



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
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Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Committee
Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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13 May 2022

Dear Huw,

Thank you for inviting the Permanent Secretary and I to speak to the Committee on 27 April. We were very grateful for the opportunity to discuss the wide range of work currently underway in the Department.

I am writing to provide you with the further information that we committed to provide on certain topics during the session. This material is set out in Annex A.

I also want to correct the record on the following matters - the number of zero emission buses on the road and the number of deaths during E-scooter trials. These corrections are set out in Annex A.

At the Committee's request I am also attaching a copy of the letter that the Permanent Secretary recently wrote to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee on congestion at the Port of Dover. This is included at Annex B.

Yours ever,

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

Annex A – Further information and clarifications for the TSC following the session on the Work of the Secretary of State for Transport, 27 April 2022

During the evidence session, further detail was promised in relation to 13 topics:

1. Advice given to airlines regarding 6 months validity of passports for travelling to the EU
2. A copy of the Permanent Secretary's recent letter to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee regarding congestion at the Port of Dover
3. The date of DfT's response to the consultation on expanding the medical professionals able to undertake driver medicals
4. The definition used for motorway refuge areas in relation to the commitment for every 1 mile of smart motorway to include a refuge area
5. Network Rail plans for minimising disruption on the Transpennine Route Upgrade
6. Timings related to National Rail Contracts and Passenger Service Contracts
7. Number of zero emission buses
8. The total distanced travelled by e-scooters during e-scooter trials
9. The dates that UK Shore will begin announcing investment plans
10. DfT views on the Rail Industry Association's criticisms of DfT's original response to TSC recommendations on rail decarbonisation
11. Projections on modal shift to active travel
12. DfT's estimate of the scale of the HGV driver shortage
13. Progress on facilities for HGV drivers, including temporary facilities

I would also like to correct specific details related to 1 additional topic:

14. E-scooter deaths

The material below sets out this information.

Further Information

1. Advice given to airlines regarding 6 months validity of passports for travelling to the EU.

Communications on passport validity for travel to the EU are the responsibility of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). I have written to the Foreign Secretary to ask her Department to respond directly to the Committee on this point.

2. Share the Permanent Secretary's recent letter to the chair of the Public Accounts Committee regarding congestion at the Port of Dover

This letter is attached at Annex B.

3. The date of DfT's response to the consultation on expanding the medical professionals able to undertake driver medicals

We are planning on publishing our response on 12 May.

4. The definition used for motorway refuge areas in relation to the commitment for every 1 mile of smart motorway to include a refuge area

In our response to the Committee's report on the rollout and safety of smart motorways in January 2022, we made a commitment to deliver 150 additional Emergency Areas (EAs) to all-lane running (ALR) sections in operation and construction by 2025. We are currently developing a detailed programme for delivering these additional EAs, which we intend to publish later in the year. We are committed to this including 150 new EAs, but the programme may in addition to these also include some other types of PRS to meet the GD301 spacing standard, as it was published in 2020. In response to the Committee's question, the current design standard sets out that a PRS includes motorway service areas as well as new and existing hard shoulders on slip roads (referred to below as diverge connector roads) and purpose-built emergency areas (EAs).

The new GD 301¹ design standard for smart motorways, which was first published in October 2020, set out a new standard for the spacing of places of relative safety (PRS) on smart motorways. This specifies that places of relative safety should be 0.75 mile apart where feasible, up to a maximum spacing of 1 mile.

