

### The Roads Standards Unit: a Road User's Champion

Hon. Bernard Jenkin MP, Shadow Transport Minister

Set out below is the text of the speech by the Hon. Bernard Jenkin MP to the Selsdon Group lunch held in Portcullis House, London in February 2001 to mark the launch of the Conservative policy on roads. This is followed by the text of a policy paper launched that day.

#### Introduction

Roads are the last great state utility without any kind of accountability to their customers. The roads Standards Unit will be a new inspectorate to ensure that road users are treated like customers, rather than the problem. Conservatives will raise more for investment in roads from the private sector, but lack of investment in roads is just one of the problems. The lesson of the past four years and more is that Britain's roads require better management. Road providers – whether local councils, the Highways Authority or, increasingly, the private sector – should be more accountable for the quality they are meant to provide. The road user deserves greater transparency of what is taxed from the road user and what is spent on



*By the Hon. Bernard Jenkin MP, Shadow Transport Minister and Vice President of the The Selsdon Group suggests .....  
..... TEXT TO BE ADDED*

the roads. Road users need a framework for much faster decision making. Today the Conservatives are proposing a policy for better roads.

#### Conservative philosophy compared to Labour

In transport, there is a fundamental difference between the Conservatives and the other main parties.

The Conservatives are the only party that regards the right to travel as a fundamental freedom. Transport is freedom. Transport is about the right to travel when you want, where you want and how you want. Transport policy is, therefore, about choice. People will make sensible transport choices if they are offered a sensible range of transport options. It is the job of government to enable the transport industries to offer those choices to people and to business, so people can get about freely and business can efficiently access their markets.

Labour does not share this view. Behind the rhetoric of Labour's so-called "integrated transport policy" is the implication that the state is in a position to manage *demand* for transport. They claim it is the right of the state to limit people's freedom to travel in favour of some ill-defined and probably

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unattainable public good. However, is it really for ministers to decide which journeys are in the public interest and which are not? Can a government know when you should travel, how you should travel and where you should travel?

When Labour attacks the concept of "predict and provide", they are setting a deliberate policy to avoid the basic strategic question of growth. What sort of integrated transport policy is that?

In aviation, the UK is set to run out of airport capacity in the South East of England around 2010 – there is no policy on that. After four years, we just have another consultation. Container terminal capacity at ports serving the South East England is due to run out in around two years – Labour's recent ports white paper does not address the question of capacity. But it is on the roads where this philosophy has led to Labour's greatest and most abject failure.

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## Labour's failed roads policy

Roads form the heart of our transport system. More than 90 per cent of passenger journeys and 80 per cent of freight journeys are by road. The roads are the arteries through which the country's economic bloodstream flows, but under Labour they are choked with congestion in the same way as Labour policy has been choked with contradictions.

In their transport white paper, Labour said 'to do nothing is not an option' (Trunk Roads White Paper, July 1998).

But doing next to nothing is precisely what they have done for four years.

Their roads policy has been about deliberately cutting back capacity with reductions in the roads programme. In 1998, they slashed more than a hundred bypasses and road widening schemes from the list. They tried to call this a "New Deal for Trunk Roads" but instead it was a death knell.

They punish road use with the highest taxes on petrol and diesel in Europe and they propose spiteful taxes on drivers and business car parks in town centres. However, these restrictions and tax punishments are not working. Labour promised things would get better, but they have got worse. "Standstill Britain" is the result.

Just after the last election John Prescott said: "I will have failed if, in five years time, there are not... far

fewer journeys by car. It's a tall order but I urge you to hold me to it" (John Prescott, Guardian 6 May 1997; also confirmed HC Debs, col. 1070, 20 October 1998)

He has failed. Traffic levels have continued to rise. In fact, they are rising faster. Last year's increase of 1.7 per cent was actually higher than the previous year's 1.5 per cent.

### What the Papers Said

"The proposals put forward this week by **Bernard Jenkin**, the Shadow Transport Minister, are among the most sensible so far in this confused debate... Little of this is ideological; all deserves to be implemented by any government. The Tories know that transport is an issue on which support for Labour has fallen faster than on any other; and their proposals... would free road policy from partisan bickering. Labour would be wise to adopt most of them."

