

# Transport Scotland submission of 11 May 2023

## PE1936/I: Remove Potholes from Scotland's Roads

Thank you for your letter of 18 April requesting consideration on a number of areas relating to potholes on Scotland's roads.

Transport Scotland officials have provided an update on the following areas, attached as Appendix A to this letter:

- Concerns raised by the Civil Engineering Contractors Association that spending on motorways and trunk roads was reduced in the 2023-24 budget, and what action is being taken to help build resilience into the road network across Scotland.
- The announcement in the UK Budget of additional funding for pothole repairs and whether the resulting consequential will be made available for pothole repair in Scotland.

I hope this information is helpful.

## **Appendix A**

### **TRUNK ROADS**

Transport Scotland, through our Trunk Road Operating Companies and Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) Concessionaries, is responsible for the management and maintenance of the strategic trunk road network including motorways.

In 2023-24 we are investing £525 million in managing, maintaining, and safely operating the Scottish motorway and trunk road network. We will continue to invest in our extensive trunk road maintenance and operations programmes, to improve Scotland's trunk road network through essential road maintenance schemes, our bridge strengthening programme, renewal of ancillary assets and increasing the resilience of the network to unplanned events such as landslides, flooding and extreme weather events. In addition, the overall condition of our network is being enhanced through the delivery of our capital investment programme, including the A9 dualling programme.

Transport Scotland has maintenance contracts in place with Operating Companies to provide Scottish trunk roads that are safe, efficient, and well managed. As part of their continuing inspection and management of the trunk road network, our Operating Companies have an obligation to inspect the network twice weekly. These inspections are primarily to identify defects that require prompt attention (Category 1 defects) because they present, or could present, an immediate hazard to road users, including cyclists. The Scottish Government fully funds the repair of all road surface Category 1 potholes, which are repaired by the Operating Companies within the strict timescales set out in their contracts. All Category 1 defects in the road surface must be made safe by 6am the following morning and permanently repaired within 28 days.

The Transport Scotland Road Asset Management Plan (RAMP) sets out how Scotland's trunk road network is maintained strategically and efficiently in order to protect our assets and ensure maximum value for money from our road maintenance activities.

### **LOCAL ROADS**

With regards to local roads, local authorities have a duty under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to manage and maintain local roads in their

area and duties under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic.

Local authorities are independent corporate bodies with their own powers and responsibilities and are entirely separate from the Scottish Government and consequently are afforded financial freedom to act independently. As such, the vast majority of funding is provided by means of a block grant. It is then the responsibility of individual local authorities to manage their own budgets and to allocate the total financial resources available to them, including on road repairs, on the basis of local needs and priorities, having first fulfilled their statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities. Ultimately, it is for locally elected representatives to make local decisions on how best to deliver services to their local communities.

The Scottish Government recognises the crucial role which local authorities and their employees play in communities across Scotland and the challenging financial circumstances they face. That's why the Scottish Government is working with COSLA to agree a New Deal for Local Government in Scotland, aiming to balance greater flexibility over local financial arrangements with improved accountability for delivering outcomes. Despite UK Government cuts, the Scottish Government has protected local authorities in the most challenging Budget since devolution to provide nearly £13.5 billion in the 2023-24 Local Government Settlement – a cash increase of over £793 million or 6.3%, which is a real terms increase of £376 million or 3%.