A place of relative safety (PRS) is defined in the GD 301 design standard as follows:

A facility where road users can stop in an emergency. A place of relative safety only includes the following:

- 1) a motorway service area (MSA) and rest area;*
- 2) an emergency area;*
- 3) an existing hard shoulder that is a minimum of 3 metres wide and a minimum of 100 metres in length, located intra-junction or on a diverge connector road; and,*
- 4) a new short section of hard shoulder (NSSH) located on a diverge connector road that is 100 metres in length and is a minimum of 3 metres wide.*

Examples of features that are not a place of relative safety include:

- 1) a maintenance hard standing;*
- 2) depots or turnarounds, including their connector roads;*
- 3) verges; and,*
- 4) any location outside the Overseeing Organisation's land boundary (excluding MSAs).*

¹ GD301: <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/search/d908f9c2-cd47-4e96-b015-97b51e24c588>

The spacing standard, and the definition of types of PRS it covers, have not changed since it was published in 2020. Moreover, the types of PRS have not changed since 2012, when they were defined in IAN 161/12², although at this time “places of relative safety” were called “refuge areas”, with “emergency refuge areas” being a type of “refuge area”. To note the terms “emergency area” and “place of relative safety” are both now included in the Highway Code, as Rules 270 and 275 respectively.

5. Network Rail plans for minimising disruption on the Transpennine Route Upgrade

The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) is a major upgrade that will provide significant benefits to passengers in the North, but delivering it will mean that passenger and freight services on the route will be disrupted.

Network Rail are reviewing the Strategic Access Plan principles for TRU and engaging with industry stakeholders to examine how different access agreements may be of benefit in limiting disruption where possible. A TRU Customer Manifesto has been developed to assist train operating companies create and deliver effective customer management plans. This includes a commitment to keeping passengers on a train as often as possible and moving on time and in comfort. We aim to provide as much notice as possible for any disruption along the route.

6. Timings related to National Rail Contracts and Passenger Service Contracts

The seven National Rail Contracts (NRCs) awarded to date to replace the current emergency agreements put in place during the pandemic have different lengths. They all have a core term of between two and about three years, and at the Secretary of State’s discretion these contracts can then run on for a further two or three years. Three further NRCs are planned to be let this year, with core terms of between three and four years. The NRC is a flexible agreement that does not commit the government to any particular train service or timetable. The contract operates through on the agreement of an annual business plan, budget and train service which is agreed each year. This flexibility allows the government to plan the train service to reflect the recovery of demand following the pandemic, to support the introduction of rail transformation reforms and the transition to Great British Railways (GBR), and to meet current budgets.

The NRCs will therefore not constrain the ability of GBR to plan and deliver reform to the railway once it is established.

Government policy in relation to the timing and duration of the successor PSCs remains under development, including the approach to stakeholder consultation.

7. The Number of zero-emission buses that are currently received and active on the road

We are committed to supporting the introduction of 4,000 new zero emission buses. To clarify comments made in the session, under this Government since February 2020 2,000 new zero emission buses (ZEBs) have been funded in green bus funding schemes in

² IAN 161/12 <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/archive/search/c5634ec0-979d-4852-9efe-d47b3b2dd2f4>

England. In addition, over 700 ZEBs have been funded in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Key details of UK Government green bus funding schemes are as follows.

943 ZEBs will be supported through £198.3m funding from the standard process of the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. The funding was awarded to 12 areas in England: Blackpool, City of York, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Nottingham, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth & Hampshire, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and the West Midlands. These areas were announced in March 2022. The first orders for ZEBs are expected to be placed in the coming months and the majority of these ZEBs are expected to be on the road by March 2024.

335 ZEBs have been supported through nearly £71m funding awarded under the fast track process of the ZEBRA scheme. Five areas were awarded funding: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Leicester, Warrington, Kent and Milton Keynes. This funding was announced in October 2021. The first orders for ZEBs are expected to be placed in the coming months and, again, all ZEBs are expected to be on the road by March 2024.

Government funding of Transport for London has supported the introduction of 300 zero emission buses in London.

In March 2021, £50m funding was awarded to the West Midlands Combined Authority to transform Coventry into the first All Electric Bus City. Up to 300 ZEBs will be supported through the project by 2025 and the first order for 130 electric buses was placed in December 2021.

82 ZEBs have been supported through the Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme in England outside London since February 2020. 51 of these buses are on the road, two have been delivered to the bus operator but are not yet in service, and a further 29 have been ordered.

