



NORTH of SCOTLAND AREA ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the QUARTERLY MEETING

Date: Wednesday 2nd February 2022

Meeting held online on MSTEAMS

Present:

Darren Grant (Chair)	D.G.	SSEN
Kevin Abercrombie	K.A.	Aberdeen City
David Armitage	D.J.A.	Aberdeenshire Council
Caroline Auld	C.A.	Network Rail
Kelly Bibby	K.B.	ABS Streetworks / Last Mile
Gerry Cullen	G.C.	Traffic Scotland
Karyn Davidson	K.D.	Vodafone
Irvine Ellis	I.E.	SSEN
Jim Forbes	J.F.	CityFibre
Lauren Goodman	L.G.	BEAR Scotland
Mike Gray	M.G.	BEAR Scotland N.W. and N.E. Areas
Julie Greig	J.G.	SGN
Barry Hall	B.H.	GTC-UK
Lindsay Henderson	L.H.	o.S.R.W.C.
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
Kat Quane	K.Q.	Transport Scotland
Neil Robertson	N.R.	Shetland Islands Council
Iain Ross	I.R.	o.S.R.W.C.
Molly Saunders	M.S.	MBNL – EE / 3
Ruth Scott	R.S.	NEOS Network
Antony Thorpe	A.T.	Balfour Beatty (AWPR O & M)
Donald Wilson	D.W.	Orkney Islands Council

In Attendance:

George Borthwick	G.B.	Secretary
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Apologies:

Clark Findlay	C.F.	Ineos
Gary Hay	G.H.	SSEN
David Hearty	D.H.	MBNL – EE / 3
Rob James	R.J.	Network Rail
Carole McDonald	C.McD.	CityFibre

Apologies (Continued):

Kenny Roy

K.R.

Orkney Islands Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

Apologies were recorded as above.

2. Minute of the last Meeting held on 3rd November 2021

a. Accuracy

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 3rd November 2021 on MS TEAMS were agreed as read.

b. Matters Arising

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

3. National Coring Programme

C.McQ. reported to the Committee as follows: -

- The Coring Sample Report is available from the Register and R.As should be preparing the individual sample drafts to issue to the S.U.s for agreement. The samples should be ready for delivery to the S.U.s by the end of February.
- All S.U.s had been asked to submit their Coring Representative's contact information to the o.S.R.W.C. by the 24th December 21. To date, only 15 out of the 57 S.U.s have provided their contact information. This will be reviewed at the Coring Group tomorrow and a revised timetable agreed but, in the meantime, all who have not responded should do so as soon as possible. **Action – S.U.s**
- Contact lists will be circulated to the Community via the Secretary. **Action – C.McQ. / Secretary**
- A. MacL. can also provide contact information.
- Khub has been set up for transfer of data and files for the duration of the programme.
- The Working Group will provide assistance on any problems which are raised.
- The 30% sample from the Register should be divided by 15 to get the required 2% sample. The minimum cores for any S.U. is 5. If there are problems achieving that sample contact should be made with the Working Group.
- J.F. will send out an email request to all S.U.s asking those who have not done so, to provide their Coring Representative's contact information to L.H. as soon as possible.
- CityFibre are using narrow trenching so these tracks will not be available for coring except where there is overbreak. Even on these sites coring the bound layer may only be available.
- Coring narrow trenching sites will be reviewed to draft an acceptable method for future coring.

4. Matters Arising from RAUC(S) Meeting – 1st December 2021

The previously circulated draft minutes were taken as read.

There were no issues raised about the content of the draft minutes.

a) RAUC(S) Working Group Recruitment

The previously circulated schedule was taken as read. The Committee noted that a NRAUC R.A. Representative is require on the Inspections Code Working Group to replace Kevin Price (The Moray Council) who had retired.

All R.As should consider if they can provide a Representative and advise the Secretary of the contact information of anyone they wish to volunteer.

b) Scottish Government Update

K.Q. provided the following Updates: -

COVID-19 Impact

- As announced by First Minister, on 25 Jan, from Monday 31 January, new guidance recommends that employers should consider implementing hybrid working where that can be accommodated.
- Homeworking, where possible, remains one of the most effective protections against Covid-19 however, there are benefits to be gained from Office working even if it is only part time in a hybrid model.
- New Guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-offices/>
- Other guidance updated to reflect the above is available on:
 - [safer businesses and workplaces guidance](#)
 - [call centre and customer contact centre guidance](#) and [checklist](#)
- General guidance on wearing face coverings can be found on [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): face coverings and masks - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). Please note that wearing a face covering when traveling in a vehicle with people not from your home is still advised e.g. in car sharing or travel in a works vehicle.

Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

- The previously circulated batch diagram which was updated in December 2021 was commented on as follows: -
- A number of Items will be updated in 2022 They include:
 - Review of accreditation qualifications (general)
 - A new requirement for R.As to have qualified operatives and supervisors
 - Works start and works clear/closed information to be provided within 2 hours - A separate paper will be circulated relating to this matter. K.Q. is happy to talk through the content of the paper with Members if they contact her.
 - Update of SROR confirming new 6-year guarantee period
 - Bringing forward the status of VAULT in plant protection, e.g. confirming that the information in the register can be used for safe digging.
 - Mandatory submission of data to the VAULT is still planned for 2023.
 - Early work on Compliance Notices in preparation for the SRWC appointment of Authorised Officers (Inspectors)
 - Final removal of Items of Legislation which have never been introduced.
- The RQP Code of Practice has now been published on the SRWC website. In accordance with the powers of Section 17(4)(b) of the 2005 Act, The Scottish Road Works Commissioner has endorsed this code as best practice. This code is due to come before Scottish Ministers in 2023.

- The special case of S 109 holders operating with an RQPs requires an update to Advice Note 22. The new S 109 ‘template’ allows the suggested process to be formalise, which will allow R.As to issue permission (or refuse permission) without requiring the application involvement from the SRWC.
- The Register itself needs to be amended to allow for the additional information gathered through the application process to be included with the intention to issue licence notification. The RAUC(S) Working Group should finalise the template and process for approval through the RAUC(S) protocol, with the involvement of the oSRWC in the process to allow those adjustments to be made.

Changes within Scottish Government

- For health-related reasons, Mr. Graeme Dey MSP has recently stepped down as Minister for Transport.
- Ms. Jenny Gilruth MSP has now been appointed Minister for Transport, supporting Mr Michael Matheson MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport.

If there are any queries about any of the above, they should be passed to K.Q.

D.G. thanked K.Q. for the input to the meeting.

c. RAUC(S) / Area RAUCs Chairs / Meetings

J.F. commented as follows: -

RAUC(S) – The previously circulated schedule indicated that S.U.s had been allocated to all years up to 2034, but to date, only Philip MacKay was on the Schedule until 2023 for the R.As. It was essential that the R.A. vacancies to 2034 were appointed and recorded as soon as possible.

Area RAUCs - The previously circulated schedule indicated that S.U.s had been allocated to all years up to 2040. It was essential that the R.A. vacancies to 2040 are appointed and recorded as soon as possible.

S.U.s and R.As need to meet to agree the administration of the new Constitution and what it requires at each level. Administration including proposed Agendas need to be reviewed and agreed.

Karyn Davidson (Vodafone) has agreed to Chair NRAUC for the first 2 year period to 2024.

5. SRWC Report & Performance & Management

Scottish Road Works Commissioner Report

RQP Launch Webinar - The Code of Practice for Reinstatement Quality Plans was published and posted on the Commissioner’s website on 20 January. A launch webinar was held on the same day. It was well attended with over 100 attendees.

Commissioner Best Practice Guidance - The Commissioner has updated his guidance on what he considers to be best practice under section 17(4)(b) of the Transport Scotland Act 2005. Essentially, all Codes of Practice, Advice Notes and Guidance published on the Commissioner’s website are considered best practice and failure to comply with any of these

can be considered a failure to meet duties required under Sections 118 and 119 of the New Roads and Street Works Act.

Policy and Quality Manager Vacancy – The Commissioner has a vacancy for a Policy and Quality Manager. The postholder will have a lead role in assessing submitted RQPs and in working with stakeholders to develop the RQP process in the Community. Applications are invited from 7 February and the application pack will then be available from: - <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk>

The Closing date is Friday 25 February and completed applications are to be returned to applications@srwc.gov.scot.

Engagement with SCOTS – The Commissioner has regular engagement with SCOTS, the Society for Officers in Transportation in Scotland through its Liaison Committee. The Commissioner would encourage all R.As to engage proactively with SCOTS to gain valuable insight into best practice and share experience with other local authority practitioners.

