

**NORTH of SCOTLAND AREA ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES
COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the
QUARTERLY MEETING**

Date: Wednesday 3rd February 2021

Meeting held online on MSTEAMS

Present:

Darren Grant (Chair)	D.G.	SSEN
Kevin Abercrombie	K.A.	Aberdeen City Council
David Armitage	D.J.A.	Aberdeenshire Council
Caroline Auld	C.A.	Network Rail
Itzair Cores	I.C.	Balfour Beatty (AWPR O & M)
Gerry Clen	G.C.	Traffic Scotland
Karyn Davidson	K.D.	Vodafone
Jane Dunlop	J.D.	O.S.R.W.C.
Irvine Ellis	I.E.	SSEN
Jim Forbes	J.F.	CityFibre
Mike Gray	M.G.	BEAR Scotland N.W. and N.E. Areas
Julie Greig	J.G.	SGN
Barry Hall	B.H.	GTC-UK
Kevin Hamilton	K.H.	Scottish Road Works Commissioner
David Hearty	D.H.	MBNL-EE/3
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
Lewis Major	L.M.	SSEN
Richard Miller	R.M.	Transport Scotland
Graham Milne	G.M.	O.S.R.W.C.
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
Kenny Roy	K.R.	Orkney Islands Council
Ruth Scott	R.S.	SSE Telecom
Antony Thorpe	A.T.	Balfour Beatty (AWPR O & M)
JJ Van Grann	JJ.V.G.	Century Link
Donald Wilson	D.W.	Orkney Islands Council

In Attendance:

George Borthwick	G.B.	Secretary
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Apologies:

Clare Callaghan	C.C.	Scottish Water
Rob James	R.J.	Network Rail
Carole McDonald	C.McD.	CityFibre
Hazel Moore	H.M.	BEAR Scotland NE
Alex Rae	A.R.	SGN
Alison Weir	A.W.	Lastmile

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 4th November 2020

a. Accuracy

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 4th November 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. National Coring Programme

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

- There will be another programme which will be carried out on Reinstatements made between 1st January 2021 and 31st December 2021.
- The Working group will be reviewing the existing Advice Note and producing a revised version to be used in the Programme.
- In order to reduce the workload in deciding and agreeing the sites to be cored, subsequent agreement of cores etc, the intention is to increase the number of Utility inhouse core results used in the sample. The cores will require to be produced in accordance with the Advice Note.
- The existing SPEN Representative on the Working group has stood down due to moving to a new post. SPEN have provided a temporary replacement who can continue on a permanent basis if SJUG agrees. J.F. will check with the other Power Companies prior to any agreement being made at SJUG in March. **Action – J.F.**

4. Matters Arising from RAUC(S) Meeting – 2nd December 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. David Capon (JAG UK) has agreed to be the R.A. Co-Chair on the Quality Plans Working Group.

b) Scottish Government Update

K.Q. provided the following Updates: -

- There have been no revisions to the Covid 19 instructions for construction work since the commencement of the current lock down.
- As before hand washing, face masks and social distancing must be observed.

R100 Rollout: -

- R.Y. has retired but may provide input on a consultancy basis.
- Digital Scotland is a separate Section from Kat's but for this round at least she will make the report to the RAUC meetings.
- A revised structure is being created with 1 member of staff dealing with each lot.
- The Reaching 100% Programme (R100) is striving to extend the availability of next generation access (NGA) broadband infrastructure to meet the Scottish Government's commitment to enable superfast broadband access to 100% of premises in Scotland. To achieve this, the Scottish Government has procured coverage of NGA broadband infrastructure in areas where such broadband is currently unavailable. The procurement was split into three geographic lots, with Lot 1 (North) covering the north of Scotland and the islands, Lot 2 (Central) covering the central belt and Lot 3 (South) covering southern Scotland. All three lots were awarded to BT plc.
- BT is responsible for the contractual build against the three contracts via its prime contractor – Openreach. As this is a gap-funded contract, Openreach will build the network in line with its normal commercial approach. The vast majority of the build is full fibre to the premises (FTTP) and therefore the amount of civils work is greatly increased from previous Scottish Government funded programmes.
- Roads Authorities have access to the planned build across the contracts at premise level, providing an advance view of where and when activity will take place. Any issues can be raised directly with Openreach and their contractors and/or raised with the Scottish Government's R100 team via the Stakeholder Director.

Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

- The previously circulated paper was taken as read with the following comments: -
- Apologies were made for the late circulation, but the paper needed to be approved at various levels before it could be issued.
- The first column listed all the items in the Act which required action.
- At this point there are no dates available for these to be progressed.
- The column headed notes indicates actions which will be required. These actions included in some cases revisions to the Advice Notes and Codes e.g. the repeal of Section 61 will need a revision to Advice Note No. 22.
- The Sections numbers have not been used to avoid the potential confusion with the previous legislation. (plain English used to describe the Reform Measures)
- Some items need more input e.g. Vault, and these will be dealt with in stages.
- There is some old legislation which has not been commenced. The intention is to deal with the cancellation but in doing so it will not affect current practice.
- If there are any queries about the paper they should be passed to K.Q.

5. SRWC Report & Performance & Management

SRWC Indicators and Statistics Reports

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

- The SRWC dashboard for 2020 / 21 Q3 had been circulated and was taken as read with the following comments: -
- Organisations continue to programme works to accommodate the problems raised by Covid. Projects are being reed where necessary to complete their annual programme before the end of the financial year. In most cases work levels are returning to the pre Covid levels.
- All Organisations should email the Commissioner's Office with their plans to deal with poor performance in any of the Report categories.
- Any queries should be passed to G.M.
- 2020/21 Performance Reviews – The office is reviewing options to provide an appropriate response for Organisations delivering their works while accommodating the Pandemic restrictions. The process to be adopted will be shared with the community prior to the May round of RAUC meetings, with the probability that Q1/Q2 performance will be ignored.
- 2021/22 Performance – The office is reviewing a number of indicators in light of the continuing improvements with any changes related to standardising performance across all sectors. The Community will be given the opportunity to comment prior to introduction.
- Improvement Plans - Organisations currently under review have submitted their Q3 2020/21 plans and the oSRWC has completed follow up review meetings where required. Organisations on plans are reviewed quarterly. Currently there is still 1 RA and 4 S.U.s on improvement plans. It is likely that a further 2 Organisations will have their plans closed before April 2021. The Q4 submission date is Friday 16th April 2021.

b. Monitoring and Improving Compliance – No. 3 SRWR Dashboard Changes

The previously circulated paper was taken as read. Its purpose is to clarify recent changes to the dashboard which reflect the continuing improvements delivered by all sectors. If there are any issues or queries about the content of the paper, they should be passed to G.M.

SRWC Report

J.D. provided a verbal report as follows: -

- Time Critical Updates – COVID 19 are available on the Commissioners web site in the news page at <https://roadworks.scot/news>.
- The SRWC issued a statement on materials on 14 January 2021 which relates to the following: -
 - All requests for alternative reinstatements (in line with the SROR and the guidance given) should be considered favourably – this relates to all utility companies, not just water, power and gas.
 - The statement applies to all geographical areas in Scotland. The guidance from the Scottish Government is to reduce interactions which means requests are appropriate no matter where the work is being carried out. The practice should be the same for all R.A. areas.
 - Please update the works description as necessary. IR is working with certain sectors of the community to try and improve the way this change is identified however for the present the revision should be recorded in the works description.
- The Community were reminded that things can change rapidly and they were encouraged to continue to monitor the SRWC website as it was possible that the SRWC

and the Scottish Government may have occasion to issue further guidance on undertaking road works. Any new publications by the SRWC will be issued via the circulation list of primary contacts and senior managers held by the SRWC.

- If updates are not being received, please contact Jane Dunlop and ask to be added to the circulation list (jane.dunlop@srwc.gov.scot). *Post Meeting Update - Please note that Jane Dunlop is on a secondment with Transport Scotland so a request to be added to the Contact List should be sent to enquiries@srwc.gov.scot*
- New SRWR Reporting Group - Progress has been made with outstanding issues categorised for review. The next meeting is mid-February where the group will develop the required statement for submission to Symology.

