

Pre-Budget/ Financial scrutiny on roads maintenance in Scotland

**Submission to the Scottish Parliament's Local
Government and Communities Committee**

September 2019

fsb^{coo}

Experts in Business

Roads Maintenance

Submission from FSB Scotland

Introduction

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's scrutiny on roads maintenance in Scotland. Our response focuses on maintenance of local roads and argues that the Scottish Government should provide extra funding for local authorities with the highest proportion of roads in poor condition.

FSB is Scotland's leading business organisation and aims to help smaller businesses achieve their ambitions. These micro and small businesses comprise the majority of all enterprises in Scotland (98%), employ around one million people and contribute tens of billions of pounds to the economy.

The importance of the road network

Most smaller businesses operate within local and regional economies, where they are a key source of jobs and growth, with the importance of small businesses as employers particularly critical in remote and rural communities.

At both a local and national level, FSB has consistently highlighted the importance of maintaining the local road network *and* investing in new large-scale road infrastructure projects, because of the continuing importance of the road network for small businesses.

In an FSB survey, almost two-thirds (63%) of small businesses cited the road network as vitally important. And,

as the table below illustrates, small firms rely on cars, vans and lorries to conduct their day-to-day operations.¹

Table 1: How important are the following modes of transport to your business?

Source: FSB Transport Survey

	Important	Unimportant
Car	92%	3%
Van	66%	9%
Lorry	52%	15%
Bus	38%	22%
Train	33%	23%
Walking	43%	19%
Cycling	26%	30%
Other (e.g. ferry, plane)	37%	24%

Thus while we understand the challenges of a discussion about investment in roads, given the ongoing debate about the climate crisis and the need to reduce emissions from transport, nevertheless businesses and households in Scotland still predominantly use motor vehicles and need an effective road network. This view is supported by recent Transport Scotland statistics², which highlighted that:

1. There are three million motor vehicles licensed in 2017 – the highest recorded level.
2. The 48 billion vehicle kilometres travelled on Scotland's roads in 2017 was the highest recorded level.

¹ Statistics taken from an unpublished FSB survey, 2015.

² See: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-no-37-2018-edition/>

Further Information

For further information please contact Barry McCulloch barry.mcculloch@fsb.org.uk

The FSB campaigns for a better social, political and economic environment in which to work and do business. With a strong grassroots structure and dedicated Scottish staff to deal with Scottish institutions, media and politicians, the FSB makes its members' voices heard at the heart of the decision-making process. It is therefore recognised as one of Scotland's most influential business organisations. The FSB also provides a suite of services to help our members reduce the cost and risk of doing good business – from legal and tax protection to business banking.

74 Berkeley St, Glasgow, G3 7DS

t: 0141 221 0775

e: Scotland.policy@fsb.org.uk

w: www.fsb.org.uk/scotland

Twitter: @FSB_Scotland

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