

The Highland Council

**Transport, Environment and Community Services Committee
16 May 2013**

Agenda Item	7
Report No	TEC 40-13

Distribution of Road Maintenance Budget - 2013/14

Report by the Director of Transport, Environment and Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the distribution of the Roads Maintenance Budgets for 2013/14 between the three Operational Areas, including the allocation of the additional £2m towards road maintenance, as agreed as part of the Revenue Budget, on the basis of need. The details are contained in **Appendix A**.

1. Background

1.1 The Programme for the Highland Council contains the following commitment:

“The Council will improve the road maintenance allocation system. We will spend preventatively on our roads according to need.”

1.2 In this context preventative spend is taking early intervention to arrest deterioration and avoid more expensive works in the future.

1.3 The budgets for road maintenance fall under four main headings:

- Winter Maintenance (Revenue)
- Routine Maintenance (Revenue)
- Surface Dressing (Revenue)
- Structural Road Maintenance (Capital)

1.4 The budgets for Road Maintenance are allocated between the three Operational Areas:

Caithness, Sutherland Easter Ross (CSER)
Ross, Skye and Lochaber (RSL)
Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (INBS)

2. Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey

2.1 The Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) is undertaken annually by specialist contractors employed jointly by all 32 local road authorities. It is machine-based and ensures that the condition of roads throughout Scotland is measured to the same standards, enabling benchmarking of road condition between authorities.

- 2.2 The survey covers both rural and urban roads and all “A” class roads, 50% of “B” and “C” roads, and a 10% sample of unclassified roads are surveyed each year.
- 2.3 The percentage samples are taken to reflect the proportion of rural and urban roads in each class, so for example the unclassified road sample is split in the ratio 15:85 urban:rural because 15% of the total length of unclassified roads are urban.
- 2.4 The Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) provides an objective method of assessing the relative condition of roads, which enables available funds to be distributed according to need.
- 2.5 The SRMCS measures a number of parameters including:
- Texture
 - Cracking
 - Rutting
 - Profile
- 2.6 Roads are categorised as:
- Green (in satisfactory condition)
 - Amber (to be considered for maintenance, the “early intervention” stage)
 - Red (in need of major maintenance).
- 2.7 The sum of the percentage of roads in the red and amber categories is known as the Road Condition Indicator (RCI). The funds allocated to each area are proportional to the length of road in the red and amber categories in each area.
- 2.8 The table below shows the percentage of road in each category for each Operational Area together with the total length of road requiring maintenance, based on the outputs from the SRMCS carried out in in 2012.

Area	Red%	Amber %	Overall RCI
CSER	5.2%	22.4%	27.6%
RSL	6.9%	29.9%	36.9%
INBS	3.8%	22.8%	26.7%
Highland	5.3% (224 miles)	26.6% (1,218 miles)	31.9% (1,442 miles)

3. Allocation Methods

3.1 Winter Maintenance (Revenue)

- 3.1.1 The allocation for winter maintenance is based on the resources required to deliver the Council's winter maintenance policy. The allocation for winter maintenance includes a central allocation for providing the detailed weather

forecasting service and the Icelert system. The number of operatives employed and the number of winter maintenance vehicles deployed in each operational area is determined by the needs of the winter maintenance policy.

3.2 Routine Maintenance (Revenue)

3.2.1 The allocation for Routine Maintenance, which includes surface patching, footway works, ditching, gully emptying, road markings, traffic signs and verge cutting, is distributed between Operational Areas according to a formula based on road mileage with a weighting for urban areas, based on population, to take account of urban type features such as footpaths and increased signage and junction markings.

3.2.2 Routine maintenance is either cyclical (such as verge cutting and ditch cleaning) or reactive (such as filling potholes.) In either case, the amount of work is proportional to the length of the road, making road length the most effective measurement to establish relative need.

3.2.3 Within the overall allocation for Routine Maintenance the allocation for bridge maintenance is based on the number of bridges in each Operational Area, rather than road mileage.

