

## WARD 5 ROADS MEETING – THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

**Present:** Cllr Biz Campbell (Chair); Cllr Liz Kraft; Cllr Chris Birt; Dot Ferguson (WM); Julie Wileman (AWM); Andrew Bone (RO); Kevin Fulton (RO); Alasdair Wright; Alastair Brown; Anne Macrae; Ann Macleod; Audrey Sinclair; Bob Moir; Brendan Henry; Eilidh T; Fiona MacKenzie; Ian Hay; Karen Buchanan; Kenny Maclean; Mhairi Macrae; Michelle Teago; Neil Moscrop; Peter Mackenzie; Ron McAulay; Sue Whiting; Tom Forrest; Willie Scambler.

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	Iain Moncrieff (Roads Operations Manager)	<b>Action</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Action Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Councils are requested to contact Andrew Bone (<a href="mailto:andrew.bone@highland.gov.uk">andrew.bone@highland.gov.uk</a>) directly with specific queries or concerns</li> <li>Any concerns discussed, can be sent via email to back up handwritten notes</li> <li>To report a problem to Highland Council - <a href="https://www.highland.gov.uk/report">https://www.highland.gov.uk/report</a></li> </ul>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Discussion Topics</b>		
	<b>Capital Budget/ Capital Schemes</b>	<p>This budget is for major road improvements, chipping, inlaying and overlay.</p> <p>Discussion around who makes project decisions, and how 48% of the capital budget is spent in the Ross and Cromarty area. There is a team of 34 staff spread over 10 depots. Underspend 2021/2022 carried on to 2022/2023 budget. All projects and monies approved by Area Committee will be carried out in the new financial year. Budgets could be decreasing over the next few years.</p> <p>Summer Programme consists of 6 chipping schemes and 4 overlay schemes – 5 of which were completed all pre-surface work was completed on time.</p> <p>Concerns over capital programme being used consistently as a maintenance programme – replacing surfaces constantly. And only tackling approx. 1% of roads in area. It is felt surface dressing is patching job not a repair job, and only causing problems for the future.</p> <p>Discussion around the serious need for further campaigning and more investment into the road infrastructure of Ward 5.</p>	
	<b>Revenue Budget</b>	Discussion on Revenue Budget and what the allocation for this budget is split into winter maintenance, drainage, gullying road restraint systems, crash barriers, bridges, and cattle grids. Overspend 2021/2022 carried over to 2022/2023 budget.	

	<b>Priorities</b>	<p>Discussion on proposal priorities and how these priorities are reached. Priority given to fast roads, fast bends but smaller roads and less busy stretches are also discussed within the proposal.</p> <p>Proposal is completed by Service and presented to Area Committee for approval. It was noted that Economy and Infrastructure and Corporate Resources are the appropriate committees at which to raise the funding issues. Full report of HC finances also discussed and presented at Full Council last week. All available to watch and read on HC website.</p> <p><a href="https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home">https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHighlandCouncil">https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHighlandCouncil</a></p> <p>The Strategic Committees where decisions are made are public and members of the community are welcome to attend. Full details of Highland Council financial position including discussions with Scottish Government are all online and available for all to access following Full Council on Highland Council website.</p>	
	<b>Area Discussion Points</b>	<p>Thanks were noted for work already done this year. Great improvement in road surfaces into Lochcarron, Shildaig and Torridon and the new smiley face speed signs through Lochcarron Main Street seem to be very effective.</p> <p>Passing place signage on the Bealach na Ba, including the bend at Murray's Peat was discussed in 2021/2022, have not been completed, accidents are regular – poles and signs purchased waiting on time to complete project. Suggestion of adding a 'Slow' road sign on this stretch, to warn users of bend in the road.</p> <p>Applecross Bealach is badly needing white lines, especially at top on Kishorn side coming round by the wee lochan where there are no barriers to stop folk going off the road in the mist. Applecross Community Council is being asked why this hasn't been addressed. Concerns raised over the sides of the road being in a poor state of repair in many places, but it is thought white lines will be able to guide drivers where possible. It was noted there has been an approved program to carry out this work.</p> <p>Strathpeffer Main Street example of consistently deteriorating roads surfaces, and concerns over lack of funding available to Highland Council for road repairs. Drainage has been recognised as a concern for the area. Concerns over the flooding issues in the Strathpeffer area. The issue is the flooding of some properties within the area, partly due to local storms, but also felt it is due to lack of maintenance/clearing of gullies and drains. Community suggested that Highland Council could invest in more gully sucker vehicles to handle extra workloads. Concerns over the lack of repairs to local properties affected by flooding. Monies have been allocated to address the issues around flooded properties. Inspections are to be carried out soon.</p> <p>Torridon &amp; Kinlochewe, situation in Glen Torridon, being consistently flooded, which could cut off the area completely. The road has maintenance completed on it, but it is felt this has not been effective, and it is not fit for purpose. A comprehensive report</p>	

