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Crisis time for the region's roads

The announcement of the Villages Bypass scheme comes at a crisis time for the road network in the North-West.

A new study by the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) reveals the existing network imposes inefficiency on the region's motorists and its economy worth £1.39 billion per year.

The new study, "Funding Roads", suggests that if the government could reduce congestion by just one minute per vehicle per day, drivers across England would save as much as £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.

Mike Barber, ACE North West Chairman, said: "Historically, Government has always spent only a fraction of the monies collected in Vehicle Excise Duty 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.

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

The chairman of ACE's Roads Sector Interest Group, Mike Llywelyn-Jones, said: "Over recent months, industry has been pleased to see the Government acknowledging that previous cycles of stop-start investment have been very detrimental to the country's road network.

"The associated proposals in "Action for Roads", to convert the Highways Agency into a strategic highways company and guarantee long-term funding, initially to 2021, through legislation, will be transformational when they become reality."

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