



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Item: 7

Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee: 8 September 2026.

Column Mounted Decoration Policy.

Report by Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

1. Overview

- 1.1. This report presents a review of the Column Mounted Decoration Policy for members' consideration.
- 1.2. Orkney Islands Council receives occasional requests from Community Councils, community organisations, event organisers and election candidates to install festive decorations, banners, bunting and campaign material, over or adjacent to the public road network.
- 1.3. Given Orkney's classification as an extra heavy wind zone, strict windage limits apply to Council infrastructure. The limited size of signage that can be safely installed on lighting columns, particularly older columns, makes it essential that such installations are effectively controlled and managed.
- 1.4. The policy establishes requirements and responsibilities relating to the installation, maintenance, inspection and removal of column mounted decorations and similar features within the roads boundary. It also sets out technical requirements, insurance obligations and application procedures.
- 1.5. Following a review of the existing policy, and to formalise the management of similar requests, the policy has been revised to cover all column-mounted decorations rather than solely festive decorations. While the specification itself has changed little, the revised policy now encompasses a broader range of decorations.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Approve the Column Mounted Decoration Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council currently provides and maintains festoon-style festive decorations within Kirkwall, Stromness and St Margaret's Hope. These displays contribute to the festive appearance of the towns and are installed on approved infrastructure in accordance with relevant safety requirements.
- 3.2. Community Councils and local community groups may also provide decorations within their own areas, subject to obtaining the necessary permissions and complying with the technical, electrical and safety requirements set out within the Policy.
- 3.3. Community Councils or other community group acting as applicant are required to cover the cost of the purchase and installation of any additional decorations. The Council will continue to cover electricity costs.

For Further Information please contact:

Matthew Wylie, Service Manager (Roads and Grounds), extension 2318, Email matthew.wylie@orkney.gov.uk

Implications of Report

1. **Financial** – The applicant is responsible for on-going costs associated with erection, maintenance, repair and storage of decorations. The Council continues to meet the cost of electrical supply. This cost is considered to be minimal, approximately £350-£400, and met from existing approved budget for Street Lighting.
2. **Legal** – Approving the Policy will support the Council in complying with section 90 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and establishes conditions under which consent may be granted for installations within or adjacent to the public road network.
3. **Corporate Governance** - Although section 2.9.2 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers refers to the operational management of street lighting, Christmas trees and other decorative features, approval via Committee of any new or revised Policy establishes the governance framework and principles that will apply to those activities.
4. **Human Resources** – No adverse impacts envisaged.
5. **Equalities** – An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

- 7. Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
- ☐ Growing our economy.
 - ☒ Strengthening our Communities.
 - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
 - ☐ Transforming our Council.
- 8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
- ☐ Cost of Living.
 - ☐ Sustainable Development.
 - ☐ Local Equality.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
- 9. Environmental and Climate Risk** – All lighting provided and installed must be energy-efficient, low-wattage LED lighting. The use of LED technology helps minimise electricity consumption, reduces environmental impact, and supports the Council’s climate change and sustainability objectives.
- 10. Risk** – Signage or decorations installed on Council infrastructure that exceed the technical specifications set out in the Policy may place undue loading on the asset and increase the risk of structural failure.
- 11. Procurement** – No adverse impacts envisaged.
- 12. Health and Safety** – The Policy helps to protect public safety by ensuring that all decorations, banners and other attachments to Council infrastructure are installed, maintained and removed in accordance with recognised technical and safety standards. The requirements relating to structural loading, electrical safety, inspection, maintenance, insurance and safe working practices reduce the risk of injury to members of the public, road users and operatives, while also ensuring that installations do not compromise the safe operation of the road network.
- 13. Property and Assets** – No adverse impacts envisaged.
- 14. Information Technology**- No adverse impacts envisaged.
- 15. Cost of Living** - No adverse impacts envisaged.

List of Background Papers

Column Mounted Festive Decoration Policy 2021 – 2026, Approved by Environmental, Property and IT Services on 7 September 2021.

