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Road inefficiencies costing region £422m a year, report claims



By [Joe Willis](#), Regional Chief Reporter

12:00am Thursday 24th October 2013 in [News](#)

INEFFICIENCIES in the North-East road network are costing the region £422m per year, according to a new study.

The report by the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) claims that by 2020 the region will have lost £3.4bn through a lack of investment in the roads.

The study, Funding roads, calculates that congestion is one of the biggest causes of inefficiency, with vehicles stuck in traffic costing the region £307m a year in lost economic output.

Fuel used by motorists held up by congestion costs a further £48m, while damage to vehicles caused by potholes costs £17m.

The report reveals that the Government spent £455m on North-East roads in 2010/11 – however this only equated to around 27 per cent of the money raised through road taxation.

ACE is urging ministers to ring-fence vehicle excise duty (VED) for spending on roads, with an increase in the tax balanced by an equivalent reduction in fuel duty.

David Hodgson, ACE North-East chairman, said: "Historically, Government has always spent only a fraction of the monies collected in VED and in fuel duty on roads.

▶ "This represents a missed opportunity to dramatically improve the economic performance of ambitious regions like the North-East while also reducing the local cost of living.

"Relatively small but regular additional investment in roads could have a significant

positive impact on both business in the region, and on drivers' pockets."

According to the report, the Government spends £28,163 per km of road in the North-East, compared to £90,594 in London but only £16,375 in the South-West.

Mike Llywelyn-Jones, chairman of ACE's roads sector interest group, said the proposals in the report built upon current Government plans by examining ways of establishing a stable source of funding for both Highways Agency and local authority roads to 2040.

In response to the report, the Department for Transport said the Government had recently invested £28bn to upgrade the nation's roads, with improvements being made to ease congestion in the North-East to the A1 Leeming to Barton and A1 Lobley Hill.

A spokesman added: "We have also committed to detailed studies of the challenges and improvements that can be made to the A1 north



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