

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 11 September 2024
13th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

PE1936: Remove Potholes from Scotlands Roads

Introduction

Petitioner Lesley Roberts

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve road surfaces by:

- creating an action plan remove potholes from trunk roads across Scotland; and
- providing ring-fenced funding to local Councils to tackle potholes.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1936>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 22 November 2023.](#) At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, and the Minister for Transport.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the then Deputy First Minister and Minister for Transport, which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage.](#)
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial position on this petition on 20 June 2022.](#)
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 573 signatures have been received on this petition.
8. Members may wish to note that the motorways and trunk roads budget increased by 24.1% in real terms between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 Budget Bills.

Action

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

CPPP/S6/24/13/4

**Clerks to the Committee
September 2024**

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE1936 – Remove potholes from Scotland’s roads

Petitioner

Lesley Roberts

Date Lodged

9 June 2022

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve road surfaces by:

- Creating an action plan remove potholes from trunk roads across Scotland; and
- Providing ring-fenced funding to local Councils to tackle potholes.

Previous action

I have raised the issue with my MSP Stuart McMillan.

Background information

Health and safety should be paramount and yet there are huge holes on our roads throughout the country. There is no respect for human life and no respect for our property. Please deal with the pothole plague in a decent way and stop doing partial repairs which make things even worse and leave stones all over our carriageways.

Potholes cause accidents, putting lives and property at risk. They cause severe damage to cars, and other means of transport. When riding a bike it is hard to miss them and that is simply not acceptable.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1936 on 22 November 2023

The Convener: PE1936, lodged by Lesley Roberts, calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve road surfaces by creating an action plan to remove potholes from trunk roads across Scotland and providing ring-fenced funding to councils to tackle potholes.

We last considered the petition at our meeting on 22 March 2023, when we agreed to write to the Scottish Government, Audit Scotland and Police Scotland. The committee has now received responses from all those organisations, with Transport Scotland responding on behalf of the Government to state the level of funding that is being invested in Scotland's motorways and trunk road network.

Transport Scotland also notes the obligation on operating companies to inspect the trunk road network twice per week, which is intended to identify serious defects and ensure that they are rectified promptly. The response does not directly address why the motorways and trunk roads budget was reduced in 2023-24 and whether the Barnett consequentials resulting from the UK Government's announcement of an additional £200 million for pothole repair in England will be allocated for pothole repair in Scotland. I imagine it will notionally be £20 million.

In its response, Audit Scotland indicates that it has no plans to do further work in relation to Scotland's roads.

Police Scotland tells us that, in the past three years, 95 road traffic collisions were recorded with "defective road" noted as a contributory factor, though it is noted that such a contributory factor might not necessarily be a pothole.

We have also received two submissions from the petitioner, reflecting on the responses that we have received and sharing her continued concern about the health and safety risks being faced by motorists and cyclists while so many roads remain in poor condition.

Do members have any comments or suggestions?

David Torrance: We could keep the petition open and write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to seek clarity on whether the Barnett consequentials resulting from the UK Government's announcement of additional funding for pothole repairs will be made available for pothole repair in Scotland as part of the 2024-25 budget allocation for motorways and trunk roads and the local government settlement.

We could also write to the Minister for Transport to seek information on what action is being taken to ensure that the budget for motorways and trunk roads is not further reduced as part of the 2024-25 budget.

The Convener: That seems reasonable. With specific additional funding coming from the Barnett consequentials, it would be useful to have some confirmation or otherwise that the money will be deployed for that purpose here in Scotland.

Annexe C: Written submission

Deputy First Minister and Minister for Transport submission of 20 December 2023

PE1936/N: Remove potholes from Scotland's roads

Thank you for your letters, both dated 24th November 2023 regarding Petition PE1936 which sought assurances regarding the budget for motorways and trunk roads.

The economic conditions are set to remain challenging as inflationary pressures continue on households, businesses and public services. The fiscal outlook for the Scottish Government is expected to remain similarly challenging with the medium-term funding outlook also being subject to considerable volatility with funding remaining uncertain. This means taking tough choices to ensure that our resources are focused on our three critical missions outlined in the Policy Prospectus, and driving reform to secure value for money for the taxpayer.

Budgets are allocated on an annual basis through the Scottish Budget process, where available funds will be prioritised and published in the draft budget. All Barnett consequential, including consideration of their source are factored into that process. The 2024-25 draft budget will be published on 19 December 2023 and will set out spending plans for motorways and trunk roads.

I hope this is of assistance and clarifies the Government's position on this matter.

Yours sincerely

SHONA ROBISON

FIONA HYSLOP