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People for Proper Policing in North Wales

UNDER-FUNDING RISKS ROAD SAFETY

Shocking state of UK roads bad for safety and cars

All local authorities in Wales and 89 per cent in England believe that there is a threat to the safety of road users because of under-funding for road maintenance.

Following the publication today of a survey showing the shocking state of local roads, **the RAC Foundation has called for an immediate commitment from Government of more cash to address the problems.** The annual ALARM survey into the state of roads in England and Wales shows:

English authorities receive just 40 per cent of the budget they need to spend on local roads. Welsh authorities fare even worse, receiving only 28 per cent of the budget they require – just one pound per metre a year is spent on roads in Wales in comparison to two pounds in the rest of England and six in London.

English authorities (including London) spend £106 million pounds last year on compensation claims because of damage to vehicles or road accidents due to road structural conditions. Wales spent £17 million pounds on claims.

Those claims have increased by more than 60 per cent in England (outside of London), 43 per cent in London **and a massive 187 per cent in Wales** over the past decade. Roads are re-surfaced every 51 years in England (outside of London) **and 61 years in Wales.** London's roads are resurfaced every 23 years. **The recommendation for road resurfacing is 10 – 20 years** depending on road type. Visual defects, including cracking, deterioration, patching and potholes have risen by 130 per cent in Wales and 69 per cent in England (outside of London). In London the increase is 41 per cent. Thirty-nine per cent of the total roads budget available to local authorities in Wales is spent on reactive maintenance. In England (other than London) it's a quarter and in London 37 per cent.

Edmund King, executive director of the RAC Foundation said, "The survey makes for uncomfortable reading. Persistent under funding of road maintenance has led to a situation whereby 100 per cent of local authorities in Wales and almost 90 per cent in England believe **this creates a real threat to road-user safety.** There is still a massive shortfall in terms of what engineers need to maintain our roads adequately. Surely, this is an accident waiting to happen. "Motorists **contribute £42 billion to the Treasury in motoring taxes** each year. **Yet only £6 billion is spent on roads.** We have a right to expect and get a safe road network. We claim to be one of the world's leading economies yet we have a third world transport infrastructure. "Ninety-three per cent of all passenger traffic is by road, not just by car, but according to the survey local authorities in England can only afford to re-surface roads once every 51 years when the recommendation is once every 10-20 years. It's even worse in Wales. Adequate money must be provided to local authorities to allow them to undertake this work and measures must be put in place to ensure that money earmarked for road spending is not diverted elsewhere."

The PPP comments...It's about time the RAC started supporting their customers (Monday 21st March 2005) confirms our earlier bulletin. See our other bulletins on this subject....under **technical issues**