

### **The effectiveness of Welsh Government planning and costing of schemes;**

- **The approach to project delivery and evaluation of projects; and**
- **How the Welsh Government could improve its approach to planning and delivery of schemes.**

We are not in a position to comment on the effectiveness of WG planning and costing. Following the recent decision to remove the planning functions from the Trunk Road Agents and to house within Welsh Government, we would expect processes to be put in place to ensure that there are regular discussions between Welsh Government and local government for joint consideration and planning on issues such as network planning, maintenance and community/user concerns.

### **The extent to which the current approach to routine maintenance and improvement of the network via Trunk Road Agents has delivered value for money;**

The operation of the Trunk Road Agents has been subject to a number of audits and reviews and the findings have found the performance and operation effective.

The location of the TRA within local authorities brings many benefits and financial efficiencies for Welsh Government and Local Authorities. Local authorities can muster significant resources to deal with exceptional events. Current arrangements also ensure that a significant proportion of the works are undertaken using local resources and contractors, this makes a positive contribution to the local economy in terms of jobs and spend in the local area. There has been good co-operation between Welsh Government, Trunk Road Agencies and local authorities on issues of winter service. However, it is important that gritting routes are planned to maximise efficiency of journeys, minimising 'dead miles'.

### **How the maintenance and improvement functions delivered by the Trunk Road Agents can be improved, in the context of the on-going Welsh Government review of these agents.**

The maintenance and improvement of Motorway and trunk road network should not be planned in isolation from the county roads. Indeed, all parts of the network should be planned and maintained with a high degree of co-operation. For the user, travelling along routes that involve differently managed parts of the network, it does not make sense to have a high standard of maintenance on motorways and trunk roads if the county roads network is below standard or vice versa. Future ongoing funding of the highway network for which local authorities have responsibility is of concern and local authorities have requested the continuation of the Local

Government Borrowing Initiative to enable continued investment in the highway asset, however, this is not being taken forward by WG at the current time.

There may be future opportunities to consider how services are procured to enable more local or regional suppliers to bid for work as this could support local businesses and may produce a cost saving by procuring work locally.