

Agenda Item	5
Report No	ECI/31/2021

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Economy and Infrastructure**

Date: **1 September 2021**

Report Title: **Capital Monitoring – Outturn for 2020/21 and Quarter 1 2021/22**

Report By: **Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an out-turn monitoring statement for the 2020/21 financial year, as well as the first reported position for the new 2021/22 financial year for the quarter to end June 2021.
- 1.2 In relation to the 2020/21 out-turn, as recently reported to the June Council meeting, the Infrastructure, Environment and Economy element of the capital programme had an underspend of £7.060m.
- 1.3 Net spend on capital projects in the first quarter of financial year 2021/22 totalled £4.475m.
- 1.4 Given this is the first quarter of the financial year, the fact Covid is still having an impact, and based on present expenditure trends, a balanced position for the year end is forecast.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note the capital outturn position for the 2020/21 financial year; and
 - ii. Consider the financial position as at 30 June 2021 and note the estimated year end forecast.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - Resource implications are discussed in the report.
- 3.2 **Risk** - Risk implications to the budget position and budget assumptions will be kept under regular review and any risks identified reported to future Committees.
- 3.3 **Legal** - The contents of this report and the annual accounts aim to satisfy the requirement of Sections 6 and 7 of the CIPFA Financial Management Code- 'Monitoring financial performance' and 'External financial reporting'.
- 3.4 There are no specific equality, climate change/carbon clever, rural or Gaelic implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Capital Programme Outturn 2020/21

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the reprofiled current year budgets and spend and income for the year ended 31 March 2021. The reprofiled budget was approved at Highland Council in January 2021. The year-end actual figures provided reflect the net project expenditure, i.e., project costs incurred less project-specific income received.
- 4.2 Overall, there has been a net expenditure of £14.383m for the 2020/21 financial year. Total expenditure incurred was £33.046m with income received of £18.663m. The reprofiled net budget was £21.443m and after taking account of the outturn position, left an underspend of £7.060m which comprised £6.780m of slippage and a small underspend of £0.280m. The slippage was carried forward to the 2021/22 financial year.

5. Capital Programme 2021/22

- 5.1 The capital programme summary is included in **Appendix 2**. It shows net expenditure to 30 June 2021 of £4.475m. The estimated outturn position shows a net expenditure of £39.105m. Given this is the first quarter of the financial year, the fact Covid is still having an impact and based on present expenditure trends a balanced position for the year end is forecast.
- 5.2 Progress on capital projects is as reported in the notes column on **Appendix 2**.
- 5.3 An update on major projects is included at **Appendix 3**.

6. Additional Capital Investment

- 6.1 As part of the Medium-Term Financial Planning and Health and Prosperity Investment report to June Council, additional capital funds totalling £8.350m were approved for Infrastructure and Environment projects.
- 6.2 **Roads Infrastructure Investment £4m** – the significant additional funding will further support the key priority of the Council to maintain the current funding for the local road network and continue to make the case for additional resources in recognition of the unique challenges and costs of maintaining the largest road network in the UK.

The investment will add to the rolling programme of road improvements and repairs – new schemes to be identified at Area Committee level and discussed with local

Members; to increase the maintenance works required to the Council's structures such as bridges, culverts, retaining walls and including cattle grids; strip widening to address verge damage caused vehicle over-run; and investment in additional passing places and lengthening of existing passing places, in order to ease congestion and improve road safety.

6.3 **Roads Plant and Machinery Investment £1.5m** – for roads plant and machinery to improve the delivery of road pot hole repairs by increasing the number of first time permanent repairs; investment in plant/machinery to undertake verge side maintenance of grass/vegetation in the spring/summer and removal of vegetation from gullies, verges and drainage ditches/channels in the autumn/winter; and upgrading and replacement of plant and equipment to reflect local area needs, based on discussions with Roads Operations Managers and local Members.

6.4 **Corran Ferry Investment £1.6m** – for essential design work in order to make the case for investment in replacement vessels, slipways and supporting infrastructure to ensure service sustainability until such time that a longer-term fixed link solution is built. There is a time critical requirement for The Highland Council to have Naval Architects and Marine Consultants in place to commence work on the design of the 2 new vessels and the supporting slipways and infrastructure. In terms of how this will be delivered, £0.8m will be directed towards working with Transport Scotland and their naval architect consultants on the design of the new ferry vessels as part of the wider ferry replacement programme, aiming as far as is technically possible to ensure that complementary designs can be agreed. The second stage, which is the design of new slipway, infrastructure and parking provision, will be managed by the Council's Project Design Unit, using external expertise where required, and will be procured through the normal framework arrangements in place.

