

Motoring facts

Motorists paid £23 billion in fuel duty and £5 billion in Vehicle Excise Duty in 2005/6 [1]. However these taxes have to pay for the accidents, air pollution, carbon emissions and other damage to the environment that motoring causes. The taxes must also cover road maintenance.

Last year there were 260,000 casualties on our roads, including 3,172 fatalities [2]. Using Government figures, the cost to the economy of these accidents was £12 billion [3].

In 2005/6 the government spent £6.6 billion on roads [4].

There is currently no way to monetise the cost to the economy of the air pollution and associated health problems caused by motoring.

Road transport emitted 142.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (or 38.8 million tonnes of carbon) in 2005 [5]. Using Stern's figure of £190 per tonne of carbon, the carbon caused by road transport cost the economy £7.4 billion.

The Government has a large roadbuilding programme, with over 80 schemes in the Highways Agency Major Roads Programme, and 59 local authority road schemes approved and funded by the Government. There are another 20 schemes in the Highways Agency's Study Pool waiting to be approved into the Major Roads Programme [6].

Data from the Office of National Statistics and DfT cannot be used to determine whether the road network has grown. Since 2000 the Government have 'detrunked' a lot of the major road network, and handed it over to local authority control. This gives a misleading impression that the major road network is not growing. Also the methodology for assessing road lengths has been revised several times since 1993, so the data is impossible to compare from year to year [7].

References

[1] From Transport Statistics Great Britain 2007, published by the Department for Transport, November 2007 Section Seven, Roads and Traffic, Table 7.15

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/tsqb/2007edition/sectionsevenroadsandtraffic.pdf>

[2] From Transport Statistics Great Britain 2007, published by the Department for Transport, November 2007 Section Eight, Transport Accidents and Casualties: Table 8.1

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/tsqb/2007edition/sectioneighttransportacciden.pdf>

[3] Highways Economics Note No. 1

2005 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of Road Accidents and Casualties, published by the Department for Transport, 12 January 2007

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/ea/pdfeconnote105>

Fatalities cost the economy £1,428,180 each. Serious casualties cost £160,480 each, whilst slight accidents cost £12,370 each.

[4] From Transport Statistics Great Britain 2007, published by the Department for Transport, November 2007 Section Seven, Roads and Traffic, Table 7.13

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/tsqb/2007edition/sectionsevenroadsandtraffic.pdf>

[5] From Transport Statistics Great Britain 2007, published by the Department for Transport, November 2007 Section Three, Energy and the Environment, Table 3.8

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/tsqb/2007edition/section3energyenvironment.pdf>

[6] See "Review of Highways Agency's Major Roads Programme", a report for the Secretary of State for Transport by Mike Nichols, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Nichols Group, on cost estimating and the management of the Highways Agency's major roads programme, March 2007, Appendix 3

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/nicholsreport/nicholsreport>

[7] From Transport Statistics Great Britain 2007, published by the Department for Transport, November 2007, Section Seven, Roads and Traffic, Table 7.6

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/tsqb/2007edition/sectionsevenroadsandtraffic.pdf>