
OCTOBER 2023 WEATHER EVENT – UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following a period of wet weather which left ground conditions very wet and in many cases saturated, over a months' worth of rain fell over a 36 hour period starting Friday 6 October 2023 and running into Saturday 7 October 2023.
- 1.2 Conditions were so severe that by mid-morning on Saturday 7 October, Police Scotland had declared a major incident and a multiagency tactical response was assembled to ensure that the incident could be managed across the many agencies and communities involved.
- 1.3 Transport connections into and out of Argyll and Bute were severely compromised on Saturday 7 October and for a period of time, all of the trunk roads and many of the local roads were impassable. Numerous people became stranded due to flood waters, landslips and damaged structures. Mountain rescue were deployed along with the coastguard who arranged ground units and a helicopter to support the response to assist Police Scotland who were coordinating the responses in line with protocol for major incident response.
- 1.4 The Council response was significant with reception centres and catering put in place to accommodate individuals who were unable to get home, together with many staff from Roads and Infrastructure assisted by several contractors involved in responding to the chaos and disruption to public infrastructure caused by the event.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

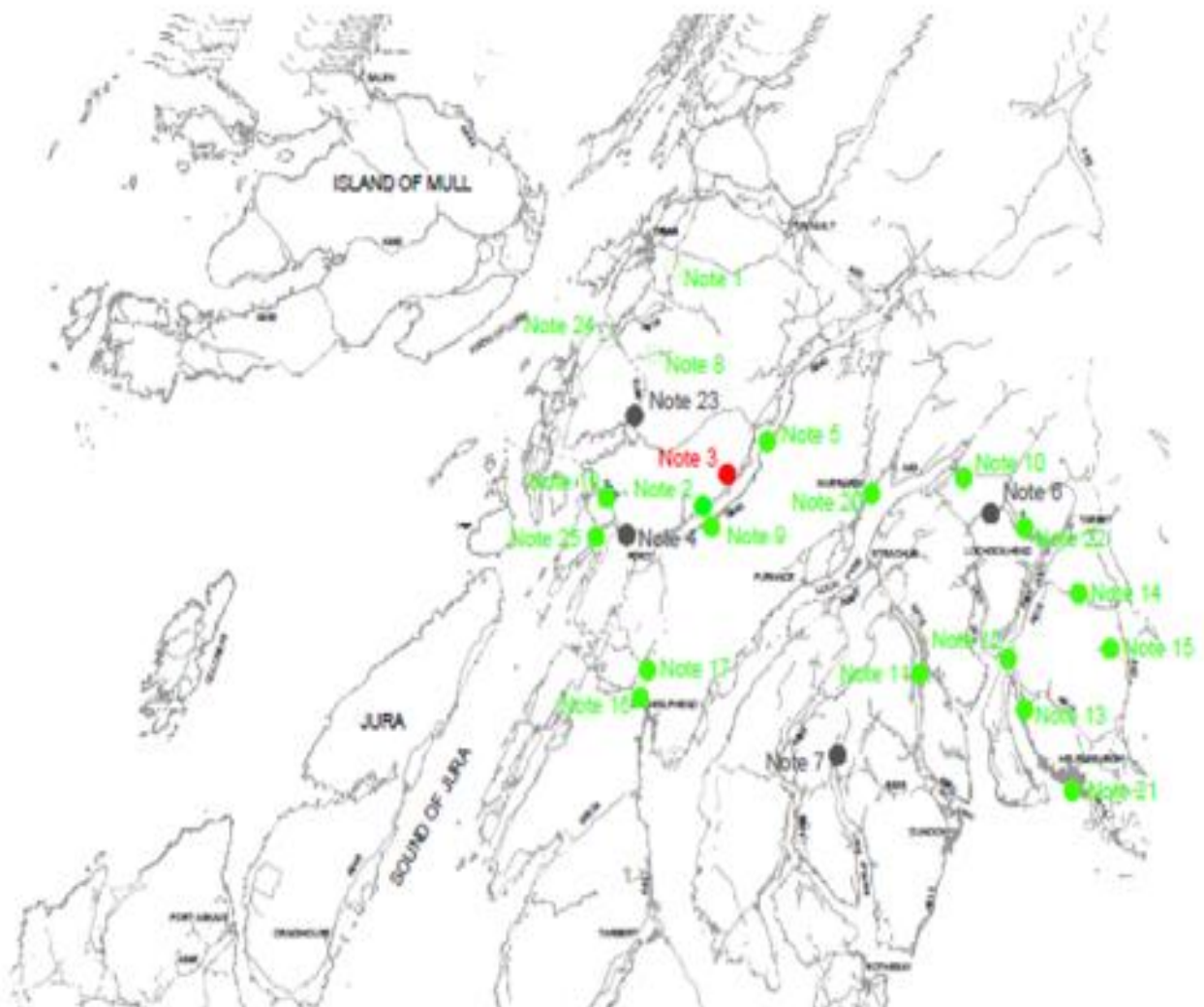
- 2.1 It is recommended that Council consider and note this report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 We are seeing an increasing number of weather events locally, nationally and internationally no doubt linked to climate change. In recent years in Argyll and Bute we have had several weather events including:-
 - West of Mull bridge wash out At the foot of Ben More July 2012;
 - Clachan snow event March 2013 – significant snow fall blocked the road and the weight of frozen snow on power lines resulted in power lines breaking and several thousand households being without power;

