computer programme called WDM (Williams Detail Management), which will be scanning the road network collating information, and will be submitted to Area Committee in May 2023.
- Concerns were raised on the next step for the Achnasheen West to Achnashellach road, as the failed previous treatments were removed, and the patching is failing. Will this be repaired properly rather than temporary fixes. A890 will be worked on asap.
- It was confirmed there will be a white lining programme this year for the area.
- It was asked if there are there any guarantees or warranties expected from outside contractors, and what would happen if the contractor's work was unsatisfactory. It was said if these contractors did an unsatisfactory piece of work, no invoices would be paid, and the contractor would not be asked to return. It was asked if the contractors who completed the Stromferry Bypass barriers were returning, it was noted these barriers have been snagged and have passed, however it is unlikely they will be returning.
- Requests for more information on the new pothole team. It was noted there is to be one (possibly two) to cover the Highland region. As it is only a one year post it is thought this will be difficult to recruit, so it is thought this will be covered through existing staff.
- Concerns were raised over the condition of the B8057, road surfacing is deteriorating badly and needs urgent repair. Do the Highland Council expect their own staff to be held to the standard of any contractor? It must be realised there is no budget for any staff mistakes, so this ensures there is a lot of monitoring and standards expected from HC staff.
- With the extra budget will this mean a chance to recruit extra staff. It was explained this would come out of a Revenue budget and the extra funding is for Capital projects only, so this is unlikely.
- Concerns were raised that there is no mention of the Bealach. Will there be any chance of getting the white line programme to come to this area as it is felt they are badly needed to guide cars over the hill? There was also a request on the whereabouts of the missing passing place signs a couple of years ago. The passing place signs and posts are in hand and will be put in place as soon as possible. The white lining will be added to the programme and carried out as soon as the equipment is in the area. Regards to the improvement of the Bealach, HC are in talks with Hydroplan to improve resurface overlay and surface dress approx. 2 kms, also negotiated the extension of 17 passing places and construction of a further 4 or 5 new passing places. There have been hot tar patches and some of the coastal road.

- Concerns were raised over the bridge parapet on the Torridon to Wester Alligin road, it has been noted this bridge has been deteriorating quickly and concerns have been previous raised over a safety issue. It is scheduled to be repaired when there are resources, materials are in place. If it is not completed in 4 weeks there is permission to use a local contractor, but the end of April 2023.
- Concerns with the road surface to the bridge over the Coire Mhic Nobuil river, on the Torridon to Diabaig road, above Torridon House, has been patched but the repairs are degrading rapidly, and the surface is now deteriorating badly. Is there a proposal to repair this road surface properly? At this moment no, however this could change easily, but will have a look and see what will be required.
- Concerns were raised with the condition of the Achiltibuie road, it is in very poor condition, parts are subsiding, heading through the Achnahaird village is very degraded. It is felt there has been little or no investment in this area for a while. At this moment this is not an option however as stated previously this can change, due to the fluidity of the capital programme, but will have a look and discuss at a Ward Business meeting.
- Concerns were raised over Roy Hams corner, access junction to Drumbuie, West of Drumbuie. Very dangerous holes at an increasingly narrowing area. A temporary repair has been carried out but there is a need for the hot box, so when its available there will be a premiant repair done.

Appendix 2

Area Capital Programme 2023/24

Road No	Road Name	Length (m)	Width (m)	Treatment	Area (sq. m)
U3119	Tarvie Township Rd 2. Deferred from 22/23	381	3.30	Surface Dress	1257.3
U3119	Tarvie Township Rd 1 Deferred from 22/23	736	3.30	Surface Dress	2428.8
U3393	Rhue Rd deferred from 22/23	739	4	Overlay	2956
A896	Torridon - Kinlochewe	5445	3.50	Surface Dress	19057.5
A834	Strathpeffer Main St 1 @ Kinellan Dr	100	6	Inlay	600
C1223	Glenelg - Donovan's Sawmill - Village Junction	3140	3.5	Surface Dress	10990
A896	Church St jct - CG, Lochcarron	2270	5	Surface Dress	11350
	Structural patching				
C1055	Letters - Logie Rd	750	3.5	Overlay	2625
A896	Shepherd's cottage - Sch Lochcarron	1,840	6	Surface Dress	11040
A890	A890 Achnasheen - West	3385	7	Surface Dress	23695
A835	A835 Trunk Rd - Morefield Ind. Estate, Ullapool	1360	6	Surface Dress	8160
U3006	Marybank	120	3.5	Inlay	420
	Diabeg Village and hill	2,610	3.5	Surface Dress	9135

*****PLEASE NOTE: This programme is subject to change*****

To report a problem to Highland Council - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/report>