



Minutes of the Caithness Transport Forum

Date: 07.06.2013

Time: 10:30am

Location: Naver Business Centre, Thurso

Present

Trudy Morris	Chief Executive, Caithness Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
David Swanson	Marketing & Communications, Caithness Chamber of Commerce (Minute Secretary)
David Flear	Chair, Dounreay Stakeholder Group
Donnie Mackay	Councillor, Thurso
Eann Sinclair	Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership
Ian Wright	
James Linklater	Customer Care Manager, Serco NorthLink Ferries
June Love	Dounreay
Kris Bevan	Freight Manager, Serco NorthLink Ferries
Peter Body	Director, Caithness Chamber of Commerce
Sandy Mackie	Scrabster Harbour Trust
Stan Towers	Operations Manager Caithness & Sutherland, Stagecoach
Steve Walker	Managing Director, Stagecoach North Scotland
William Manson	Association of Community Councils
William Sutherland	Station Manager, Wick John O'Groats Airport

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all present for attending.

- 1.2 Apologies were received from: Cathel Macaskill (BEAR Scotland), Christine Dodd (Highland Council), Gail Ross (Highland Council), Gordon Doull (Wick Harbour), Ken Nicol (Dounreay), James Foubister (Orkney Islands Council), John Yellowlees (First ScotRail).

2. Minutes of last CTF meeting 14.12.12

- 2.1 Eann Sinclair noted that the last line on page 3 could be misconstrued and asked for it to be rephrased.
- 2.2 The minutes were otherwise unanimously approved.

3. Review of actions from last meeting

CTF(2012)M001/A005 – Chamber to find contact at BEAR Scotland and invite to next meeting – **COMPLETE**. It was confirmed that Cathel Macaskill has transferred to BEAR Scotland.

CTF(2012)M001/A007 – Chamber to contact new Transport Scotland area manager and invite to next meeting – **ONGOING**

CTF(2012)M001/A014 – David Swanson to go through Transport Forum materials passed to Chamber from Caithness Partnership to find Terms of Reference. If none exist, discuss at next meeting with regards to this – **COMPLETE**. An old copy was found and a new version drafted based on this, which was circulated to the Forum for comments or changes.

CTF(2013)M001/A001 – Gail Ross to feed back to Scottish Government regarding shovel-readiness of Berriedale Braes – **ONGOING**. Gail has fed back to the Scottish Government, but has had no answer yet.

CTF(2013)M001/A002 – Cathel Macaskill to keep Chamber updated regarding details of BEAR Scotland changeover – **COMPLETE**. See **CTF(2012)M001/A005**

CTF(2013)M001/A003 – Chamber to contact Network Rail for an update on level crossing barriers. **COMPLETE**. Network Rail have passed on a list of planned upgrades, as follows:

- 19th May – Hoy
- 2nd June – Forsinard
- 7th July – Kinbrace
- 28th July – Watten
- By end of current financial year – Lairg, Brora, Kirkton

The solution planned for Halkirk is an Automatic Barrier Crossing, Locally Monitored (ABCL). This is expected to be commissioned by the end of the calendar year or early 2014.

CTF(2013)M001/A004 – Chamber to work with Eann Sinclair on Terms of Reference and circulate before next meeting – **COMPLETE**. See **CTF(2012)M001/A014**

CTF(2013)M001/A005 – Chamber to liaise with Subsea 7 regarding projected usage of B876 – **COMPLETE**. Trudy Morris spoke with Willie Watt. Willie stated that the road is a lifeline for their Wester site. They have invested heavily in the Wester site over the past year and that to lose access would be a blow to their operations in the area. He suggested a meeting with Highland Council to discuss issues surrounding the route.

Peter Body noted that the issue raised at the last meeting regarding the B-road classification of the route remains a barrier to outside understanding of the importance of the route to the county. He noted that Norscot also use the road, but that they have other options.