6.5 **Environment/Climate Change Salix Match Funding £1.250m** – Salix now operate on a 75/25 funding basis, therefore this £1.250m contribution would activate an investment of £3.750m from Salix, taking the total value of the Fund to £12m. The key headlines and benefits of the original £7m investment to date:–

- Estimated annual energy savings in excess of 4.4m kWh;
- Estimated annual carbon savings in excess of 1,200 tCO₂e;
- Estimated annual financial savings in excess of £0.5m (which will continuously be reinvested in other energy efficiency initiatives);
- A match funding contribution of £3.5m from Salix at 0% interest;
- Lifetime savings of over £13.5m;
- Ongoing access to technical support and project analysis from Salix; and
- Further strengthening the Councils successful partnership with Salix. The Highland Council is a leading Salix client, operating the largest value active Recycling Fund and showcasing exemplar implementation of projects estate-wide to support holistic decarbonisation.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Date: 18 August 2021

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MONITORING OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST MARCH 2021

SERVICE: INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Project Description	Actual Net	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21
	Year to Date	Reprofiled Budget	Actual Expenditure	Actual Income	Acceleration / (Slippage)	Overspend / (Underspend)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
ROADS AND BRIDGES						
Structural Road Works						
Road Structural Capital Works	2,249	4,550	2,546	(297)	(2,301)	0
Road Surface Dressing Capital	224	1,500	224	0	(1,276)	0
Bridges, Retaining Walls & Culverts	213	344	213	0	(131)	0
Area Minor Capital Works						
Timber Extraction	501	500	2,225	(1,724)	1	0
Major Road Improvements						
The Inverness West Link	4,961	5,258	5,340	(379)	(297)	0
Inshes Roundabout	9	50	74	(65)	(41)	0
Development Infrastructure, Dingwall	(23)	50	40	(63)	(73)	0
B851/B862 South Loch Ness Road Improvements	373	206	376	(3)	167	0
Stromeferry Rockface	65	50	65	0	15	0
Minor Road Improvements						
Crask Junction	8	5	8	0	0	3
Other Minor Schemes	8	10	8	0	0	(2)
Major Bridge Works						
B863 Invercoe Bridge, Lochaber	157	200	157	0	(43)	0
A862 Muir of Ord Railway Bridge	3	5	3	0	(2)	0
B9090 White Bridge	82	140	82	0	(58)	0
Dulsie Bridge	0	11	0	0	(11)	0
Naver Bridge	47	100	47	0	(53)	0
Lifeline Bridges						
B8007 Glenmore Bridge - Lifeline Bridges	26	20	26	0	6	0
A884 Acharn Bridge - Lifeline Bridges	0	0	0	0	0	0
A884 Achnagavin Bridge - Lifeline Bridges	0	0	0	0	0	0
A831 Comar Refurbishment - Lifeline Bridges	0	22	0	0	(22)	0
ACTIVE TRAVEL						
Car Parking - Portree	444	200	543	(99)	244	0
Car Parking - Fort Augustus	5	10	5	0	(5)	0
Car Parking - Storr	107	(69)	287	(180)	176	0
Car Parking - Inverness Lorry Park	15	10	15	0	5	0
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	28	0	929	(901)	28	0
20mph Zones	3	22	10	(7)	(19)	0
Traffic Management Improvements	173	130	173	0	43	0
Community Links PLUS	0	0	189	(189)	0	0
Bus Priority Rapid Development Fund	0	0	89	(89)	0	0
Spaces for People	8	0	1,188	(1,180)	8	0
LIGHTING						
Structural Lighting Works	783	1,500	783	0	(717)	0
FLOOD PREVENTION						
Flood Prevention Schemes						
River Ness Flood Prevention - Tidal Section (Incl Streetscaping)	11	10	11	0	1	0
Smithton / Culloden Flood Alleviation	498	700	501	(3)	(202)	0