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/media/yualz2ll/column-mounted-festive-decoration-policy-2021-2026.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Column Mounted Decoration Policy.

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 3 – Island Communities Impact Assessment.



Column Mounted Decoration Policy 2026-2031

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Document Control and Council Approval

Version Number/Date.	V2/August 2026.
Approved by Council	(E&I Meeting) XX XXXXX 2026 (Date of approval).
Next Update Due.	August 2031.

1. Policy

1.1. Introduction

Section 90 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 requires that anyone who wishes to affix overhead apparatus over, along or across a road (including associated footways and verges) must first obtain consent from the Roads Authority. This Policy sets out how consent can be obtained, the standards that must be met and the general conditions that will apply for anyone looking to install festive decorations, banners, bunting, election posters or any attachments to street lighting columns in Orkney.

Orkney Islands Council may remove, if appropriate without notice, any installation which has been installed without consent or which does not fully comply with the conditions of its consent. We will seek to recover from the responsible body the costs for removal along with the costs of making good any damage caused to public assets.

1.2. Attachments To Street-Lighting Columns

Attachments to columns may be made subject to consent being granted from the Council and compliance with any conditions imposed.

For many types of apparatus, a professional assessment of the security, suitability and location of the apparatus and fixings will be necessary. Such installations covered in this Policy includes:

- Festive Decorations (see section 2).
- Banners (see section 5).
- Bunting (see section 6).
- Display of Election Posters and Campaign Material on lighting columns (see section 7).

Where permission is granted to fix an attachment to a lighting column, this must be fixed to the shaft of the column only and not to the lantern or any bracket. Attachments must not be fixed to wall-mounted lights, traffic signs, control pillars, or any other street-furniture. All attachments, and their contents if applicable, are to be maintained to an acceptable standard during the lifetime of the consent.

1.3. Fixings

Fixings shall be of a corrosion-resistant material and of sufficient strength to withstand the design wind loading. All attachments shall be fitted with a 5mm neoprene (or other approved insert) to prevent damage to the column surface or any protective treatment. Metal to metal contact shall be avoided.

2. Festive Decoration Specification

Orkney Islands Council no longer provides additional festive decorations, it is the responsibility of the community council or community association to purchase, erect, maintain, and store their own. All decorations erected on the streetlight columns must be approved by the Council's Roads Services. The only cost to the Council is for the electricity supply.

2.1. Policy

Community councils and community groups, hereafter referred to as 'the applicant', will be responsible for all future maintenance, erection, and storage of the decorations and associated electrical fittings.

2.2. Permission

The applicant will be required to request permission from the Council to erect decorations on street light columns. The following must be supplied to the Council for approval.

1. Number of decorations.
2. Location of decorations.
3. Specification of decorations including but not limited to size, windage, wattage, and material.
4. Details of how they will be erected, removed, and maintained.
5. Details of public liability insurance.

The Council reserves the right to reject or remove any installation on the network on the grounds of safety.

2.3. Siting On Column

No decorations shall be sited on columns which already support lit road signage or warning sign.

No decoration shall interfere with or obstruct access for structural or cyclic maintenance to any part of the column or lantern.

Decorations must be located at least 1m below the road lantern.

There is no maximum size of decoration however they must be erected at least 500mm from the road edge and be fitted 2.5m above the footway. Decorations should be fitted to the roadside of the column (front). Where this is not possible the decoration may be fitted to the rear of the column.

