

Scottish Road Works Commissioner submission of 24 November 2022

PE1936/C: Remove Potholes from Scotland's Roads

The position of Scottish Road Works Commissioner is an independent public official whose aim is to improve the planning, co-ordination and quality of road works throughout Scotland.

I monitor performance, promote and encourage good practice across both utility companies and roads authorities. I also have powers to impose financial penalties on roads authorities who systematically fail in their duty to co-ordinate and upon utility companies who systematically fail to co-operate when undertaking road works.

The title of Scottish Road Works Commissioner can lead people to assume that I am responsible for works being undertaken in roads on Scotland. This is not the case. Roads authorities are responsible for any decisions related to the repair and maintenance of their roads. In the case of the local road network, the roads authority is the local council and, in the case of trunk roads, Transport Scotland.

With regards to the specific requests contained within the petition, I would make the following comments:

“Improve road surfaces by creating an action plan remove potholes from trunk roads across Scotland”

My role does not extend to directing organisations as to how their budgets should be allocated, nor does it cover the specifics of development and implementation of services provided. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate for me to make specific recommendations upon how Transport Scotland should inspect, manage and maintain their assets. However, I would have an interest in ensuring that Transport Scotland properly co-ordinated its works considering safety, the impact on road users and the structural integrity of the road. This is done through the Scottish Road Works Register and I would expect any works arising from an action plan to be properly notified through the register at the appropriate times.

“Improve road surfaces by providing ring-fenced funding to local Councils to tackle potholes”

As noted above, my role does not extend to directing organisations as to how their budgets should be allocated. Accordingly, I do not consider it to be appropriate to make specific recommendations on local authority funding arrangements for road maintenance programmes.