*The Times, Leader column, "The road ahead", Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 17, 2001*

"Nothing illustrates this difference between the parties better than their attitude towards speeding. Under Labour, motorists could face a year's ban for driving at more than 85mph and automatic fines for breaking the 70mph speed limit - as more than half of all motorway drivers do. The **Conservatives**, meanwhile, have noticed what happens in the real world. Sensibly, they would consider increasing the limit to 80mph, and then rigidly enforcing that as the maximum. If Labour can think of no better way of tackling transport problems than attacking drivers, the voters should have something to say about it."

*The Daily Telegraph, Leader column, "Freedom of the Road" Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001*

The contradictions in Labour policy are endless. Belatedly, Labour's ten year transport plan promises to spend £60 billion on roads. First they slashed the bypass programme. They have approved fewer than ten in four years. Now they promise a hundred bypasses over the next ten years. Their record does not inspire confidence.

Urgent decisions are utterly bogged down in hopelessly complex multi-modal studies. The London to Ipswich A12 corridor study started a year ago. It will not report until spring 2002. Everybody knows that the A12 is operating at 60 per cent in excess of design capacity. Parts of the road have hardly been altered since the 1930s. Whatever additional transport measures may be required, there is no alternative to widening and improving the A12, but no such decisions are in sight.

The A12 corridor serves an immediate population of 300,000 people. While we wait for a strategic

view from the government, let alone a start date for improvements, Labour have already decided to impose an additional 50,000 homes on the area. This will further choke the road with traffic. What sort of integration is that?

This story is repeated all over the country. The whole of the motorway network in the West Midlands grinds to a halt every day, because of cancelled improvements. The A14, the main artery from the East Anglian ports to the UK's industrial heartland, is solid with traffic from dawn till dusk and often through the night too. There is desperate need for bypasses at Hindhead on the A3, or on the A1 at Gateshead. The party that promised to cut congestion and pollution has increased it.

In addition to cancelling road improvements, the current Government have also ignored road maintenance. In November, the National Road Quality Report revealed that Britain's roads are in their worst state since 1977, when Labour budgets were being written by the IMF.

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## The Conservative Solution

The first premise of successful policy must be that traffic growth is a challenge we can and must meet. There is no purpose served by despair. To predict and to fail to provide is not a coherent solution. Yes, government's can and should pursue policies to reduce traffic growth, but this can only be achieved by offering

alternative and informed choices, not by punishments and deterrents.

Relative to incomes, cars are ever cheaper. In a prosperous and free society, people will have more to spend on cars. Cars will also become ever cleaner and more efficient, so the environment is no longer available as an excuse to punish the motorist. The challenge is to reconcile personal and family mobility with all our other social and environmental objectives.

Critics often compare Britain's transport investment with our competitors. Well, lets start with roads. All our major competitors spend proportionately more than Britain. However, increased investment is not enough. The next Conservative government will establish The Roads Standards Unit - a new roads inspectorate - to ensure better management and accountability for the roads network.

We will abolish the Labour's unremarkable

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Integrated Transport Commission and other roads quangos such as SACTRA (The Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment) so this will lead to a net reduction in bureaucracy. The RSU will take over the regulatory functions from the Highways Agency and the Audit Commission, as well as absorbing appropriate parts of the DETR.

The roads are the only public service left without an independent monitor of performance. For schools, there is Ofsted; for prisons, there is the prisons inspectorate and the utilities companies have a series of regulators. The Conservatives will make the roads similarly accountable. The Roads Standards Unit will promote improved roads performance and champion the interests of the road user.

The policy we are publishing today sets out how the Roads Standards Unit will operate. We endlessly measure inputs, but there is currently little systematic reporting of outcomes. The provision of information regarding the performance of the road network and how it is achieving its objectives will start to bridge this accountability gap.

## Tax transparency

Under Labour, road user taxes have increased astronomically, but the road user is not getting a proper service or value for money. The Roads Standards Unit will publish an annual analysis of what is taxed and what is spent. This is consistent with our overall policy of tax transparency.