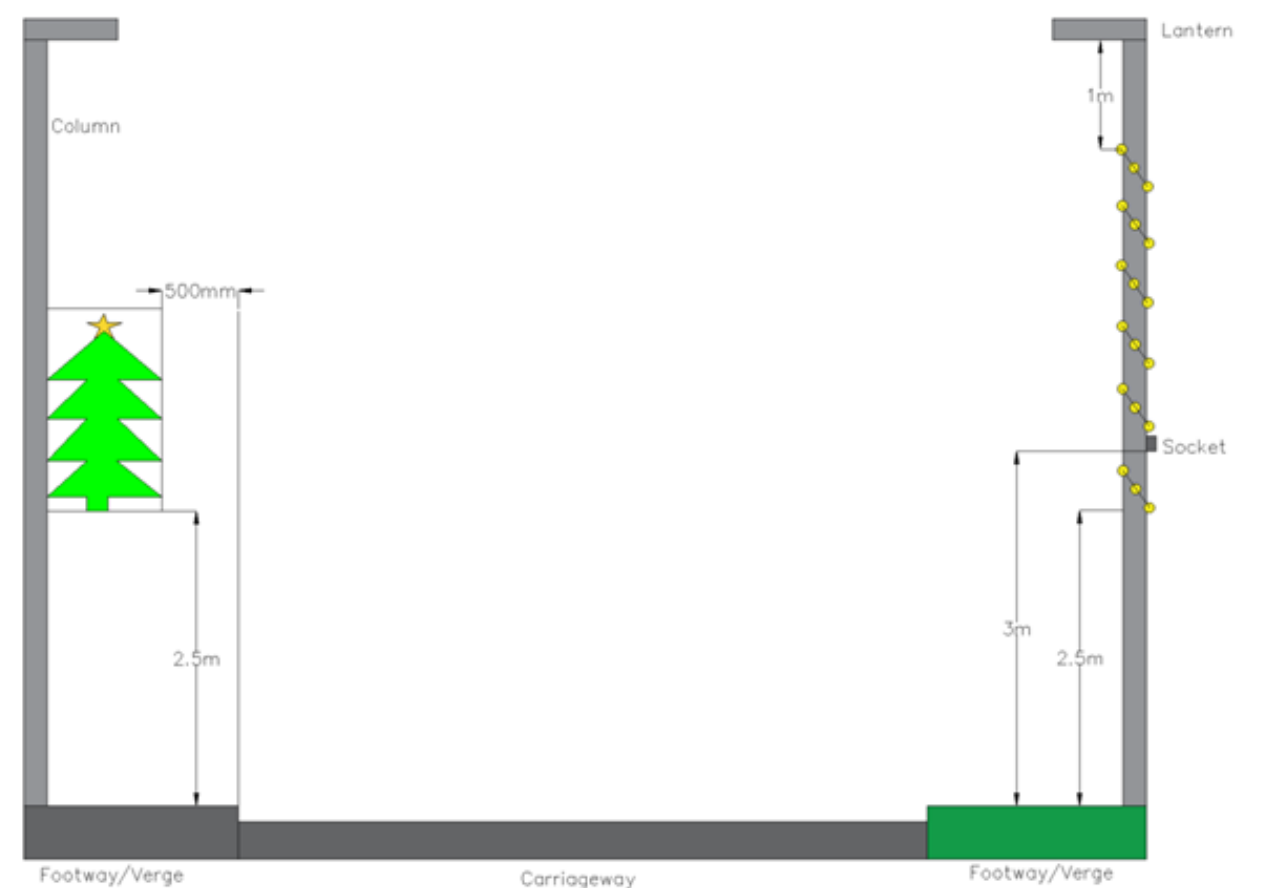


Figure 1 - Festive light siting requirements

2.4. Windage

Maximum windages for a 6m column is 0.35m² and for 8m column is 0.25m².

2.5. Weight

Decorations must not weigh more than 10kg.

2.6. Material

All decorations must be aluminium or galvanised.

3. Electrical

3.1. Electrical Supply

All electrical supplies must comply with the requirements of the current version of the IET Wiring Regulations.

Protective earthing must be maintained and a 30mA RCD shall be installed at the point of origin.

All external electrical sockets must be sited at least 3m above the footway/verge.

All parts of the electrical installation must be at least IP66 rated and ensure that no water can ingress into the Streetlight Column.

3.2. Wattage

Maximum 55W, however this should be reduced where possible.

Rope lights should be LED Platinum, specifically for use on outdoor features with 30 LED per metre, 12mm diameter and 4W/m. Various other accessories are required include end caps, glue etc and must be compatible with the LED rope light. The rope light should be one continuous length with as few joints as possible.

