

Agenda Item	6
Report No	SR/6/20

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Skye & Raasay Area Committee

**Date:** 31 August 2020

**Report Title:** Road Maintenance Up-Date - April to August 2020

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment

### **1 Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an up-date on road maintenance operations within the Isle of Skye & Raasay Area during 2020 and advises of the impact of Covid-19.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report's contents.

### **3 Implications**

- 3.1 Resource – No implications.
- 3.2 Legal - No implications.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – No implications.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – No implications.
- 3.5 Risk – No implications.
- 3.6 Gaelic - No implications.

## **4 Essential Works**

4.1 On 6 April 2020 The Scottish Government stated that only essential construction work should be undertaken. This included 'the repair and maintenance of critical Infrastructure' such as roads.

4.2 Following a review of its operations by the Roads and Transport Service, the following duties were deemed to be eligible in order to comply with the above. These works included:-

- Emergency Out of Hours response;
- Winter maintenance (ending 14 April 2020);
- Road Safety Inspections with priority given to H1 and H2a network;
- Structures Inspections;
- Road Safety Defect Repairs:-
  - Treat CAT 1 and 2H defects with priority to the H1 Strategic and H2a Regional networks:-
    - Pothole repairs using spray injection vehicle on rural roads and;
    - Hot tar repairs using a hot box where hot tar is available from quarries
- Gully emptying in response to flooding or history of flooding;
- Ditching and drainage works only where there is a risk of flooding or it has occurred;
- Vehicle Restraint Systems (safety fences):-
  - Defer replacements; and
  - Only respond to road traffic accidents:-
    - Make safe and defer repairs
- Structures
  - Only respond to emergencies and bridge strikes; and
  - Defer all other works
- Signs
  - Make safe; and
  - Remove signs if required

4.3 All tar plants, except for our own Sconser Quarry on Skye, ceased production with staff being furloughed. Sconser Quarry continued production throughout the lockdown period providing a ready supply of Quarry materials to all Council areas. Initial demand was for cold tar & washed stone (for use with Jet Patcher) with a steadily increasing demand for hot tar for Hot boxes, as lockdown progressed.

## **5 Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

5.1 The Covid 19 pandemic has seen unprecedented restrictions placed upon both individuals and organisations.

These restrictions have significantly impacted on the operations we can undertake and how these are carried out.

5.2 Early in the emergency it was recognised that having a robust Risk Assessment plan would be give confidence to our operatives that every reasonable measure had been undertaken to protect them.

- 5.3 Initially there were limited supplies for alcohol hand gel, antiseptic wipes and face masks. Road Officers played a critical role in sourcing sufficient supplies at the outset. The supply chain has now improved significantly and PPE such as gel and wipes are no longer in short supply.
- 5.4 To avoid the possibility of transmission within vehicles our operatives were each issued with their own dedicated vehicle which are not shared unless they have been 'deep cleaned'.
- 5.5 No operatives have reported sick in the Isle of Skye & Raasay Area for Covid-19.
- From the Portree Depot, four operatives were 'shielding' during the lockdown period with all four returning to work in early July 20. One operative had been off long-term sick prior to the start of lockdown and has also subsequently returned to work
- 5.6 During this time there was one vacancy in Portree Depot for which permission has been granted to fill the post. The recruitment of 4 apprentices was adversely impacted by lockdown and these posts remain unfilled.
- 5.7 Combining operatives shielding from Covid-19 and the vacancy (not including 4 apprentices), the Portree and Broadford squads were operating at 63% capacity from April 20 to start July 20.

## **6 Essential Works Undertaken from April to Jul 2020**

- 6.1 Programmed works were suspended after only 'essential works were permitted.
- 6.2 The A851 Broadford to Armadale road is the only designated H1 Strategic Road in Skye & Raasay and there are no H2a Regional Roads in the Skye and Raasay Area. Category 1 and 2h potholes were patched on these roads first.

The road network considered to fall within 'essential works was later widened out to include all roads.

The majority of works undertaken in Isle of Skye & Raasay Area from April to Jul 2020 was patching of safety defects throughout the local road network utilising Jet Patcher, Hot & Cold patching.