Major Flood Schemes						
River Enrick FPW / NFMS	252	250	252	0	2	0
Caol FPW	534	450	536	(2)	84	0
Mill Burn FPS	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conon Bridge Flood Defence Improvements	53	100	53	0	(47)	0
River Gynack FPS / NFMS	18	20	18	0	(2)	0
River Peffery - FPS / NFMS	9	8	9	0	1	0
Golspie FPS / NFMS	1	0	1	0	1	0
River Nairn & Auldearn Burn FPS	0	30	0	0	(30)	0
Kirkhill Watercourse Diversion	0	1	0	0	(1)	0
Risk Management Plans	214	155	214	0	59	0
Flood Improvement Works Knockbain Burn, Dingwall	17	50	17	0	(33)	0
Scalesburn, Wick	1	0	1	0	1	0
Inverness SWMP/ICS	31	20	31	0	11	0
Newtonmore SWMP	6	15	6	0	(9)	0
Dingwall SWMP	15	15	15	0	0	0
Halkirk SWMP	9	15	9	0	(6)	0
Fort William SWMP	17	15	17	0	2	0
Corpach SWMP	8	15	8	0	(7)	0
FERRIES AND HARBOURS						
Uig Ferry Terminal and Link Span	413	643	413	0	(230)	0
Harbours General Structural Works	(9)	402	22	(31)	(411)	0
Corran Ferry	0	300	0	0	(300)	0
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Parks and Play Areas - Development						
Inshes Park (Phases 1 to 3)	(26)	178	105	(131)	(204)	0
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT						
Town & Countryside Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0
Storr Car Park	216	95	432	(216)	121	0
Nairn High Street	38	50	38	0	(12)	0
Fairy Pools (Glen Brittle)	41	41	41	0	0	0
Inverness Townscape Heritage	(312)	0	4	(316)	0	(312)
Approaching Inverness	1	1	1	0	0	0
Visitor Management						
Storr Visitor Management	32	125	152	(120)	(93)	0
Misc Assets, Bridges & Structures						
Assets, Bridges & Structures	3	10	20	(17)	(7)	0
Ellen Wood Footpath, Carrbridge	15	15	15	0	0	0
Green Networks, Core Paths & Long Distance Routes						
Green Infrastructure	(1)	25	17	(18)	(26)	0
Long Distance Routes	1	5	1	0	(4)	0
Other Grant Funded Schemes						
Vacant & Derelict Land Fund and Regeneration Fund	0	0	2,477	(2,477)	0	0
Town Centre Fund	0	0	1,211	(1,211)	0	0
City Deal Projects	0	0	4,732	(4,732)	0	0
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	0	0	647	(647)	0	0
Smart City - Digital Projects	1	250	1	0	(249)	0
CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS						
Inverness Justice Centre	96	93	96	0	0	3
Inverness Castle	0	800	0	0	(800)	0
SELF FUNDING PROJECTS						
Longman Campus Site	16	50	16	0	(34)	0
Local Full Fibre Network	863	863	2,841	(1,978)	0	0
27 Harbour Road Acquisition, Inverness	585	557	585	0	0	28
LED Programme for Buildings - SALIX Funded	247	247	1,835	(1,588)	0	0
OVERALL TOTAL	14,383	21,443	33,046	(18,663)	(6,780)	(280)

MONITORING OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - 1ST APRIL 2021 TO 30TH JUNE 2021