Local areas are of course able to use funding from other Government funding schemes, including the Transforming Cities Fund and the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements to support the introduction of ZEBs.

There is over £200m of further funding dedicated to zero emission buses over the remainder of the Spending Review, which will directly support even more zero emission buses and drive progress to our 4,000 target.

DfT is currently consulting on a date after which it will not be possible to buy a non-zero emission bus. This, and the uplift in Bus Service Operators Grant brought in in April, will drive even greater uptake of zero emission buses, pushing us towards our aim of a zero emission bus fleet.

Taken together, this means the government remains on track to deliver its commitment to fund a total of 4,000 zero-emission buses across the country – which the Prime Minister promised in 2020 to “drive forward the UK’s progress on its net zero ambitions” and to “build and rebuild those vital connections to every part of the UK”.

8. The total distanced travelled by e-scooters during e-scooter trials

Data from the e-scooter trials shows that 24.8 million miles have been travelled on e-scooters up to 31 March 2021.

9. The dates that UK Shore will begin announcing investment plans

We plan to launch the multi-year Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition this year, to help bring to market pre-commercial clean maritime technologies. Early next year we will launch a new scheme supporting R&D in vessels and infrastructure that are closer to market, accelerating their commercial roll out. These schemes will be announced alongside other initiatives, as part of ambitious packages of interventions, which will be announced in due course.

10. DfT views on the Rail Industry Association's criticisms of DfT's original response to TSC recommendations on rail decarbonisation

The Office of Rail and Road's (ORR) infrastructure statistics state 1221 miles of track in Great Britain have been electrified, from new electrification projects for passenger traffic, between financial years 2010-2021. From 2017 to 2021, almost 800 miles have been electrified across England and Wales. This compares to 60 miles electrified in England and Wales between financial years of 1997 to 2010 from Network Rail's Annual Return in 2020.

In the Transport Decarbonisation Plan the Government committed to deliver a net zero rail network by 2050. To deliver this we are committed to the construction of new lines to meet growing demand for rail travel, as well as to the upgrade of existing lines. The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands outlines the biggest ever single government investment in Britain's rail network; a £96bn strategy of rail construction and upgrades to be delivered over the next 30 years. This includes new electrified track in HS2, as well as electrification of the Transpennine Main Line between Manchester, Leeds and York and the Midland Main Line between London St Pancras, the East Midlands, and Sheffield. We also announced in early September the £78 million approval for the electrification of rail infrastructure between Wigan and Bolton.

Taken collectively, this shows a clear pipeline of electrification and demonstrates our serious commitment to decarbonisation. We also continue to provide support for development of alternative rail decarbonisation technology, including £2.15m funding to enable a trial of battery train fast-charging on the GWR network, announced in February.

11. Projections on modal shift to active travel

Gear Change sets out an ambition for half of all journeys to be walked or cycled in towns and cities by 2030. In 2019, 42% of journeys in towns and cities were cycled or walked. The trajectory set out in the Net Zero Strategy is for 46% of journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2025, rising to 50% in 2030 and 55% in 2035. Our current forecast from Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy modelling is that by 2025 42-47% of journeys will be cycled or walked in towns and cities, and 44-50% of journeys by 2030.

12. DfT's estimate of the scale of the HGV driver shortage

The worldwide haulage sector has been experiencing a chronic shortage of HGV drivers for some time. This is now considered an acute shortage within the UK, where the shortage of HGV drivers was estimated to be around 51,000 during 2021.

Source: ONS data from the Annual Population Survey. The number of HGV drivers is estimated to have fallen by an average of 51,100 from 303,900 over the twelve-month period ending December 2019 to 252,800 in the twelve-month period ending December 2021.

13. Progress on facilities for HGV drivers, including temporary facilities

The Government recognises the need to ensure hauliers have access to appropriate services and facilities. We are aware of the concerns expressed by many HGV drivers about the provision, quality and value of lorry parking in the UK.

