



Scottish National Roads Maintenance Review

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues

- The Scottish Government through Transport Scotland have issued a significant review report into the state of Scottish Roads – National Roads Maintenance Review
- The review was established in response to an Audit Scotland report which examined the state of Scotland's roads
- The review report identifies some 30 options or proposals to be addressed and progressed by the local government sector as per the national reports agreed strategic framework
- The review report addresses the need for shared services as a potential delivery solution for the road service in Scotland in the short/medium term(s)
- The review report also touches upon the potential for the re-organisation of the function in terms of creating a single roads authority for Scotland

1. Background

- 1.1 Scotland's road network covers 55,000km and is one of the largest community assets and is essential for the long term sustainability and development of Scotland's communities. It is against this background and within a period of constrained spending that Audit Scotland identified and reported on the condition of the roads network within Scotland.
- 1.2 The recent severe winters have exaggerated this deterioration and with the deterioration of roads considered to be increasing, the backlog has risen to a level where, without sustained investment to help address the maintenance backlog, a further deterioration in the conditions of the roads is inevitable.
- 1.3 Within the context of constrained public sector spending and increasing demand there is a clear expectation that all public services need to be bold and creative in delivering increased value from a declining budget

2.0 Terms of Reference for the National Roads Maintenance Review

- 2.1 The review was established in response to a central recommendation of an Audit Scotland report produced in 2010 – Maintaining Scotland’s Roads, which highlighted the fact that only 66% of Scotland’s local authority roads were in an acceptable condition. With regard to trunk roads on 78% were considered to be acceptable
- 2.2 The Audit Scotland report suggested the state of the roads was related to the reduction in purchasing power of roads authorities. In addition, given reductions in Scottish public spending it is difficult to envisage the prospect of an injection of significant additional funding for roads maintenance across Scotland
- 2.3 The Audit Scotland report estimated the cost of the backlog across the whole of the Scottish Roads network being £2.2 billion. This being split between local authority roads £1.54 billion and £0.713 billion for trunk roads. This discounts the backlog for local authority bridges
- 2.4 The national review was therefore concerned with the following recommendation:
- To consider a national review on how the road network is managed and maintained with a view to stimulation service redesign and increasing the pace for the potential for shared services. Source: Audit Scotland Report Maintaining Scotland’s Roads 2010

The recommendation was fully supported by the then Minister for Transport and Infrastructure

- 2.5 The review also aimed to identify how those responsible for, and working in, Scotland’s road maintenance sector can deliver more efficiently managed roads for all within the budgets available and identify opportunities for innovation, collaborative working and the sharing of services
- 2.6 The review covered the whole of the road asset
- 2.7 In the normal way a steering group was established to progress this specific recommendation. The Steering Group consisted of representatives from:
- Transport Scotland
 - COSLA
 - SOLACE
 - SCOTS
- Scottish Roads Network Commissioner

3.0 Methodology for the Review

- 3.1 A robust review methodology was established which examined issues, concerns and areas of risk. Specifically four working groups were established to explore and examine:
- The use of technology to encourage innovation and productivity

- The suitability of shared services and collaboration between local authorities
- The economic, social and environmental impact of deteriorating roads and footways

3.2 The respective working groups identified a number of key themes:

- Effective Asset Management
- Prioritisation
- Benchmarking and monitoring
- Delivery models
- Incentivising Innovation
- Enabling faster change
- Communication

Within the themes, were a full range of options for further consideration which were refined over a period of time

3.3 The final review report contains and captures 30 options which are organised around elements of a strategic framework which includes:

- Robust Asset Management Planning
- Identify more than one provider or supplier to ensure meaningful comparison
- Appropriate outcome focused benchmarks and KPIs to illustrate efficient performance
- Appropriate monitoring to demonstrate transparency
- Appropriate incentivisation to encourage behavioural change and innovation
- Establish SMART Targets to ensure innovation and collaboration
- Financial Management
- Collaboration to deliver economics of scale.

4.0 **APSE Comment and Conclusion**

4.1 The work of the review has been aimed at improving how those responsible for and working in Scotland's roads maintenance sector deliver maintenance requirements more efficiently. APSE has supported SCOTs with aspects of the review particular in relation to benchmarking and KPIs. The options identified within the review report will need to be addressed and progressed by key stakeholders.

A particular option worthy of note is the need to consider in more detail the scope for roads maintenance as a shared service. A further option which is highlighted relates to structural change over the long term in terms of moving towards a roads authority. This would require legislative change. APSE would have concerns about the centralisation of the roads function. To support the review from an implementation viewpoint, the report suggests a central resource is created overseen by COSLA and the Scottish Government in order to direct the programme of work detailed within the review.

Andrew Spowart
Principal Advisor