

Motion from Surrey County Council on Investment in UK Roads

Surrey County Council, supported by West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, Isle of Wight Council, and West Berkshire Council.

Proposes that:

“This Association expresses its concern that the state of the UK’s roads continues to provoke unnecessary problems, financial costs and huge frustrations for residents, businesses and councils alike throughout the country.

A study by Oxford Economics estimated that if transport infrastructure spending in the South East had been maintained over the past 15 years at 1% of GDP, as seen in 1989-91, UK GDP could be expected to have been around £1.6 billion (1%) a year higher by 2006 than it actually was. This in turn would have generated an additional £750 million a year in tax revenues that would be available to support public spending elsewhere in the country.

In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever that all public spending be targeted to ensure that it is achieving the greatest possible impact. This Association believes that investment in roads in areas of high economic activity creates a virtuous circle in which these areas’ economic potential can be harnessed to create more jobs, more growth and significantly higher tax revenues that can be reinvested in all areas of the country.

This Association will use its influence to lobby for this investment.”

LGA Comments

The LGA group recognises the important of investment in the UK road network. Poor quality roads present a safety risk and add to congestion resulting in cost to local economies and increased traffic emissions. We have long campaigned for investment to address historic underfunding of road maintenance. LGA lobbying earlier this year secured an additional £100m for local authorities to deal with damage to roads caused by

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severe winter weather, but further investment is needed to bring roads up to acceptable standards. We strongly agree with the motion that all public spending needs to be targeted to deliver the greatest impact. We have argued that this will require a radically different approach to planning and funding for infrastructure to give councils more flexibility to target investment locally. We have begun discussing proposals for reform with the government.

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