Improving Local Road and Highway Maintenance: The Implications of the Potholes Review

A Public Policy Exchange Symposium

Thursday 27th September 2012
10:15am – 4:30pm

Central London

Public Policy Exchange, in association with the Centre for Parliamentary Studies, holds regular interactive seminars which provide an invaluable interface for policy discussion, debate and networking. These special events offer local practitioners, civil servants and other stakeholders not only an insight into current policy thinking, but also the opportunity to feed into future development across all areas of public policy.
Improve Local Road and Highway Maintenance: The Implications of the Potholes Review

Overview

Recent research indicates that there are approximately 1.5 to 2 million potholes (holes in the road) on British roads – more than twice the figure reported in 2007. According to the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), complaints to local authorities on road conditions from members of the public rose by 10% in 2011. Unsurprisingly, there is a strong public perception that potholes are one of the main causes behind the deterioration of local roads.

Recognising that potholes are a major concern for local communities and highway users, the Government is to provide more than £3bn over the next four years to local highway authorities to improve road maintenance. In April 2011, the Department for Transport launched a review into the problem of potholes. This was followed by a progress report published in December 2011, with the Potholes Review final report made available in April 2012.

The Review highlights three main themes:

- **Prevention is better than cure** – intervening at the right time will reduce the amount of potholes forming and prevent bigger problems later
- **Right first time** – do it once and get it right, rather than face continuous bills; Guidance, knowledge and workmanship are the enablers to this
- **Clarity for the public** – local highway authorities need to communicate to the public what is being done and how it is being done

The Government recognises that on top of the direct cost of highway damage to local highway authorities, there is a wider economic burden to highway users and business from potholes via accidents and subsequent compensation and insurance claims. Repairs also lead to inevitable traffic disruption and delayed journey times resulting in further economic costs.

This special symposium provides an invaluable opportunity for local authorities, road/highway maintenance and management professionals, road user groups and other key stakeholders to discuss the latest Government thinking on dealing with potholes. The symposium will also examine the wider implications of the Potholes Review for developing a more resilient and efficient framework for local road and highway maintenance.

***...We all know the misery that potholes can cause to highway users and local communities, which is why, despite the current economic situation, this Government is providing over £3 billion to local highway authorities for road maintenance over the next four years. We also provided an additional £200 million to local highway authorities this time last year in recognition of the effect the series of harsh winters had on our roads.***

The aim of the Review was to not only investigate the issue from an engineering perspective but to also explore the wider issues around potholes, including the impact of long term maintenance strategies, decision-making arrangements, the processes of reporting, prioritising and repairing, guidance and wider operational arrangements.

***...I urge all parts of the highway maintenance sector, including councillors, chief executives, local highway practitioners, the utility sector and contractors to adopt the approaches set out in this Review, not only to make real cost savings but also to provide a first class quality service to highway users.***

- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, April 2012

Why Attend?

- Assess the Potholes Review’s 17 recommendations and the potential to reduce the number of potholes and improve overall highway maintenance
- Discuss the ‘prevention is better than cure’ principle and it’s ability to improve the highway network and reduce potholes in the future
- Consider how local highway authorities can improve their public communications to provide clear and transparent road repair information
- Explore the requirements to further strengthen well-maintained highways
- Share ideas on training highway inspectors, using proven technology and systems and making best use of research and innovation

Who Should Attend?

