

The Highland Council
Community Services Committee
15 May 2014

Agenda Item	8(ii)
Report No	COM/06-14

Road Asset Management Plan (RAMP) Version 3 and the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey Results

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report presents the third version of the Council's Road Asset Management Plan for approval and updates Members on the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) joint project with Scottish Local Authorities and Welsh Unitary Authorities to implement a common asset management framework for the road and bridge infrastructure in Scotland and Wales.

The report also updates Members on the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) and compares results of recent surveys which indicate ongoing deterioration. The funding situation is also explained.

1. Background

- 1.1 The road and bridge network is the Council's highest valued asset and provides direct support for our communities, businesses, tourism, and future economic development of the economy of the highlands, e.g. oil and gas, renewable energy, tourism, fishing, aquaculture, and farming.
- 1.2 The road network (6,751km) is the largest local authority network in Scotland and contains 2,154 bridges and culverts, 1,036 retaining walls and 50,650 street lighting units.
- 1.3 Road safety is a high priority for the Scottish Government, and the Council has adopted the SG's challenging targets for reductions in accidents. The level of road maintenance provided by the Council is an important factor in reducing road traffic accidents, e.g. quality of road surface, drainage and road markings.
- 1.4 The Council's Public Performance Survey has consistently shown that "road repairs and pot holes", is regarded as one of the most important services, but has the lowest satisfaction rate, falling from -50% in 2009 to -61% in 2013.
- 1.5 The Corporate Asset Management Plan requires a Road Asset Management Plan (**RAMP**) to be in place.

- 1.6 The TECS Committee agreed to support the SCOTS Road Asset Management Project by working with all 32 Scottish Local Authorities to produce a common framework for the RAMP at its meeting on 16 August 2007 (TEC-50-07).

2. RAMP Development

- 2.1 Audit Scotland has reported on a number of their reviews of road maintenance practice in Scotland as follows:

Title	Published	Report to Committee
Maintaining Scotland's roads	November 2004	
Maintaining Scotland's roads: a follow-up report	February 2011	August 2012 TEC-38-12
Maintaining Scotland's roads: an audit update on council's progress	May 2013	August 2013 TEC-55-13

- 2.2 As a result of the first report Councils were encouraged to implement asset management systems and to develop RAMPs - a few already had.

Notably Councils collaborated to implement machine based road condition monitoring across Scotland in the form of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS).

- 2.3 The Audit Scotland press release for the most recent report was headlined *"More work needed to improve Scotland's roads but on tighter budgets"*.

- 2.4 The RAMP is based on the common framework developed through collaborative working in the SCOTS project.

- 2.5 The TECS Committee approved the first version of the RAMP at its meeting on 18 March 2010 (TEC-23-10) and the second on 20 September 2012 (TEC-48-12).

- 2.6 The RAMP has been reviewed by the Infrastructure Asset Management Planning Team, set up by the recently retired Director of TECS in response to the Action Plan contained in the Corporate Asset Management Plan. The review took place before the creation of the new Community Services directorate. At that time it was also reviewed by the Head of Roads and Community Works, Area Roads and Community Works Managers and TECS & H&P Finance Manager.

- 2.7 Version 3 of the RAMP continues the themes of the previous two and identifies the following actions:
- Continue to develop data management for the main assets.
 - Populate a roads risk register in the corporate risk management system.
 - Update relevant policies as identified in the RAMP.
 - Develop life cycle cost projection models for carriageways, footways and structures.
 - Use corporate performance software to collate information currently available for performance indicators.

The revised RAMP does not involve any policy changes and the information contained in the RAMP is correct at the time of writing.

