



## NORTH of SCOTLAND AREA ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the QUARTERLY MEETING

Date: Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Meeting held online on MSTEAMS

#### Present:

Darren Grant (Chair)	D.G.	SSEN
Kevin Abercrombie	K.A.	Aberdeen City Council
Caroline Auld	C.A.	Network Rail
Nitha Babu	N.B.	Aberdeenshire Council
Clare Callaghan	C.C.	Scottish Water
Itziar Cores	I.C.	Balfour Beatty (AWPR O & M)
Gerry Cullen	G.C.	Traffic Scotland
Karyn Davidson	K.D.	Vodafone
Scott Donnan	S.D.	EE / MBNL / 3
Irvine Ellis	I.E.	SSEN
Jim Forbes	J.F.	CityFibre
Julie Greig	J.G.	SGN
Barry Hall	B.H.	GTC-UK
Gary Hay	G.H.	SSEN
Rob James	R.J.	Network Rail
Fiona McInnes	F.McI.	Scottish Water
Donald Macleay	D.A.Macl.	Western Isles Council
Duncan MacLennan	D.MacL.	Openreach
Alison MacLeod	A.MacL.	The Highland Council
Craig McQueen	C.McQ.	Scottish Water
Graham Milne	G.M.	O.S.R.W.C.
Hazel Moore	H.M.	BEAR Scotland NE and NW Areas
Kevin Price	K.P.	The Moray Council
Kat Quane	K.Q.	Transport Scotland
Paul Richmond	P.R.	Arqiva
Neil Robertson	N.R.	Shetland Islands Council
Iain Ross	I.R.	O.S.R.W.C.
Kenny Roy	K.R.	Orkney Islands Council
Ruth Scott	R.S.	SSE Telecom
Antony Thorpe	A.T.	Balfour Beatty (AWPR O & M)
Alison Weir	A.W.	Lastmile

#### In Attendance:

George Borthwick	G.B.	Secretary
Robert Young	R.Y.	Scottish Government (Digital Scotland)

## **Apologies:**

David Armitage	D.J.A.	Aberdeenshire Council
Mike Gray	M.G.	BEAR Scotland N.W.
Carole McDonald	C.McD.	CityFibre
Alex Rae	A.R.	SGN
Tommy Smith	T.S.	Shell

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Darren Grant (SSEN) welcomed all to the meeting and thanked all Representatives for attending.

Darren thanked Tommy Deans, BEAR Scotland for all his input to NoSRAUC over the last two years and for his help in preparing to take over the Chair.

Apologies were recorded as above.

## **2. Minute of the last Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

### **a. Accuracy**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 on MS TEAMS were agreed as read.

### **b. Matters Arising**

Matters arising from the previous meeting are recorded on the Action Tracking Summary.

## **3. Matters Arising from RAUC(S) Meeting – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020**

The previously circulated draft Minutes were taken as read. Any queries about the content can be passed to D.G. who would endeavour to provide the answer.

### **a) RAUC(S) Working Group Recruitment**

The schedule is currently up to date.

## **4. SRWC Report & Performance & Management**

### **SRWC Indicators and Statistics Reports**

G.M. provided a verbal report as follows: -

- The SRWC dashboard for 2020 / 21 Q” performance had been circulated.
- Covid 19 is still affecting the amount of work being carried out across the Community. The R.As work load was still down on pre-Covid operations but the S.US were generally back up to speed.
- There was an increase in the number of potential Notice failures, and it appeared to be due to dealing with reprogramming of works and restarting works which had been stopped during the lockdown.

## SRWC Report

G.M. provided a verbal report as follows: -

- The Annual Performance Reviews for 2019 / 20 were issued in August to all Organisations. Covid 19 did not fully affect programmes until mid-March 2020 so did not affect the results of the Reviews to any extent.
- A total of 5 Organisations, (4 RA's and 1 S.U.) were asked to contact the oSRWC to comment on aspects of their 2019/20 performance. They have all responded.
- All Organisations subject to previously issued Improvement Plans (5 R.As and 7 SUs) have submitted their Q2 2020/21 plans and the oSRWC has now started the next round of follow up review meetings. Several Organisations have delivered improvements and they are scheduled to have their plans closed later this year.

For Organisations still on Improvement Plans, the submission date for the Q3 2020/21 plans is Friday 15 January 2020.