David Flear suggested that the Chamber write to Graham Phillips, chair of TEC Services, to express concerns and arrange a meeting to discuss the importance of the road.

Eann noted that Drew Hendry, Council Leader of the Highland Council, has agreed to come up and visit the Wester site. Trudy noted that it would be possible to combine the meetings. It was further noted that it would be useful to have a member of HITRANS at the meeting. William Sutherland stated that Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd would have an interest in the meeting.

CTF(2013)M001/A006 – David Swanson to read and extract appropriate information from HITRANS study, contact HITRANS regarding possibility of more detailed information on B876 – **COMPLETE**.

David noted that he had read over and extracted the appropriate sections from the report, but that it did not contain much useful information. Eann Sinclair noted that it is only since the release of that report that there has been investment on the route at areas other than the Wester site.

It was asked whether this could become a priority for CNSRP. Eann noted that it would be a departure from the current priorities but that highlighting the issue would not be a problem.

Trudy asked whether any of the planned substations would use the road. Eann answered that he did not believe they would.

Trudy mentioned that the Numax building must also be taken into consideration – that Sinclair Bay Subsea are currently using it for storage but it is to be hoped that it will be used further. Peter noted that any renewables activity in Wick Harbour would likely involve Numax, as an engineering company, and that the road would be a crucial link.

CTF(2013)M002/A001 – Chamber to arrange meeting with Graham Phillips, Drew Hendry, HITRANS, HIAL to discuss B876

CTF(2013)M001/A007 – Chamber to follow up with Cathel Macaskill on organisation of winter management presentation at autumn CTF meeting – **COMPLETE**. Cathel has confirmed that he and Kevin Campbell (Operations Manager) will be delivering the presentation in September.

CTF(2013)M001/A008 – Chamber to liaise with Stagecoach regarding Caithness Bus Users Group. **COMPLETE**. A Bus Users Group meeting was organised for the same day (7th June) in Wick at 2.00pm

CTF(2013)M001/A009 – Chamber and Mark Norton to liaise with John Yellowlees regarding First ScotRail updates – **COMPLETE**. David Swanson emailed John Yellowlees regarding the First ScotRail updates and a more substantial update was provided for this meeting.

CTF(2013)M001/A010 – Chamber to work with Mark Norton to input on First ScotRail franchising process – **ONGOING**. Mark has now stepped down from his position with DORLAG – an SGM

David Flear raised the issue of some missing information from an action at a previous meeting regarding DRS traffic calming measures at the Georgemas railhead. He noted that while an update was delivered, there was no further information regarding timescales, the chosen options, etc. He asked that this be followed up.

June Love noted that there are a number of options which are currently being looked at. Trudy agreed that an action should be taken to follow up on this.

CTF(2013)M002/A002 – *Chamber to follow up with DRS regarding a timeline for implementation of traffic calming measures at Georgemas*

Trudy noted that the main reason to implement any solution would be an increase in commercial freight traffic at the site and that DRS have not as yet had any substantial enquiries regarding this.

4. Berriedale Braes

Trudy Morris stated that she and Anna MacConnell of the NDA took part in a teleconference with Transport Scotland and URS on 15th May. She noted that while her understanding had been that a solution had been decided on and URS were going to explore this, there is a statutory requirement for them to explore all options. She felt this was disappointing – that things had returned to where they started.

As a result, the process will take longer than expected – the draft will be issued in October 2013 and the final report in spring 2014. If the project does end up being shovel-ready, it will miss the current financial year's allocation of government spending for shovel-ready projects.

Trudy will circulate the draft objectives from the study once they are available.

CTF(2013)M002/A003 – *Trudy Morris to circulate draft objectives from Berriedale Braes study to the Forum*

Trudy noted that a key issue is that the chosen solution has to be able to get consented. She noted that the solution which had been pushed for – a diversion around the cemetery – would cost around £2.3 million and that this seemed achievable. Once the objectives are available, the Forum can decide on the best course of action.