- 2.8 Copies of the RAMP document will be available in the Members lounge and will be published on the Council website when approved. A temporary link to the RAMP is provided below:-

http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4305E3EE-D680-40CE-B64A-4E4E620A3317/0/20132015_Highland_RAMP_v30Draft.pdf

3. SCOTS Asset Management Project Delivery

- 3.1 SCOTS awarded a new 3 year contract to EXP Consulting Ltd on 19 July 2013 to support and continue the Asset Management project. The contract has been drawn up in collaboration with the County Surveyors' Society (CSS) Wales and therefore now includes all Welsh Unitary Authorities in the project. Value for money is improved with the involvement of CSS Wales which has reduced the cost of the contract to each Authority.
- 3.2 Funding for the SCOTS project has previously been approved by Members. The annual contribution required for the first year of the 3 year contract is £5,000.

4. SRMCS Results - Current Condition of the Council's Road Network

- 4.1 The SRMCS first produced results for the year 2005 and has done so annually since then. There are now 8 years of data, allowing trends for the last 5 years to be considered reliable as the overall sampling has reached almost the whole of the unclassified network.
- 4.2 Highland's SRMCS results and ranking in Scotland for recent years are shown in the following table. It is positive to note that the Highland RCI (road condition indicator) remains better than the Scottish average; however a worsening trend is evident.

Road class	RCI (Larger = Worse)			
	Survey Years			Change 2010-12 to 2012-14
	2010-12	2011-13	2012 - 14	
A	24.1	24.6	25.3	+1.2%
B	32.5	33.5	35.9	+3.4%
C	32.9	34.6	41.9	+9%
U	35.0	36.4	37.2	+2.2%
Overall	31.9	33.2	35.6	+3.7%

National Ranking	9th	12 th	17th	
Scottish Average	36.4	36.2	36.7	
Range Best to Worst			20.1% to 57.6%	

4.3 Overall there has been a deterioration of 3.7% over the last 3 years. This equates to 249 km (156 miles) of road falling from the green category into red and amber categories and overall 35.6% or 2400 km (1500 miles) of the Highland road network requires investigation and consideration for appropriate maintenance.

5. Maintaining the current “Steady State” position

5.1 SRMCS results and the road maintenance backlog have been regularly reported to the TECS Committee since 2004.

5.2 SCOTS commissioned work in 2010 to assess the road maintenance backlog across Scotland. This was reported by Audit Scotland in February 2011. The road maintenance backlog for Scotland was **£1.54b**, with Highland’s share calculated at **£151m**. That work reaffirmed the need in Highland to be spending in the order of **£15m** every year on structural maintenance to maintain “steady state”.

5.3 For roads (not bridges) the Council spends £4.65m on structural maintenance.

5.4 In addition to this, the Council allocated an additional £1.25m in 2014/15 to be used as a “Roads Innovation Fund”. This is the subject of the next report on the agenda.

6. Implications

6.1 Given the currently affordable structural maintenance budget there is a significant risk that deterioration of the road network will continue.

6.2 There are inflationary pressures on labour, plant and materials that reduce the volume of work that can be delivered on an on-going basis.

- 6.3 Resource implications for the SCOTS project have previously been approved by Members and are included in TECS budgets.
- 6.4 There are no legal, climate change/ Carbon Clever, risk, Gaelic or equality implications arising directly from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- (i) Approve the third version of The Highland Council's Road Asset Management Plan, 2013-15;
- (ii) Note the introduction of the new contract for the SCOTS Road Asset Management Project which now includes partnership working with CSS Wales; and
- (iii) Note the results of the 2012-14 Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey.

Designation: Director of Community Services

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Background Papers:

TEC-55-13 Audit Scotland Report "Maintaining Scotland's Roads: An Audit Update on Councils' Progress"
TEC-48-12 Road Asset Management Plan (RAMP) Version 2
TEC-38-12 Audit Scotland Report "Maintaining Scotland's Roads: follow up work"
TEC-08-12 Asset Management – Structural Road Maintenance Whole Life Cost Evaluation
TEC-84-10 Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Indicator - 2009
TEC-23-10 Road Asset Management Plan (RAMP)
TEC-09-10 Footway and Cycle Route Network Hierarchies
TEC-96-09 Road Network Hierarchy and Inspections Policy
TEC-36-08 Asset Management – Roads and Bridges
TEC-50-07 Asset Management
RES-134-07 Asset Management