I.R. provided a verbal report as follows: -

- Recent guidance bulletins on risk assessment and face coverings had been issued from the Scottish Government by SRWC. There have been no other formal updates since 22 June 2020. The situation is continuing to change, and it is possible that the Scottish Government / SRWC will need to issue further guidance on undertaking road works. Any new publications will be issued via the SRWC to the circulation list of primary contacts and senior managers held by the SRWC.
- If you are not receiving these updates and think you should, please contact Jane Dunlop to be added to the circulation list ([jane.dunlop@srwc.gov.scot](mailto:jane.dunlop@srwc.gov.scot)).
- Links to the current and any new SRWC guidance are on the SRWC website on the following link: <https://roadworks.scot/news>.
- The new Commissioner, Kevin Hamilton, will take up his post on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- As previously reported the Commissioner issued penalties totaling £94k to 6 Organisations relating to failures in the National Coring Programme. The penalties have all been collected.
- For information, the money collected from the penalties does not remain with the SRWC but are transferred via the Scottish Government to Westminster.

## SRWR Report

I R. provided a verbal report as follows: -

- The sum to be collected for the Fees and Amounts has been set at £915k which is up from last year's sum of £911k. If any Organisation requires information on their share of the fees, they should contact I.R.
- The new version of the Register has been rolled out and is now bedding in. If there are any issues / problems / queries they should be passed to the Support Desk. If the response does not appear to deal with the matter or if there was undue delay it should be passed to I.R. who will investigate it. All should note that the response from I.R. may be the same as from the Support Desk. In some cases, you may be asked to submit a Change Request which will be passed to I.R. / SAT for consideration.
- Problems with extraction of data / report has been investigated and changes made. Further consideration may be required. The W.G. dealing with this matter met yesterday and their comments are awaited.
- The New User Courses are being rolled out with some not quite completed. The training modules are free as they are covered in the Fees and Amounts. modules.

Please note some courses may have a temporary price tag of £9,999.99 while they are still under construction / testing.

- In this quarter Commsworld Limited have been given access to the SRWR. Two other Organisations namely Energy Asset Networks and PCCW Global Networks have also started the process gaining access to the Register.
- SAT have reverted to their normal tasks and have been reviewing the register of Change Requests and removing the C.Rs which are no longer relevant e.g. covered in the new Register. The C.R. process has been updated and includes a requirement for more dialogue with the sponsor and the provision of feedback.

## 5. Local RAUC Reports

### Highland

There had recently been a problem with works being carried out on two sites without the required permit in place. Power cables had been laid without inspection which if not carried out with the required cover and marker tape could lead to serious accidents in the future.

A.MacL. asked for comments from the S.U.s on the need for their processes to require site of the R.A permit before issuing their permit / connection agreement. At this time it was generally only affecting the Scottish Water and SSEN infrastructure.

The work should only be carried out by an approved Contractor and the S.U. should want to see the work being carried out before it is backfilled.

F.McI. indicated that Scottish Water asked the applicant to ensure they contacted the R.A. and obtained the required permits and permissions. If they were aware of the work, they would audit the work prior to connection. Scottish Water are developing a new App which would deal with applications. A.MacL. asked if some additional clauses could be added to cover this problem.

**Action – F.McI.**

A.MacL. queried what would happen if the reinstatement failed and how it would be dealt with in the Unattributable Works process. F.McI. responded that they would not be able to pass client details due to the requirements of G.D.P.R. This would make the recovery of cost difficult.

In the cases being discussed the plant laid was power cables and would therefore be an SSEN issue. D.G indicated that he would investigate these sites and respond to A,MacL.

**Action – A.MacL / D.G.**

H.M. reported that the trunk roads were affected from time to time and usually with water connections which should be dealt with under a Section 109 License. Applicants are required to provide design details of their work with a bond in place to cover any defective repairs which may be needed. All costs are passed to the Applicant.

N.R. commented that he was not happy with S.W. connections in relation to who should be applying for the license i.e is it the contractor or is it the developer. The problem was who to deal with if the work is substandard and has to be replaced. There was also concern about whether the plant would be adopted by the S.U. or left in the ownership of another. Details tend to get lost and there is no one to charge for the repair.

Problems with these works always fall back on the R.A. and the request was being made to the S.U.s to join with the R.As to come up with a process which would provide a solution albeit

partial and a starting point would be to have checks in place that licenses are in place for both the S.U. and R.A. sections of the works.

It was noted that some Wind Farm Organisations do not have code powers to work in the road without a Section 109 license. In some cases, a Letter of Comfort is issued by the relevant S.U. to cover any future work required on the reinstatement.

