

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

PRE-BUDGET/FINANCIAL SCRUTINY ON ROADS MAINTENANCE IN SCOTLAND

SUBMISSION FROM DAVID HAMILTON

Your Committee seeks views on the efficacy of the current approach to road maintenance in Scotland, and the adequacy of current expenditure levels.

This, I feel strongly, is your job. Speak to key stakeholders, road maintenance is, I believe, failing badly.

How have recent spending decisions on roads maintenance affected the quality of Scotland's roads, road users, businesses, public services, and the economy?

- Driving experience suggests poorer road conditions year after year. Drivers evade road surface issues with consequences for near misses and road accidents. Cyclists particularly badly served. Businesses use road as cheapest form of delivery, all costs passed to consumers hence we could all be better off if roads improved.
- Transport Scotland produce excellent data including road condition and road maintenance spend by category. Priority must, I feel, be given to reconstruction thus improving contractor experience, enlarging the maintenance equipment pool, and reducing cost. Surface dressing must be a final and last option not first priority.

If spending on roads maintenance continues at current levels, what could be the likely effects on the above groups?

- Use your own imagination! Decline to failure, I'd say.

How could any negative effects of reduced road spending best be addressed?

- Clarity of targets; you get what you measure.
- Using Transport Scotland statistics, agree the key statistics and have them reported very quickly annually against planned improvements e.g. Table 4.3 Trunk road constructed/re-surfaced etc. statistics. along with Table 4.4. Trunk road constructed/re-surfaced etc, by unit. NOT provisional figures, demand actuals and quickly each year.

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?

- What a joke! The Scottish Government alone knows how LAs are actually funded. Road spend must be stripped out of totals, not assimilated, along with revenues from, amongst others, fuel duty.