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## News release

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# More work needed to improve Scotland's roads but on tighter budgets

Major changes called for two years ago to improve the management of roads maintenance have yet to result in significant improvement in road condition, says the Accounts Commission.

An audit update published today charts progress by councils against recommendations made in a 2011 report. The update, based on reports from local auditors, says that the percentage of local roads in acceptable condition has marginally increased over the last two years, despite a 21 per cent reduction in spending between 2009/10 and 2010/11. However, the proportion of roads in acceptable condition is still lower than it was in 2005.

All councils now have a roads asset management plan in place and there is some evidence of them taking action to improve value for money by, for example, joint tendering with other councils, reorganising roads departments, and changing shift patterns. But more work is needed to improve the quality and monitoring of roads asset management plans and the consistency of costs data used for benchmarking.

The update notes that public concern about the condition of Scotland's roads remains high, and recommends further effort by councils, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and the Society of Chief Officers of Transport in Scotland.

Chair of the Accounts Commission, John Baillie, said: "There is a lot still to do. A well-maintained roads network is essential for all of us to get around in our daily lives and for economic prosperity.

"Tighter budgets mean councils have to make tough choices across the board but this is about making better use of the resources they already have. There is potential for better sharing of skills and resources, more effective planning at national and local level and more use of benchmarking to learn from best practice elsewhere.

"We will continue to monitor developments in the future."

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### Notes to editors

1. The update is available here: **INSERT LINK** and the 2011 report available here **INSERT LINK**
2. The Accounts Commission for Scotland checks how well Scotland's councils perform. It operates independently of local and central government.
3. Audit Scotland provides services to the Accounts Commission for Scotland and carries out work as directed by the Accounts Commission.