

Minister agrees to National Roads review

Following Audit Scotland's report last week into the condition of both local and strategic roads, Transport Minister Keith Brown has today confirmed his acceptance of its central recommendations.

A national review looking at how the road network is managed and maintained, including how the Scottish Government can work better with local authorities, and also what can be learned from international roads management practice, will be undertaken.

Mr Brown said:-“Scotland's road network – both local and strategic – plays a vital part in supporting Scotland's economy by getting people to work and ensuring businesses operate effectively.

“That's why last week's report by Audit Scotland into the road network at both local and national level was welcomed. The report highlighted the progress made in how the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland manages trunk roads and motorways in an efficient and sustainable way to deliver better value from available budgets.

“It also highlighted some of the considerable challenges faced by local authorities and Transport Scotland in maintaining our road networks in the face of increasing traffic levels, the recent very severe winters we've witnessed, and in the face of Westminster-imposed cuts to the Scottish budget.

“Of course, with more access to more of Scotland's resources, we could do more. The Scottish Parliament should have control of Scotland's oil revenues and road tax receipts through full financial responsibility – instead of sending these valuable resources to Westminster. And the Scottish Government should

have proper borrowing powers as quickly as possible, so that we can fund key projects such as the new Forth Crossing on a sensible, long-term basis. Scotland needs to be in charge of our own finances. These are practical improvements that can and should be delivered.

The Minister added:-“I welcome the central recommendations of the Audit Scotland report, particularly to explore how local authorities can work better with each other and with the Scottish Government to make limited resources go further. In doing so, I want to look closely at whether international expertise and technological advances can bring greater efficiencies in the way we manage our roads.

“The review will be undertaken over the course of the summer and is expected to report in the autumn with a Road Maintenance Summit proposed to discuss its findings.

“Meantime, we will though continue to deliver an extensive programme of maintenance and improvement works on our trunk roads and motorways and address the challenge of improving Scotland’s roads infrastructure as we move forward.”

It is anticipated that the review will consider opportunities for better collaboration between local authorities and with Transport Scotland, and will be taken forward jointly by Transport Scotland, CoSLA and SCOTS with input from stakeholders from the road users community.

The Audit Scotland’s report, *Maintaining Scotland’s Roads*, highlights that the overall maintenance backlog on Scotland’s roads is £2.25billion. Of this, £1.54 billion relates to the maintenance backlog on Local Authority roads and £0.713 billion relates to trunk roads, including bridges.