

The Highland Council
Community Services Committee
28 April 2016

Agenda Item	8
Report No	COM 17/16

Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey 2015

Report by Director of Community Services

SUMMARY

This report updates Members on the annual results from the Scottish Road Condition Survey for 2015.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) is an annual survey which assesses the condition of the entire Scottish Local Authority road network. It is used to calculate a Road Condition Indicator (RCI) that is used by Audit Scotland as a Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) for reporting carriageway condition.
- 1.2. WDM Ltd, an independent company, are contracted to carry out the survey and cover the entire 56,000km of the Scottish Road Network. The survey vehicles used are all subject to strict independent audit and verification by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL Ltd) to ensure consistent data recording across the entire road network, which allows comparison between Councils.

2. Survey Details

- 2.1. The length of road surveyed annually is substantial and includes:
 - 100% of “A” class roads with the direction of travel changed on alternate years;
 - 50% of “B” and “C” class roads with the remaining 50% surveyed the 2nd year so covering all these roads on a 2 year cycle. For consistency the direction of survey is also alternated over a four year period; and
 - 10% of “U” class roads are surveyed in one direction each year.
- 2.2. In a Highland Council context, the annual survey sample equates to approx 2,970km or just under 44% of the network.
- 2.3. The main parameters collected by the survey vehicle include :
 - texture (roughness of the road);
 - rutting (wheel tracking);
 - longitudinal profile (smoothness of ride); and
 - cracking.

3. Statutory Performance Indicator

- 3.1. The Statutory Performance Indicator for the condition of the Scottish Local Authority road network is defined as “the percentage of the road network which should be considered for maintenance treatment”.
- 3.2. To minimise the effect of differing sample sections on the results, the RCI is derived from the survey data collected over the previous two years for A, B & C class roads, and over 4 years for U class roads.
- 3.3. The overall results from the SRMCS are presented on a colour coding convention as set out below:

Green - Minor defects may be present, but the road is considered to be in an acceptable condition.

Amber - Further investigation is required.

Red - The road has deteriorated to a point where repairs are very likely to be required to preserve serviceability and to prolong its future

- 3.4. The Scottish RCI is derived by adding the lengths of road shown as “red” and “amber”. An increase in the figure indicates deterioration, whilst a decrease indicates improvement.

4. Results from the 2015 SRMCS Survey

4.1. Overall Results

Across Scotland’s Local Authorities in 2015, the RCI (red and amber) ranges from 21.2% to 54.4% (best to worst) with Highland Council’s RCI measuring 39.1%. The Scottish average is 36.7%. A graphical representation of the results is shown in **Appendix 1**.

4.2. Change in RCI over last 12 months

The table below shows the change in RCI over the last 12 months within the family group known as ‘rural’ Councils in Scotland. (A negative number indicates deterioration, a positive number improvement).

Council	Change in RCI (%)
Highland	-2.9
Moray	-1.6
Borders	-0.8
Aberdeenshire	+0.5
Perth & Kinross	+0.9
Angus	+1.2
Argyll & Bute	+1.2

4.3. Road Condition Indicator (RCI)

Highland's ranking against the other "rural" Councils is tabulated below, together with how we compare against the Scottish average (the higher the number the worse the condition of the road network):

Authority	SPI (Red + Amber)	Ranking
Aberdeenshire	24.9%	Best
Moray	27.9%	
Angus	28.9%	
Perth & Kinross	34.3%	
<i>Scottish Average</i>	<i>36.7%</i>	
Highland	39.1%	
Borders	46.3%	
Dumfries & Galloway	46.9%	
Argyll & Bute	54.4%	Worst

4.4. Long Term Trend (RCI)

The 2 year rolling average RCI values for Highland over the last 5 years are shown in the table below:

Year	RCI
2011-12	29.3%
2012-13	33.2%
2013-14	35.6%
2014-15	36.2%
2015-16	39.1%

4.5. To put this in context, over the last 5 years an additional 660km (412 miles) of the road network has fallen from the Green sector into the Red or Amber sectors.

5. Maintenance Funding

5.1 In December 2015, the Council allocated an additional £24.3 million over the next 9 years for roads, bridges and piers. This, when added to the £4.5m already in the Community Services budget for capital structural road maintenance, raises the annual capital allocation to £7.2 million for 2016/17.

5.2 This additional funding will assist with reducing the overall deterioration of the road network.

5.3 Members should note however that the 'steady state' (no deterioration or improvement in the network) has been calculated independently at £16.25m per annum.

5.4 There is an opportunity for Members to reflect on this as we move forward with the redesign of the Council.

6. Implications

- 6.1 Resource implications and the impact on the Highland Council's road network have been flagged up throughout the report.
- 6.2 There are no known direct impacts on equality, Gaelic, climate change/Carbon Clever or rural considerations.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the results of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey for 2015.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 15 April 2016

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Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey Results 2015 Scottish Local Authorities