SERVICE: INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Project Description	Actual Net Year to Date	2021/22 Reprofiled Budget	2021/22 Actual Expenditure	2021/22 Actual Income	2021/22 Estimated Outturn	2021/22 Acceleration / (Slippage)	2021/22 Overspend / (Underspend)	COMMENTS
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
ROADS AND BRIDGES								
Structural Road Works								
Road Structural Capital Works	2,123	14,787	2,218	(95)	14,787	0	0	Works progressing in all Areas.
Road Surface Dressing Capital	603	3,540	603	0	3,540	0	0	Works progressing in all Areas.
Bridges, Retaining Walls & Culverts	125	1,081	125	0	838	(243)	0	Torbreck bridge works underway. Ness Bridge design tender price over budget and re tender required. Torrdaroch Bridge added to programme and design is progressing. Works planned at Ledmore, Halladale and Knockan, all high priority repair works with designs progressing.
Area Minor Capital Works								
Timber Extraction	23	499	42	(19)	499	0	0	Various schemes under development.
Major Road Improvements								
The Inverness West Link	617	694	617	0	694	0	0	
Inshes Roundabout	124	57	124	0	250	193	0	
Development Infrastructure, Dingwall	4	485	4	0	485	0	0	Consultation on permanent 20mph limit and associated traffic calming underway
B851/B862 South Loch Ness Road Improvements	57	190	57	0	190	0	0	Works progressing as and when required.
Stromeferry Rockface	4	1,015	4	0	1,015	0	0	The EDI committee in 2019 agreed additional spend for Phase 11 and 12 works contracts to carry out works on high risk areas, Phase 11 was completed in 2019/20 but phase 12 was delayed due to covid. Phase 12 is now planned for construction to commence this financial year.
Minor Road Improvements								
Other Minor Schemes	10	0	10	0	50	50	0	
Major Bridge Works								
B863 Invercoe Bridge, Lochaber	9	2,515	9	0	2,415	(100)	0	Procurement for main contractor underway, construction to start November 2021.
A862 Muir of Ord Railway Bridge	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	Complete.
B9090 White Bridge	1	84	1	0	84	0	0	Final land issues to be resolved. Repairs of old bridge expected 2022..
Dulsie Bridge	0	22	0	0	22	0	0	Monitoring continues, design not started. Scope of design to be decided following monitoring.
Naver Bridge	33	362	33	0	362	0	0	Consultant (Fairhurst) appointed for design phase, construction start 2024 - note construction route to planned spaceport.
Lifeline Bridges								
B8007 Glenmore Bridge - Lifeline Bridges	0	20	0	0	20	0	0	Land issues still outstanding to be resolved. Ground investigation expected late 2021 / early 2022.
A884 Acharn Bridge - Lifeline Bridges	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	Design commenced August 2021 (1 yr earlier than previously planned)
A884 Achnagavin Bridge - Lifeline Bridges	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	Design commenced August 2021 (1 yr earlier than previously planned)
A831 Comar Refurbishment - Lifeline Bridges	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	Land issues nearing resolution. Design to commence 2021/22
ACTIVE TRAVEL								
Car Parking - Portree	(99)	(44)	0	(99)	(44)	0	0	Complete.
Car Parking - Fort Augustus	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	
Car Parking - Inverness Lorry Park	17	145	17	0	145	0	0	Works for completion this financial year.
Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets	12	(28)	183	(171)	(28)	0	0	Expenditure fully funded by Transport Scotland grant.
20mph Zones	1	19	1	0	19	0	0	
Traffic Management Improvements	21	(43)	21	0	(43)	0	0	Remainder of budget allocation as match funding for ERDF transport project as part of Scotland's 8th City - The Smart City. Project to be completed this financial year.
Community Links PLUS	(319)	0	135	(454)	0	0	0	Fully funded by Sustrans. Works progressing on all phases. Raigmore Ramp construction underway and consultants for the design of Millburn Road will soon be appointed. Design of the Riverside Way phase is progressing.

