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## **UK Budget: Majority of drivers want Chancellor to ringfence 2p of existing fuel duty for local roads**

**Six-in-10 UK drivers (59%) want the new Chancellor to bolster spending on the country's crumbling local road infrastructure at next week's Budget by ringfencing 2p from every litre of petrol and diesel sold without increasing duty rates, according to an RAC survey of 3,200 drivers.\***

In fact drivers feel so strongly about the need to increase spending on maintaining local roads that they would much prefer the Chancellor kept fuel duty at the current level – 57.95p on every litre of fuel bought – than cut it, so long as a proportion of it is reserved for fixing potholes and improving the quality of roads that are under local councils' control.

A quarter (26%) of motorists surveyed would like to see fuel duty reduced by 2p to bring down pump prices, while any increase in duty would prove extremely unpopular with just one-in-10 (10%) in favour.

When it comes to what drivers expect the Chancellor to do with fuel duty, rather than what they would like to see happen, the figures are mixed. An almost-identical proportion think he will put duty up (42%) as expect him to keep it at the current level (41%), with few drivers (6%) expecting any form of cut next week.

Motorists are also keen to see more financial support to encourage them to switch to an electric model next time they change their car. Four-in-10 (41%) said they would be more attracted to electric vehicles (EVs) if further funds were announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Budget. As things stand, the current Plug-in Car Grant – which provides up to £3,500 off the list price

of a new battery electric vehicle – may not be extended at all after this year, ending the direct financial support given to help drivers go electric. With the high up-front cost of electric vehicles second only to concerns about EV range on a single charge according to the RAC's research (28% say the former is their biggest concern, 31% the latter), it is clear the Government needs to continue providing incentives that will encourage more drivers to make the switch to an electric model.

**RAC head of policy Nicholas Lyes said:**

“What the Government decides to do with fuel duty is always the subject of much speculation before each Budget, and this year is no exception. But the Chancellor might be interested to discover that more than twice the proportion of drivers want to see it kept at its current level compared to those who want to see it cut, so long as he commits to ring-fencing fuel duty to fix the country's local roads.

“The maintenance of England's ‘strategic’ roads – motorways and major A-roads – has guaranteed investment in the form of the National Roads Fund, where part of the funds raised through ‘car tax’ (vehicle excise duty) are ringfenced. But we've said consistently that no such system exists to help better maintain the thousands of miles of roads under local authority control, which isn't right given the importance of these roads. With one of the wettest February's ever recorded fresh in the minds of so many motorists, we're concerned we're on the verge of yet more pothole misery come the Spring if action is not taken soon.

“We believe the only hope for getting the UK's local roads up to a standard fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is by ring-fencing a small proportion of the tax drivers already have to pay every time they fill up – and from our survey it's clear most drivers agree. We really are hoping for some fresh thinking on this from the Chancellor in his Budget.

“It's also vitally important that the Chancellor retains, or ideally improves upon, the financial support available to make electric vehicles the first choice for drivers when they next change their car. With a ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars coming by 2035 if not earlier, now is the time for the Government to show motorists it is serious about helping them make the switch – especially as the default option for so many may be simply to stick with a new petrol or diesel vehicle, or even not change their vehicle at all.

Already more than 160,000 drivers have gone electric thanks to the Plug-in Car Grant – but with 42m people holding a full driving licence in the UK there remains a long way to go in encouraging many more of us to make the switch.”

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## **Notes to Editors**

\* 3,200 drivers surveyed who are members of the RAC Driver Opinion Panel.  
Survey completed February 2020

## **About the RAC**

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the world, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **[Insurance](#)**. The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers ['black box' telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **Other motoring services**. The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on

the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the [RAC Opinion Panel](#). The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

**For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).**

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