



Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

Call for Views

Pre-Budget/Financial scrutiny on roads maintenance in Scotland

The Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee wants to hear your views on the efficacy of the current approach to roads maintenance in Scotland and the adequacy of current associated expenditure levels. In particular, the Committee would like to hear your views on the following areas —

- How have recent spending decisions on roads maintenance affected the quality of Scotland's roads, road users, businesses, public services, and the economy?
- If spending on roads maintenance continues at current levels, what could be the likely effects on the above groups?
- How could any negative effects of reduced road spending best be addressed?
- Is the current model of funding and delivering roads maintenance, which is split between Transport Scotland and local authorities, the most economic and efficient option?

The responses to these questions will allow the Committee to consider how national budgetary allocations support both Transport Scotland and local authorities to maintain roads.

This activity will support an element of the Committee's scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2020-21 later in the year, as well as wider fiscal issues related to roads maintenance.

Background information on roads maintenance in Scotland can be found in the attached Annex.

How to submit your evidence

Please note that in most cases **your written submission will be published on the Scottish Parliament's website and may be quoted in the Committee's report or in Committee meetings (which are public and broadcast).**

If you wish to request that your submission be published without your name, please contact us (see contact details below).

Before making a submission, please read our privacy notice about submitting your views to a Committee [Privacy Notice](#). This tells you about how we process your personal data.

Please send your views **no later than Friday 6 September**.

Responses should be sent, wherever possible, electronically and in MS Word format to: rec.committee@parliament.scot

Hard copy responses may be sent to: *Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, T3.60, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP*

Ideally, responses should be **no more than four sides of A4 in length**.

We welcome written views in English, Gaelic, Scots or any other language. Due to the time required to process and analyse evidence, late submissions will only be accepted with the agreement of the Committee.

Contact

Should you require alternative formats of this information or further assistance in making a written submission to the Committee, please do not hesitate to contact the clerking team of the Committee.

For Committee information, contact: Steve Farrell, tel 0131 348 5211, email: rec.committee@parliament.scot

For media information contact: Tim Hustler, tel 0131 348 6270, email: tim.hustler@parliament.scot

For general parliamentary enquiries, contact: 0845 278 1999 (local call rate), email: sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

Further information on the budget process:
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/82912.aspx>

Road Maintenance in Scotland

Background information

Scotland's public road network is 56,364km long, of which 3,681km (6.5%) are trunk roads. The following sections briefly outline who is responsible for the maintenance of these roads and their current condition.

Trunk roads: The trunk road network, which includes all of Scotland's motorways, primarily caters for longer distance traffic between Scotland's major towns, cities, airports and ports. It is Scottish Ministers' single biggest asset, with a value of £20.8bn. The network is very diverse, ranging from a ten-lane section of the M8 in the centre of Glasgow to single carriageway sections in the west Highlands.

While the Scottish trunk road network is owned by Scottish Ministers, Transport Scotland is responsible for its development, management and maintenance. Day-to-day management and maintenance of the network is handled by [four geographic trunk road maintenance units](#) (south-west, south-east, north-east and north-west) and one for the Forth Road Bridges. Each is operated by a private sector contractor, awarded a contract following a competitive tendering exercise.

The holders of the current trunk road operating contracts are set out in the table below:

Contract	Operator
North East Scotland	BEAR Scotland
North West Scotland	BEAR Scotland
South East Scotland	Amey
South West Scotland	Scotland TranServ
Forth Bridges	Amey

Transport Scotland began the [process of retendering the South-East and South-West contracts](#) in August 2018.

In addition to these geographic contracts, there are five Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) operators, responsible for the management and maintenance of stretches of trunk roads under contract to Scottish Ministers/Transport Scotland. These are:

- **DBFO Autolink:** the A74(M) from Junction 12 to the English Border
- **PPP Connect:** the M77 from Junction 5 to Fenwick
- **Highway Management (Scotland) Ltd:** the M80 from Steps to Haggs
- **Scottish Roads Partnership:** core section of the M8, M73, M74 network
- **Aberdeen Roads Ltd:** The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

In 2017-18, 13.4% of motorways, 8.6% of trunk road dual carriageway and 11.3% of trunk road single carriageway roads were life expired – that is, had reached the point

where it may be necessary to undertake road reconstruction rather than resurfacing/strengthening to restore the road's full life.

Local roads: Scotland's 32 local authorities are designated as "local roads authorities" under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. Each authority is responsible for the management and maintenance of all roads included in its list of public roads.

In 2017/18 some 37% of the local road network may require some kind of maintenance.

Previous investigations into Scottish road maintenance issues

Audit Scotland has investigated both local and trunk road maintenance matters on several occasions since 2004, as briefly summarised below:

[Maintaining Scotland's Roads](#) (Audit Scotland 2004): The first investigation into the condition of Scotland's roads conducted by Audit Scotland. Key findings were that 13% of Scotland's roads should be considered for repair now and 31% require further investigation. There was a maintenance backlog worth £1.7bn on local roads and £232m on trunk roads

[Maintaining Scotland's Roads: A follow-up report](#) (Audit Scotland 2011): The condition of Scotland's roads continued to deteriorate following the first audit, with the percentage of all local roads in an acceptable condition falling from 70% in 2005 to 66% in 2010 and trunk roads in an acceptable condition falling from 84% to 78% over the same period. This obviously meant that the size of the maintenance backlog had increased

Scottish National Roads Maintenance Review (2012) ([Summary](#)): In response to the findings of the 2011 Audit Scotland report, Transport Scotland, working with local authority partners, undertook a review of road maintenance in Scotland. The report set out 30 options for consideration and implementation, with a strong emphasis on the development of shared road maintenance functions amongst local authorities.

[Maintaining Scotland's Roads](#) (2013) A brief update report on the implementation of previous Audit Scotland recommendations and the National Roads Maintenance review by local authorities. This found there had been a marginal improvement in the condition of local roads since 2010, despite falling investment. However, many of the recommended actions were yet to be implemented by some authorities.

[Maintaining Scotland's Roads: A follow-up report](#) (Audit Scotland 2016): This found that the condition of local roads had remained broadly stable since the last audit, with a slight fall in the proportion of trunk roads in an acceptable condition (90% to 87%) – all within the context of declining road maintenance budgets.

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