Developers, especially one off by a person for their own property, lack knowledge of what is required before they can proceed. Once they have the planning approval, they do not read on to see what other licenses they require. By taking a joint approach, problems can be avoided.

SSEN ask for a L.A. Reference before they will lay the cable and connection. That appeared to be a good way forward.

J.G. reported that they have had problems with excavations, and he was of the view that there needed to be an agreed process which included the reference to the R.A. license before the work would commence.

J.F. indicated that this is not a new problem, but it needs to be addressed by both sides with a formalised agreement.

C.C. will check if the App could accommodate an agreement which would deal with this problem. **Action – C.C.**

## **6. Combined reports and comments**

### **Aberdeen City Council – K.A.**

- Spaces for People – there had been some problems accommodating S.U. works.
- The Christmas Embargo will last from 16<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> January.
- There were no events planned for the town centre during the Christmas period.
- The Union Terrace Gardens scheme has been delayed and will not now be completed until September 21.
- Traffic in the Merchant Quarter will be affected by Scottish Water works lasting 6 months.
- Work on the Haudagain Roundabout improvement scheme is progressing, and traffic will be affected for a period by contraflow arrangements.

### **Aberdeenshire – N.B.**

- The works programme is progressing with no major problems to report.

### **Highland Council – Alison MacLeod**

- The works programme is progressing with no major problems to report.

### **Moray Council – K.P.**

- The programmed works is going ahead at a reduced level (The Direct Labour work force is cut).
- Openreach is the busiest S.U. in the Area.
- Water and Power connections are being carried out as required.
- Staff are working from home.

### **Orkney Islands Council – K.R.**

- Much as the above R.As
- Scottish Water Plant Records – Stennes

A set of record drawings for a site at Stennes indicated an asbestos main some 6 metres away from where it was located during the works resulting in increased costs and a major delay to the project.

Scottish Water indicated that the information provided was based on their best knowledge and always required to be checked on site. The drawings were issued with a caveat stating information was a best indication. Scottish Water would revise their records based on any new data.

F.McI. Agreed to investigate this particular site, and report back to K.R. **Action – F.McI.**

### **Shetland Islands Council – N.R.**

- The work was progressing at about 50% capacity.
- The programme was based on trying to catch up on the time lost to the Covid 19 lockdown.
- There would be a rise in the number of early and late starts being used.

### **Western Isles Council – D.McL.**

- Bitmac Plant – there is a programme up to December 2020 but nothing yet for 2021.
- S.U.s are back to normal with Covid 19 Guidance.
- Bernera Bridge replacement will commence when the Marine Scotland License is issued. It is hope that this will happen soon and allow a start this month. S.U.s have been informed.

### **Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road – A.T. / I.C.**

- Routine maintenance programme ongoing dealing with Cat 1 defects.

### **BEAR Scotland N.E. - H.M.**

- Work at the Haudagain Roundabout improvement scheme is progressing. Contraflows will be introduced initially on the east bound then swapped to the west bound. (3months for each section)

Work will then commence on the A90 approach to the roundabout.

Advance signing will be provided.

There will be difficulties providing S.U. access to works in the area.

- A review of Traffic Sensitivity in the small towns will be progressed to deal with increasing traffic.
- T.M. Contractors should visit the site as part of their design process. Physical conditions on sites change over the years.
- Requests for out of hours working may be agreed depending on the traffic volumes / ability to deal with rerouting during works. This will avoid bad press.

C.C. commented that out of hours working causes problems for: -

- Dealing with ironwork programmes
- Productivity problems due to the squads not being available for work on the next shift.

C.C. asked for a pragmatic approach with no blanket requesting. H.M. agreed that this would be in general the way forward.

- H.M. requested any traffic counts made as part of a TM design to be shared.
- Safety should be a major factor in the site arrangements. F.McI commented that this was certainly the case in the Scottish Water risk assessments.

#### **BEAR Scotland N.W. – H.M. for M.G.**

- The work programmes have restarted with work arranged to fit in with S.U. work where relevant. Thanks should be recorded for the cooperation by the S.U.s to the Coordination.
- T.S. will not be promoting any Orders for events.

#### **Traffic Scotland – G.C.**

- Maintenance programmes are continuing as required.
- Cameras will be installed at swing bridges on the Caledonian Canal in due course.

#### **Digital Scotland - Robert Young**

The DSBB Programme is complete for Rest of Scotland, but some work still continues in the HIE area.

