

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	6
Report No	SCC/21/25

Committee: Sutherland County

Date: 1 August 2025

Report Title: Area Roads Capital Footpath Programme 2025/26

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details the proposed 2025/26 Area Roads Capital Footpath Programme for the Sutherland Area.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Approve** the proposed prioritised Area Roads Capital Footpath Programme for Sutherland Area; and
- ii. **Agree** to allocate £100,000 from the Sutherland Roads Capital Budget to the Footpath Programme.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - All work will be managed within budget allocations with the Council delivering its legal responsibilities.
- 3.2 **Legal** - The combined programme for Structural Resurfacing and Structural Integrity Improvements enables the Council to meet its duty under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 within the Local Committee Area.
- 3.3 **Risk** - The level of investment across Highland falls short of the budget requirements to maintain a steady state condition of the road network. Deterioration of the overall network will occur with a corresponding risk to the travelling public. An increase in damage claims can also be expected, as the road defects develop.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - No implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - This report has no impact on Gaelic considerations.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 14 August 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that there are no negative impacts arising from the Roads Capital Footpath Programme for 2025/26. The improved footpaths will result in improved transport links for residents, visitors and businesses which is a positive impact. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3	Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
	Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children and Young People – <i>no impact</i>• Children affected by disability – <i>no impact</i>• Older adults – <i>no impact</i>
	Socio-economic	<i>No impact</i>
	Human Rights	<i>No impact</i>
	Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>No impact</i>
	Island and Mainland Rural	<i>Positive impact</i>
	Climate Change	<i>No impact</i>
	Data Rights	<i>No impact</i>

5 Background

5.1 This report outlines the proposed list of priorities for the Sutherland Area Roads Capital Footpath Programme for 2025/26 and the approved capital budget for the Roads and Footpaths.

5.2 Works are delivered through roads workforce, augmented as required by external contractors. Due to the inter-relationship between the capital and revenue budget to fund the roads workforce, prioritisation to internal delivery will be given, with the use of external contractor being limited to projects where such additional funds permit.

5.3 It is recognised that the works necessary at any location may be a combination of works that are additional to the footpath surface (e.g., kerbing, structural integrity improvements, drainage, etc.).

- 5.4 Such works take time to plan and deliver, and it is vital that the programme of works is agreed, as any delay in the agreed programme will impact on the construction programme, which is influenced by the availability of resources and also by the prevailing weather conditions as summer delivery is more reliable and durable.
- 5.5 We also need to ensure that such works are coordinated with utility companies so early uploading of the programme aligns with the necessary reporting requirements and allows the coordination of works.
- 5.6 Notwithstanding these works are as proposed in this report it is recognised that variation can be expected, these will be agreed with members at Area Business meetings to maintain a dynamic programme and reported to Area Committee for recording.

6 Budget

- 6.1 The Highland Council Budget was set on 14 March 2024, where Members agreed the Roads Capital Budget Allocation for 2025/26 as part of a 3-year investment into Roads. Item 6.10 of [Place Based Approaches to Strategic Capital Planning and Asset Management](#) sets out the total investment into Road Capital over the 3 years.
- 6.2 For 2025/26 a total investment of £21.15m has been agreed.
- 6.3 The £21.15m is to be distributed in the same way as last year with a strategic allocation and a base capital allocation. The base capital allocations are to be distributed as per the distribution current formula for the operational Areas.
- 6.4 The local allocation for Sutherland is set at a similar level as last year:-
- Base capital allocation = £1,332,342.
 - Strategic allocation = £882,300.
 - Structures = £100,000.
 - A total for Sutherland of 2,314,642.
- 6.5 There is no separate allocation for footpaths within the current allocation and the funding of any footpath works is to be provided from the current allocation.

7 Footpath Programme

- 7.3 All footpaths are inspected either monthly, quarterly or annually for safety hazards depending on their priority. Footpaths are also inspected in the course of preparing the works programmes. These inspections, together with specific concerns raised through Members and Community Councils, are considered for inclusion in the works programme.