Bridge at Lochloy, Nairn	27	0	85	(58)	0	0	0	Design of bridge crossing of the Inverness to Aberdeen is progressing. Member and Community consultation is underway. Developer contributions of circa £600k have been received for construction, to be match funded via Sustrans.
Bus Priority Rapid Development Fund	338	0	337	1	0	0	0	Fully funded by Transport Scotland. Rose Street bus gate nearing completion (July 2021). Raigmore bus gate to be delivered through Bus Partnership Fund.
Spaces for People	801	(8)	475	326	(8)	0	0	Fully funded by Transport Scotland. Some funding has been carried forward to enable the 20mph schemes to be made permanent whilst also designing a future permanent one-way system around Inverness Castle.
LIGHTING								
Structural Lighting Works	333	2,807	333	0	2,807	0	0	Essential lighting works including LED enabling and LED delivery ongoing. Replacement communications mast committed. Upgrade/refurbishment of existing radio mast portfolio ongoing. Essential traffic signal works ongoing. Essential CCTV works ongoing.
FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT								
Flood Protection Schemes								
River Ness Flood Prevention - Tidal Section (Incl Streetscaping)	90	0	90	0	150	150	0	Flood scheme works complete – negotiations have not concluded regarding final compensation claims.
Smithton / Culloden Flood Alleviation	20	2,723	27	(7)	2,558	(165)	0	Main Flood Scheme works complete. Maintenance period ongoing and some compensation claims.
River Enrick FPW / NFMS	57	727	57	0	727	0	0	
Caol FPW	12	2,936	25	(13)	2,936	0	0	
Flood Studies								
Mill Burn FPS	0	62	0	0	62	0	0	Preferred Options submitted to SEPA for national prioritisation. Awaiting Scot. Gov. decision on grant funding (linked to prioritisation) which is not anticipated until late 2021.
Conon Bridge Flood Defence Improvements	12	665	12	0	665	0	0	Out to tender.
River Gynack FPS / NFMS	0	54	0	0	54	0	0	Expected to spend this financial year.
River Peffery - FPS / NFMS	2	0	2	0	10	10	0	Preferred Options submitted to SEPA for national prioritisation. Awaiting Scot. Gov. decision on grant funding (linked to prioritisation) which is not anticipated until late 2021.
Golspie FPS / NFMS	0	40	0	0	40	0	0	Scheme on hold awaiting Scottish Government grant funding decision - Underspend required for budget for 21-22 to undertake exiting sea wall assessment.
River Nairn & Auldearn Burn FPS	0	143	0	0	143	0	0	Expected to spend this financial year.
Risk Management Plans	56	96	56	0	96	0	0	This budget only has enough allowance for Planning whereas the work on this code is for Planning, Local Flood Risk Management Strategies, Local Flood Risk Management Plans, Lead Local Authority Forums, Local Advisory Groups, Local Plan District meetings, SCOTS, Flooding Incidents and general responses. A budget request to increase to £0.25m per annum has been included in the capital programme review.
Flood Improvement Works Knockbain Burn, Dingwall Scalesburn, Wick	1	239	1	0	239	0	0	Design work ongoing. Expected to spend this financial year.
Surface Water Management Plans	10	84	10	0	84	5	0	Working on an overall SWMP with individual chapter to cover each area. SWMP started for each area. Ongoing into next financial year.
FERRIES AND HARBOURS								
Uig Ferry Terminal and Link Span	47	230	47	0	230	0	0	
Harbours General Structural Works	(14)	661	17	(31)	661	0	0	Programme of works identified.
Corran Ferry	0	300	0	0	300	0	0	Steering system replacement on MV Maid of Glencoul £0.250m; and urgent improvement works to Ardgour slipway £0.050m.
LEISURE FACILITIES								
Parks and Play Areas - Development								
Inshes Park (Phases 1 to 3)	73	204	73	0	204	0	0	Works underway on Phase 3A.
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT								
Town & Countryside Regeneration								
Storr Car Park	0	228	0	0	153	(75)	0	
	(192)	(297)	24	(216)	(297)	0	0	Complete. Income received to match expenditure in 2020/21.

Nairn High Street	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	Carry forward from previous year.
Inverness Townscape Heritage	63	0	67	(4)	75	75	0	Complete. Part of the overall Inverness heritage project.
Visitor Management								
Wester Ross Visitor Hubs	0	89	0	0	89	0	0	Carry forward from previous year.
Storr Visitor Management	(120)	93	0	(120)	93	0	0	Complete. Income received to match expenditure in 2020/21.
Misc Assets, Bridges & Structures								
Assets, Bridges & Structures	(17)	57	0	(17)	57	0	0	PDU undertaking a review of miscellaneous assets.
Green Networks, Core Paths & Long Distance Routes								
Green Infrastructure	28	101	28	0	101	0	0	Ongoing project works at Merkinch Nature Reserve (MLNR) active travel route. Insufficient funds to progress to construction without contribution from adjacent housing / flood control development. (Reduced spec may be option).
Ardersier Path	0	26	0	0	26	0	0	Carry forward from previous year.
Long Distance Routes	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	Carry forward from previous year.
Other Grant Funded Schemes								
Vacant & Derelict Land Fund and Regeneration Fund	(1,381)	0	1,301	(2,682)	0	0	0	Grant carried forward, schemes under development.
Town Centre Fund	(4,134)	0	283	(4,417)	0	0	0	Grant carried forward, schemes under development.
Carbon Clever	0	103	0	0	103	0	0	Fully committed.
Inverness Rail Station	0	52	0	0	52	0	0	Joint project with Network Rail / HITRANS. HC committed to £0.3m over 2 years commencing 2021/22.
Inverness City Gateways	110	66	110	0	66	0	0	Carry forward from previous year, project now underway.
City Deal Projects	1,018	0	625	393	0	0	0	Projects progressing.
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	(13)	0	68	(81)	0	0	0	
Smart City - Digital Projects	35	250	35	0	250	0	0	Projects progressing.
CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS								
Inverness Castle	1,258	800	228	1,030	800	0	0	Part of the City Deal suite of projects.
SELF FUNDING PROJECTS								
Longman Campus Site	16	34	16	0	34	0	0	Carry forward from previous year.
Local Full Fibre Network	2,335	0	2,280	55	0	0	0	Project costs recovered from Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport of UK Government.
LED Programme for Buildings - SALIX Funded	237	0	237	0	0	0	0	Programme of works progressing.
OVERALL TOTAL	4,475	39,105	11,154	(6,679)	39,105	0	0	

