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**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 2 MAY 2023**

**SUBJECT: COUNCIL POLICY - BRIDGE MAINTENANCE PRIORITISATION**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND  
FINANCE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the proposed Council Policy relating to prioritisation of bridge maintenance works, which will formalise the existing prioritisation process.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (15) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to management and implementation of the requirements of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee agree to endorse the Council Policy as set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.11 in relation to prioritisation of bridge maintenance works.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Moray Council's bridge stock includes 376 road bridges. The Council's revenue budget for bridges is £130,000 and this is predominantly used to undertake pointing work to masonry bridges and vegetation clearance work. Significant maintenance works are funded through the Council's capital budget.
- 3.2 The condition of the Council's bridges is monitored through general inspections undertaken every two years and Principal Inspections undertaken every six years. Each bridge is scored on its general condition and on the condition of its critical elements. This score in combination with the strategic importance of the bridge is used to prioritise significant maintenance or refurbishment works.
- 3.3 Prioritisation of bridge maintenance works has previously been based on the critical importance of the bridge, its condition and where appropriate engineering judgment. It is proposed that the prioritisation procedure is formalised as policy for all future capital maintenance works on bridges.

- 3.4 Future capital maintenance works on all bridges on the public road network in Moray will be prioritised based on a range of factors grouped under two main indicators: Network Criticality, which indicates the importance of the bridge to the road network in Moray; and Bridge Alert Status which indicates the probability of failure of the bridge. These factors will be combined according to an algorithm to produce a Priority Score for each bridge. Details of these factors and the priority scoring process are provided in the **Appendix**.

#### Network Criticality

- 3.5 Network Criticality will be split into three categories, Vital, Important and Standard. As a large number of bridges are expected to be categorised as Standard, this category will be sub-categorised into Standard – High, Standard – Medium and Standard – low.
- 3.6 Bridges will be categorised as Vital if they carry more than 7000 vehicles per day, provide sole access to twenty or more properties or provide sole access to critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructure will include main hospitals (those with A&E Departments); main fire stations (those with full time crew); water supply, treatment and storage, including reservoirs, power generation and major substations; and major armed forces sites.
- 3.7 Bridges will be categorised as Important if they are on a Priority 1 gritting route or they provide sole access to eight or more properties. A range of factors relevant to the specific social and economic geography of Moray are used when determining Priority 1 gritting routes, including access to essential infrastructure. Essential infrastructure is local hospitals (those without A&E); secondary fire stations (those with retained/part time/volunteer crews); sewage treatment sites (not including private systems); and primary schools.
- 3.8 All bridges that do not meet the criteria set out in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 will be categorised as Standard. As a significant number of the council's bridge stock is likely to come under the Standard category, it has been subdivided into high, medium and low. Standard – high will include critical routes, defined as a credible direct link connecting settlements or localities together. Settlements and localities are statistical entities defined by the National Records of Scotland as groups of densely populated postcodes that add up to 500 or more people and represent urban or built-up areas of Scotland. Standard – medium will include routes that provide sole access to eight or fewer properties, are on a School bus route or have a diversion route greater than 7.5 miles. All remaining bridges will be categorised as Standard – low.

#### Bridge Alert Status

- 3.9 The Bridge Alert Status will indicate when a bridge is likely to fail. Failure is defined as the point where a bridge becomes unserviceable, requiring a weight restriction or closure. The Bridge Alert Status will consider load carrying capacity, condition, environmental risk and recent movement and / or deterioration.
- 3.10 By combining the outputs from both the Network Criticality and Bridge Alert Status a Priority Score will be given to every Network bridge in Moray. A worked example of this process is provided in Appendix D of the Appendix.

- 3.11 To ensure the prioritisation remains relevant the input date will be updated when changes occur. The prioritisation will also be reviewed annually or when a significant event occurs. It should be noted that while the Bridge Alert Status will change over time it is unlikely that there will be a significant change in the Network Criticality of most bridges.

#### Policy

- 3.12 Based on the information provided in Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.11 the proposed policy for Members consideration is provided below. As stated above this is a formalisation of the existing prioritisation process, as set out in the Appendix to this report.

- All bridges on the public road network in Moray will be prioritised based on a combination of Network Criticality and Bridge Alert Status, which will be used to produce a Priority Score.
- The bridge prioritisation will be reviewed annually to allow for changes that occur throughout the year.

## **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

“Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray”

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

Moray Council in its role as Local Road Authority has a statutory duty under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to manage and maintain the road network.

### **(c) Financial implications**

If the bridge prioritisation policy is not adopted there is a risk that future spend would not be managed in an objectively justified way within budgets. This policy will also ensure that best value is achieved.

### **(d) Risk Implications**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **(f) Property**

All of the network bridges in Moray currently vest with Moray Council in its role as Road Authority.

### **(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities of socio economic implication associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

Where possible we would seek to recycle and/or reuse the waste material generated through demolition of the existing bridge.

**(i) Consultations**

Depute Chief Executive (Economy Environment and Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Chief Financial Officer, Legal Services Manager, Senior Engineer Transportation, Strategic Planning Development Manager, Equal Opportunities Officer and L Rowan, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 Significant maintenance of Moray Council's bridge stock is funded from the Council's Capital Budget.**

**5.2 Maintenance works are currently prioritised based on strategic importance and condition.**

**5.3 The proposed bridge prioritisation policy set out in this report would formalise this process.**

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Background Papers:

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