

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR

7<sup>th</sup> January 2010

**Road damage resulting from severe winter weather**

Dear Philip,

I am sure you will already be receiving reports, as we are, from councils about the impact of this winter's harsh weather on local roads, and consequently on local authority highways maintenance budgets. With the snow and ice still affecting some parts of the country and the thaw only recently occurred in many other areas, it is clearly too soon to accurately estimate the costs of repairing this season's potholes. However, as our experience of the severe weather last year demonstrates, the extra financial burden placed on councils is likely to be very significant. To give an idea of the extent of the problem, last year, the estimated additional cost was at least £5 million for the typical shire county.

The additional damage this year will come at a time when councils have to scale back budgets for highways maintenance as a result of spending review decisions. Without additional funding for increased road maintenance activity required to deal with the increased numbers of potholes resulting from the exceptionally cold weather, the damage to the roads will cause significant damage to roads, present a safety risk to road users and disruption to traffic.

I am therefore writing in order to ask that you consider, as a matter of urgency, whether your department might be able by reprioritisation within existing central budgets for 2009-10 to direct immediate emergency financial assistance to councils to allow us to deal at once with this high profile pressure. We are working with our member authorities to establish a reliable estimate of the financial impact they face and will be happy to share this information with you as soon as possible.

Yours,



Cllr Peter Box, Chair,  
LG Group Economy and Transport Programme Board