## Key performance indicators

The Roads Standards Unit will hold road providers - both nationally and locally - to account by monitoring the quality of their infrastructure and services. It will provide the expert framework and the strategic direction that is lacking in local and national road planning. It will focus on 'key performance indicators' to identify problems in three key areas: safety; traffic flow and environmental impact.

Promoting road safety will be the Roads Standards Units' first priority. Britain has the best road safety record of any European country, bar Sweden, but with 3,400 deaths per year, the policy response does not match the scale of the carnage. The Roads Standards Unit will help meet casualty reduction targets by developing methods of risk assessment for all kinds of roads and junctions.

It will create a national policy framework to promote

the most effective use of signs, traffic lights, road markings, speed limits and traffic calming schemes, based upon benchmarks of acceptable risk. Risk assessment of particular roads and junctions will become a key driver for investment in roads improvements, such as the dualling of the A1 in the North East of England.

The Roads Standards Unit will also seek to promote traffic flow. Road providers have an obligation to minimise congestion and delay. The CBI regularly points out the costs of congestion. Rail and air passengers rightly complain about delays, but road providers and politicians have conditioned people to accept massive and unpredictable delays. Road works often seem timed to cause the maximum disruption. Some bus lanes (such as on the M4) cause far more disruption than can be justified.

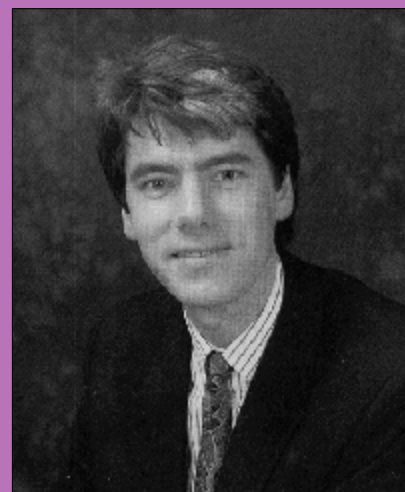
Subject to all the other constraints such as safety, road providers should maximise the convenience of roads to road users. Traffic calming on roads carrying through traffic should be regarded as a last resort until better solutions can be funded. There will be many cases for raising speed limits on roads where existing limits are unnecessarily restrictive. Thus, even motorway speed limits may be raised when traffic and weather conditions allow.

A speed limit on a given stretch of road must meet both the expectation of drivers and the risks they face. It must match what drivers expect, or they will ignore it. At the same time the speed limit must reduce the risk of accidents to an acceptable level. The best road safety laws are self-enforcing, because drivers can understand their reason and purpose. Traffic laws that depend solely on enforcement will never achieve their safety objectives.

If motorway speed limits are to be much more rigidly enforced, the RSU should be free to make a case for 80 mph speed limits. Motorways are our safest roads: they carry 40 per cent of the traffic but account for only 5 per cent of road casualties. Variable speed limits have already proved successful at improving traffic flow and reducing accidents.

On motorways, around 80 mph is a normal and safe speed for many drivers in the right conditions. The 70 mph limit is widely discredited and ignored. If 80 mph were legalised but rigidly enforced, nothing much would change, except to improve respect for the law. This is the kind of traffic flow issue that the RSU will address.

The RSU will also set standards for better road maintenance and management and will identify the key road improvements needed to improve traffic flow. This will inform ministers' decisions about priorities for roads investment. New roads are not



## Note from the Chairman

The Selsdon Group was formed in 1973 to promote free market policies within the Conservative Party. Over 20 Conservative MPs, MEPs and MSPs are members of the group including four members of the Shadow Cabinet and several front-bench spokesmen.

Since his appointment as Shadow Transport Minister, Bernard Jenkin has impressed everyone with his hard work and the wide range of detailed policies he has developed across all modes. The Selsdon Group was therefore delighted when Bernard recently agreed to become one of our Vice-Presidents.

One sector that continues to divide political opinion is roads policy. The Selsdon Group is concerned that road users pay over £36 billion in taxes and fuel duties but have no influence on how the road network is managed and maintained. We believe that road users should be treated as customers rather than cash cows to be milked by Gordon Brown and herded around by John Prescott.