Research Project – Service Life of Reinstatements. Confirmation is awaited from SRRB that the consultant has been formally appointed. Until the conformation is received, the research project cannot commence.

SROR – A couple of meetings have been held with the Co-Chairs of the SROR Working Group and it was agreed that frequent meetings will be held going forward starting in February 2022. The plan is still to submit a draft to RAUC(S) for consideration after the summer.

Performance

Dashboard - The previously circulated SRWC 2021/22 Q3 dashboard taken as read.

2020/21 Performance Reviews – Following the issue of the 2020/21 performance reviews a small number of Organisations continue to engage with the oSRWC on performance issues.

Improvement Plans - 6 Organisations are currently on plans with all co-operating to deliver a compliant performance.

All should note that poor performance across back to back quarters will trigger intervention by the oSRWC.

Submission date for Q3 Improvement Plans for 2021/22 is Friday 15 February 2022.

Monthly Performance Monitoring - The Commissioner is developing a monthly monitoring dashboard which considers performance information covering all sectors. This information will be made available on the SRWC website. The publishing of this data will allow transparency and hopefully assist Organisations to bench mark their own performance against peer groups.

Recent monthly analysis had identified a particular non-compliant trend which required Commissioner intervention. Those affected all provided appropriate responses.

All Organisations should be aware that non-compliant performance should be investigated and a summary provided to the enquiries@roadworks.scot e-mail address.

If you have any comments on any of these items, please contact the office at the usual e-mail.

Safety/Technical Standards

Robert Hudleston has stepped down as Co-Chair of TAG and appreciation of his contribution to the group over the years was recorded. Once a new Co-Chair has been appointed, RAUC(S) will be notified.

The work of TAG is ongoing with update Reports submitted to RAUC(S).

Management & Operation of SRWR

SRWR Support Desk

Symology have introduced a new telephone number for the SRWR Support Desk. The Support Desk can be contacted on 0808 196 8341 (or by email to srwr@symology.co.uk).

Issues should be reported to the Symology Support Desk in the first instance. If the Support Desk are not able to resolve your issue or have closed the issue without resolving it to your satisfaction, please escalate it to Iain Ross (via enquiries@roadworks.scot) along with details of the issue and why the Support Desk response does not resolve the problem.

Please be aware that Symology may, in line with industry best practice, wish to close the Support Desk case when it is escalated internally to their Development Team. Such cases are added to the Known Issues List and when resolved an announcement is made to the Community on release. These are instances where the Symology Support Desk are unable to resolve the issue, as such repeatedly raising the same issue will have little benefit and will not get it resolved any faster. As above, if there is an issue on the Known Issues List that is taking too long to resolve please escalate it to Iain Ross. More information can be found on: -

<https://aurora-portal.symology.net/category/srwr-news/known-issues/>

<https://aurora-portal.symology.net/category/release-notices/>

There have been a small number of reports from Symology Support Desk staff, particularly following the release of Aurora Ver. No. 2, that some customers have been unreasonable exhibiting behaviour that staff have found to be disrespectful. The Commissioner wishes to remind all members of the Community to be respectful in their dealings with Support Desk staff and that bullying in any form will not be tolerated. Should there be a problem with the service provided by Symology it should be escalated to the Commissioner as described above.

Dial before you Dig Service

The Commissioner has asked for a reminder to be given about the process described in RAUC(S) Advice Note 1 - The Exchange of Plant Information, particularly for responding to plant information requests through the Dial before you Dig Service, run on behalf of the Community by Symology.

Any response you wish to make to the applicant, should be sent directly to the originator of the request, using the contact information provided in the Plant Information Request. These individuals do not have access to the SRWR so cannot see what data has posted on Vault or any comment you place on the SRWR against the P.I.R.

SRWR User Satisfaction Survey

To help the Commissioner gauge the effectiveness of the Scottish Road Works Register a questionnaire has been circulated to all users of the Register. It's relatively simple and should only take about 6 minutes to complete. All Organisations are asked to encourage their users of the SRWR to complete this questionnaire.

The link can be found in the Aurora Portal under News. Or via: -
<https://forms.office.com/r/6KtLj5Ngfi>

New Undertakers

Forbury Assets Limited (electricity) have been given access to the SRWR.