Management & Operation of SRWR

J.D. 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 OSRWC will issue quotations at the beginning of March in order that all Organisations can prepare for making an early payment after the invoices are issued on 1st April.
- 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.
- SRWR Webinars - Symology are planning to hold regular webinars, in place of the user forums held previously. They initially plan to hold events more frequently. Reports received following the first of these events, held on 20 January 2021, were positive. Details of future events will be advertised on the SRWR Aurora Portal news page (<https://aurora-portal.symology.net/news>).
- Two new Undertakers, namely The Electricity Network Company Ltd. and Open Fibre Networks Ltd. (both part of the GTC same group) will be given access to the SRWR from 1 April 2021.
- SAT, having completed the testing of the new version of the Register have now returned to reviewing Change Requests. Due to the workload, they intend for the present to meet more regularly.
- Submissions to Community Apparatus Data Vault - A recommendation from the SRWR Steering Group will be made to the RAUC(S) March meeting. If approved, Submissions to Vault will be required once every 2 months, rather than quarterly/every 3 months. (Note: The option was always available to supply data every two months. The change is that it is now a requirement to do so).
- The OSRWC has issued a request to all Organisations to check / update their contact details. Some responses have already been received and all should ensure that their return is submitted as soon as possible. **Action – All**

Comments from the Commissioner

The Commissioner indicated that he had now been in the post for about 12 weeks. In that time, he had been finding his way into the post and reviewing the way the Office operated and the workload (including issues related to the new Act) which needed to be dealt with. He went on to comment as follows: -

- Noticing Works – The number of works recorded in the Register by the R.As continue to vary significantly across the Community and he intends to examine this issue

closely over the coming year. The office will continue to measure notices per 100 km of road length and encourage all R.As to notify all their works on the Register.

- **Inspections** - The performance of S.U.s works is measured through the R.A. The SRWC is concerned that the way R.As are undertaking inspections is not consistent and further scrutiny and monitoring will be undertaken over the coming year.
 - **Safety** – It is unacceptable for any road works to fail to comply with safety standards and it is expected that all Organisations will take a zero-tolerance approach to sub-standard traffic management. Adequate provision for the most vulnerable road users in society must be accommodated ensuring equality of access for people with mobility challenges. The SRWC will continue to engage, with stakeholders representing these road users to promote best practice within the industry to meet their needs. He will communicate with the Community to ensure the required site management is fully understood.
 - **General Performance** - The performance framework is being reviewed and changes are proposed to several targets and indicators going forward. These changes are expected to be introduced prior to the start of the 2021/22 monitor. Information will be provided as soon as possible, and all will be invited to submit comments.
- c. **Inspection Fails Process** – C.McQ. Reported that since requesting this Item he had been informed that SAT were reviewing the subject and would comment on it.

The query relates to the auto inspection of failures and if anyone in the Community feels it is affecting their Organisation, they should pass comments to the SAT.

6. **Improvement Notices** – No Improvement Notices had been raised in the last quarter in the NoSRAUC Area.
7. **Health and Safety** – The previously circulated Health and Safety Bulletins were taken as read and all were asked to share any bulletins or incidents with the Community. **Action - All**
8. **Combined Reports and Comments**

Aberdeen City Council – K.A.

- The last meeting held on 13th January was generally well attended.
- The works at present are carried out within the Covid rules, winter maintenance and Spaces for People.
- Efforts are ongoing to complete the programmes but. To accommodate all the ongoing factors the programmed works, need to be rescheduled.
- The programme for the major Scottish Water project has been revised.

Aberdeenshire – D.J.A..

- The last meeting was held on 19 November 2020.
- Experiences with new version of SRWR was discussed.
- Information on programmes of work was exchanged.
- The Aberdeenshire Council programme of works has been reduced because of Covid.

Highland Council – Alison MacLeod

- The last meeting was held on 21st January 2021.
- The works programmes were shared with no major problems to report.
- No contentious issues were raised.

- All are generally happy with the online meetings.

Moray Council – K.P.

- Dialogue continues with Statutory Undertakers and Trunk Road Operators on a regular basis without convening a remote Local RAUCS Meeting.
- Currently there is a low level of activity being undertaken by Moray Council Roads Dept, although this may change as new budgets are agreed.
- Due to weather conditions many works need to be replanned.
- There is no planned dates for Local RAUC meetings to be held in 2021.