The Selsdon Group was honoured to host the launch of the Party's new roads policy. The positive press comment shows that Bernard's proposed policy offers a more sensible and practical approach to road policy the Labour's motorist-hating Government

*Robert Marr,  
Chairman  
February 2001*

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the answer to every case of congestion, but can be the best answer on environmental and safety grounds alone.

Finally, roads have an adverse environmental impact. The RSU will make it the responsibility of road providers to minimise the adverse impact of roads by such measures as noise barriers, low noise surfaces, low 'sky glow' lighting, landscaping, planting and proper treatment of water run-off. In due course, road providers should be full participants in the trading of carbon emissions and contribute towards measures that mitigate the effects of global warming emissions from cars. The cost of roads must better reflect their true cost to the environment.

The RSU will also set the highest environmental standards for roads improvements and new roads. New roads will only be built as a last resort, where

improvements to existing roads will not suffice. The Conservatives have learned the lessons of Newbury and Winchester: the public will not support roads on the cheap that compromise environmental standards. Money will be spent on tunnels and cuttings. Bridges and viaducts should be of architectural merit to complement the landscape. Roads policy must be more sensitive to the countryside.

For example, we have grave concerns about the proposed bypass for Hastings, which was supported by the Access to Hastings study. We support the principle of bypasses but this scheme seems unable to satisfy our environmental criteria. Moreover, the economic case for a bypass is not overwhelming. The real issue is access to and from Hastings. This would suggest that the real priorities are the links to and from London, including smaller scale improvements to the A21 and to

existing rail services. The RSU will promote the highest environmental standards for decisions about new roads.

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## Conclusion

Our policy is to make road providers, primarily the state, more accountable to road users. Road user organisations like the AA, the RAC and the British Roads Federation support the principle of a roads inspectorate. We propose to end to haphazard planning. We propose transparency and accountability for road user taxes. Britain's roads are a vital economic and social asset to society. Labour has made them a national embarrassment. The Conservatives will deliver a fairer deal to the motorist: better-managed roads to get Britain moving again.

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# The Roads Standards Unit: A Proposal

**The next Conservative Government will ensure better management of Britain's roads network, as part of our fair deal for the road users, by creating a new independent inspectorate for roads: The Roads Standards Unit (RSU).**

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## The Roads Standards Unit and its functions

Our roads are the main arteries through which the lifeblood of Britain's economy flows, but they have been starved of investment. They are also often poorly managed and so fail to deliver what road users are entitled to expect. The end result is not just the huge costs of congestion and delay. Poor safety costs thousands of deaths and serious injuries every year. Many poor roads also blight the environment and the quality of life of millions who live or work near them.

There is a lack of relevant information about the performance of individual roads – whether under the control of the Highways Agency or local councils. The roads are the only public service left without an independent monitor of performance. For schools, there is Ofsted. For prisons, there is the prisons inspectorate, and the utilities companies have a series of regulators. The Conservatives will make the roads similarly accountable. The Roads Standards Unit (RSU) will promote improvement in roads performance and represent the interests of the road user.

In recent years, road user taxes have increased,

but the road user is not getting a proper service or value for money. The RSU will hold road providers to account by monitoring the quality of their infrastructure and services. It will provide the expert framework and the strategic purpose that is lacking in local and national road planning.

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## The accountability gap and tax transparency

Road users and those who live by them are all too aware of poor road performance, but there is little systematic reporting of outcomes. The provision of information regarding the performance of the road network and how it is achieving its objectives will start to bridge this accountability gap by creating transparency and accountability between road users and road providers. The RSU will publish an annual analysis of what is taxed and what is spent. This will make it clear how the tax collected from road users is spent.

The RSU will focus on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to identify problems in three key areas: **safety, traffic flow and environmental impact**. KPIs will indicate where the network is failing and where action is most urgently needed. KPIs will also be used to identify which road providers are the most successful and thus encourage best practice.