3.3 Surface Dressing (Revenue)

3.3.1 The allocation for surface dressing, which is used as an early intervention treatment to extend the life of the road surface, is based on the outputs from the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey, which is a very good indication on need. The measurements for **texture and cracking** (within the overall RCI) are used to allocate the funding for Surface Dressing.

3.4 Structural Road Maintenance (Capital)

3.4.1 The allocation from the capital budget is split between surface dressing (£1.5m) and resurfacing (£2.65m). The funding is distributed on the basis of need as assessed by the outputs from the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey. The measurements for **texture and cracking** (within the overall RCI) are used to allocate the funding for Surface Dressing, while the measurements for **rutting, profile and cracking** (within the overall RCI) are used to allocate the funding for Resurfacing.

3.4.2 Within the total Structural Road Maintenance (Capital) allocation, a proportion is reserved for road structures such as bridges, retaining walls. This budget is held centrally and is distributed on the basis of need as determined by routine and special inspections of structures. The distribution is agreed by the Chief Structural Engineer in consultation with Area staff.

4. **Additional £2m Allocated for Roads Maintenance**

4.1 It is recommended that the additional £2m for roads maintenance, allocated in the Revenue Budget for 2013/14, is targeted at works which will arrest

deterioration to save more expensive works in the future.

4.2 It is recommended that the funding should be targeted at two main areas:

1. Keeping water off the road by improving drainage maintenance
2. Road surface treatments to improve the condition of the road surface

4.3 On the basis of the above rationale it is proposed that the additional £2m, agreed as part of the revenue budget for 2013/14, is distributed on the following basis:

- 50% (£1m) is distributed on the basis of road mileage – to improve road drainage.
- 50% (£1m) is distributed on the basis of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) – to improve the condition of the road surface, and the measurements for **rutting, profile and cracking** (within the overall RCI) have been used to allocate this element of funding.

5. Budget Allocation for Roads Maintenance

5.1 This report invites Members to approve the distribution of the overall Road Maintenance budgets for 2013/14 between the three Operational Areas, including the allocation of the additional £2m, on the basis of need, as contained in **Appendix A**.

6. Implications

6.1 The overall road maintenance allocation is included in the TECS Revenue budget for 2013/14 and this report invited Members to approve the allocation between the three Operational Areas.

6.2 The distribution enables the Council to meet its duty under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to an equal measure in each Operational Area.

6.3 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

6.4 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

6.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Members are invited to approve the distribution of the Roads Maintenance Budgets for 2013/14 between the three Operational Areas, including the allocation of the additional £2m towards road maintenance, as agreed as part of the Revenue Budget, on the basis of need. The details are contained in **Appendix A**.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date: 3 May 2013

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Appendix A

Activity	Distribution Method	HQ	CSER	RSL	INBS	Total
Road Length (miles)	Urban		212	151	278	
	Rural		1,334	1,453	789	
Winter	Resource to deliver policy	£131,180	£1,700,928	£1,645,265	£1,216,383	£4,693,756
Routine Maintenance	Road Length + Population		£2,401,881	£2,472,843	£1,754,694	£6,629,418
Surface Dressing	SRMCS	£20,000	£709,456	£914,535	£537,009	£2,181,000
Bridge Maintenance	No. of Bridges		£233,603	£332,175	£183,223	£749,001
Additional £2m	50% Road Length		£366,625	£380,274	£253,101	£1,000,000
	50% SRMCS		£286,000	£440,000	£274,000	£1,000,000
Capital Allocation						
Structural Maintenance	SRMCS		£1,251,674	£1,800,521	£1,097,805	£4,150,000
Bridge Maintenance	Condition Survey	£350,000				£350,000
Totals (£)		£501,180	£6,950,167*	£7,985,612*	£5,316,216*	£20,753,175

Note: Totals (*) corrected 14/05/2013