Changes to Inspection Reporting and Processes

The previously circulated paper was taken as read with the following comments: -

To allow the Commissioner track outstanding reinstatement defects, several changes are proposed to the inspection processes used on the SRWR. The aim is for the SRWR to be able to report on defects that have not been repaired in a timeous manner. These changes will ensure both S.U.s and R.As follow the procedures described in the Code of Practice for Inspections.

To this end the register will start reporting on defects which have not been repaired by an S.U. more than 6 months after they were reported. To encourage R.As to record when a final inspection pass (D/3 or DA3) is noted, the register will also report on inspections that have not had a follow up inspection for over 6 months.

The register will be updated to no longer allow a R.A. to remove a prompt for an inspection. Prompts will only be removed where the required inspection takes place, or where the original defect is withdrawn, or a final inspection is recorded as a pass.

These changes will be implemented on 1 April 2022. Following this date the Commissioner expects all S.U.s and R.As to follow the correct procedures, as described in the Code of Practice for Inspections. Also on this date any D/2, D/3, DA2 or DA3 prompts for R.As with a Due Date before 1 April 2021 will be automatically cleared down. For S.U.s any Inspection Awaiting Assessment due before 1 April 2021 will also be cleared down.

All should note the content of the previously circulated paper for this meeting describing these changes in detail. Should you have any concerns or questions please raise them with the Commissioner at enquiries@roadworks.scot.

Vault

The Commissioner met recently with a group from Atkins who are working for the Geospatial Commission on their NUAR project. They are interested in Vault and asked if some of the R.As and S.U.s using Vault as well as those providing data to it would be prepared to discuss their experience with them. As such RAUC(S) are asking for volunteers to talk to Atkins. Please contact I.R. to record an interest.

Action – All

J.F. offered his assistance with the meeting with Atkins. I.R. thanked J.F. and indicated that he would contact him.

Issues raised by the Report

K.Q. commented that as the system currently operates, entering a failed inspection/D1 will automatically generate a D/2 follow up 17 days hence. R.As can cancel it, swap it for another inspection type, bring it forward in time or push it further into the future.

Going forward the new system will be that once a D/2 is prompted, you will not be able to cancel it or swap it for another type. Your options will be to carry it out or agree that it isn't needed by entering the original inspection as a pass.

K.Q. queried whether they will also be losing the ability to swap the day it is prompted on (an arbitrary 17 days from the date the original was entered) for another day, or if it's going to be fixed in stone.

K.Q. asked this because for many RAs the inspector basically gets a list of inspections due that day from the register, and that's where they go that day. If you are responsible for inspectors and you know you have three separate D2s coming up in locations with an extended travel time, you might amend the dates in the register, so they all fall on the same day rather than having repeat journeys. In terms of charging, they can't be earlier than 17 days, but you can do them on a later date. This is operationally efficient as well as saving in energy and reducing emissions.

I.R responded that reordering the date should still be possible, but if more than 6 months have passed since you did the last inspection, and you still haven't done the next one, you will appear on his report.

D.J.A, commented that the changes required to recording stop / start data has been on the programme for some time so should not be a problem for the Community. The Works Promoter App is available which allows this information to be recorded so he recommended that all should review the facility and consider its use at an early date. He suggested a soft launch to get the process started so that the Organisations have time to make the required arrangements and trials ahead of the date of introduction. This would allow any I,T, software / hardware issues to be dealt with.

J.G. on behalf of SGN indicated that they had been using the App and it was fine in their experience.

The recommendation was made that all Organisations should trail the Apps if they had not already done so. They are available and Symology would be available to answer queries about their use.

6. **Improvement Notices** – No Improvement Notices had been raised in the last quarter in the NoSRAUC Area.
7. **Health and Safety** – There were no matters raised. All should note the recently circulated Safety Bulletins and deal with them within their Organisation as they consider necessary or beneficial.
8. **Environmental Issues**

There were on issues raised.

9. **Combined Reports and Comments**

Aberdeen City Council – K.A.

- The last Local RAUC meeting was held on 12th January. There were no remits passed to this meeting.
- The works are recorded on the Register.

Aberdeenshire – D.J.A.

- Aberdeenshire Council had introduced an Infrastructure Fund which is likely to raise additional works on roads and bridges. These schemes will be raised for discussion at the Local Coordination meetings.

Highland Council – A.MacL.