David Flear stated that he felt this to be very disappointing – a lot of effort had been put in to the proposed solution. He noted that a number of people in the business community feel that the Berriedale Braes is an issue for them rolling out their business.

He raised concerns that the A9 dualling project will become a higher priority for the Scottish Government and stated that as much pressure as possible should be put on Keith Brown, Rob Gibson, etc. to ensure this project is viable and moves forward. He noted that there was a tendency

to look at these projects in terms of accidents, but that this project has to do with economic development rather than road safety.

Trudy noted that one of the operational objectives was that there should be uninterrupted, two-way movement for all vehicles, which is currently not the case.

Eann Sinclair asked if there was a sense that a solution involving flyovers would be looked at again. Trudy stated that this would probably be discounted quickly but that they have to look at all solutions.

June Love noted that Dounreay's parent body is trying to encourage URS to move this project forwards.

Trudy noted her disappointment that Anna MacConnell hadn't seen the tender documents for procuring the consultants, even though the NDA have been a major funder of this, and that the Highland Council are probably in the same position.

Donnie Mackay noted that he was in strong agreement with David Flear that pressure should be put on MPs, MSPs. There was general consensus with this view.

Eann Sinclair and David Flear noted that the Berriedale Braes is the number one transport priority for both CNSRP and the Transport Forum.

Trudy stated that she would write again to Rob Gibson on this matter. Eann Sinclair stated that he would feed back to Cllr. Gail Ross as well. David Flear noted that the minister for economic development should also be involved – this is not just a transport matter but key to the regeneration of Caithness.

CTF(2013)M002/A004 – *Trudy Morris to write to Rob Gibson, Keith Brown, Fergus Ewing regarding the Berriedale Braes*

CTF(2013)M002/A005 – *Eann Sinclair to feed back to Gail Ross regarding the Berriedale Braes*

Eann Sinclair noted that the CNSRP chair met with John Swinney this week and he has agreed to write the foreword for their annual review.

Trudy noted that if the study comes out in spring 2014, the construction date would be some time in 2015. She also noted that the £220,000 spent so far is just taking the project to the standing orders – that is, ready to go to tender but not through the tender process.

5. Transport Updates

5.1 Roads – Highland Council TECS

No Highland Council TECS representative was present and no written update submitted.

CTF(2013)M002/A006 – David Swanson to liaise with Iain Moncrieff regarding lack of attendance / update

5.2 Roads – BEAR Scotland

A written update was submitted by Cathel Macaskill (Appendix 1)

David Flear noted that the Berriedale Braes are in a poor condition.

Trudy Morris noted it would be useful to find out more about the structural maintenance mentioned in Cathel's report. She also queried whether the stretch of road mentioned as "South of Achnavanich" in the report is part of the A9.

CTF(2013)M002/A007 – David Swanson to ask Cathel Macaskill for more information on structural maintenance work and road south of Achnavanich

No further issues with roads were raised at this time.

6.1 Sea – Scrabster Harbour

Sandy Mackie delivered an update from Scrabster Harbour Authority, split by sector.

Fishing

Fishing is fairly steady, with a slight improvement on last financial year. The refrigeration of the fish market is proving attractive to the fleet. They have had a varied number of landings – UK, Spanish, Faroese and Norwegian boats. He noted that Defra are bringing out new some proposals relating to discards and that he will be attending a meeting in London to discuss these.

Oil and Gas

Oil and gas activity has been steady. There are continuing prospects relating to activity west of Shetland.

Cruise Ships

Scrabster has had a successful first visit from P&O, with the *Adonia*. They will have a visit from the *Amadea*, a German vessel, on Saturday (8th June). This will be their first test of the more rigorous Border Force Agency checking process. Previously, checks could be done by looking at the manifest – now Border Force Agency officials will board the ship and do a face to passport check. Sandy's feeling was that this is heavy-handed with regards to the cruise industry.