Orkney Islands Council – K.R.

- Although we have started to address the backlog of planned and routine maintenance works COVID restrictions continue to impact on works.
- Recent winter weather has resulted in delays to our planned programme of works and will result in changes and extensions to notices.
- Openreach is the S.U. carrying out most works.
- The next meeting is scheduled for 17/02/2021.

Shetland Islands Council – N.R.

- Covid continues to cause delays and disruption to works, which will be affected further by Winter Maintenance Operations needing the use of a second man on each gritter driver, resulting in limited works which can be undertaken by remainder of the workforce.
- The programme is being revised with some projects being transferred to next year.
- All the above is likely to cause some disruption and delays/extensions to larger jobs.
- Early starts are being dealt with pragmatically to accommodate all works programmes.
- An agreement has been made with SSE that an L.A. Reference Number must be quoted before [private works are allowed to commence.

Western Isles Council – D.McL.

- The isles are now in Tier 4.
- Covid and Weather are resulting in the programme delays.
- S.U.s are back to normal within Covid 19 Guidance.
- Bernera Bridge replacement has been delayed and is now programmed to commence March / April 21.
- Work is being carried out within the Covid restrictions.

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

- Routine maintenance programme where they can be accommodated due to Covid and winter maintenance.

BEAR Scotland N.E. and N.W. – M.G.

- Apologies were noted from H.M. who was on winter maintenance duty.
- The resurfacing programme will be progressed weather permitting. Start dates may need to be revised.
- The period to complete deliveries of Wind Farm equipment along the A9 from Nigg to Gordonbush, Brora has been extended.

Traffic Scotland – No report

Digital Scotland – Kat Quane (see Item No. 4b above)

CityFibre – J.F

- Issues raised about the works in Aberdeen and Inverness are being discussed in an effort to ensure quick agreements and rectification.

Energy Assets – No Report

GTC – B.H.

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

LastMile – A.W.

- No issues raised.

EE / MBNL / 3 – D.H.

- Works posted on the Register.
- Working within the Covid restrictions.

Network Rail – C.A.

- No issues with the ongoing programme.

Openreach – D.MacL.

- All work is recorded on the Register and is ongoing.
- Working within the Covid restrictions.
- Openreach are due to commence coring on their reinstatements. Depending on the results the level of coring on a Contractor's work may be increased or decreased.

Scottish Water – F.McI.

- Due to the number of emergencies e.g., bursts Scottish Water may need to extend their request to use alternative material in reinstatements.
- The Trunk Road Operators were asked to request night working only when it was essential as it created problems with productivity, performance, and additional costs.

C.McQ. commented as follows: -

- The work on Capital projects is ongoing.
- The new Capital Plan for the next 6 years from 1st April is being drafted. The funding for the period has been increased. There is likely to be a change in the contacts and Contractors working in any area.
- The coring programme is ongoing but at present the agreement meetings are suspended. When the cores are agreed the results will be shared with the relevant R.As.

SGN – J.G.

- The reduced programme of works is recorded on the Register.
- The working arrangements are in place in accordance with the Covid constraints.
- A new Capital programme is being drafted.
- The 6 existing Depots will be reduced to 4 Areas. Established contacts should still be available.
- J.G. is the main contact if there are issues.
- J.G. will contact the R.As to agree a standard arrangement for using alternative materials in reinstatements.

Sky – No Report

SSEN – I.E.

- Works are posted on the Register and are ongoing with cooperation with others.

SSET – R.S.

- The programmed works in Aberdeen City and Shire are on the Register.

Vodafone – K.D.

- There are no issues to raise

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. Standard Incident Diversion Routes (SIDR) – Local Authority Contact

BEAR Scotland is reviewing the routes for incident diversion and H.M. and M.G. are looking for the R.A. contacts who would be the best Representatives to discuss and agree these routes. R.As contact H.M. and / or M.G. **Action – R.As**

d. Network Access Forms

J.F. informed the meeting that through RAUC(S) he would raise this matter and ask for an update on the progress to have the forms integrated into the Register.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The Next Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 5th May 2021 (10.30)**

VENUE – MS TEAMS

Future Meetings: - Wednesday 4th August 2021
Wednesday 3rd November 2021

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

The Meeting Closed at 11.55