The RSU will initially commission a series of studies of roads that are known to be poorly performing. It will examine routes through thematic case studies on types of road. For instance, it could commission

a study on roads in London boroughs or on roads heavily used by HGVs. This will enable the individual concerns to be evaluated and recommendations to be made.

The next Conservative government will continue to assess new road schemes according to the established criteria, namely Environment, Safety, Economy, Accessibility and Integration. However, a similar rigorous assessment should be made of existing roads. The RSU's KPIs will focus on outputs that reflect the intention of the assessment criteria and are relevant to road users and those who are affected by roads.

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## Key criteria to measure road performance

**Safety:** The RSU's first priority will be to promote the safety of the roads. The UK has the best road safety record of any major European country, bar Sweden, but with 3,400 deaths per year, roads are far more dangerous than rail or air. The Conservatives set the target to cut road deaths by 40 per cent. This has now been achieved and we endorse the next set of targets set by Labour.

Like the safety authorities in other transport industries, the RSU will develop methods of risk assessment for all kinds of roads and junctions. It will create a national policy framework to promote the most effective use of signs, traffic lights, road markings, speed limits and traffic calming schemes, based upon benchmarks of acceptable risk.

At present, the Highways Agency and local



authorities do not share a common method of roads safety management. For example, each carries out different policies for applying speed limits. Local police use different criteria for enforcement and prosecution. The RSU will provide a national framework for deciding appropriate speed limits, signs and markings on different types of road. Over time, the RSU will make recommendations for every stretch of road.

Risk assessment of particular roads and junctions will drive the priorities for investment in roads improvement. For example, this is likely to show that major trunk roads that remain two-way single carriageways (like the A1 in the North East of England) are unacceptably dangerous roads and should be improved to save lives.

The RSU will advise road providers on the most effective road safety improvements. It will make recommendations about best practice for the management of safety on the roads according to national criteria and advise ministers on road safety policy. This will be based on the best research and investigation.

The RSU's safety role will be supported by an independent **Road Casualty Investigation Branch** of the DETR. This will build up a body of research on the causes of road accidents, including driver training and behaviour, and make recommendations to the RSU and to ministers for managing safety on the roads more effectively.

**Traffic flow:** Road providers should have an obligation to minimise congestion and delay. Rail and air passengers rightly complain about delays, but road providers and politicians have conditioned people to accept massive and unpredictable delays. Road works often seem timed to cause the maximum disruption. The Conservatives have already announced that we will clamp down on excessive road works by charging utilities companies for the amount of time spent digging up the road. Utilities companies will save money by co-operating and working at hours that cause the least disruption. The RSU will set the framework for this.

The RSU will also set standards for better road maintenance and management. It costs more to repair or renew a neglected road than to keep up with scheduled maintenance. The RSU will advise on maximum usage limits for a stretch of road to ensure that road users are not delayed extensively for major roadworks.

Some bus lanes (such as on the M4) cause far more disruption than can be justified. Traffic calming, on roads carrying through traffic, should be regarded as a last resort until better solutions can be funded. The RSU again will have a role in



## Hon Bernard Jenkin MP

In August 1998 Bernard Jenkin was appointed Shadow Minister for Transport, taking on additional responsibility as Shadow Minister for London in December 1999.

He was elected Member of Parliament for North Essex in the 1997 General Election with a majority of 5,476 and was appointed Opposition Front Bench Spokesman for Constitutional Affairs.

From 1995 to 1997 he was Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Hon Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland. Mr Jenkin was a Member of the Social Security Select Committee from December 1993 to 1997. He was Member of Parliament for North Colchester from 1992 to 1997.

He was Political Adviser to the Rt Hon Sir Leon Brittan, QC, from 1986-88; PA to Sir Hugh Rossi MP in the 1979 and 1983 General Elections; Chairman of Matching Parish Council, Essex, from 1985-87; and a Governor of Central Foundations Girl's School ILEA between 1985 and 1989.

Bernard is married to Anne and has two sons.

auditing the usage of bus lanes. This does not mean that the Conservatives want to remove well used bus lanes, it is about better management of existing road space. An unused bus lane is a waste of road.