There are cost and time implications involved in the new regime – passengers stuck in the longer processing will not be able to spend as much time in the town. Scrabster will be monitoring the process closely and feed back to the Scottish Government on the experience.

Eann Sinclair asked if this was only applicable if Scrabster is the first UK stop for the vessel. Sandy confirmed this but noted that he felt the process is not a proportionate response to the risk posed by cruise passengers.

Peter Body asked whether the harbour or the ferry bears the additional cost of the new checking regime. Sandy stated that at present there is a transition period where the cost is borne by the Treasury, but that following this it will be the cruise line and that this has not been well-received by cruise companies. He noted that the cost of bringing in officials is higher for remote ports and that Lerwick received a number of cancellations last year.

Eann asked for how many of the cruise ships Scrabster would be their first port of call. Sandy stated that there would be two. He further noted that it is not a good advert for the UK and raised the issue of sulphur emissions regulations coming in this year, which will add extra costs. He felt the question to be asked was why the UK is adopting this practice when the rest of Europe isn't.

It was agreed that the Forum would write to the appropriate politicians to raise these issues.

CTF(2013)M002/A008 – *Transport Forum to write to Mark Harper, Fergus Ewing and John Thurso to raise concerns over new Border Force Agency checking regime*

James Linklater asked how the checking programme would be facilitated. Sandy replied that officials from Aberdeen would come up and do the checking on board the vessel.

Other

Other activity has been relatively steady. Sandy noted that they have had a number of enquiries which he cannot go into detail about at this time. He noted that they had attended All-Energy in May and that it was a particularly successful visit. They have now finished the first phase of their development plan, with other phases now in progress.

Sandy brought up the TEN-T European funding programme for regionally significant ports. He was concerned that the port and the area might miss out on this funding and that he felt it was worth pursuing.

Eann Sinclair raised that he had asked Highland Council about this and had received no response. Peter asked if the IMED initiative might add weight to the area's case for funding. Eann noted that opportunities west of Shetland would add further weight.

CTF(2013)M002/A009 – *Chamber to investigate TEN-T funding options for Scrabster Harbour (COMPLETE – Deadline for the 2012 TEN-T call for proposals was 26th March 2013. It appears the TEN-T budget is being folded into the Connecting Europe Facility for the 2014-2020 budget period.)*

6.2 Sea – Serco NorthLink

James Linklater delivered an update from Serco NorthLink ferries.

They have recently held community “meet the manager” sessions for staff and stakeholders – they will invite Forum representatives to any future sessions. The meetings were generally positive - they were able to discuss issues and clarify situations with the communities. They also did a round trip on the *Hamnavoe* to meet with passengers and crew to discuss things.

James went on to discuss the recent issues with the *Hamnavoe*, which suffered a major failure on Thursday 25th April. They carried out a number of investigations over the weekend to ascertain the

available contingencies. They had meetings with the Scottish Government to find what relief vessels would be available – while they found some possibilities, the impact on other communities resulting from their removal would have been too great.

In the interim, Kris Bevan worked with Scrabster Harbour regarding freight issues and James met with Pentland Ferries to discuss passenger capacity for forward bookings. They also spoke with John O’Groats Ferries. In addition, they worked with Stagecoach to provide a complementary bus service. James noted his appreciation for the help Stagecoach provided.

James noted that the replacement of the *Hamnavoe’s* crankshaft was a big job and that they were hoping to do something in the media to make people clear on the process that took place and the extent of the work.

He stated that both he and Kris were in daily contact with Pentland Ferries and their freight stakeholders respectively and that at no point was there an issue with capacity. He noted that the message portrayed to the media was not necessarily the best.

He raised that the contract does not contain any obligation for a relief vessel.

Forward bookings for June, July and August are slightly up on last year. James noted that the issues with the *Hamnavoe* have had little impact on these bookings.

James handed over to Kris Bevan for an update on freight.

