

Dear Lillian Greenwood MP,

Transport Committee Inquiry into Local Roads Funding and Governance

We write as a group of professional bodies, charities and other organisations who are actively involved in the design, maintenance and operation of the entire highway network. We recognise that there have been great strides in improving efficiency in the highways industry, but believe that that the local highways network needs urgent answers to the questions of funding and governance.

In recent years local highways have been under funded and unrecognised for the fundamental role they play in the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our nation. Unless a future financial settlement addresses these issues, the UK will continue to build up a maintenance backlog for future generations and continue to suffer from less serviceable carriageways, footways, bridges, lighting, signs and drainage infrastructure, all of which are necessary in delivering for communities.

This is in stark contrast to the strategic road network (SRN) which has been granted increased funding, stable investment and unified governance. [64 per cent of all road traffic is on local highways](#), in addition to almost all walking, cycling and bus journeys, and yet the SRN will receive 52 times more funding per mile [under current plans](#). While the SRN should be sufficiently resourced to enable freight and longer journeys, there is a need to recognise the value of local transport.

The state of our local highways is a national issue and there are key issues to be addressed;

Firstly, that local authorities **should not be forced into a trade-off between funding local roads and other vital services such as adult social care or children's services**. The removal of 'ringfenced funding' allowed new opportunities for local authorities to choose how they spend their money, and to prioritise the issues of local residents. However, protecting spending in some areas means that other budgets will inevitably be squeezed, leading to a lower quality of service.


Secondly, that **the scale of the problem is not fully understood, nor the full benefits that the local highway network brings**, as there are no overall comprehensive data sets for local roads, which are managed by 152 different local authorities. There is a range of useful surveys by bodies such as the AIA, RAC, NHT, LGA and UKRLG but none are sufficient to provide the detail needed to develop a structured approach to addressing the issues.

Thirdly, **there needs to be a proper consideration of how we fund our local highway network for long term sustainability**. Currently there is no relationship between using local highways and paying for them, despite some users such as utilities and freight companies having a disproportionate impact. The creation of a roads funds for the SRN is welcome but given virtually all journeys on the strategic network begin and end on the local network it seems perverse not to extend the principle to the local roads network.

Finally, our roads are there to deliver for all users, not just motorists, **so the future of local roads governance and funding must address the needs of walkers, cyclists and all users**.

Our organisations will continue making positive contributions to the national conversation on the condition and structure of our local roads, and CIHT intends to publish a major report written by our President Matthew Lugg OBE in 2019.

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Lugg (President, CIHT)



Jonathan Pearson (President, IHE)



George Lee (Chief Executive, HTMA)



Mark Stevens (Chair, ADEPT Engineering Board)



Alasdair Reisner (Chief Executive, CECA)