3.3. Payment Of Electricity

The Council will pay for all ongoing cost for the electricity supply.

4. Maintenance and Testing

4.1. Maintenance

The applicant will be responsible for on-going costs associated with maintenance of decorations and brackets, repairs to rope light and storage of materials when not in use. They will also be responsible for the replacement of any damaged decoration.

The Council will remove any decorations that are dangerous and recover all reasonable costs associated with removal or repair from the applicant.

Where streetlight columns are replaced, the Council will undertake all works necessary to relocate the decoration and fitting onto the new column at no cost to the applicant.

All works undertaken on the public road must comply with Safety at Street and Road Works: A code of practice 2013.

4.2. Testing and Inspection

All installations must be inspected and tested prior to commissioning in accordance with the IET's Guidance Note 3: Inspection and Testing.

Any rope lights left in place over the summer months must be fully inspected prior to the start of the festive period.

All inspection, testing and maintenance must be undertaken by a competent person.

A certificate for the installation must be submitted to the Council prior to fully energizing the decorations.

The Council reserves the right to disconnect and/or remove any decoration which may be deemed a hazard to the public or OIC staff.

4.3. Supplier

There is no preferred supplier provided the specification set in this Policy is met.

4.4. Months Of Use

Festive Decorations may be in place from 1 November and must be removed as soon as is practicable following the festive period, however no later than 31 January. Works to install lighting may begin before November but they must not be connected until 1 November.

Column wraps are excluded from this provided planning permission has been granted for these to remain in place all year round.

4.5. Storage

The applicant is responsible for the storage of all decorations.

4.6. Insurance

The applicant must ensure that the installation is covered by public liability insurance to a value of £5,000,000 at all times.

5. Banners

5.1. General

Organisations wishing to erect a banner over or across a road or footway must obtain consent from the Roads Authority before doing so. Applications should be sent to RoadsSupport@orkney.gov.uk

Banners shall only be permitted in association with sporting, cultural or community events or public service campaigns. Advertising shall not be permitted and banners featuring the name of commercial organisations shall only be considered where the business name is an integral part of the event name. Banners associated with an event must not be erected more than 14 days in advance of the event and must be removed no later than 7 days after the event. The organisation erecting the banner must indemnify Orkney Islands Council against any claims that arise because of the installation and be covered by public liability insurance to a value of at least £5,000,000.

5.2. Column-Mounted Banners

Column-mounted banners must be supported with EN40 compliant Euro Chieftain fixings and banner size must comply with windage requirements of 0.35m² for a 6m column and 0.25m² for an 8m column.

Banners will not be permitted on columns with existing signage or apparatus installed.

Permission will not normally be granted for banners stretching across the carriageway.

5.3. Siting and Mounting Heights

All banners must comply with the specifications detailed in Section 2.3 of this Policy.

5.4. Application Process

Applications must be made in writing or by email to the Roads Support Team with all the details specified below:

1. Name and contact details of applicant;
2. Details of banner (size, type, materials, and fixings);
3. Reason for wishing to erect banner;
4. Dates the banner will go up and come down;
5. Details of location and fixing points;
6. Evidence of insurance;
7. Details of the proposed method of working (see Section 8: safe working practices for erecting and removing features); and
8. confirmation that the applicant has read this Policy, and that the requirements contained within this Policy will be fully met.

6. Bunting

6.1. General

Organisations wishing to erect bunting along or across a road or footway must obtain consent from the Roads Authority before doing so. Applications should be sent to RoadsSupport@orkney.gov.uk

Bunting associated with an event must not be erected more than 14 days in advance of the event and must be removed no later than 7 days after the event. The organisation erecting the bunting must indemnify Orkney Islands Council against any claims that arise because of the installation and be covered by public liability insurance to a value of at least £5,000,000.

Bunting must be fixed to ensure that it cannot be pulled at any point to encroach into the pedestrian clearance zone (2.5m ground clearance) nor the vehicle clearance zone (5.8m ground clearance). The height of the pedestrian clearance zone should be increased to 3.4m where horse riders may be expected.