The Reaching for 100% (R100) deployment in the North Contract Area has named BT as preferred bidder, but the contract has not yet been signed. When this is completed, survey work will then commence.

The majority of deployment will be Fibre to the Premise technology.

The Scottish Government will be looking to share advance information with roads authorities and communicate plans for the deployment of the works.

#### **CityFibre – J.F**

- Issues raised about the works in Aberdeen are being discussed in an effort to ensure quick agreements and rectification.
- In Inverness there had not been any issues escalated to date.

#### **GTC – B.H.**

- No issues had been raised about the works in Aberdeen.

#### **LastMile – A.W.**

- No issues raised.

#### **EE / MBNL / 3 – D.H.**

- No issues raised.

#### **Network Rail – C.A.**

- No issues with the ongoing programme.
- All R.As are asked to record their embargoes on the Register as soon as possible.

#### **Openreach – S.S.**

- All work is recorded on the Register and is ongoing.
- There were no issues requiring attention.

#### **Scottish Water – F.McI.**

- The programme dealing with defective ironwork is being progressed.
- The contact for dealing with F.P.Ns is Courtney Mitchell.

C.C. commented as follows: -

- C.C. asked for a guide on how long it would take to process a TTRO as there were some 100 sites requiring attention.
- With home working it was taking a bit longer to complete the process so applications should be sent in as soon as possible. It was liable to take at least a month for a TTRO and possibly not much less for a TTRN.
- K.P. indicated that the timetable in Moray was about the same. TTRNs could maybe be completed in about 2 weeks.
- N.B. would check on the timetable for Aberdeenshire and comment back to C.C.

#### **Action – N.B.**

- C.C. asked R.As to indicate the priority on Defect Notices in order that the correct timetable for the Inspection / repair could be set in place.

C.McQ. commented as follows: -

- Projects are starting up in Wick, Thurso, Inverness and Loch Ness. The cooperation of the R.A and others was appreciated.
- The sewer scheme in the Merchant area of Aberdeen is due to commence.
- There are currently no cross-boundary schemes programmed.
- There is an increased budget for 2021/22.
- The Coring programmes are ongoing, and the results will be shared with the relevant R.As.

#### **SGN – J.G.**

- All works are recorded on the Register.
- Discussions are ongoing with the R.As to agree programmes.

#### **Sky – C.M.**

- No problems to record.

#### **SSEN – D.G**

- No issues to raise.
- Works are ongoing with cooperation with others.

#### **SSET – R.S.**



- The programmed works are on the Register.
- There are no major schemes in the area at present.
- There are no issues to raise.

**Vodafone – K.D.**

- The programmed works are on the Register.
- There are no major schemes in the area at present.
- There are no issues to raise

**Transport Scotland (S.G.) – K.Q.**

- The tier levels have been published which sets protection requirements in the respective Areas. Risk Assessment should be used in accordance with the relevant tier requirements for the area where the work is to be carried out.
- The Risk Assessment guidance from the HSE had been issued and notified via the SRWC.
- The money which is collected from Penalties issued by the Commissioner is passed via Scottish Government to Westminster.
- The Commencement Schedule for the Transport Scotland Act 2019 is still being delayed by Covid 19 and a number of issues. The proposed programme is with the Cabinet Secretary at present and it is possible that a Report can be submitted to the RAUC(S) meeting in December giving information on how matters will be progressed.
- Kat invited a call on any matters which require further comment.

**8. Safety**

D.G. asked all Representatives to share Safety Bulletins or events with the Committee.

**9. AOCB**

**a. List of Plant Protection Systems**

The list would be circulated to each meeting and all were asked to check the data and advise the Secretary of any additional information or changes so that it could be kept up to date on the Web.

**b. Emergency Contact Details**

The list would be circulated to each meeting and all were asked to check the data and advise the Secretary of any additional information or changes so that it could be kept up to date on the Web.

**c. Meeting dates for 2021**

The previously circulated schedule of meeting dates for 2021 was agreed.

**d. Coordination Meetings 2021**

The previously circulated papers were to provide an indication of the initial views of the Working Group on how groupings might be revised, and meetings held. It was now unlikely that any changes will be progressed before 2022.

Please pass any comments / suggestions to J.F. / A.R. / M.P..

**10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

The Next Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 (11.00)**

**VENUE – MS TEAMS**

**Future Meetings: -** Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

The Meetings are likely to be held on MSTEAMS at present.

The Meeting Closed at 12.30