



NEW YEAR CHEER AS ROADS GET FINANCIAL GIFT

Companies and their employees involved in maintaining Northern Ireland's roads, and indeed the travelling public, were handed a New Year present this week, as Finance Minister, Sammy Wilson, announced that as part of the December monitoring round, Government has allocated an additional £15 million for the maintenance of the deteriorating roads network.

Commenting on the announcement, Gordon Best, Regional Director of the Quarry Products Association NI, the industry body that represents 95% of companies involved in road resurfacing, said, "This is excellent news for the industry and our employees" The extra funding is much needed as our roads network has been deteriorating at an ever increasing rate, due to inadequate investment over a period of many years. This was highlighted back in October last year, following the publication of a report, commissioned by the Minister for Regional Development, that showed the backlog of roads maintenance waiting to be carried out across the 25,000km of roads in the North now stands at £700 million. The report recommended that current spending of some £74 million needed to rise to £108 million per year, to ensure we have safe and efficient roads.

Mr Best added that Roads Service has confirmed that as much of the extra allocation as possible will be used for resurfacing, although a small amount will have to be spent on smaller scale road repairs, following recent flooding incidents and cold weather.

Mr Best concluded by saying that the overall package was excellent news for companies who have had to make significant redundancies and put employees on short time working over recent months. This extra allocation will help protect and sustain some 100 jobs in the road maintenance industry.

The industry now looks forward to making early progress on the newly funded schemes, that will deliver excellent value for money and quality to the Northern Ireland tax payer," Mr Best added.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The Quarry Products Association NI represents approximately 95% of companies involved in the supply of quarry products to the Construction Industry in Northern Ireland. Our Association draws its membership from companies engaged in providing primary aggregates, the processing of recycled and secondary materials, the production of downstream products such as asphalt, lime mortar, ready-mixed concrete, precast concrete and road surfacing contracting. The Quarry Products Sector now employs over 3500 people across Northern Ireland and has a turnover of some £500 million.

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