In addition, the RSU will have a role on deciding where to trial and implement the Conservatives proposal of amber filter arrows at certain junctions to allow cars to turn left through a red light. The RSU will consult with local authorities and the police to ensure that cars may only turn through a red light when it is safe to do so.

Subject to all the other constraints such as safety, road providers should maximise the convenience of roads to road users. This may mean raising

speed limits on roads where existing limits are unnecessarily restrictive, subject to RSU risk assessment. Thus, even motorway speed limits may be raised when traffic and weather conditions allow.

Finally, as a key element of its functions, the RSU will identify the vital road improvements needed to improve traffic flow. This will inform ministers' decisions about priorities for roads investment. New roads are not the answer to every case of congestion, but can be the best answer on environmental and safety grounds alone. Labour say they will reverse their cuts in the roads programme, but they seem reluctant to take the necessary decisions to implement the improvements.

**Environmental impact:** Roads have an adverse impact on the environment. The RSU will make it the responsibility of road providers to minimise the adverse impact of roads by such measures as noise barriers, low noise surfaces, low 'sky glow' lighting, landscaping, planting and proper treatment of water run-off. In due course, road providers should be full participants in the trading of carbon emissions and contribute towards measures that mitigate the effects of global warming emissions from cars. The cost of roads must better reflect their true cost to the environment.

The RSU will also set the highest environmental standards for roads improvements and new roads. New roads will only be built as a last resort, where improvements to existing roads will not suffice. The Conservatives have learned the lessons of Newbury and Winchester: the public will not support roads on the cheap that compromise environmental standards. Money will be spent on tunnels and cuttings. Bridges and viaducts should be of architectural merit to complement the landscape.

That is why we have grave concerns about the proposed bypass of Hastings. We support the principle of bypasses but this scheme seems unable to satisfy our environmental criteria. Moreover, the economic case for a bypass is not overwhelming. The real issue is access to and from Hastings. This would suggest that the real priorities are improvements to links to and from London, including smaller scale improvements to the A21 and to existing rail services. The RSU would help ensure that environment standards are adhered to in decision-making on roads.

## Reduced bureaucracy: RSU running costs

The RSU will not increase bureaucracy. It will

combine tasks that are currently performed by a number of bodies. The RSU will also take over the roads monitoring functions of the Highways Agency and of the Audit Commission. The Conservatives will abolish the Labour's Commission for Integrated Transport and the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA). The RSU will take over SACTRA's role and advise ministers on enhancement of the road network. This will be part of a process to speed up the assessment of proposed road schemes.



*Conservatives will care for the environment and the road user*

## How a Roads Standards Unit will work in practice

The following illustrate common complaints about poor management of the roads and show how the RSU will improve the situation:

### Traffic flow

The RSU will monitor the variance of traffic flow on congested stretches of road and advise the highways authority on ways in which maximum and safe traffic flow can be achieved. This would include tackling troublesome accident blackspots or repetitive roadworks. It would also involve introducing technology such as in the successful variable speed limits project on the western M25.

Highways authorities that fail to achieve maximum traffic flow would be exposed for hindering taxpayers. This means that the RSU will be able to tackle problems such as proliferation of unnecessary traffic lights. The RSU will also audit urban bus lanes to discover whether they are being adequately used by public transport and, if not, recommend that the road be given back for general transport use.

Predicting journey times is a key factor for travellers and particularly businesses. The RSU's research will therefore help build up a more comprehensive guide to likely journey times and journey reliability.

### Road Safety

The RSU will have a role in examining the safety record of particularly poor performing stretches of road and making recommendations for changes either to the layout of the infrastructure or signing, visibility or lighting issues so as to reduce the number of localised accidents.

It will also work with our new Road Casualty Investigation Branch to hold thematic inquiries into

why certain types of accident happen. For instance, they could look at accidents on rural roads or on poorly-lit suburban streets. From the evidence that the RCIB gathers, the RSU will make recommendations to local authorities for improvement, thus ensuring safety value for taxpayers.

### Road Maintenance

Three-quarters of local authorities believe under-funding of road maintenance is threatening road users' safety and £50 million was paid out last year in compensation for accidents or vehicle damage caused by poorly maintained roads. The current average road can only be resurfaced every 78 years on current budgets, while engineers recommend a life of only 10-20 years.