	<p>has been submitted, to the Highland Council, and local members. It was noted when the road is when the road is redirected round Achnashellach avoiding the Railway Bridge, likely to result in less large vehicles using the Torridon Glen Road. Although it is thought a number of large vehicles such as Forestry and Fish farm are still likely to be using it, and some other large vehicles heading North will move to the A896 Kishorn. This raised concerns over the bottle neck at Lochcarron village, causing discussions of twin tracking Glen Torridon, which was noted as being an expensive alternative, due to the peat.</p> <p>Village Hall Kinlochewe, concerns over leaking sewage pipes causing the road to sag, it has been repaired many times, but it always goes back to the original condition. Extensive repairs have been completed in that stretch of road, this is appreciated but it is felt this stretch of road needs further investment. Especially due to the NC500 users and are requesting traffic calming, this situation has been research through telemetry through the rumble strips and will be reported back when the information is published.</p> <p>Bridge on the road to Diabaig is badly damaged and concerns are raised about the state of it. It is recognised it needs repaired and realigned.</p> <p>Concerns were raised over the lack of movement on the Strome ferry bypass and Coulac de craig projects, it was asked if the roads service needs a larger workforce and/or money. It was acknowledged there is a distinct possibility the road to Gleann Udalain will be closed at some point. Requests were made for information on where these programs currently sit.</p> <p>Concerns over the lack of signage within the area, requests have been submitted but works don't seem to be getting done. It is felt there has been a significant investment in the Plockton area, which was acknowledged but requests are being made on the next stage.</p> <p>Parking charge monies in the Plockton area, were promised to pay for an extension to the main carpark, questions were asked on how this is progressing and when it going to happen. It was advised this sits with Parking enforcement and will be added as an agenda item at a Ward Business Meeting to check progress. It is understood these monies are to be allocate via Area Committees, which are in November 2022 and February 2023. It is felt this has influenced the reduction in contribution to maintaining the public toilets.</p> <p>Kyle raised concerns include white lining, with safety concerns on tourist using the one-way system wrongly, although there has been an improvement to the road there is still an issue around car park bay marking, concerns raised about loss of revenue. Concerns raised about the local slipway bus shelter. This has been noted as in hand, as is the failed storm drain, this will be improved next year as will the storm drain.</p> <p>Concerns were raised over the lack of investment in the Kinlochewe area, stating they have tried to work with Highland Council Roads Team and it is felt all completed work has been carried out by volunteers.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about possible ringfenced monies for the Balmacara road, there is no knowledge of this item. A point was also raised about the state of the road in Ardaneaskan, recent work has been completed nearby and has been</p>	DF
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		acknowledged there are repairs needed, along with both cattlegrids, one has been repaired, and the other has been replaced with stock gate being added.	
	<b>General Discussion Points</b>	<p>Concerns raised on the movement of Highland Council staff, it is felt there is a lack of continuity. Requests were made to inform Community Councils of relevant staff changes to improve continuity.</p> <p>Points were raised over the lack of plant machinery and the use of contractors in the area, communities were told there is no plant available, which is causing concerns. It was stated contractors are used when required to carry out specialised work. It is more cost effective for the smaller tasks to be completed by the Highland Council.</p> <p>It was noted that there was plant machinery left unused at the side of the road for approximately one week, 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. Not all staff are qualified on all machines however this year many more have been through further training. Things are improving all the time. It was discussed that hiring a driver with equipment is expensive. It is often realised that if there is not a driver available the hire company will give sabbaticals on equipment when not in use.</p> <p>Request on the uses of the white liner vehicle, it was noted the vehicle used is not a dedicated liner, but a unit placed on the back of a lorry which is also used as a gritter for the winter program. Permission has been given for a contractor to carry out lining within the area, due to the council vehicle being condemned, this will be prioritised throughout the area.</p> <p>Discussion on how helpful it would be to know the most effective way for Community Councils to report and update information.</p> <p>Acknowledgment and appreciation for the Roads Team doing what they can with a limited budget and a wide area to cover.</p> <p>It was asked if there is access to the Roads Team, work schedules and plans, if so, would it be possible to have these published. it was stated this is not the case, but it can be addressed with the Roads Operation Manager on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022.</p> <p>Requesting information on the recent Community Regeneration fund and how to apply for support to push the carpark extension, it was suggested the Community submit an expression of interest in for this fund - <a href="#">About the fund   Community Regeneration Funding   The Highland Council</a> (closing date for this round is 7<sup>th</sup> October). These funds will be recurring over the next 2/3 years. For further information contact Fiona Cameron <a href="mailto:Fiona.Cameron4@highland.gov.uk">Fiona.Cameron4@highland.gov.uk</a> It was also noted Leona Joiner <a href="mailto:Leona.Joiner@highland.gov.uk">Leona.Joiner@highland.gov.uk</a> is responsible for the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund.</p> <p>Concerns were raised over a published article stating Highland Council had a £9 million underspend across the whole area, while Ward infrastructure is being neglected. It was felt there is no effective planned road maintenance within the Ward 5 area this is due to a lack of manpower and investment.</p>	<p>DF/JW</p> <p>AB/KF</p>

