

# COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

## Road Works

Shetland Islands Council's Roads Service, as a matter of course, undertakes and commissions a wide range of maintenance and upgrading work of variable size and scope across the isles.

While the primary focus of such work must always be to maintain the isles' road network to as high a standard as possible, it is essential that the right information is shared with the right stakeholders at the right time, to make sure that any potential impact is minimised.

This strategy is designed to enable Engineers and Team Leaders to build 'communications' into the process when planning for works. It is acknowledged that different approaches will be taken to different projects (depending on the potential impact on stakeholders) but there are template examples provided for larger and smaller pieces of work.

This strategy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing circumstance and experience.

### Stakeholders

- Community stakeholders including local residents, road users and Community Councils;
- other service users including local businesses and shops;
- partner organisations including NHS Community Services, the emergency services, the Post Office and public utilities such as British Telecom;
- SIC stakeholders including Transport Planning, Community Care, Education and elected members;
- the general public; and
- the media.

### Aims

- To identify means of effective engagement with all relevant stakeholders;
- To identify the appropriate tools for clear, two-way communication;
- To outline a potential timeline and plan for engagement with stakeholders;
- To identify and promote the best means of feedback from stakeholders;

### Risks

- Stakeholders hear important information through other channels before being informed through proper channels as this can result in them being misinformed;
- Stakeholders are significantly inconvenienced by works which have not been appropriately explained and described to them;
- SIC suffers reputational damage.

## **Assurances**

- We will communicate with stakeholders about issues affecting them in as timely a fashion as possible. (However, we must bear in mind that projects are disrupted by weather conditions and plant breakdowns. In these situations we may have to amend the works programme in order to ensure its completion within the financial year. This may require the commencement of works with notice periods less than that prescribed in the following “Road Closure Noticing Procedures” section).
- We will tell stakeholders about issues affecting them before we talk to others;
- We will communicate the facts – good and bad – honestly and in a clear and unbiased way, using plain language as far as possible;
- We will make sure stakeholders have access to all the relevant information, including those who do not use email or other digital systems;
- We will listen and reply to questions and queries from stakeholders within 3 working days;

## **Communication Tools**

The following channels can be used to communicate with stakeholders:

### **1. SIC website**

Information can be placed on the appropriate pages of the Roads Services' section of the SIC's website, with options for bullet-points, timescales, and contact details for individual queries.

### **2. Press release**

This information is issued to the media via the weekly Roads Report that details the "whereabouts," the start date and duration of the roadworks that are currently in progress or about to commence in Shetland.

### **3. Community Councils, public buildings.**

The weekly Roads Report is also issued to Community Councils, emergency services, media etc via e-mail. Copies should also be sent, if appropriate, to Care Centres, local schools etc.

### **4. Social Media**

Links to the appropriate information on the SIC's website can be issued through SIC's Twitter account, along with contact details for enquiries. Individual messages can also be communicated as and when appropriate.

### **5. Shetland News/SIBC adverts**

An advert can be posted within the dedicated SIC rolling banner advert space on the Shetland News website, with a direct link to the appropriate information on the SIC's website. This can be updated as appropriate. The SIC also has a contract with SIBC to provide 'spot' adverts of varying durations.

### **6. Non-digital communications**

Non-digital communications are an option if necessary, e.g. leaflets, etc. The Communications Unit can look across any draft material produced, though services should be aware of the time delays etc. involved in sending out material through a mail drop, or as an insert in the Shetland Times.

### **7. Members' briefings**

In some instances, such as long-term road closures for major capital improvement schemes, it is to inform members on any issue that may have an impact on their community. This allows them to answer queries from the public or the media with up-to-date, accurate information. Regular briefings can be issued in email form by Directors/Executive Managers as appropriate.

## Road Closure Noticing Procedures

Procedures to be followed for scenarios, which would result in minimum and significant levels of disruption are detailed below. The Roads Engineer or Team Leader will be responsible for deciding on the procedures used depending on the level of disruption.

