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| Agenda Item | 20 |
| Report No | EDI/56/18 |

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Environment, Development and Infrastructure

Date: 16 August 2018

Report Title: Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey 2017

Report By: Director of Community Services

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report updates Members on the annual results from the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey for 2017.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to:

- note the results of the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey for 2017; and
- consider additional investment in the road network.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) is an annual survey which assesses the condition of the entire Scottish adopted 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 road condition.
- 3.2 The survey is undertaken by an independent contractor, accredited by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), and covers all Scottish Council Road Networks and the entire Trunk Road Network. This ensures an unbiased survey which allows a direct comparison between Council's Road Networks.

4 Survey Details

- 4.1 The length of road network 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 second year. These roads are therefore covered 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.
- 4.2 In a Highland Council context, the annual survey sample equates to approximately 2,970km of road or just under 44% of the total adopted road network.
- 4.3 The survey machine takes a measurement every 100mm along the road. These results are then averaged over 10 metre lengths.
- 4.4 The main parameters collected by the survey vehicle include:
- Texture (roughness of the road);
 - Rutting (wheel tracking);
 - Longitudinal profile (smoothness of ride); and
 - Surface cracking.

5 Statutory Performance Indicator

- 5.1 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".
- 5.2 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. This means that the overall survey result is based on a 100% sample of A, B & C class roads and a 40% sample of the U class road network.
- 5.3 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.

5.4 The RCI is derived by adding the lengths of road categorised as 'red' and 'amber' together and expressed as a percentage of the overall network. The higher the RCI, the worse the road condition. A year on year increase in the RCI would indicate deterioration, whilst a decrease indicates improvement.

6 Results from the 2017 Survey

6.1 Overall Results:

Across Scotland's Local Authorities in 2017, the RCI ranged from 19.8% (Orkney) to 55.5%(Argyll & Bute). The Scottish average was 36.7%.

6.2 Highland Council Ranking:

Highland's RCI for 2017 was 38.8%. Our current ranking compared to other "rural" Councils is shown in the table below.

| Authority | RCI | National Ranking out of 32 Councils (best to worst) |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|
| Aberdeenshire | 26.2% | 3 |
| Moray | 27.9% | 4 |
| Angus | 31.8% | 8 |
| <i>Scottish Average</i> | <i>36.7%</i> | - |
| Perth & Kinross | 37.2% | 20 |
| Highland | 38.8% | 24 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 47.3% | 30 |
| Borders | 48.5% | 31 |
| Argyll & Bute | 55.5% | 32 |

6.3 Long Term Trend

Comparing our results over the last 7 years show a significant deterioration in our RCI. In 2011 we had an RCI of 29.3% and were ranked 9th best Council. In 2017 our RCI was 38.8% and our ranking has fallen to 24th.

7 Backlog and Steady State

7.1 WDM Ltd, an independent company, has the current SRMCS contract and are commissioned by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) to run a financial model quantifying the backlog of road maintenance on the Scottish Local Authority network.

7.2 The headline backlog budget is defined as the carriageway maintenance funding required to treat all the red and amber sections of road within one year. This can be thought of, in general terms, as achieving a network free from carriageway defects. In reality to treat all the red and amber sections in one year is both impractical and unattainable but the figure does allow a comparative budgetary valuation to be calculated which can be monitored on an on-going basis.

7.3 The 'steady state' figure is the annual budget required to maintain the road network in its current state, i.e. no improvement or deterioration.

7.4 The backlog figure calculated in March 2017 for Highland was £177.75m. The steady state figure was £21.7m.

7.5 Members should note that the financial model only relates to carriageways and does not include calculations for bridges, lighting, footways or drainage.

8 Road Maintenance Funding

8.1 The capital allocation for structural road maintenance for 2018/19 is £8.2m. This is due to reduce to £6.2m in 2019/20 as £1m was brought forward from 19/20 to help deal with the impact of the 17/18 winter. (Note the 5-yr capital programme agreed in March 2018 was: £8.2m (18/19); £6.2m (19/20); £7.2m (20/21); £7.2m (21/22); £7.2m (22/23).

8.2 Members should be aware that not all of the current £8.2m allocation is spent on resurfacing roads. Other essential activities such as bridge maintenance, safety barriers, drainage, cattle grids and road markings are all required to be funded from that budget.

8.3 The Council has allocated an additional one-off sum of £1.5m to roads in 18/19 (bringing the total capital allocation for 18/19 to £9.7m). The impact of this will not be known until we have the results of next years SRMC Survey.

8.4 We have an ageing road network in Highland which, in many cases, is reaching the end of its life cycle. Surfaces, through oxidation, are becoming brittle and weak. The experience of the past winter has shown us just how fragile some parts of the network are and, without further and consistent levels of investment, this will undoubtedly become a more common occurrence.

9 Implications

9.1 Resource – as detailed in this report.

9.2 Legal – no known implications.

9.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – there is a risk that as road conditions deteriorate access to low trafficked roads in rural areas may become more restrictive as precedence is given to maintaining the strategic road network.

9.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – no known implications.

9.5 Risk – managed under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

9.6 Gaelic – no known implications.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 24 July 2018

Author: John MacLennan, Senior Service Support Officer