

(i) Mr R Bremner

To the Chair of the Economy & Infrastructure Committee

There has been considerable concern by members of the public, especially in Caithness, in respect of the roads infrastructure. For some time there has been an underspend of the committed funding by Council for the road's infrastructure in Caithness and in other areas of Highland. It is imperative that the extra committed funding this year is spent and that this is the case for next year also. What comfort can our Highland communities be given that Council will actually ensure this happens?

*Previous underspends in roads infrastructure have arisen due to a variety of factors including extreme weather conditions, and Covid, which affected all of the Highlands.*

*In terms of the extra funding committed for this year, the Council has made good progress in completing our Area Roads Maintenance Programmes over the summer season, and has committed all of its budget in relation to investment in Roads Plant and Machinery.*

*For Caithness, the surface dressing element of the programme is now fully complete and has been delivered in-house by the Caithness and Sutherland roads teams. The A836 at Gills Bay (which is part of the NC500) was the last section of 17 prioritised road projects to receive surface dressing works. £27,000 of the Caithness Area's prioritised capital works programme for 2021/22 has enabled 1.5km (0.9 mile) of the A836 Warse Farm Road to Upper Gills to be Surface Dressed.*

*Other prioritised surface dressing works in Caithness include:*

- U2196 Sordale to Hilliclay Road,
- A836 BT Business Park,
- U2144 Hill of Forss,
- U2110 Lythmore Road at Lythmore Strath,
- A99 Freswick,
- B874 Buckies to Aimster,
- A836 Canisbay Cemetery to Bridge at Lower Warse,
- C1001 Isauld Glengolly Road, Shebster to Westfield,
- A99 Lyth Junction to South of Keiss,
- U3664 Whitechapel Road, Wick,
- B876 Bower to Grantown Mains,
- B874 Hoy Gillock Road, Hoy Junction to Knockdee,
- B874 Hoy Gillock Road to Corsback Junction,
- U2052 Foss Achreamie Road Skail to Forss Junction,
- U2502 Shebster Achreamie Road at Achreamie Junction, and
- U2066 Buldoo Achreamie Road.

*These 17 surface dressing works costing £259,047 in total have repaired approximately 19km (11.9 miles) of road.*

*In terms of future spend a review is currently ongoing to consider the delivery of road improvements in all areas across Highland. This review is being progressed to consider the mix between in-house delivery and also external contractors to augment the Council's workforce. To enable this, additional technical resources will be provided from the capital*

*programme to review schemes and determine the delivery strategy to ensure progress, programme and also best value.*