

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Report No</b>	<b>ECI/45/2023</b>

## The Highland Council

**Committee:** Economy and Infrastructure

**Date:** 17 August 2023

**Report Title:** Rapid Road Repair Team Update

**Report By:** Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report updates Members on progress with assembling the temporary Rapid Road Repair Team as agreed at Full Council on 2 March 2023 ([HC/01/23](#)).

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **note** the contents of this report.

### 3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - No financial implications as the funding has already been allocated by the Council.

3.2 **Legal** - Notices will be required for works and will be entered on the Scottish Road Works Register.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** - There are no direct equality, poverty, rural or island implications arising from this report.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - Road maintenance activities use resources and therefore have a carbon output. However, keeping the road network in a condition which allows the free flow of traffic will assist in reducing carbon emissions.

3.5 **Risk** - There is always a risk that inclement weather will delay works programmes. Where this occurs, works will be rescheduled where possible. Contractor and material availability are also a factor, which Area staff will manage where possible.

3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - As new staff may be employed, there will be a period of training required for those who do not have up to date qualifications.

3.7 **Gaelic** - None arising from this report.

## **4 Background**

4.1 At Full Council on 2 March 2023, the Council agreed to provide £1.266m of funding for a temporary Rapid Road Repair Team in 2023/24. This was to provide centrally managed, strategic support to enable road repairs in targeted areas across the Highlands.

4.2 The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 places a statutory duty on Roads Authorities to manage and maintain their road network. Potholes can form over a short time and usually continue to deteriorate the road surface around them unless repaired. Operating a dedicated team to not only repair defects, but monitor them from a central point, will allow the Council to target specific problem areas and therefore prevent deterioration of the network. This is a cost avoidance measure as delaying repairs normally results in a larger and therefore more costly repair to be undertaken. It would also reduce the number of temporary, repeated repairs required, as the team would be undertaking permanent ones first time. The dedicated repair team would have a programme of permanent repairs, which were prioritised and targeted to alleviate pressure on the network and Area teams.

4.3 Currently, pothole/ patching repairs are dealt with as part of the Roads Area maintenance workload. This is in addition to a wide range of other cyclical maintenance tasks, including verge maintenance, drainage, the winter service and emergency responses. The Roads Area teams also undertake a significant amount of the roads capital works (resurfacing and surface dressing) during the summer period, which impacts on their reactive ability. The proposed temporary Rapid Road Repair Team, managed from a single point, will be additional to the resources already provided at Area level. It would not replace the Area resource but be a dedicated one to the repair of potholes (including patching) in the carriageway or footway out with the winter months. During winter, the operatives would be used to supplement the existing resources for gritting, etc.

4.2 The team is to comprise of the following staff for 6 months, as a trial:-

- Engineer/ Senior Technician;
- Operational Support Officer;
- Roads Foreperson; and
- 7 Roads Operatives

## **5 Update**

5.1 Adverts for the above posts were publicised on MyJobScotland in June and applications received. At the time of writing this report, the interview process was ongoing.

5.2 If all posts are appointed, then the team will be assembled after any current job notice periods expire. Training will be organised as necessary, and plant hired along with utilisation of any existing vehicles available. An update on the appointment of posts will be given at committee.

Designation:	Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment
Date:	19 July 2023
Author:	Elizabeth Maciver, Principal Engineer (Transport Planning/ Road Asset Management and Policy)
Background Papers:	HC/01/23 Revenue and capital budgets 2023/24 and medium-term financial outlook
Appendices:	None