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RAC comments on IEA report on traffic controls

Research by the Institute of Economic Affairs found the cumulative effect of traffic regulation measures "imposes an enormous burden on the UK economy". The authors claim that the UK could afford to lose around 80% of traffic lights that cause unnecessary delays which cause a loss of up to £16 billion a year.

RAC spokesman Simon Williams said: "Traffic lights can play a valuable role in keeping traffic moving, equally there are occasions when they can also hinder traffic flow. The Portishead experiment in North Somerset was a case

where removing lights improved the flow of vehicles as road users took more care and worked out whose turn it was to move. But interestingly, not far from there in the village of Portbury by junction 19 of the M5 at Gordano services the introduction of lights has helped prevent queues as traffic previously struggled to turn left on to the busy A369 from Bristol towards the motorway junction.

“Timing settings of lights are also crucial and even slight adjustments can make big differences to good traffic flow. In addition, there are instances where traffic lights are clearly needed in the day, but needlessly hold up traffic at night.

“The use of traffic lights should always involve careful consideration on a case-by-case basis. There are many situations where their use is vital, both for traffic flow and road safety so any indication that all traffic lights should be turned off would likely do far more harm than good. However, identifying lights that may adversely be affecting traffic flow for further 'switching off' trials would be worth exploring.”

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About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to nearly 14 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. Included in this is the first-of-its-kind nationwide Mobile Mechanics service which brings the garage to homes and workplaces.

At the forefront of new solutions for business fleets and consumers, the RAC's

breakdown service is electric-ready with mobile EV charging technology and can be called on using [myRAC](#) – the all-in-one route planner, fuel finder and breakdown reporting app.

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