- Beast from the east February 2018;
- Sea wall wash out Bute December 2021;
- Numerous flood events in locations such as Lochavullin Oban, East and West Clyde Street Helensburgh, Rothesay, Campbeltown (flood prevention works underway) Lochgilphead Front Green etc.

3.2 The map below shows each of the locations where there was disruption caused (road closed or traffic restricted) across Argyll and Bute's road network on 7 October 2023. It is interesting to note that the weather band was very localised sweeping through the central part of Argyll and Bute, this is illustrated with the damage caused. Also, and perhaps quite unusual, is that the majority of damage caused took place inland rather than on the coast. This very local weather and damage is peculiar to this storm event. As Members will be all too familiar with, often Argyll and Bute, with over 3000 miles of coastline, regularly suffers coastal damage during storms, the recent example being the sea wall on Bute where around 100m was extensively damaged in December 2021.



3.3 Regular updates were provided to Members and the public following the October rain

event and two separate Members Seminars were held in November and December 2023 – copies of these slides can be provided on request.

3.4 The works carried out by following the rain event were extensive with dozens of locations requiring attention from simple cleansing of a small drain to significant landslides and bridge replacements.

3.5 The majority of locations where damage occurred have been reinstated and permanent works are in place. The following table summarises locations where works are still outstanding:

Location	Ongoing works	Scheduled completion
Kilmelford	Bridge parapet, bridge training walls, scour protection along upstream and downstream and narrow footway on the upstream side of the bridge	Late Summer / Autumn 2024
Kilnilver	Rock amour protection to the south east banking which abuts the bridge	Late Summer / Autumn 2024
C30 Ford to Dalavich	Finalising rock protection and vehicle barrier	End of April 2024
Glen Lean B836	Construction of permanent bridge and removal of temporary structure	Late Summer / Autumn 2024
A816 Kintraw catch pits at base of unstable slope	Catch pits and bunds to be completed following the completion of the last of the temporary works land agreement	License agreement anticipated soon with approximately 4-6 weeks of work following signing of the agreement This will allow traffic back onto the original route of the road subject the hillside being stable (monitored via cctv system, hillside saturation level and forecast rainfall). Temporary diversion to be used should there be a risk of material flow from the hillside
A816 Kintraw convoy system 'v' fixed traffic lights	Convoy system continues to operate. Subject to safety audit sign off it is the intention to put in place fixed hard wired	End of April 2024

	<p>traffic lights (wireless radio signals don't have a clear line of sight and would be unreliable).</p> <p>Cost options are being worked up</p>	
<p>A816</p> <p>Kintraw – permanent diversion onto a widened alignment of the emergency route</p>	<p>Archeologist has carried out further investigative works and have given positive feedback. The next stage is further design work including ground investigation, ecology and archeological which will allow for permissions to be sought and a final design progressed for a permanent solution</p> <p>Cost options are being worked up</p>	<p>2 – 5 years</p>

