

Client: Association for Consultancy and Engineering  
Source: Oldham Evening Chronicle (Main)  
Date: 24 October 2013  
Page: 3  
Reach: 12849  
Size: 82cm2  
Value: 205.82



## Road improvements need to move in fast lane

POOR roads throughout the North-West cost the region around £1.39 billion each year.

A study by the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) suggests that if congestion could be reduced by one minute per vehicle per day it would save up to £277 million a year in reduced fuel costs.

The same improvement would also benefit the economy by £1.9 billion in reducing unproductive journey times.

ACE North-West chairman Mike Barber said: "Historically, the Government has always spent only a fraction of the monies collected in Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and in fuel duty on roads.

"Reversing the shortfall in roads investment would enable the North-West to fully realise economic benefits of ambitious multi-million pound projects like the Mersey Gateway second river crossing and Northern Hub rail scheme.

### Encourage

"Investment in a balanced and sustainable transport network could have a sustainable impact on business in the region and improvements in travel times for motorists."

The report goes on to suggest that VED be hypothecated for use on roads investment and maintenance, with an increase to match need balanced by an equivalent reduction in fuel duty.

Road pricing could then be considered as a way to simply encourage more road use at less-congested times.

Mike Ilywelyn-Jones, chairman of ACE's Roads Sector Interest Group, said: "The proposals in this ACE report build upon current Government plans, by examining ways of establishing a stable source of funding for both Highways Agency and Local Authority roads to 2016, to ensure that the inefficiencies associated with the current road network do not recur.

"Whether this is done by hypothecation of Vehicle Excise Duty or by road pricing, it would provide a basis for long-term planning where we can borrow to invest where there is a strong case to do so."