Volumes of materials used in patching during this period are as follows:

- Cold tar patching (400 tonnes);
- Hot tar patching (264 tonnes); and
- Jet Patcher Emulsion (132 x 200kg Barrels Emulsion)

Notable works include:-

- Replacement of 3 Cattle Grids (Camustianavaig, Cuidrach & Portree Recycling Centre access road) and repairs to the double grid on the A851 near Broadford and grid on the Committee Road nearest Ashaig;
- Edge strengthening works on the C1237 Merkadale – Glenbrittle road (Square Mile);

- Gully Emptying (2 weeks), A855 in Staffin & Portree village. Gully ironwork raised in locations on A855 (Staffin Road, Portree) ; and
- Defect repairs using spray injection vehicle (Jet Patcher), Glasnakille, Elgol, Kilmarie, Park Bernisdale, Bernisdale, Kingsburgh & Heribusta. Two additional operatives received training to operate Jet Patcher.

## **7 Covid-19 Financial Implications and Future Works**

7.1 Due to the loss of income and additional expenditure arising from Covid-19 there is a significant budget gap across The Highland Council. On 29 May 2020 the 2020/21 budget approved by Council earlier in the year was suspended. This means that no expenditure is permitted except for that related to Covid-19 or the running of essential services.

In addition, all expenditure must be approved by Head of Roads and Transport.

7.2 In view of this, much of the Area Maintenance Programme has been suspended except those works which are contractually committed, or which have secured match-funding in place.

Due the surface dressing being weather and temperature dependent this element of the capital programme has unfortunately had to be cancelled. The following schemes will now be considered for surface dressing in 2021/22:-

- U4748 Talisker;
- U4892 Old Corry;
- C1235 Raasay;
- U4807 Edinbane Village;
- A863 Sligachan – Drynoch Jct;
- A850 Clahamish – Bernisdale;
- A850 Glen Bernisdale – Skeabost Bridge;
- A851 A87 Junction – Double Grid;
- A855 Old Man of Storr;
- C1244 – Ardvasar - Aird of Sleat; and
- Portree Village

No decision has yet been taken on whether the full 2020/21 Capital allocation for overlay or inlay capital schemes will be released. However, the Head of Roads and Transport has agreed a limited Capital allocation to the Isle of Skye and Raasay to undertake previously approved schemes that remain outstanding from 2019/20. This decision is due in part to Sconser Quarry's commercial supply commitments commencing early September 2020 to supply surfacing material for programmed resurfacing works on the A87 Invergarry – Uig Trunk road. While there is a clear financial benefit through income generation, the operations do also impact area the DLO operations as they are restricted to a limited supply of surfacing material for the duration of the trunk road works. This is due to some of the works being planned night shift operations as well as there being no hot storage facility at Sconser Quarry (hot material is batched and discharged directly into a lorry) and the limited local supply of haulage vehicles. These previously approved schemes include:-

- C1242 Teangue – Ord – Tarskavaig – Ostaig (Coille a Ghasgain);
- A850 Borve – Dunvegan (Braebost/Lyndale);
- U4815 Scorrybreac Road, Portree;

- U4768 Peinsoraig – Balnaknock (Sheader Road, passing places); and
- U4780 Upper Milovaig – Waterstein (Neist Point, passing places)

7.3 Whilst spending restrictions remain in force, the following measures have been introduced:-

- Switching to low material cost operations such as:-
  - Drainage works;
  - Minor bridge works;
  - Signage (Passing Place); and
  - Grass cutting

## **8 Shared Funding & Income Generation Schemes**

8.1 Storr Car Park – Phase 1 was essentially complete on budget prior to lockdown. During the works agreement was given to the Storr Footpath contractor to temporarily store bagged stone within the Phase 1 site until such time as they could be airlifted by helicopter and delivered to the footpath works site. Weather delays early in the new year and subsequently the Covid lockdown delayed the movement of the stone until the resumption of construction works. The car park was open to the public on following the move into Phase 3 allowed increased visitor numbers and prior to the commencement of the Storr Toilets contract.

8.2 Storr Car Park – Phase 2 works were approximately 30% complete when lockdown stopped all works. Works recommenced in mid-July 20 and are currently approximately 50% complete and on budget.

8.3 Fairy Glen Car Park & On-street Parking works was approximately 50% complete when lockdown stopped all works. Works recommenced at the end of July 20 and are currently 55% complete and on budget. Mobilisation was delayed due to machine operators being occupied on other projects.

8.4 Quiraing – Phase 2 works are programmed to commence following the completion of the Storr – Phase 2. SGRPID funding for the works has been received by the Council and commitment for the Councils share of funding was agreed by Council prior to Covid-19 and is hence considered committed works that can proceed.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment

Date: 7 August 2020

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