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# Road privatisation long overdue [1]

Written by **Blog Editor** [2] | Monday 19 March 2012

The Adam Smith Institute has been advocating the privatisation of Britain's roads since the 1980s. Today's announcement on allowing private firms to run roads is a welcome piece of news, and Tom Clougherty, our Executive Director, gave the following reaction:

"The government is right that we need more investment in the UK's road network and right that this investment cannot realistically come from public resources. If we're going to give Britain the infrastructure it needs for stronger economic growth and a better quality of life, we need to get the private sector involved.

"Paying private contractors to manage and maintain existing highways makes a lot of sense, and is something that has been done successfully around the world. But the really exciting prospect is that private firms will be able to build new road capacity and charge drivers to use it. Introducing the profit motive in this fashion ? and thereby drawing infrastructure investment to where it is really needed ? is the surest way to ease congestion and speed up travel times on some of the UK's most important routes.

?Of course, the devil is in the detail, and we can't look at this policy in isolation. Motorists are feeling the pinch as it is, so any widespread shift towards toll charging should be accompanied by cuts in fuel and vehicle duties. Secondly, the successful implementation of this idea requires that we dramatically speed-up Britain's notoriously bureaucratic planning system. Without that, we are bound to see vital infrastructure projects strangled at birth.?

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