HGV drivers will benefit from £52.5 million investment in driver facilities, including £20m National Highways funding to improve roadside facilities in addition to the £32.5m investment in HGV parking announced in the December 2021 Spending Review.

On 27th January 2022 DfT commissioned a 'National Lorry Parking Survey' as the primary evidence base to understand what improvements are most needed and where they are most needed. Emerging findings will be presented in May, and an interim report in September 2022 will inform the criteria for the first round of matched funding before a final report in January 2023.

The Department is also working with Logistics UK, National Highways, the Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport, Transport Focus (the transport users' independent watchdog) and other industry stakeholders to assist evidence gathering around lorry parking facilities. A Preliminary Survey report is due mid-June 2022.

Officials are developing appropriate match-funding grant mechanisms and criteria for investment. Subject to design approval by Cabinet Office Complex Grant Advice Panel (CGAP), the scheme will invite applications from operators to fund improvements to HGV driver facilities such as improved shower and washroom facilities, catering areas, security lighting, barriers and perimeter fencing, or capacity improvements.

The Department intends to invite applications during October 2022 and commence grants in the current financial year. We will develop tailored communications both to encourage bids from operators of lorry parks and driver welfare facilities.

Ministers have also approved scoping work for several public sector-controlled sites identified near to the strategic road network that may have potential as lorry parking facilities. This includes commissioning legal and independent property specialists to evaluate commercial and engineering feasibility, and we will advise on a site-by-site basis.

The Department already has a contract in place with Ashford International Truckstop – a private lorry park located off the M20 – for traffic management purposes, up until March 2023. This can hold up to 960 HGVs until the end of August 2022, and up to 650 thereafter, providing safe and secure parking with the highest level of driver welfare facilities.

We are also ensuring that the planning system plays its part in meeting the needs of hauliers for lorry parking. DfT continues to work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to highlight the criteria and consideration for lorry parking with Local Authorities.

The National Planning Policy Framework already sets out that local planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing overnight lorry parking facilities, taking into account any local shortages, to reduce the risk of parking in locations that lack proper facilities or could cause a nuisance.

DfT is working with stakeholders to finalise an update to the Strategic Road Network

Circular 02/2013 prior to public consultation as set out in the Lorry Parking Written Ministerial Statement of 8th November 2021.

We are also developing a video guide to demonstrate good practice for truck stop planning applications, and to promote the importance of lorry parking to practitioners. Furthermore, the Future of Freight Strategy will help ensure the needs of the Freight and Logistics Sector (including HGV parking requirements) are reflected in a reformed planning system.

Corrections

14. E-scooter deaths

During the session the Committee asked about the number of deaths in relation to e-scooter trials. Out of the over one and a half million active participants in the trials and the 24.8 million miles covered, there have been two deaths, both in the North Northamptonshire trial. The first, in October 2020, was recorded by the coroner as an accidental death. The second was in December 2021, but the inquest is yet to take place.



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30 March 2022

Meg Hillier MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee

[Sent via email]

Dear Chair,

Supporting local economic growth

At the hearing of 2 March on supporting local economic growth, I committed to write with further details of what my Department knew about congestion at the Port of Dover and Hammersmith bridge.

On the first point, we are proactively engaging with Port of Dover and National Highways to understand common causes of delays leading to the port and to seek robust mitigations to reduce them. Disruption is not a new occurrence and increases in the Traffic Access Protocol (TAP) activations in recent years were not solely caused by additional border checks. Several factors have led to freight passage through the port taking slightly longer at peak periods, leading to recent increases in TAP activation. These include higher than forecast freight traffic, mandatory ship refitting, essential roadworks on Jubilee Way, and operator and PAF border checks (for both COVID and Import/Export requirements). Data analysis shows that TAP is coinciding with the weekly freight trends - busiest during mid-week - but more Saturdays are seeing TAP activations believed to be due to changing freight patterns.

