



## *INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION*

*Britain's independent research charity for transport and land use policy*

[www.theitc.org.uk](http://www.theitc.org.uk)

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### ***WHAT NEXT ON ACTION FOR ROADS? ITC LAUNCHES NEW RESEARCH ON WINNING PUBLIC TRUST***

**The Independent Transport Commission is today launching new research into public attitudes around how roads should be funded and managed in the future.**

The Independent Transport Commission (ITC) welcomes the Government's new command paper, 'Action for Roads', committing to a major programme of overdue investment in England's roads, and turning the Highways Agency into a more autonomous state-owned company. But we also believe further reform will be needed to ensure that the funding is sustainable, and to engage effectively with road users and secure their trust.

The Government is now seeking views on options for greater independence in how roads are managed at the same time as increasing accountability. The ITC wants to stimulate public debate on this important policy challenge, and so is today announcing a new research study to help us better understand public attitudes on how we should pay for roads and road use in Britain in the longer term. The research work will investigate the current mindset across the country, using a wide range of consultation methods, including workshops, surveys and citizens' panels in order to develop a valuable picture of the acceptability of some of the lead options for reform. We will be concentrating on reactions to different ways of paying for road use, and on attitudes towards different governance options for the strategic road network.

The Chairman of the ITC Steering Group, Steven Norris, explained: 'it is clear that we need to think much more creatively about how we fund our roads infrastructure if we are to maintain a first-class network. The Government has taken a major step in committing to long-term funding for the strategic road network. But one obstacle to Government effectively exploring new options for sourcing those funds is widespread public scepticism about the case for any change. This ITC research work is extremely timely and we believe it will provide some clear pointers for rebuilding trust and engaging the British public – whether they drive or not - in the process of reform.'

Several of the examples cited by Government of more independent roads bodies in other countries rely on revenues raised direct from road users. To accompany the launch of this research work, the ITC is therefore releasing a background note investigating the experience in a number of European countries of levying a form of access charge for a motorway network. The paper looks at how so-called car vignette schemes from Switzerland to Slovenia have been implemented and sold to the public. It finds that their appeal has principally rested on their

constituting a way of making foreign transit traffic, and not just domestic drivers, pay for the upkeep of motorways. Transit traffic accounts for a much higher proportion of motorway users in these central European countries than it does in Britain; and if such a scheme were to be considered here it would probably need to be sold on a different rationale in order to gain acceptance.

The report from the ITC's research is expected to be released in the Autumn, while the background note can be downloaded from the ITC website using the following link [<http://www.theitc.org.uk/docs/94.pdf>]. The ITC is extremely grateful to its benefactors as well as the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund for grants supporting the research.

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#### **Notes for Editors**

For further information please contact Matthew Niblett, email [secretary@theitc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@theitc.org.uk) or telephone 0207 253 5510/ 07813 174582.

1. The ITC's Paying for Roads and Road Use research project is being generously supported by a grant from the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund. The Research project is overseen by a Steering Group chaired by Steven Norris (chairman), and this phase of the research project will be carried out by Social Research Associates: one of the UK's leading social research firms.
2. The paper on the European experience of motorway charging schemes was authored by Phil Carey in consultation with the ITC Steering Group. It is available in electronic copy from the Commission's website at the following link [ <http://www.theitc.org.uk/docs/94.pdf> ].
3. The ITC, founded in 1999, is Britain's leading independent think tank investigating issues in transport, planning and land use. It is run by a small Secretariat and 12 Commissioners, and has a base at Cowcross Street in central London. The Chairman of the ITC is Simon Linnett, Executive Vice-Chairman of Rothschild. The Secretariat is run by Dr Matthew Niblett, Research Associate at the Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford.
4. The ITC is a registered charity and is reliant on charitable grants and donations. Our core benefactors currently include: Transport for London, Go-Ahead Group, FirstGroup, Arriva, Network Rail, British Land, Heathrow Airport, Gatwick Airport, SNCF, Bircham Dyson Bell, Peter Brett Associates, British Airways, Birmingham Airport, Arup Group, Balfour Beatty and ABP.

#### **Commissioners of the ITC:**

Alan Baxter CBE, Kristine Beuret OBE, Mary Bonar, John Dawson, Nicholas Finney OBE, Dr Stephen Hickey, Sarah Kendall, Professor Peter Jones, Simon Linnett (Chairman), Professor Gregory Marsden, Steven Norris, and Professor John Worthington.

**The Patrons of the ITC** include Lord Adonis, Lord Freeman, Sir Patrick Brown, Sir Terry Farrell and Professor Sir Peter Hall.