### **Scenario 1: Significant Roadworks without Road Closure**

This procedure is to be followed when significant road works are undertaken without the need for a formal road closure but where there may be individual delays of up to 10 minutes. For example, larger scale ditching or patching operations.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>How we will communicate</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Local residents	Notices/signs posted on site.  Consideration of an operational note or press release issued to the media.	1 week prior to commencement on site.  When required.	Removed on commencement of works.  Updated as required.
Service users	Notices/signs posted on site.	“	“
Elected members	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed to elected members on a weekly basis or as and when required.	Updated when required.	Updated as required.
Community Councils	Chair and Clerk notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed on a weekly basis or as and when required.	Prior to commencement on site.	Updated on completion. Further notices for delays.
Partner organisations	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed on a weekly basis or as and when required.  Utilities informed via Roadworks Commission website.	Prior to commencement on site.	Updated on completion. Further notices for delays.
Media	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed to media on a weekly basis.	Updated when required.  When required.	Updated as required.  Updated as required.

## **Scenario 2: Road Closure with Minimum Disruption**

This procedure is to be followed when a road closure is required to undertake relatively minor maintenance for a short duration that may result in minor but not significant diversions, delays or loss of access. For example, King Haakon Street, Lerwick where there are a number of alternative routes for through traffic.

The communication timescales for this type of closure may be reduced where scheduling with advance notice is not available such as a required weather window for weather dependant works or where no disruption would be caused by the loss of access.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>How we will communicate</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Local residents	Notices/signs posted on site.  Consideration of an operational note or press release to be issued to the media.	1 week prior to commencement on site.  When required.	Removed on commencement of works.  Updated as required.
Service users	Notices/signs posted on site.	“	“
Elected members	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed to elected members on a weekly basis or as and when required.	Issued on a weekly basis, updated when required.	Updated as required.
Community Councils	Copies of the relevant notice mailed to each Chair and Clerk.	1 week prior to commencement on site.	Updated on completion. Further notices for delays.
Partner organisations	Copies of the relevant notice mailed to each organisation at the start of the works season.  Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed on a weekly basis or as and when required.  Utilities informed via Roadworks Commission website.	ASAP, min 1 week prior to commencement on site.	Updated on completion. Further notices for delays.
Media	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed to various media on a weekly basis or as and when required.	Issued on a weekly basis, updated when required.	Updated as required.

### **Scenario3: Road Closure with Significant Disruption**

This procedure is to be followed when a road closure is for a lengthy period of more than 5 working days and/or will result in a lengthy diversion. It should also be used when no alternative route is available. For example, the closure of the A968 Dales Lees Road, Delting.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>How we will communicate</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Local residents	A display advert with map is to be advertised in the local press. (This will state whether the works are weather dependent and the implications). Signs posted on site.	2 weeks prior to commencement on site.	Initial notice only.
	Notices/signs posted on site including in local shops etc.	1 week prior to commencement on site.	Initial notice only.
	SIC website.	2 weeks prior and for duration	Completion notice at end of works.
	SIC Twitter account.	1 week prior; repeated as required.	Completion tweet at end of works.
	Shetland News SIC rolling banner.	1 week prior and for duration	Removed at end of works.
	SIBC adverts, where necessary (e.g. short duration changes).	1 week prior and for duration	Cease at end of works.
	Note to "what's on diary" at Radio Shetland.	For duration of works; updated as appropriate.	
	Consideration of an operational note or press release issued to the media.	When required.	Updated as required.
Service users	A display advert with map is to be advertised in the local press. Signs posted on site.	2 weeks prior to commencement on site.	Initial notice only.
Elected members	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed to elected members on a weekly basis.	Issued on a weekly basis, updated when required.	Updated as required.
	Regular briefings for large scale capital improvement schemes.	2 weeks prior to commencement on site.	Every 3 months or at significant stages.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>How we will communicate</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Community Councils	Copies of the relevant notice mailed to each Chair and Clerk.	2 weeks prior to commencement on site.	Updated on completion. Further notices for delays.
Partner organisations	<p>Copies of the relevant notice mailed to each organisation at the start of the works season.</p> <p>Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed on a weekly basis or as and when required.</p> <p>Discuss proposals with Community Care and their partners at NHS Community Services.</p> <p>Utilities informed via Roadworks Commission website.</p>	<p>ASAP, min 2 weeks prior to commencement on site.</p> <p>Issued on a weekly basis, updated when required.</p> <p>Immediately when the need for the closure is identified.</p>	<p>Initial notice only.</p> <p>Give sufficient notice of end of works to allow transition back to their normal work routine.</p> <p>Updated on completion. Further notices for delays.</p>
Media	Notified by the Roads Report which is e-mailed to media on a weekly basis or as and when required.	Issued on a weekly basis, updated when required.	Updated as required.