Permission will normally only be granted for fixing bunting along or over streets with a speed limit of 30mph or less.

All bunting and its associated fixings must be constructed from a material that would snap under excessive loading. The use of polypropylene rope, twine or other materials to reinforce or support the bunting is not permitted.

Bunting should be arranged with short distances between fixings and no catenary span should exceed 20 metres. Long continuous lengths of bunting should be avoided. It should be fixed in sections so that a problem in one location does not affect other locations.

6.2. Bunting Along the Street

Where bunting is:

1. Fixed entirely over footways, verges, or other areas where vehicles are excluded;
2. Attached only to private buildings, lighting columns or trees; **and**
3. Complies fully with the requirements of section 6.1.

Then applicants should apply to the Roads Support team in writing or email and supply the following details:

1. Name and contact details of applicant;
2. Details of bunting (size, type, materials, and fixings);
3. Reason for wishing to erect bunting;
4. Dates the bunting will go up and come down and dates of the associated event;
5. Exact details of location bunting spans and fixing points including maximum span length;
6. Evidence of insurance;
7. Details of the proposed method of working (see Section 8: safe working practices for erecting and removing features); and
8. confirmation that the applicant has read this Policy, and that the requirements contained within this Policy will be fully met.

6.3. Bunting Across the Street

When bunting crosses a street, it must be fixed to secure mounting points on buildings or other structures. It must **not** be fixed to streetlighting columns.

Permission will not normally be granted for bunting across a freight route such as within Hatston Industrial Estate. Where permission is granted the height of the vehicle clearance zone shall be 7.5m.

Applications must be made in writing or by email with all the details specified in section 6.2.

7. Display of Election Posters and Campaign Materials

The Council will permit the display of election posters on lighting columns within the Council area in connection with any election but only if they comply with the conditions stipulated herein.

Prior to any posters being displayed, an email must be sent to RoadsSupport@Orkney.gov.uk, for the attention of the Team Manager (Roads Support) to:

- Seek permission to display campaign election posters.
- Agrees to indemnify the Council against any damages as a result of the display of such election posters.
- Agrees that Roads Services, where material is displayed in breach of this Policy shall remove it as soon as practicable and then recharge the election agent or independent candidate to recover the costs in doing so.
- Agrees that posters, mounts, string and cable ties are removed within the 7 days following the election.

The following conditions must be met:

- Campaign posters must not be displayed prior to the date of announcement of an election.
- In any circumstances must not be located upon control boxes or upon roundabouts.
- Be located not to interfere with the visibility required for persons emerging from side roads or private accesses.
- Must be so mounted that the poster and mount will not afford any resistance or damage to a vehicle coming into contact with them.
- Posters attached to lighting columns must be first fixed to card of adequate stiffness which in turn must be tied with string or cable ties to the road lighting column. The mounting height of the card must not be less than 2100 mm (7 ft) above the height of the adjoining footway.
- The area of any poster must not exceed 0.2 sq. m, and the maximum overall vertical or horizontal dimension must not exceed 500 mm.

8. Safe Working Practices for Erecting and Removing Features

The installation, maintenance and removal of decorative features within public areas can expose both the person carrying out the operation and members of the general public to various hazards. For this reason, it is essential that any person carrying out this work is competent and qualified to do so.

All operations within the road boundary shall comply with Safety at Street and Road Works: a code of practice 2013. (Reference / link to this <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-at-street-works-and-road-works>)

Risk assessment and method statements should be in place prior to commencing any works.

Ladders must not be placed against lighting column shafts.

Self-supporting ladders, free-standing platforms or mobile elevated work platforms should be utilised as appropriate.



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a proposal or changes by anticipating the consequences and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

Should you have any questions or wish for your draft EqIA to be reviewed by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, please contact OD@orkney.gov.uk.

1. Identification of the Proposal or Change

Name of proposal or change being assessed.	Column Mounted Decoration Policy.
Responsible Service and Directorate.	Infrastructure Services, Infrastructure and Organisational Development.
Date of assessment.	4 August 2026.
Is the proposal or change existing? (Please indicate if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Review of existing policy.

