

(xiv) Mr D Macpherson

To the Chair of the Economy & Infrastructure Committee

Can you also please give an assurance that this Council will not simply spend the additional allocated roads improvement monies on new road signs and expensive shiny new machinery and equipment (that could be hired in as and when it's required for use at multiple locations across the Highlands) for that equipment only to lay and gather dust in compounds for the seven dormant months of the year when it can only effectively be used for the five short months of good weather when ground temperatures are above the frost warning of 4oC across the Highland and Islands region that we serve?"

In respect of the purchase of new machinery and equipment and road signs we can provide the following re-assurances:

- *Pothole Pro machines can be used for pot-holing and other works so they will be utilised for 52 weeks of the year. They will also reduce the requirement for hire of ditching machinery.*
- *The purchase of seasonal equipment is still cost effective when compared to hire costs, as the hire costs include a capital repayment element, and they are also based on costs being re-covered by the supplier during the seasonal period. Over a five-year period, we can pay more in hire costs than it costs to purchase the equipment.*
- *The investment in new machinery rather than hiring in also means we are getting brand new vehicles which are less prone to breakdown and down-time. This is an important factor for the Highlands where repairs to machinery and sourcing of replacements can be difficult.*
- *Signage – where signage has degraded, it needs to be replaced for Road Safety reasons. This is relatively low cost. Brown Tourist signage is paid for by the business or by separate funding stream so will not come out of the roads budget.*