Kris thanked Sandy Mackie for Scrabster’s support throughout the period of the breakdown. He noted that the *Helliar* had capacity for 12 passengers and 885 lane metres of freight. He noted that the full capacity of the *Helliar* was not used – she carried 400 passengers and around 2000 lane metres of freight over the duration.

Kris stated that the engine failure could have been much more serious and that had it not been caught in time, things could have been much worse. He noted that the engineers did very well to fix the damage in just four weeks. He noted that when conducting sea trials following the repair another fault was found and that local expertise in Caithness was very helpful in repairing this fault.

James finished the update by noting that the feedback from customers has been fairly positive and that they have made payments to those who incurred additional expenses as a result of the breakdown.

Trudy Morris stated that it was encouraging to hear of partnership working between the various local transport operators. She noted that the recent issues have highlighted the fragility of the service and she is concerned about what would happen if there was another, more catastrophic breakdown.

She said she appreciates that Serco NorthLink are not required to provide a relief vessel and that the Forum will take up issues with the contract with Scottish Government. She noted that there is a problem across the board with low penalties in lifeline transport contracts.

James noted that Pentland Ferries and John O’Groats Ferries are also classed as lifeline ferry services, following the Scottish Ferries Review.

Trudy also raised that the marketing message was heavily Orkney oriented and that Serco NorthLink should bear in mind that the service issues affect Caithness as well – she noted that businesses around Scrabster have seen an impact as a result.

James and Kris agreed and noted that they need to do more. It was noted, for example, that they have a daily operations update and that anyone is welcome to receive that.

David Flear noted that there was a public perception that the vessels would be replaced, as happened with previous services. He asked what it would cost to hire a vessel for a week. James stated that he doesn't have that information to hand. David noted that it would almost certainly be cheaper than the cost of the penalties. James noted that a vessel can only be hired if one is available.

David noted that we need to look at both the present and future contracts and ensure that a requirement for replacement vessels is there. He reiterated that this needs to be taken up with Scottish Government.

James noted that with the previous operator, the *Hamnavoe* was out of service for two weeks with no replacement.

It was asked why the previous vessel, the *St. Ola* was always replaced. James noted that was a different contract.

Eann Sinclair noted that there are lessons to be learned from the situation – that the Forum and represented agencies may be able to assist from a marketing point of view. He noted that there have been various attempts at a joined-up message in the past and that this could be an opportunity . There was general agreement.

CTF(2013)M002/A010 – Chamber to draft letter to Keith Brown and talk to Scottish Chambers regarding concerns with the Serco NorthLink contract

6.3 Sea – Wick Harbour Authority

No attendee from Wick Harbour Authority was present and no update was given.

CTF(2013)M002/A011 – David Swanson to follow up with Wick Harbour regarding non-attendance / lack of update

7.1 Air – HIAL / Wick John O'Groats Airport

William Sutherland delivered a brief update from HIAL / Wick John O'Groats Airport.

Passenger numbers through the airport continue to grow. William noted that this is very much tied to the oil-related helicopter traffic. NHV, the helicopter operators, now have an engineering base and office space in Wick and are hoping to base two more, larger helicopters in Wick.

William noted that they have had similar issues to Sandy Mackie regarding the new Border Force Agency regime.

Trudy Morris suggested that the issue with the Border Force Agency be taken up not just on behalf of the harbours but the airport as well.

William had a meeting with Scrabster to see if there are opportunities to tie-up with some of the incoming business.

He noted that if you were to take the helicopter traffic out of the equation, the passenger numbers are holding steady.

He raised Flybe's recent sale of their Gatwick slots to easyJet and the concerns about potential loss of service from Inverness – Gatwick. He noted that while this is not a direct issue for Wick John O'Groats Airport, it will cause issues for passengers travelling on to London. He noted that if easyJet do take over the service, it will add time to overseas journeys as passengers will have to reclaim baggage at Gatwick and check it on to the international flight.