2. Primary Information

What are the intended outcomes of the proposal or change?	To provide clear specification to the local community on what is permissible to attach to OIC Roads infrastructure, either permanently, or on a seasonal basis.
Is the proposal or change strategically important?	Strategic plans include major investment plans, new strategic frameworks or plans such as annual budgets, locality plans or corporate plans. Where a proposal is identified as strategic, evidence relating to socio-economic impacts and inequalities will be required in the relevant section No.

State who is or may be affected by this proposal or change, and how?	Community Councils and any community organisation looking to affix decorations or advertisements on OIC Roads assets, primarily street light columns.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this proposal or change?	As this Policy is concerned with maintaining the safe loading limits of Council infrastructure, it is not subject to consultation. Consequently, no consultation has been undertaken.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking.	No.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	No.
Could the proposal or change have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons:
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No differential impact.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No differential impact.

3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No differential impact.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No differential impact.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No differential impact.
6. Age: people of different ages.	No differential impact.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No differential impact.
8. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	No differential impact.
9. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No differential impact.
10. Caring responsibilities	No differential impact.
11. Socio-economic disadvantage.	No differential impact.
12. Care experienced	No differential impact.

3. Impact Assessment

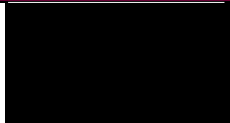
Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	No
Does the analysis above identify any potential negative impacts?	No
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes

4. Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please complete the following action plan where you have identified any differential impacts or potential negative impacts in Section 3 of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Impact Identified	Action to be taken	Owner	How will it be monitored	Date Action to be completed

5. Sign and Date

Signature:	
Name:	Matthew Wylie
Date:	4 August 2026

Island Communities Impact Assessment

Column Mounted Decoration Policy

Preliminary Considerations	Response
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	To review and implement new 5-year Column Mounted Decoration Policy.
Step 1 – Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Response
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	To provide clear specification to the local community on what is permissible to attach to OIC Roads infrastructure, either permanently, or on a seasonal basis.
Do you need to consult?	No.
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	Islands are defined as any inhabited island within Orkney.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	To provide clear specification to the local community on what is permissible to attach to OIC Roads infrastructure, either permanently, or on a seasonal basis.
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	No – Review of existing with minor changes only such as the inclusion of all decorations rather than just festive decorations.
Step 2 – Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Response
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	N/A
Do you need to consult?	No
How does any existing data differ between islands?	N/A
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	N/A
Step 3 – Consultation	Response

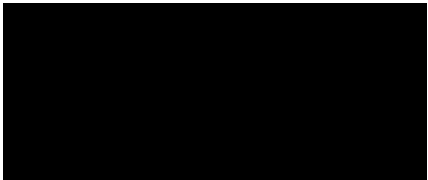
Who do you need to consult with?	As this Policy is concerned with maintaining the safe loading limits of Council infrastructure, it is not subject to consultation. Consequently, no consultation has been undertaken.
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	N/A
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	N/A
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	N/A
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	N/A
Step 4 – Assessment	Response
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	No
How will you address these?	N/A
You must now determine whether in your opinion your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community, which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities). If your answer is No to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and you can proceed to Step 6. If the answer is Yes, an ICIA must be prepared and you should proceed to Step 5. To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:	

• Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)? • Are these different effects likely? • Are these effects significantly different? • Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the Scottish mainland or between island groups?	
Step 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Response
In Step 5, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	
Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Stage 6 – Making adjustments to your work	Response
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	N/A
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	N/A
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	N/A

Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	N/A
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	N/A
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	N/A
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	N/A
Step 7 – Publishing your ICIA	Response
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	Yes
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	Published on Council's website as part of the Committee report agenda.
Who will sign off your final ICIA and why?	Lorna Richardson, Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development, in accordance with Council policy.

ICIA completed by:	Matthew Wylie
Position:	Service Manager (Roads and Grounds)
Signature:	
Date complete:	3 August 2026

ICIA approved by:	Lorna Richardson
Position:	Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

Signature:	
Date complete:	5 August 2026