Expenditure and Bellwin Scheme Claim

- 3.6 The Bellwin Scheme exists to give special financial assistance to Local Authorities who would otherwise be faced with an undue financial burden as a result of providing relief and carrying out immediate work due to large-scale emergencies. As a result of the weather incident in October, Argyll and Bute Council activated the Bellwin Scheme with Scottish Government. The Bellwin Scheme normally covers revenue expenditure incurred within a 2 month period from the date of the incident, however at our request, Scottish Government agreed to extend this period to 4 months. Capital expenditure is not claimable via the Bellwin Scheme. Grant is paid at a rate of 100% of eligible expenditure above each Local Authority's annual threshold (Argyll and Bute Council threshold is £0.529m and this has been covered by Crown Estate funding).
- 3.7 A claim amounting to £5.356m of revenue costs was submitted to Scottish Government at the end of the 4 month period and after deducting our threshold of £0.529m this results in a net claim of £4.827m. Scottish Government considered the claim and advised us on 10 April 2024 that they were issuing payment for 90% of the claim which is standard procedure. The Council are required to make a further final claim for the remaining 10% which officers are dealing with.
- 3.8 In addition to receiving the funding via the Bellwin Claim, on 18 March 2024, a letter was received from Mairi McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition confirming that Argyll and Bute Council will receive an additional £2.3m of funding for 2024-25 as a contribution towards the additional costs incurred as a result of the weather incident.
- 3.9 The table below summarises the latest estimated cost of the weather incident, split between what has been (or is expected to be) funded by Scottish Government and what has been provided for in the Council's budget. Any change to the estimates will be reported via the Council's budget monitoring process.

	Total £000	Scottish Government £000	Council £000
Revenue Expenditure Claimed Via Bellwin	5,356	4,344 (already received) 483 (final claim due)	529
Revenue Expenditure outwith 4 month period	839	457 (included in £2.3m payment)	382
Capital Expenditure not claimable via Bellwin	4,348	1,843 (included in £2.3m payment)	2,505
Total Estimated Expenditure	10,543	7,127	3,416

Next Steps

- 3.10 Our initial focus is to complete the various works still outstanding and to continue to monitor slopes where debris flows may affect the road network. Cost estimates are being finalised for the convoy 'v' traffic lights and permanent solution for the A816 Kintraw.
- 3.11 Climate change is a significant challenge to the Council for a number of reasons but not least it is a challenge for the road and transport infrastructure. This report highlights some of the challenges faced recently and over the last decade or so. The road and wider transport system provides the economic backbone for our communities. We need to have infrastructure which is fit for purpose and sufficiently resilient to withstand the increasing weather challenges we are experiencing which are linked closely to climate change. The building of a bypass on the A816, strengthening bridges, and modifying roadside ditches are all adaptations being progressed to better accommodate some of the climate changes we are seeing. However, more will be needed to be done and whilst the works mentioned above will increase our infrastructure's resilience to future weather events, the network overall is fragile and unable to cope with significant weather events.
- 3.12 It will be necessary to see more infrastructure investment put in place to enable climate change adaptations to be made. The level of investment will be significant and the Council will need to consider how its funding can be assembled and what lobbying can be progressed with Scottish and UK Governments.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report summarises the rain event which caused significant travel disruption and damage during the weekend of 7 October. The report also summarises the extent of works that have been carried out to repair the damage and considers what our next steps should be as detailed in paragraph 3.8 above.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – policies in place for climate change, coast protection etc where applicable these policies are being worked to.
- 5.2 Financial – new costs pressures have no identified funds to respond to the infrastructure damage. A Bellwin claim is being progressed for eligible costs and works not eligible for Bellwin will need to be funded. A financial summary is being prepared for schemes which continued after the end date of the Bellwin Scheme and therefore have no identified funding for costs after 7th February 2024.
- 5.3 Legal – various land agreements necessary for individual locations.
- 5.4 HR – none known.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known.
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known.
 - 5.5.3 Islands – none known.
- 5.6 Climate Change – the impact of the storm is very closely linked to climate change and the October event has highlighted to need for further adaptation to be made to infrastructure to increase our resilience to future weather events. The level of investment to improve resilience is expected to be significant.
- 5.7 Risk – significant risk of similar future events impacting our infrastructure.
- 5.8 Customer Service – none known.
- 5.9 Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – investment to improve our road network will contribute to a safer environment for young people to thrive in.

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