Trudy noted that the Chamber puts its support behind the other chambers and the Press and Journal in their campaign to save the Inverness – Gatwick slots.

William stated that they are currently looking at adding more capacity on the Wick – Edinburgh route. Trudy noted that this is a good opportunity for Wick. She reiterated that while there should be support for Wick John O'Groats Airport, concerns should still be voiced regarding the Inverness – Gatwick slots.

William finished by noting that he also attended All-Energy and felt there is a good joined-up approach through the partnerships.

Trudy noted that there has been some press attention regarding rendition flights and there was a brief discussion of this.

8.1 Rail – First ScotRail

John Yellowlees delivered a written update from First ScotRail (Appendix 2)

9.1 Bus – Stagecoach

Steve Walker delivered a brief update from Stagecoach, noting that the Thurso depot is nearing completion. He further noted that there would be a Bus Users Group meeting in the afternoon and that there would be some minor service changes, notably the removal of the 76 Wick-Staxigoe service conventionally used as a school bus.

Steve explained that this takes a bus out of their fleet and came on the back of three years with very little cutting back considering the decrease in concessionary fare reimbursements. He noted that this year's inflationary increase on council contracts was 1.37% and their fuel cost has risen 6% and that they had to do something. He explained that they had warned the council there would be potential service cuts if the concessionary fare reimbursement rate fell.

Steve noted that the number of school children affected by the service cut is small, and that they have also removed the 4.30pm Wick town service – trialled after requests from the Bus Users Group – due to lack of use.

Trudy asked for any comment or questions on Steve's update. David Flear said he recalled there being an issue a few years ago regarding the lack of a bus on the Wick – Papigoe / Staxigoe route. Steve noted that every school bus they run is subsidised by the council. David said he thought this was a political issue for the council – that Stagecoach were helpful in putting on the service years ago and it is up to the council to look at it from an education perspective.

Trudy stated that the Forum would be updated following the afternoon's Bus User Group meeting. She asked if there were any current school runs which are not full and which could be diverted to pick up the affected school children. Steve said Stagecoach would be more than happy to look at this. He noted the problem is that the affected children are not entitled to school transport.

10. HITRANS

Trudy expressed disappointment at the continued lack of updates from HITRANS.

CTF(2013)M002/A012 – *David Swanson to follow up with HITRANS regarding non-attendance / lack of update*

11. Any Other Business

William Sutherland noted that there was still no signage for Wick John O'Groats Airport in the town.

CTF(2013)M002/A013 – *Chamber to follow up with Highland Council regarding lack of airport signage*

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th September 2013 in Wick, venue TBC.

Actions on-going from previous meetings

CTF(2012)M001/A007 – *Chamber to contact new Transport Scotland area manager and invite to next meeting*

CTF(2013)M001/A001 – *Gail Ross to feed back to Scottish Government regarding shovel-readiness of Berriedale Braes – ONGOING.* Gail has fed back to the Scottish Government, but has had no answer yet.

CTF(2013)M001/A010 – *Chamber to work with Mark Norton to input on First ScotRail franchising process*

Actions arising from this meeting

CTF(2013)M002/A001 – Chamber to arrange meeting with Graham Phillips, Drew Hendry, HITRANS, HIAL to discuss B876

CTF(2013)M002/A002 – Chamber to follow up with DRS regarding a timeline for implementation of traffic calming measures at Georgemas

CTF(2013)M002/A003 – Trudy Morris to circulate draft objectives from Berriedale Braes study to the Forum

CTF(2013)M002/A004 – Trudy Morris to write to Rob Gibson, Keith Brown, Fergus Ewing regarding the Berriedale Braes

CTF(2013)M002/A005 – Eann Sinclair to feed back to Gail Ross regarding the Berriedale Braes

CTF(2013)M002/A006 – David Swanson to liaise with Iain Moncrieff regarding lack of attendance / update