7.4 Prior to finalising the programmes, each site is again visited by experienced engineers to confirm the importance of the works against the network and the details of the designs. The current prioritised list is detailed within **Appendix 2**.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 14 August 2025

Author: Joanne Sutherland, Roads Operations Manager
(Caithness and Sutherland)

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Sutherland Prioritised Capital Footpath Works
2025/2026

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Protected Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex • Age • Disability • Religion or Belief • Religion or Belief • Race • Sexual Orientation • Gender Reassignment • Pregnancy and Maternity • Marriage and Civil Partnership 	No impacts	Footpath improvements consist of surfacing existing footpaths to improve transport links and not constructing new footpaths that may impact on residents
Poverty and Socio Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospects and opportunities – the potential impact on people's life chances • Places – the potential to impact on specific vulnerable areas or communities • Financial impact – the potential impact on household resources 	No impacts	Proposals relate to existing footpaths and their maintenance.
Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 8: Respect for private and family life, home and correspondence • Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion • Article 10: Freedom of expression • Article 12: Right to marry and found a family • Article 14: Protection from discrimination • Protocol 1, Article 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of property • Protocol 1, Article 2: Right to education • Protocol 1, Article 3: Right to participate in free elections 	No impacts	Proposals relate to existing footpaths and their maintenance.

Children's rights and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are working in the best interests of the child (Article 3) • You are providing an opportunity for children to express their views in any matter affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (Article 12) • Children with disabilities can live a full life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community (Article 23) • Children have a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development (Article 27) • Children have a right to education (Article 28) • Education that develops their personality, talents and abilities to the full (Article 29) • Children have the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities (Article 31) 	No impacts	Proposals relate to existing footpaths and their maintenance.
Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What change will there be to the way personal data is processed? 	No impacts	No personal data will be processed
Island and mainland rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities? 	No impacts	No difference.
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e)? • Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity? • Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing climate? 	No impacts	Work will be undertaken to standards, guidelines and best practice using trained operatives and serviced and maintained plant to minimise the environmental impact of the programme.

Appendix 2 – Sutherland Prioritised Capital Footpath Works 2025/2026

2025/26 Priority	Activity	Locality	Route	Road Name	General Description	Average Width (m)	Scheme Length (m)	Total Area (m2)	Cost per (m2)	Estimated Scheme Costs
1	Kerb & Resurface	Bonar Bridge	A949	Bonar Bridge-Clashmore & Evelix-Dornoch(Dornoch Road)	Kyle Bakery - Pharmacy	2	300	600	100	£60,000
2	Kerb & Resurface	Bonar Bridge	A836	Dornoch Bridge-Tongue-JOG(Bonar Bridge - Lairg)	Lairg Road Post Office - Ironmongers	2	85	170	100	£17,000
3	Kerb & Resurface	Dornoch	U3326	Church Street	Footway	2	120	240	100	£24,000
4	Kerb & Resurface	Lairg	A836	Dornoch Bridge-Tongue-JOG(Lairg - Tongue)	Main Street - Lochside Footway	2	300	600	100	£60,000
5	Kerb & Resurface	Dornoch	U3367	Dentist Close	Replacement of slabbed footways at Cathedral	2	120	240	100	£24,000
6	Kerb & Resurface	Dornoch	U3347	Schoolhill	Schoolhill (below Church)	2	120	240	100	£24,000
7	Kerb & Resurface	Helmsdale	U2398	Simpson Crescent	Various Sections	2	300	600	100	£60,000
8	Kerb & Resurface	Dornoch	U3337	Bishopfield Road	Corner from Macdonald Road round to School hill	2	30	60	100	£6,000
9	Resurface	Rogart	A836	Mound - Lairg	Outside Shop	2	30	60	80	£4,800
10	Resurface	Brora	U2487	Johnstone Place & Crescent		2	300	600	80	£48,000
11	Resurface	Bonar Bridge	A836	Bonar - Ardgay	Outside Ardgay game and the Hub	2	100	200	80	£16,000
12	Resurface	Bettyhill	U1815	Post Office, School, Farr View Junction	Outside Shop round by petrol pumps	2	100	200	80	£16,000
13	Resurface	Ardgay	C1136	Ardgay-Culrain-Doune-Brae Road and Link Road	Outside Arkaig	2	20	40	80	£3,200
14	Resurface	Ardgay	A836	Dornoch Bridge - Tongue	Leading to Public Toilets	2	30	60	80	£4,800
15	Resurface	Lairg	U2146	Clashbreac Housing Estate Road	Pavements around Clashbreac	2	250	500	80	£40,000
16	Kerb & Resurface	Bonar Bridge	U3512	Tulloch Road	15 - 22 Tulloch Road	2	100	200	100	£20,000
17	Resurface	Rogart	U2302	Barnhill Road	Corner from Macdonald Place	2	50	100	80	£8,000