Further mitigations have been implemented to ease throughput times and queues: ferry operators increasing staffing levels and number of open booths; KRF multi-agency comms providing consistent messaging and reasons for TAP activation; HMRC increased presence at Sevington Inland Border Facility (and other IBFs); and enhanced support at Information and Advice Sites (informing drivers of requirements and showing hauliers how to use the P&O 'freight wallet').

TAP is operated by Port of Dover and National Highways, enabling 500 HGVs to be held on one lane of the A20, allowing all other traffic to flow freely. National Highways monitor the queue lengths and work with the Port of Dover to actively reduce them. TAP is six miles long. In the event that TAP reaches 100%, additional capacity is available at Sevington IBF. We have successfully negotiated a contract with Ashford International Truckstop whereby we can utilise up to 960 HGV parking spaces (reducing to 650 from 1st Sep 22) with the highest level of driver welfare facilities. Both of these sites were utilised for traffic management capacity as part of the response to Storm Eunice and on a standby during the current P&O crisis.

There are no plans to extend the M20 from where it currently ends at junction 13 (Folkestone) into Dover. The A20 east of junction 13 is part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), and National Highways are fully engaged with Kent Resilience Forum and Dover's Traffic Access Protocol (TAP) to manage traffic using the Port of Dover.

The improvement and resilience of strategic road links supporting the Port of Dover (principally the M20/A20 and M2/A2 corridors) are a long-standing investment priority for the Government. Since 2015, funding of England's motorways and trunk roads and investment plans have been set out in five-year Road Investment Strategies. In the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1) covering 2015 - 2020, schemes specifically supporting access to Dover included M20 j3-5 (Maidstone) smart motorway and a new junction 10a on the M20 at Ashford. In the current RIS2 covering 2020 - 2025, we are committed to starting construction of the Lower Thames Crossing as an alternative to the heavily congested Dartford Crossing, as well as upgrading M2 junction 5 (Sittingbourne). The RIS3 Pipeline of schemes (33 projects for possible delivery in the third Road Investment Strategy from 2025 or a future road period) includes two schemes: improvements to A2 access to Dover, and enhancing the A2/M2 junction at Brenley Corner. Inclusion in the Pipeline is not a commitment to delivery, and we expect final decisions will be made in setting RIS3 in 2024.

Turning to Hammersmith Bridge, in the TfL extraordinary funding and financing settlements of 01 June 2021 and of 25 February 2022, the Government committed to paying a share of the costs of the repair programme for Hammersmith bridge, alongside the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) and Transport for London (TfL). The Government will directly contribute up to one third of the cost of the works to LBHF. This funding is contingent on full scrutiny of the costs, as developed by LBHF through Green Book-compliant business cases, by TfL and DfT.

The project is being delivered, governed, and funded in two stages: stage 1, the stabilisation of the bridge; and stage 2, the strengthening of the bridge. The first stage will ensure the bridge can be permanently reopened to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic and includes the preliminary works necessary to prepare the structure for full repair in stage 2, which will see the bridge reopen to all users, including motorists. LBHF has submitted both an outline business case (OBC) and a full business case (FBC) to DfT and TfL; both organisations are considering the FBC during March 2022.

The FBC sets out the agreed cost of the first stage of the works, alongside the latest analysis of the benefits and costs, and commercial and procurement details. Should the FBC be approved, both DfT and TfL will release funding for one third of that sum. LBHF has agreed to borrow the initial £8.9m from the Public Works Loan Board and will be responsible for cost overruns.

I am pleased to note that LBHF's contractors commenced stabilisation works during March 2022.

Over the course of 2022, DfT and TfL will collaborate appropriately with LBHF to ensure both an OBC and FBC for the second stage of the project are developed to Green Book standards. This is so that due scrutiny of the costs can be undertaken, all delivery and funding options are considered, and value for money for the local and national taxpayer can be found for any HMG and TfL investment.

I trust that these responses are helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Bernadette Kelly CB
Permanent Secretary