CTF(2013)M002/A007 – David Swanson to ask Cathel Macaskill for more information on structural maintenance work and road south of Achnavanich

CTF(2013)M002/A008 – Transport Forum to write to Mark Harper, Fergus Ewing and John Thurso to raise concerns over new Border Force Agency checking regime

CTF(2013)M002/A009 – Chamber to investigate TEN-T funding options for Scrabster Harbour (COMPLETE – Deadline for the 2012 TEN-T call for proposals was 26th March 2013. It appears the TEN-T budget is being folded into the Connecting Europe Facility for the 2014-2020 budget period.)

CTF(2013)M002/A010 – Chamber to draft letter to Keith Brown and talk to Scottish Chambers regarding concerns with the Serco NorthLink contract

CTF(2013)M002/A011 – David Swanson to follow up with Wick Harbour regarding non-attendance / lack of update

CTF(2013)M002/A012 – David Swanson to follow up with HITRANS regarding non-attendance / lack of update

CTF(2013)M002/A013 – Chamber to follow up with Highland Council regarding lack of airport signage

Appendix 1 – BEAR Scotland Update for CTF 7th June 2013

First and foremost apologies for not being able to give this report in person. It is our intention to arrange a presentation on our Winter Service Delivery at the next meeting of the CTF in September 2013. Our Operation's Manager, Mr Kevin Campbell, has agreed to give the presentation and I also plan to attend.

In relation to our programme of works for 2013/14, the following schemes are programmed for Caithness and Sutherland.

Location	Scheme	Planned Start	Duration
South of Achnavanich	Structural Maintenance	19/08/2013	2 weeks
Rangag Farm	Structural Maintenance	04/11/2013	2 weeks
Berriedale	Structural Maintenance	15/07/2013	1 week
Badbea	Resurfacing	15/07/2013	1 week
Berriedale Snow Gates	Resurfacing	15/07/2013	1 week
North of Mound Junction	Resurfacing	29/07/2013	1 week
Kirkton Farm, Golspie	Resurfacing	29/07/2013	1 week
Bruan	Resurfacing	22/07/2013	1 week
Balvraid (Filter Material)	Drainage Works	11/11/2013	2 weeks
Colliburn (Filter Drain)	Drainage Works	25/11/2013	2 weeks
Loth Hall (Filter Drain & CPs)	Drainage Works	24/02/2014	3 weeks
Dornoch North (Studs)	Road Marking Works	14/10/2013	2 weeks
	Road Accident Reduction Programme	Programme Construction	
Golspie to Latheron	Investigation report has been drafted and is being reviewed	Sept/Oct 2013	

Appendix 2 – First ScotRail Update for CTF 8th March 2013

Transport Scotland have reported significant interest in the proposed 15-year Caledonian Sleeper franchise, with the Pre Qualification Questionnaire responses due in June and Invitations To Tender in September for response in December, and they hope to notify the winner next August.

Market consultation on the 10-year (with a breakpoint after the 5th) ScotRail franchise took place in May, with the Official Journal of the European Union notice due in July, PQQ August, draft ITT November, bids next April and notification of the winning bidder in October 2014. The Department of Transport have announced their intention to franchise East Coast by 2015.

Club 55 runs until 30 June with East Coast again not taking part but prices unchanged from last time : £19 (£17 with a Senior Railcard) Standard Class or £35 Club 55 Premier.

Last weekend saw the commencement of celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Highland Main Line with a plaque-unveiling at Aviemore. In September there will be further events at Kingussie, Pitlochry and elsewhere.

Highland Main Line services were accelerated up to 18 minutes last December : Network Rail are committed to delivering hourly trains with a 10-minute reduction in journey time and more efficient freight operations by 2019. On the Inverness-Aberdeen line, Transport Scotland's aim by that date is to enhance commuting opportunities on the Elgin-Inverness and Inverurie-Aberdeen stretches and support the promoters of new stations at Dalcross and Kintore.

