



Issue 12 – July 2016

Contents

- [RAC response to the select committee's concerns on all lane running smart motorways](#)
- [Businesses tell us potholes and congestion are their biggest bugbears](#)
- [RAC Fuel Watch](#)
- [Has Brexit influenced fuel prices at the pumps?](#)
- [What is the RAC doing in your constituency?](#)

RAC response to the Transport Select Committee's concerns on all lane running smart motorways

On 30th June, the Transport Select Committee published its final report following its inquiry into all lane running smart motorways. All lane running smart motorways are controlled motorways (with variable speed limits) where the hard shoulder has been permanently converted into a running lane. Emergency refuge areas (ERAs) are provided typically every 2-2.5kms apart.

The RAC supports the concept of smart motorway as a means to rapidly increase capacity on the network. However, we have some concerns over certain aspects of the design of the all lane running configuration, including spacing between emergency refuge areas.



The committee's report expressed a number of concerns and recommendations:

- Given the major change between All Lane Running and that of previous Smart Motorway schemes, the Department is wrong to present this as merely an uncontroversial, incremental step or the logical extension of what has gone before
- The level of emergency refuge area misuse is unacceptable. When combined with the scarcity of such areas, this can lead to a driver being forced to stop in a live lane in the event of a breakdown
- Using one year's worth of safety data on the M25 does not justify to stakeholders the national roll out of All Lane Running across the country.
- Police forces, motoring organisations, and vehicle recovery operators are in agreement. Emergency refuge areas in All Lane Running are placed too scarcely.
- If traditional motorway widening has been rejected as too expensive, then it is the model of the M42 pilot that should be considered the basis of future schemes. (This operates with a hard shoulder that is opens part-time as a running lane during peak periods).
- The Department should not proceed with a major motorway programme on the basis of cost savings while major safety concerns continue to exist.

Calls to action

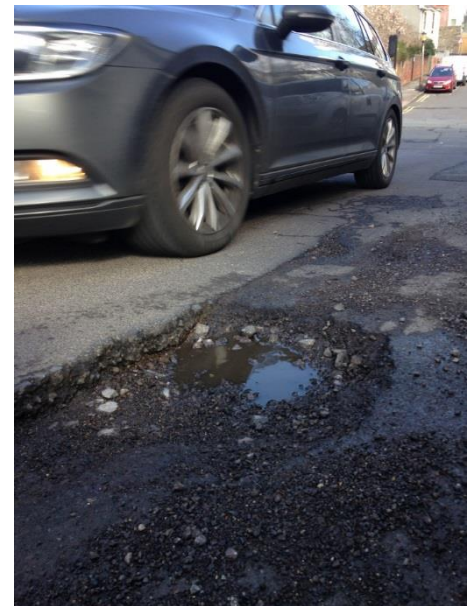
- 1 If in doubt, continue to use what works: The dynamic hard shoulder configuration has proven to be the safest form of motorway and we believe the principles of these designs should continue until Highways England has clear evidence that permanently removing hard shoulders poses no greater risk to motorists. Typically, this would mean a further two year's worth of data from the current sections on the M25 where all lanes running is currently in operation.
- 2 As a minimum, review the gaps between ERAs: In the event of a breakdown on a smart motorway where the hard shoulder has been permanently removed, it is unacceptable that motorists may be over 2kms away from the next emergency refuge area. We welcome Highways England's acknowledgement that this should be reviewed.
- 3 High profile publicity campaign on smart motorway features: Abuse of ERAs and failure to abide by the Red X (lane closed) signs have been identified as significant problems by both Highways England and the Transport Select Committee. We call upon Highways England to undertake a high-profile awareness campaign to explain why these features need to be obeyed. Automatic number plate recognition technology should continue to be used to send advisory notices to motorists who do not comply.

Should you require any further briefing on smart motorways, please contact Nicholas Lyes nlyes@rac.co.uk

Businesses tell us potholes and congestion are their biggest bugbears

RAC Business conducted a survey of 500 bosses in June to understand what are the biggest motoring barriers they face. The results reveal:

- 46% of bosses say pothole damage to their fleet as their biggest concern. The regions with the most significant concerns about pothole damage was north-east England (62% list as the biggest concern) and south-east England (55%).
- 43% said congestion on their local road network created a challenge to their business.
- A similar percentage, (19%), cited poor reliability of company vehicles as a concern, along with restrictions caused by congestion charges and low emission zones (17%).
- In a separate survey of 500 businesses on fuel prices, we found that businesses had saved an average of 11% on their fuel bills in the last year as a result of low prices at the pumps. The survey found that 24% of firms used the money saved on fuel to buy more vehicles.