Major Projects Update

Uig Ferry Terminal

Following Committee approval at the special meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the 8 July 2021, approval was obtained to accept the grant award offer and award the contract.

The contract for the main civil infrastructure works at Uig Ferry Terminal has been awarded to RJ McLeod (Contractors) Limited on 31 July 2021 at a tender assessment value of £44.7M, an Inaugural Meeting will be held in the near future to determine the actual start date and programme for construction.

The Uig ferry terminal will be upgraded with new infrastructure which will improve the ferry service provision at Uig and an improved safer experience for all ferry and harbour users. The infrastructure improvements will include an extended marshalling area, berthing structure, strengthening and widening (capable of incorporating LNG infrastructure), linkspan replacement, approach-way repair and widening, relocated new waiting shelter, new terminal building, dredging and utility provision.

There are essential works at Uig that are unrelated to the ferry operation and are thus not grant eligible (£1.5M allocation for such works has been approved in the capital programme). The Grant agreement budgeted, allows a level of contingency given the number of risks of working in a marine environment and the nature of the concrete repair works.

The tender for the new terminal Building will be issued in November 2021, with works dovetailed with the main civils works.

The new vessel, MV Hull 802 for the Skye Triangle route is now expected to be delivered between April 2023 to July 2023; and deployed to the route following completion of sea trials. The main civil infrastructure works at Uig Ferry Terminal are planned to be complete in Summer 2023.

West Link

The last 12 months has seen a major milestone for the West Link – during the year we have seen the completion of the final stage of the West Link – with the new road layout coming into operation on the 1 July 2021, and all the amenity areas being open and available to the public.

Operation of the new swing bridge has highlighted some reliability issues – and this centres around the complexity of the bridge and the associated sensors and alarms. Work is currently underway to modify the sensors such that far greater reliability of the bridge in automatic mode can be provided. The bridge when it locks out in automatic mode needs to be operated in manual mode – and this is a far more complicated process involving visual checks and operations – so systems need to develop whereby this mode is only used in exceptional circumstances.

Covid had a significant impact on the construction phase with a full 3 month cessation of construction activity. Covid continued to be an issue as when construction works recommenced many controls and measures had to be put into place which affected productivity and programme.

Scottish Canals are now operating the bridge, and discussions are ongoing with both Scottish Canals and also Transport Scotland over the transition arrangements and also the formal adoption as a section of trunk road – with Transport Scotland being owners of the new swing bridge and approach roads – with Scottish Canals undertaking the operation.

The Highland Council will continue to maintain the road and bridge for the next two years and the maintenance of the landscaping for the next 5 years.

The West Link project has delivered major transformation for the city and region. The route has provided a new, more direct crossing of the River Ness for existing city neighbourhoods, as well as supporting the transport needs of Ness Castle, a major expansion area.

Across the project area active travel connectivity has been expanded and enhanced, with a network of shared paths, road crossings and new desire line connections all contributing to support people to choose walking, wheeling or cycling to get around. Stage 2 of the project has also served as a catalyst for a broad range of community and commercial opportunity. The new crossing of the Caledonian Canal has enabled the delivery of a new city park. Taking advantage of the land's former use as a golf course the project has maximised its benefit by using waste material from General Booth Road to construct a path network that is available for use by the Inverness Park Run community group. Work is underway with a local wildflower group to identify potential to further enhance the biodiversity benefits in this new park. The repurposing of the area has also supported a local community organisation, Inverness Rowing Club, to expand their facilities and operation, with the group currently seeking planning permission to this end.