- Local Authorities and Central Government
- Local Highway Authorities
- Local Authority Road Maintenance Professionals
- Local Authority Highway Maintenance Engineers and Managers
- Highway Maintenance Leads
- Technical Services Professionals
- Technical Advisers Groups
- Environmental Services
- Planning, Transportation and Engineering Personnel
- Road Management Professionals
- Road Safety Professionals
- Road Policing Professionals
- Traffic Management Personnel
- Economy Professionals
- Surveyors
- Community Transport Services
- Rural Transport Groups
- Transport Advisory Groups
- Materials Engineers
- Specialist Contractors
- Lead, Principle and Independent Consultants
- Utility Companies
- National Highways and Transport Network
- Road Haulage Organisations
- Goods Vehicle Operators
- Transport Managers
- Emergency Service Professionals
- Traffic Signs and Signalling Providers
- Transport, Access and Safety Leads
- Operational Service Planning Managers
- Transport Planning & Review Officers
- Highway Network Managers
- Traffic and Design Managers
- Vehicle Recovery Operators
- Motoring Services
- Civil Enforcement Officers
- Bus and Coach Operators
- Emergency Service Professionals
- Cyclists Interest Groups and Clubs
- Road Surface Organisations and Associations
- Public Service Transport Operators
- Trade Associations/Unions
- Private Sector and Special Interest Groups
- Freight Transport Organisations
- Pavement Management Organisations
- Third Sector and Academics

Accommodation

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Programme

09:30 Registration and Morning Refreshments

10:15 Chair’s Welcome and Introduction

10:30 Panel Session One: Working through the Potholes Review Recommendations – ‘Prevention is Better than Cure’
- Economic Benefits of Highway Maintenance – justifying the need for investment in maintenance of the local highway network
- Commitment of Highway Maintenance Budgets – providing greater budget certainty for the highway sector
- Prevention is Better than Cure – striking the balance between structural, preventative and reactive maintenance activities
- Informed Choices – ensuring that the right competencies are available for the maintenance and repair of highways
- Guidance on Materials – comprehensive guidance made available for the use of appropriate materials for the right site
- Co-ordinating Street Works – based on sound asset management practice
- Minimising Highway Openings – restricting long term damage through alternative and innovative ways of working

11:30 Morning Refreshments

11:45 Open Floor Discussion and Debate with Panel One

12:30 Networking Lunch

13:30 Session Two: Improving Road and Highway Maintenance – ‘Right First Time’
- Quality of Repairs and Reinstatements – driving up standards with a scheme similar in quality to a National Highway Sector Scheme
- Guidance on Repair Techniques – local authorities adopting the right guidance
- Inspection and Training – ensuring that highway inspectors are trained, qualified and competent in the identification and assessment of defects (including potholes)
- Technology – using proven technology for the effective identification and management of potholes
- Research and Innovation – improving pothole management and operations through innovation from research

14:30 Afternoon Refreshments

14:45 Session Three: Improving Local Communication Strategies – ‘Clarity for the Public’
- Public Communications – local highway authorities providing clarity and transparency in their method and approach to repairing potholes
- Public Opinion Surveys – using the findings to benchmark performance and improve road, footway and cycleway conditions
- Permanent Repairs Policy – adopting permanent repairs as the first choice and restricting temporary repairs to emergency or unsafe situations
- Definition of Potholes – local authorities providing clarity for definitions of potholes as part of their maintenance policy (including response times and treatment)
- Raising the Bar – further improving well-maintained highways using all the recommendations from the Potholes Review

15:45 Chair’s Summary and Closing Comments

16:00 Networking Reception

**Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice**

Event Details

Date: Thursday 27th September 2012
Time: 10:15am – 4:30pm
Venue: Central London

Forthcoming Events

The Future of Family Policy: Working in Partnership to Support Strong and Stable Parenting
10th July 2012

Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Schools
11th July 2012

Parking and Local Traffic Management: The Implications of the Traffic Signs Policy Review
11th July 2012

The 5th Annual Domestic Violence Symposium: The Next Steps in Ending Violence in the Home
12th July 2012

Mental Health and Young People: Working Towards a Suicide Prevention Strategy
11th September 2012

Defusing the Diabetes Time-Bomb: Working Towards a National Strategy
12th September 2012

The Future of Social Housing: Empowering Local Authorities to Deliver Flexible Solutions
13th September 2012

Triggering Community Empowerment: The New Framework for Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour
19th September 2012

Pandemics and Infection Control: Meeting Tomorrow’s Threats and Challenges Today
20th September 2012

Clamping Down on Dangerous Dogs: Protecting the Public and Promoting More Responsible Pet Ownership
20th September 2012

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Enquiries: 0845 606 1535

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