Measures to alleviate A9 delays during the Kessock Bridge resurfacing include the new station at Conon Bridge that opened on 8 February, enhanced parking at Beaully and Dingwall and additional carriages on selected services. Buses replace trains between Inverness and Dingwall during 29 June-2 July for essential engineering works.

Inverness is among 19 stations to be trialling recycling bins, and is one of 25 being equipped with free wi-fi, which is being rolled out across our Class 170 and 380 fleets. Barrel-train planters made by Barrel Creations of Aberdeenshire have been delivered to Thurso and Wick Stations.

Appendix 3 – Draft Terms of Reference

Aim

The aim of the Forum is to promote a strong, inter-connected road, rail, sea and air transport network to, from and within the county of Caithness for the economic, social and environmental benefit of businesses and residents of Caithness.

In furtherance of the aim, the Forum shall:

- Engage with government agencies, the business sector and the Caithness community to inform and influence planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services to, from and within Caithness.
- Consult with local individuals, organisations and businesses to establish current and future transport needs.
- Establish the extent that existing services meet those needs.
- Engage with statutory, business and voluntary agencies to enhance the effectiveness of transport services and infrastructure and to increase transport provision.
- Promote best practice and most efficient use of existing resources.
- Make information on local, regional and national transport issues available to local individuals, organisations and businesses, where appropriate.
- Consider the implications of and, in consultation with key local transport stakeholders, provide informed opinion on local, regional and national transport policy initiatives.

The Forum will take cognisance of, and promote, the fact that the county is dependent on a variety of transport networks – road, rail, sea and air – and give due attention to each form of transport.

Membership

The Forum will invite membership from key stakeholders at a local level whose involvement it determines will be instrumental in furthering the aims of the Forum.

Status

The Forum will be facilitated by Caithness Chamber of Commerce (CCoC) and its staff and will work closely with the partners in the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP). The remit of the Forum will fit with the aims of CNSRP and Caithness Chamber of Commerce.

CNSRP is a partnership of the main public sector bodies with a remit to address the socio-economic effects of decommissioning at the Dounreay site. The partners are: Highlands & Islands Enterprise, The Highland Council, The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Skills Development Scotland, The Scottish Government and Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd. Its activities are focused on the aims and targets laid out in the Caithness and North Sutherland Action Plan 2011-2014.

CNSRP's Transport Vision states:

By 2020 Caithness will be linked to the rest of Scotland and the UK by fully effective road, rail and air routes. Freight traffic on the far North Railway line will be at consistently high levels, and improvements to journey times will allow passenger usage to increase. Wick Airport will provide important business and leisure connections whilst the main A9 trunk road to and from Inverness will provide a lifeline link for local communities.

CCoC's Mission statement:

Caithness Chamber of Commerce is committed to a vibrant Caithness economy that is successful, sustainable and diverse.

Standing Orders

Meetings

The Forum shall aim to meet once every 3 months. Meetings shall be held on a rotational basis between venues in Wick and Thurso. Notice of meetings will be issued to members at least 10 days prior to the meeting date. Caithness Chamber of Commerce staff will provide secretarial and other administrative and organisational support for meetings and act as a Clerk for the Forum.

Appointment of Chair

The Chair shall be appointed by Caithness Chamber of Commerce and shall facilitate each meeting. The Chamber shall appoint a deputy in the absence of the Chair.

The Chair shall act as spokesperson for the Forum with regards publicity and press comment.

Quorum

No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Forum unless at least one-quarter of the members are present. If during any meeting, after counting the number of members present, the meeting is not quorate, the meeting shall be adjourned to a time decided by the Chair.

Minutes

The minutes will be approved by the Chair and shall normally be issued not less than one month before the date of the next meeting.

Variation and revocation of standing orders

Any addition, variation or revocation of these standing orders shall when propose and seconded stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Forum.