The RSU will have a key role in tackling this problem of poor road quality. Not only does poor road surfacing lead to delays and congestion, but road user safety – particularly that of cyclists and motorcyclists – is being threatened by poor maintenance. Regular, planned maintenance is one of the most cost-effective ways of maintaining safe roads, and by effecting remedial works regularly councils will save themselves money in the long-run.

### Noise and the environment

The Conservative party pioneered using low-noise asphalt in road construction. Modern asphalts reduce traffic noise by the equivalent of halving the volume of traffic. The RSU will examine measures being employed by highways authorities to suppress noise, whether through modern asphalts or noise attenuation barriers, and encourage best practice for poorly performing authorities.

In addition, the RSU can examine the broader issue of the environmental impact of roads and suggest measures for improving the 'greenness' of roads such as planting trees and fauna, proper

maintenance of verges, litter control and maintenance of laybys. The RSU can also work with the Environment Agency on countering flood disruption to roads.

The RSU will also enforce measurement of air quality and suggest remedial measures to highways authorities where air quality and pollution is poor.

### Signing, marking and lighting

The quality of road signing, marking and lighting play an important role in the safe operation of the road network. The RSU will set minimum standards for the quality and maintenance of each of these.

### Including cyclists and pedestrians

Highways authorities have to consider the safe provision of road space or other dedicated paths for cyclists and pedestrians. The RSU will set standards and monitor performance of local highways authorities by using KPIs for cycle paths, safe crossing routes, quality maintenance at the road side etc. If cycling and walking are to be more attractive, action needs to be taken to improve safety and accessibility.

## How it will be funded

The RSU will not be particularly expensive to manage, or bureaucratic. The Prison's Inspectorate costs only about £1.5 million a year. Furthermore, the RSU would be a single body formed from splitting some of the functions from the Highways Agency and the Audit Commission. As such, the start-up costs would be less than expected.

## Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

As roads are a devolved matter it would be up to the individual assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to decide if they should adopt a similar body to make their roads accountable. However, road safety is a responsibility of the UK Parliament. They will be expected to draw upon the safety role of the RSU and the Roads Casualty Investigation Branch of the DETR will be a national body.

## Declaration

- *We believe that individual enterprise is the source of all progress in economics, the sciences and the arts and that the task of politics is to create a framework within which the individual can flourish.*
- *We believe that every individual should be judged by his actions and not according to arbitrary criteria of race, creed or colour.*
- *We believe that economic freedom is vital to political freedom because power is then diffused among many different enterprises instead of being concentrated on the State.*
- *We oppose the view that the State should have a monopoly in health, housing, education and welfare.*
- *We uphold the right of the individual to cater for his own preferences in the market, believing that the State provision should supplement, rather than replace, private provision.*
- *We see our primary role as to influence the Conservative Party, so that it embraces economic and social policies which extend the boundaries of personal choice.*

## Application for membership

Name

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Title

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Age

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Job

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Company

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College

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Tel (H)

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Email

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Constituency/Length of Party Membership

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Membership of other Groups?

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Address

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Statement: *I wish to apply for membership of The Selsdon group and fully support the philosophy of the Group, as laid down in the Selsdon Declaration (see left).*

Signed

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Date

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*\*All membership applications are subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.*

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## Standing Order

Please complete this form and send it along with your application to the the address below. Any queries should be addressed to the Secretary, who can also be contacted on the Group's email address: [selsdon\\_group@hotmail.com](mailto:selsdon_group@hotmail.com)

The Manager

(Bank Name)

Branch

Address

Postcode

Account No.

Sort Code

Signed

Date

Please pay the sum of £25/£15\* to Lloyds Bank, Butler Place, Caxton Street, London, SW1H 0PR, sort code 30-98-97 for The Selsdon Group, account number 0298707 immediately and thereafter on the 1st January each year until further notice.

*\* £25 for London residents, £15 outside London - delete as appropriate. Larger donations welcome.*

Please return to: The Secretary, The Selsdon Group, 35 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, London, SW3 1DE