



## **“Industry Welcomes Significant Boost to Roads Maintenance Funding”**

The Quarry Products Association NI who represents the majority of construction material suppliers in Northern Ireland, employing over 5000 people, has welcomed the announcement by the Department of Infrastructure Permanent Secretary, Peter May, that the 2018 /19 starting budget for roads structural maintenance will start at a significantly higher level than in previous years at some £75 million.

Gordon Best, Regional Director QPANI, said “Our Industry and I am sure the vast majority of the travelling public in Northern Ireland, users of public transport, cyclists and motorists will warmly welcome this announcement and significant uplift in funding. This is the highest starting level of maintenance funding since 2011. However, the priority now must be to get road maintenance schemes identified, planned and delivered on the ground over the next 6 or 7 months so that work takes place during the longest days, better weather ensuring better quality, improved safety for the road user and road worker and importantly ensuring better value for money.”

Our Roads Network in NI is valued at some £35 billion and is the largest and most valuable asset the public sector manages. The Departments own statistics show that the current underspend for maintaining our roads network is almost £1 Billion. In 2010 the independent “Snaith Report” recommended an annual structural maintenance funding level of £112 million to keep the road network at a safe and quality standard. That funding level now stands at £140 million. The Departments own figures indicate that for every £1.00 we fail to invest below that figure it will cost the Department £1.26 in the long term as lack of maintenance turns into re-construction.

That Roads Network is the veins and arteries through which the life blood of our economy flows. Our private, public and commercial transport sectors depend on it to transport products, people and services safely and efficiently. Our lack of maintenance and development of our water and sewage infrastructure will impact on public safety, on new housebuilding and our clean water environment. Mr Best added “The announcement by Mr May is good news for everyone and our economy. QPANI is now calling for a long term commitment by the Departments of Finance and Infrastructure to longer term, adequately funded maintenance budgets that will ensure our existing infrastructure is looked after and adequately maintained”.

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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 5000 people across Northern Ireland and has a turnover of some £650 million.

See attached history of structural maintenance funding in Northern Ireland from 2001 to 2018.

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