The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments
Stiùiridhean Rathaidean is Còmhdhalach airson Leasachaidhean Ùra

Section 3 – Flooding and construction traffic
Earrann 3 – Tuiltean agus trafaig togail

Chapter 9
Caibideil 9
Construction traffic
Trafaig togail

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Section 3 - Flooding and construction traffic / Earrann 3 – Tuiltean agus trafaig togail

Section 3 of the roads and transport guidelines for new developments document provides information with regard to flooding issues, as they can have a significant impact on new development. The section also provides information and guidance with regard to the impact of construction traffic.

Section 3 includes the following:

Chapter 8 – Flooding

Chapter 9 –Construction traffic

Chapter 9 – Construction traffic / Caibideil 9 – Trafaig togail

9.1 Introduction / Ro-ràdh

9.1.1 For some developments, impacts arising from construction traffic can be significant. By their nature, they are intrusive, creating potential environmental problems that relate to traffic movements, noise, dust, vibration and road damage. Construction traffic, especially abnormal loads, may require to travel along existing narrow roads, especially within rural areas, affecting both the road network and local communities. As a result, construction traffic issues that are a concern to the Council need to be considered during the planning stage.

9.2 Abnormal loads / Luchdan neo-àbhaisteach

9.2.1 The construction of some types of new development can sometimes require the delivery of abnormal loads to the construction site and these can have a significant impact on the surrounding road network.

9.2.2 Abnormal loads, by their very nature, can vary in size and weight. As delivery can involve travel along different types of road, often resulting in delay to general traffic, together with the need for occasional closure of roads, it is clear that the movement of abnormal loads can often be a complex operation that needs to be carefully planned.

9.2.3 Where an abnormal load will use roads within the Highland Council area, early discussions must be held with the Council and the Trunk Roads Authority. There may also be a requirement to coordinate local delivery times, in order to minimise impact on road users. For example, avoiding peak traffic times, school activities or other traffic-generating events would need to be taken into account and discussed with the Council.

9.2.4 Abnormal loads are often long and wide, resulting in the need for large turning circles. It is essential, therefore, that the developer undertakes a swept path analysis (horizontal and vertical) of the abnormal loads route. This could highlight the need for various local road improvements that could be temporary or permanent changes. Further guidance is set out in Appendix 9.

9.2.5 The full extent of any improvements would need to be agreed with the Council and should also be highlighted within an associated Environmental Impact Assessment for the development. Whilst some measures could be permanent, the majority are likely to be temporary (which could include road re-alignment that subsequently needs to be re-instated). The developer would normally be required to fund these improvements and any subsequent reinstatements. In some circumstances, there may be a requirement to prepare a Traffic Management Plan where a high number of vehicle movements are envisaged.

9.2.6 With regard to carriageway widening, in certain circumstances there may be a requirement to acquire land to allow the widening to be implemented and this may result in land ownership issues having to be negotiated and resolved by the developer. In addition, some of the improvement works may require separate planning approval or even listed building consent if the works impact on a listed building. Some affected trees may be covered by Tree Preservation Orders and would need an application and approval from the Council.

9.2.7 If delivery of abnormal loads requires a developer to undertake improvements (either temporary or permanent) to some of the roads, the Council is likely to require the developer to enter into a legal agreement, usually in terms of Section 48 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 or any other suitable legal agreement as approved by the Council.

9.2.8 Further advice and information on abnormal loads is given in Appendix 9.

9.3 Renewable energy developments / Leasachaidhean lùth ath-nuadhachail

9.3.1 Onshore wind farms

9.3.1.1 For wind farm proposals, a developer should be aware that the Council will require a Transportation Assessment (TA) to be submitted that must consider the existing road network, transportation constraints and potentially sensitive routes or communities. Abnormal load routes are to be part of the TA, which may require structural assessments.

9.3.1.2 For the majority of future wind farm schemes, abnormal loads will be common requirements. Blades can be up to 45 metres long or more and some of the turbine components are extremely heavy, weighing over 200

tonnes. As mentioned in Section 9.2, there is a need to ensure that appropriate routes for transferring these abnormal loads are agreed and enforced, especially as the final approach to many sites is by narrow minor roads.

9.3.1.3 A wind farm vehicular site access must provide appropriate visibility splays and suitable surface water drainage. Within the site, the wind turbines are likely to be located some distance from the nearest public road, requiring internal access tracks to be constructed. As the access tracks need to accommodate abnormal loads, they have to be of a suitable width. These tracks are normally constructed from hard-core material and the developer will usually be encouraged/allowed to use material obtained from borrow pits within the site area, to reduce construction traffic. On-site concrete batching should also be considered, as this can also result in a reduction of associated vehicles on the local road network.

9.3.1.4 A suitable turning area must be constructed within the site, to accommodate abnormal load delivery vehicles, construction vehicles and future maintenance vehicles. During the construction period, a wheel-wash system shall be provided.

9.3.2 Other types of renewable energy developments

9.3.2.1 Where other types of renewable energy schemes, such as offshore wind farms, wave/tidal power, hydro-electric and bio-fuel developments, require consent or approval from the Council, these will be considered on a site-by-site basis as some developments may generate site-specific issues, including abnormal loads and significant volumes of construction traffic. Associated developments, such as transmission projects, can also result in significant transport impacts and the Council would usually require an associated TA to be provided.

9.3.2.2 There are some types of renewable energy schemes, be they new development or significant maintenance works, which do not require planning consent from the Council. However, if these works are likely to result in significant levels of construction traffic or the need for abnormal loads then the proposals must still be discussed with the Council, in its role as Local Roads Authority. This will ensure that any detrimental impact on the surrounding road network or affected local communities is minimised.

9.3.3 General disturbance

9.3.3.1 **Peat** - some onshore renewable energy schemes may be sited in areas where peat is present. Disturbance of peat can release carbon into the atmosphere, thereby potentially contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, developments should be designed to minimise soil disturbance, particularly in relation to roads, access tracks, turbine bases and other infrastructure. Planning applications will require geotechnical and hydrological information, including risk of landslide.

9.3.3.2 **Construction - Planning Advice Note 45 – Renewable Energy Technologies (PAN45)** also highlights the issue of potential construction disturbance. Given the rural location of many renewable energy schemes, they are often served by minor roads that need to accommodate the movement of large components and it is important, therefore, that heavy vehicles are controlled. This can apply to the on-going operation and maintenance of the site facilities. PAN45 also notes that substantial site access tracks are often constructed and if these are no longer required then it is recommended that consideration be given to their removal.

9.4 "Wear and Tear" agreements / Aontaidhean a thaobh caitheamh àbhaisteach

9.4.1 Even with road improvements, whether temporary or permanent, development construction traffic and the movement of associated abnormal loads can lead to potential damage to existing public roads. In such an event, a Local Roads Authority has the powers, under the terms of Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, to seek extraordinary expenses incurred in maintaining roads damaged by heavy vehicles or traffic. As a result, planning consent for a new development that is likely to generate significant volumes of construction traffic and/or abnormal loads, such as wind farms or very large developments, will usually require the developer to enter into a "Wear and Tear" Agreement with the Council to cover costs of any damage caused by the development to the local road network.

9.4.2 As part of the "Wear and Tear" Agreement, the developer will be required to undertake a Road Assessment Condition Survey of existing road conditions of agreed delivery routes, from point of origin to the site. Usually, the survey shall be undertaken jointly with the Council, in order to agree the survey results. The Council would then monitor conditions until construction work was completed at which time a Final Road Condition Survey would be undertaken to identify any necessary reinstatement work that can be reasonably attributed to the new development.