		<p>It was suggested the four ward councillors should review the allocation of funding across the Council as a whole and in particular towards roads infrastructure - both capital and revenue (maintenance) streams - to identify additional funding that can be used to address the obvious underfunding of the roads function in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh</p> <p>Concerns raised over the lack of traffic calming and road safety measures, with the potential for loss of life are not being acknowledged by Highland Council. It is felt community councils are bringing issues to the attention of the Highland Council and they are being ignored/not addressed. This situation is being addressed; it was noted that road users do not always drive to the condition of the road. The issues stated are ongoing and outcomes will be achieved soon.</p> <p>It was asked if there was a specific way community councils could report road issues to the team, either through the website or direct email. It is felt the service portal is the best way of reporting issues/concerns.</p> <p>The Highland Council has submitted a large application into the Levelling Up Level 3, with a substantial amount allocated for infrastructure around the NC500 areas. The report and recommendation is available to the public - <a href="#">Levelling Up Fund bid for North Coast 500 and Portree Harbour   The Highland Council</a>.</p> <p>A request was made to ask if there was a way the NC500 could put pressure on the Scottish Government to increase investment in this area. Or if there was a way the Highland Council members could speak directly to the NC500 and request further investment. It was also noted there is a revenue stream via advertising and the membership. The NC500 is not the actual route it is a marketing concept.</p>	
4	<b>AOCB</b>	<p>Will this meeting have an outcome? There has been a useful discussion on local issues, it was felt this meeting had an element of solidarity.</p> <p>Concerns were raised reference the Gairloch/Bonar Bridge Recycling Centre not being open at the weekend, this affects 3 Community Councils in Ward 5. It is felt the Highland Council are not addressing this situation and for working people it is difficult because of working hours. This has been discussed and it has been noted the difficulty is having staff that are able to work over the weekend. It was noted this situation is being discussed at committee level, and there is to be a review of opening times across the Highlands. It was suggested community councils contact the Ward 5 Communities and Place Committee representative Cllr Patrick Logue <a href="mailto:patrick.logue.cllr@highland.gov.uk">patrick.logue.cllr@highland.gov.uk</a>, who can raise this concern.</p> <p>It was also noted there is no service point at Gairloch, which has been out for 3 recruitment attempts, it is felt there is a lack of publicity for this post. Update to be sought.</p> <p>A request was made on how individuals, who do not have access to the internet, contact the Highland Council. It was explained that there is a list of different department telephone numbers on the Contact Us website page - <a href="#">Contact us   Contact us   The</a></p>	DF

		<a href="#">Highland Council</a> It was suggested that Community Councils could print off the relevant page and display it at various points around their specific areas.	
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