Land immediately adjacent to the canal is recognised as a key destination and asset for the city and, as such, an updated development brief has identified this land for commercial development to establish a new, attractive destination in the city. This will add to the range of destination offers in the city and will provide capital receipts from land transactions. To the north, the former golf course land has also been unlocked for redevelopment potential as additional greenspace, with scope to deliver residential development and a school, should the school estate strategy identify the need.

Inshes Junction

Following the change to the hierarchy of travel – with the aspiration of more sustainable travel modes – layouts have been developed that have been considered at the City of Inverness Area Committee and also allowed the consultation exercise to commence – to determine public views on the proposals. Notwithstanding the need for the consultation to be virtual – and via a Highland Council consultation portal, over

1000 representations have been made to date.

Due to the level of interest and the recognised limitations on virtual consultations the consultation period has been extended to the 10 September 2021 and face to face consultations will now take place now covid relaxations allow.

Works at Beechwood are now complete – removing a direct access onto Old Perth Road – and the associated traffic conflicts seen as a vital part of the overall solution.

Dialogue is also continuing with Transport Scotland over the dovetailing of the Inshes Junction scheme with the proposed A9/A96 Smithton to Inshes Scheme.

Completion of the consultation will allow consideration at Committee to select the preferred option in late 2021– which will allow the promotion of the necessary consents required to facilitate construction.

Inshes Junction forms a key infrastructure element of the Local Development Plan. It is recognized that to realise additional development - both residential and commercial, will require this necessary infrastructure investment – and the works will act as a catalyst for development and growth in the area.

Caol Flood Scheme

Caol Flood Scheme near Fort William provides 2Km of direct flood defence to provide 1:200 year level of protection from flooding to more than 300 properties and business. The scheme will provide an increased level of protection against tidal flooding from Loch Linnhe and flooding from the River Lochy.

The works were tendered and were awarded to R J Macleod who commenced in May 2021.

A community liaison group has been established and is working well to provide information to the community and also a means of raising any issues and concerns. The community liaison is further augmented with monthly updates and letter drops.

Works to date have included statutory undertakers works, site clearance and site preparation works and these works have been well received.

Traffic management will commence soon, as will significant road haulage of imported material – and it is recognised that this will inevitably be more disruptive to the local community – but every effort has been taken to minimise the disruption and raise awareness with the community.

Works are planned to be complete in Autumn of 2022.

Drumnadrochit Flood Protection Scheme.

Late design changes to phase 1 to the water seepage cut off, due to concerns regarding buildability for the wall downstream of the A82, threatened a 12 month delay

due to the environmental constraints and limited summer period for construction within the river. Following public consultations, it was agreed that all endeavours should be made to maintain the construction programme.

A contract was tendered and awarded to RJ McLeod such that we could develop and construct the works in parallel and remain on programme.

Mobilisation and site clearance commenced in June with the temporary cofferdam installed in the river allowing the riverbank protection measures to progress.

Piling works will commence in the near future – but these will be pre-augered and then pushed in to minimise any noise and disturbance to the local community.

Wall construction, finishings and landscaping are programmed to be complete in January 2022.

Two other sections of the consented flood scheme remain to be completed, these are works at Kilmichael and the flood bund upstream of the A82. Designs are now nearing completion and procurement routes being considered to deliver the remaining sections of the flood schemes early next year.

Naver Bridge

The proposal at Naver Bridge is the construction of a new bridge and approach roads to bypass the existing bridge and allow for its demolition.

A professional services contract has been tendered and awarded to consultants Fairhursts – through a quality and price evaluation, and they commenced design in April.

Feasibility design is ongoing to determine the optimum form and route alignment, this will allow the progression of the design to determine the required land take and also the progression of the necessary consents that will include planning and also environmental consents.

The scheme will require land, and consultations with landowners over access is progressing well.

The ground investigation contract tenders have been returned and site investigation works will commence late summer/early autumn and this will inform the detailed design solutions.

Works are on programme to commence in Spring of 2023 for completion in Spring 2025 – to align with the approved budget programme.