

Agenda Item	<b>9</b>
Report No	<b>SR/14/21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Isle of Skye and Raasay

**Date:** 30 August 2021

**Report Title:** Portree Link Road

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

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

- 1.1 Developers have recently approached the Council over housing developments that are predicated on the delivery of the Portree Link Road. As development occurs such developments will provide developer contributions to substantially fund the proposed link road.
- 1.2 A successful application to the Scottish governments Infrastructure Loan Fund has provided a significant proportion of the budget required to forward fund to the progression of the design, statutory consents and construction works, subject to such consent and also conclusion of all necessary land acquisitions.
- 1.3 At the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the 5 May 2021, Members agreed the balance of the budget required to progress with the scheme and ensuring that the full funding package to allow the required repayment of the loan is now in place.
- 1.4 Subject to obtaining all necessary consents and land access agreements the Portree Link Road is programmed to be complete late Autumn/Winter of 2022.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
  - i. Note the funding position in respect of Portree Link Road;
  - ii. Agree to the submission of a planning application for the scheme; and
  - iii. Note the proposed delivery programme.

### **3 Implications**

- 3.1 **Resource** – The Infrastructure Loan Fund provides the upfront funding with the loan being recouped/repaid through associated developer contributions and the approved capital allocation.

- 3.2 **Legal** – Land acquisition will need to be progressed – it is proposed that this will be by agreement.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** - the link will provide opportunities for public transport providers – together with active travel links.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – Completion of the Portree Link Road will connect two arterial routes in north Skye, the A87 and A855, which will allow for the better distribution of traffic across Portree and the wider area and provide an important active travel route. This will help reduce unnecessary congestion in the town centre and will have knock-on carbon benefits.
- 3.5 **Risk** – Planning is a statutory process and there is a risk that it will not be granted. It should be noted that the link is included within the approved local development plan and is unlikely to be controversial. Land requires to be obtained by negotiation, and agreement cannot be assured. A compulsory purchase order could be progressed, but this would require full council approval to promote and will significantly delay the programme for construction.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – No implications.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 The creation of a Link Road forms an integral part of the long term and strategic expansion of Portree at Home Farm. It has been identified in successive development plans including the [West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan \(WestPlan\)](#) which was adopted in 2019. The Link Road serves both the development at Home Farm and connects the A87 Dunvegan Road with the A855 Staffin Road. The Home Farm expansion is nearly complete, and the vast majority of the road link has been constructed in line with development. The final, undeveloped section will provide the much-needed connection to the A855 Staffin Road.
- 4.2 Completion of the Link Road will unlock the last phase of Home Farm (allocated site 'PT02: North of Storr Road' in WestPlan) and open up land at Kiltaraglen ('PT03: Kiltaraglen South' and 'PT04: Kiltaraglen North') which forms the future strategic expansion of North Portree. These allocations are dependent on the completion of the Link Road and as set out in WestPlan. These, along with other allocations along the Link Road, are required to make developer contributions towards its delivery. The Council will work with the developers of these allocated sites to ensure suitable access and infrastructure provision is factored into the plans for the completion of the Link Road.
- 4.3 The Portree Link Road is also a key component of the Skye and Raasay Investment Plan which is currently being prepared by The Highland Council, in conjunction with Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The Investment Plan will highlight that the completion of the Link Road will contribute greatly towards the emerging outcomes and be a trigger for other projects to help the recovery and regeneration in Portree and the wider region. Completion of the route between the A87 and A855 will allow for better distribution of traffic in the area, avoiding the need to travel through the town centre. This will help reduce congestion in the town centre and at the junction to the harbour. The completed Link Road will also provide greater scope for the organisations involved in the public sector co-location project to relocate.

For example, emergency services require to be strategically located with direct access to the main arterial routes and without the Link Road, options for this are limited. In turn, these changes offer the potential for a range of major regeneration opportunities for Portree town centre.

- 4.4 An application to the Infrastructure Loan Fund – a Government financing initiative scheme to provide upfront funding to facilitate housing developments was approved (noting that this is an interest free loan), but a mechanism to pay off the loan is required. At the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 5 May 2021, it was agreed that in order to progress development of the strategic expansion of North Portree, there is a requirement to complete the link road from the Home Farm development through to the Staffin Road. The use of the infrastructure fund will enable design work to commence and negotiations to be entered into for the land assembly and deliver the new link road.
- 4.5 The scheme estimate is £1.6 M and developer contributions of some £1.4M is anticipated. Roads capital allocation of the balance of £200K was approved at Economy and Infrastructure Committee on the 5 May 2021, from the Strategic Roads Schemes – Capital Allocation – report ECI/15/2021. As Developer contributions are received this will be used to pay off the outstanding infrastructure loan amount.

## 5 Programme for Delivery

- 5.1 Approval is sought to submit a planning application for the final section of the Portree Link Road. **Appendix 1** contains the current proposals but as highlighted above, the Council will work with other developers to ensure access and infrastructure provision is factored into the plans.
- 5.2 The land required for the scheme will be provided predominantly by the housing developers – whose developments are associated with the delivery of the link road; negotiations will commence to aim to acquire land required from the three landowners by agreement. A compulsory purchase order can be progressed, but this would require full Council approval to promote and delay the programme for construction.
- 5.3 Detailed design work is ongoing – this will allow the planning application to be submitted in Summer/Autumn of 2021.
- 5.4 Assuming that planning permission is obtained and agreement over access to the necessary lands are received, it is proposed to invite tenders for the construction of the link road early 2022 – this will allow a start of construction in Spring/Summer of 2022 – with completion anticipated in late Autumn/Winter of 2022.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 26 July 2021

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Background Papers: West Highland & Islands Local Development Plan [HC/45/19](#)  
Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 [Report](#)  
Capital Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23 Update [Report](#)  
Strategic Roads Schemes – Capital Allocation [ECI/15/2021](#)

## Appendix 1 – Draft Layout Portree Link Road