Tackling some of these concerns – Calls to action

- 1 The worsening state of our local roads is not only a concern for private motorists (as the RAC found in last years 2015 Report on Motoring), but it is also now a significant worry for businesses. The RAC believes the remit of the National Infrastructure Commission should include the condition of all local roads. Having a great strategic road network, increased railway and airport capacity will count for nothing if businesses cannot use local roads that are fit for purpose to start and complete their journeys.
- 2 Motorists have welcomed the long term vision that the Road Investment Strategy has brought to upgrading and improving the strategic road network. However, we believe that a similar long term strategy is required for local roads and local highways authorities should also benefit from a more generous long-term funding solution in order to help them implement planned maintenance schedules that, over time, will put local roads back into a state that reflects the needs of the economy. In this way, we can move from measuring success by how many potholes we have filled to a situation where we measure success by how many potholes we have prevented forming in the first place and the local roads infrastructure will support economic growth and allow other transport infrastructure investment to realise its full potential.

RAC Fuel Watch

The price of a barrel of oil reached a 2016 high on the 8th June at just over \$50. Since then, the price has declined to around \$46 as the market is still in a state of oversupply. As a result prices at the pumps look likely to remain relatively stable for some time, even with the pound losing value since the vote to leave the European Union.

Has Brexit influenced the price at the pumps?

Immediately following the referendum decision to withdraw from the EU, the pound saw a large drop against the dollar, however losses were somewhat tempered when the Bank of England took steps to halt the fall in the value of the pound. The devaluation of the pound initially made fuel more expensive for retailers to buy, however at the same time, oil prices fell from around \$49 a barrel (just before the referendum) to under \$45 a barrel as of 11th July. While there was potential for retail prices to increase slightly following the pound's devaluation wholesale prices have now actually reduced meaning retailers should be looking to reduce their prices by around 2p a litre.

Year On Year: Prices lower

Year on year comparison 13th July 2015 to 13th July 2016

The average UK price of unleaded on 13th July 2016 was 4.9ppl cheaper than it was on 13th July 2015. This represents a 4.2% price drop in the year. The average UK price of diesel on 13th July 2016 was 6.5ppl cheaper than it was on the 13th July 2015 representing a 5.4% price drop in a year.

	13 th July 2015	13 th July 2016
Fuel Type	Average pump price ppl	Average pump price ppl
Unleaded	117.09	112.20
Diesel	119.22	112.73

Monthly Price Comparison: Pump prices have continued to rise slightly

Monthly price comparison 13th June 2016 to 13th July 2016

The average UK price of unleaded on 13th July 2016 was 0.6ppl more expensive than it was on 13th June 2016. This represents a 0.5% price rise in a month. The average UK price of diesel on 13th July 2016 was 1.1ppl more expensive than it was on 13th June 2016 representing a 0.9% price rise in a month.

	13 th June 2016	13 th July 2016
Fuel Type	Average pump price ppl	Average pump price ppl
Unleaded	111.64	112.20
Diesel	111.71	112.73

The facts - the cost of filling a typical family car:

Fuel	Petrol	Diesel
Fuel tank in litres	55	55
Avg forecourt price in pence per litre	112.20	112.73
Total cost to motorist	£61.71	£62.00
Duty	£31.87	£31.87
VAT @ 20%	£10.29	£10.33
Cost of fuel	£19.55	£19.80

Exc VAT	£51.43	£51.67
VAT & duty	£42.16	£42.21
% tax of fuel cost	68%	68%

*Source: Experian Catalist – UK prices as of 13th July 2016

For further information, please visit our fuel pages: <http://www.rac.co.uk/advice/fuel-prices-explained>

What is the RAC doing in your constituency?

RAC recruiting 30 more patrols across the country

The RAC is recruiting 30 new patrols to fill vacancies across the UK to boost its 1,500-strong force and help meet the growing needs of its eight million members.

The RAC has been serving motorists for almost 120 years. While the key skills its roadside patrols must possess include first rate mechanical and customer service skills today's patrols also have to be experts in the use of state-of-the-art diagnostic tools.

Every RAC technician is equipped with a modern patrol van packed with over 500 parts and tools to help fix members vehicles and get them back on the road as swiftly as possible. These include the latest 'RACScan' laptops and diagnostic software to identify vehicle faults; a state-of-the-art battery tester which delivers a comprehensive health check on the vehicle's battery, starting and charging systems; and the RAC's universal spare wheel which was developed to address the fact that over 50% of new cars don't carry a spare. <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/pressreleases/rac-recruiting-30-additional-patrols-across-the-uk-1468184>



Horace's summer road trip

The RAC's Child Road Safety Charity has a busy summer planned to reach as many as 500,000 Scouts, Cubs and Beavers with key messages around keeping safe on and near UK roads.


The lovable canine mascot, Horace, is setting out on his own road trip visiting the Scout Association's big jamborees to test the young people with some exciting challenges. This began at the Scouts big Funday at Gilwell Park in Chingford on 18th & 19th June for Cubs.

And Horace himself is still on a mission to get to as many local groups around the country as he teams up with our local patrols to help deliver our road safety workshops for Cubs hoping to earn their Road Safety Badges this year.



As the Motorist's Champion, the RAC is expertly placed to advise and guide effective road and motoring policy. Should you wish to discuss anything within this newsletter or any wider policy issues, please contact:

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 Visit: rac.co.uk/publicaffairs