- The last Local meeting was held on 20th January and the minutes will be posted on the web site at an early date. There were no issues remitted to this meeting.
- The dates for the 2022 and 2023 meetings were agreed and they have been added to the RAUC(S) Calendar.
- The draft coring programmes have been issued to the main S.U.s.

Moray Council – No Report

Orkney Islands Council – D.W.

- The next meeting will be held 2 weeks time.
- No issues from the last meeting to be remitted to this meeting.
- The programme for 2022 / 23 will be issued for discussion at the Local meeting.

Shetland Islands Council – N.R.

- Due to the open weather work on the programme is well advanced.
- There has been a problem with the prompts on the Inspectors App. This is being investigated by Symology.

Western Isles Council – D.A.McL.

- There were no issues to be raised.
- The Bernera bridge is now open to traffic.

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

- Routine maintenance and emergency works are ongoing with lane closures as necessary.
- A90 between Parkhill and Blackdog. Resurfacing work is programmed for May / June this year.

BEAR Scotland N.W. – M.G.

- Works are recorded on the Register and progressing.
- The programmes are discussed at the Local RAUC Meetings.
- The Winter Service is operational from October to mid-May.
- There has been an increase in applications for events which will affect the routes. The Queen's Jubilee celebrations may add to applications.

BEAR Scotland N.E. – L.G.

- L.G. informed the meeting that with the departure of Ryan Newman she would now be representing BEAR Scotland N.E.
- The schemes have been recorded on the Register.
- Works are programmed on the A96 at Port Elphistone and at Colpy on weekend closures. Also, on the A96 resurfacing will be carried out at Lhanbryde with overnight closures.
- The Winter Service is operational from October to mid-May.
- A problem has been recorded at Ballindalloch on the A95. L.G. asked if a Fulcrum contact could be passed to her to progress the remedy of the problem.

Traffic Scotland – G.C.

- No issues to report.

CityFibre – J.F

- The work is recorded on the Register and is ongoing in Aberdeen and Inverness. Regular meetings are being held with the R.As in an effort to avoid problems escalating.
- J.F. will pass the contact details for the CityFibre local contact in Inverness to A.MacL.
Action – J.F.

Energy Assets – No Report**ESPUG – No Report****GTC – B.H.**

- No issues to be raised and works posted on the Register.

Ineos – No Report.**LastMile – No report****Lumen Technologies – No Report****MBNL -EE / 3 – M.S.**

- No issues to report.

Neos Networks – R.S.

- No issues to raise

Network Rail – C.A.

- No issues with the ongoing programme which is posted on the Register.

Openreach – D.MacL.

- Works ongoing as posted on the Register.
- No issues to raise

- The works on the R100 project are ongoing in Wick and south of Wick.
- Work will start in Inverness but there is no start date agreed yet.

Scottish Water – F.McI.

- The Contractor, Vardy, has settled into the programme but the second Contractor has yet to settle in.
- R.As are reminded that frames and covers are available free for replacing existing damaged units on resurfacing sites.

C.McQ. commented as follows: -

- The works are recorded on the Register and progressing as usual.
- The coring programme is ongoing, and the Results will be passed to the relevant R.As when agreed.

SGN – J.G.

- Works are on the Register.
- More schemes are planned to be progressed.
- All testing is being carried out on sites and recorded as normal.
- Declined Inspections – R.As are asked to notify J.G. or deal with.
- J.G. will be the Coring Representative for SGN.

Sky – No Report
SSEN – I.E.

- Works posted on the Register.
- No issues to raise

Royal Mail - No Report

Virgin Media – No Report

Vodafone – K.D.

- No issues to raise.

9. AOCB

a. List of Plant Protection Systems

The list was circulated to the 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.

Action - All

b. Emergency Contact Details

The list was circulated to the 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.

Action - All

c. Meeting Dates 2022

All noted the proposed meeting dates as previously circulated.

This was Darren Grant's last meeting as Chair as well as being the last NoSRAUC Area Meeting before the new Constitution is introduced on 1st April 2022. The Committee recorded their appreciation of the Darren's service over the two years.

The first meeting of NRAUC will be held in June and Karyn Davidson (Vodafone) will be Chair for the next two-year period.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The Next Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 7th June 2022 (10.30)**

VENUE – MS TEAMS

Future Meetings for NRAUC

Tuesday 4th October 2022

The Meeting Closed at 11.44