



Transport Committee

Rt Hon Mark Harper MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
By email

Friday, 28 April 2023

Dear Mark,

Follow-up from oral evidence session

Many thanks to you and to the Permanent Secretary for coming to give evidence to the Committee last week.

A number of matters arose during the session which you kindly undertook to write to us about. In addition, there were some matters which we agreed to raise with you in more detail in writing, and matters the Committee wished further to draw to your attention, which I am setting out here. Question numbers refer to the published [transcript](#).

Active travel funding

Ruth Cadbury at Q588 referred to past statements that funding for active travel should be higher than £3 billion in order to meet the Government's targets. On [13 October 2022](#) then Minister of State for Transport Lucy Frazer stated that the Department estimated that "a minimum of £4.4 billion will be required to meet its cycling and walking objectives to 2025; and further, that a minimum of £5.5 billion is likely to be required to meet the objectives to 2030". The latter figure was reiterated by current Minister of State Jesse Norman in a PQ answer on [17 March 2023](#).

Giving evidence to us [in September 2022](#), Chris Boardman, National Active Travel Commissioner for England, said that, "depending on how it is done", between £9 billion and £18 billion funding would be required to reach the Government's active travel targets.

Outstanding commitments and consultations

Ben Bradshaw and Paul Howell raised the issue of consultations on important policy issues which are awaiting responses from your Department. Mr Bradshaw referred at Q652 to a [response to a written PQ](#) of November 2022 asking how many a) consultations and b) calls for evidence issued by the DfT were closed but had not been



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responded to as of 12 July 2022. He noted that the response from the Minister suggested that the Department does not habitually maintain a list of its consultations to which a response is due.

A PQ [answer](#) on the same subject in March 2023 added that “The Department always aims to publish government responses to consultations in a timely fashion, in line with the Government Consultation Principles, and to keep stakeholders updated on progress”. [Those principles](#), last updated in 2018, state that departments should “publish responses within 12 weeks of the consultation or provide an explanation why this is not possible”. We note that on 30 March 2023, DfT published the outcome of a consultation on [accessible information on buses](#) which had been conducted in summer 2018—a gap of nearly five years.

The list of 17 items to which Mr Bradshaw referred at Q652 and Mr Howell at Q664 is a combination of consultations and other policy commitments for which your Department’s timescales appear to have slipped significantly. I set these out below for your convenience, noting that these items are ones that have come to our attention in the course of the Committee’s recent work rather than an attempt to compile a comprehensive list. We have added here two further items which were addressed separately during our evidence session: pavement parking and the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

Consultation outcomes awaited:

- **New cycling offences: causing death by or serious injury when cycling;** consultation closed in August 2018.
- **Roads policing review;** call for evidence closed in October 2020.
- **Pavement parking;** consultation closed in November 2020.
- **Future of Transport Rural Strategy;** call for evidence closed in February 2021 and a summary of responses was published in June 2021. A strategy has not yet been published.
- **Reviewing personal safety measures on streets in England;** consultation closed in September 2021.
- **Future of transport regulatory review on maritime autonomy** and remote operations; consultation closed in November 2021.
- **Proposals to reform aviation consumer policy;** a consultation on proposals to reform the CAA’s consumer enforcement powers, consumer dispute resolution, flight delay compensation and accessible air travel closed at the end of March 2022.



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- **Low Carbon Fuels Strategy**; consultation closed in April 2022.

Other policy commitments and announcements:

- **Review of the Clean Maritime Plan**; the Decarbonising Transport strategy, published in July 2021, said this would be done in 2022.
- **Call for evidence on delivery of infrastructure for the freight and logistics sector**; promised “by Autumn 2022” in the June 2022 Future of Freight Plan.
- **Procurement for multi-operator bus ticketing**; the Minister told the Committee in [June 2022](#) this would be issued by the end of 2022; we understand from a [PQ answer](#) in February that this will now come “later this year”.
- **Updated guidance on bus franchising powers**; promised in the 2021 National Bus Strategy.
- **Guidance on socially and economically necessary bus services**; promised in the 2021 National Bus Strategy.
- **Call for evidence on legislation on municipal bus companies**; the Minister told the Committee in [June 2022](#) that it would be issued later in 2022; we understand from a [PQ answer](#) in February that this will now come “later this year”.
- **Consultation on reform of Bus Services Operators Grant**; the responsible Minister told the Committee in [June 2022](#) that it would be published later in 2022; we understand from a [PQ answer](#) in February that this will now come “later this year”.
- **Government response to the Union Connectivity Review**; the review was published in November 2021. In [May 2022](#) the response was expected later that year; the Roads Minister told us in oral evidence in March 2023 that he hoped the response would come out “this year”.
- **Road Safety Strategic Framework**; a revision of the 2011 framework had been expected in 2022 and in August the Government said it would be coming “soon”. In correspondence to the Committee in [November 2022](#) you said the Department was now “aiming towards a publication this financial year”.
- **Updated guidance to councils on speed cameras**; a June 2022 [PQ answer](#) said the Government planned to publish an update to the 2007 circular on speed camera placement “later in 2022”.
- **Update to the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline**; the first list of schemes in development under the [RNEP](#) was published in October 2019; the Department stated that “The list of schemes in development will be updated in future publications, on an annual basis”. As of April 2023, there has not yet been a subsequent update published.



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Several of these items have been highlighted in the Committee's recent reports on Fuelling the future, Maritime 2050 and Implementation of the National Bus Strategy. We are anticipating receiving your Department's responses to these reports throughout the month of May, and look forward to hearing more about progress on these commitments in those responses.

While we would welcome updates about other specific items in the list above, our concern is more broadly that your Department have effective oversight of these processes and commitments, including tracking how many consultation responses and subsequent policy announcements are outstanding.

We fully appreciate that it is necessary for the Department to take some time to evaluate consultation responses and that events can intervene to delay work from time to time. We would welcome reassurance, however, that the Department is dedicating the necessary resources both to completing these pieces of work in a timely way, and to communicating timescales to stakeholders including this Committee and—most importantly—those who have given their time to respond to consultations.

Benefit-cost ratios for HS2 phases

At Q559 Jack Brereton asked about the Department's intentions with respect to updating benefit-cost ratio analyses for HS2 phases in light of the changes to phasing recently announced. While the initial response to this question was positive, we note that Dame Bernadette said that she would "hesitate to commit to a full BCR review" because of the complexity of working through the consequences of the rephasing and delays and continued uncertainty on the opening date for Euston. The Committee would be grateful for clarity on the Department's timescales for completing full, revised BCR analyses of each HS2 phase.

I would be very grateful if you could address the points above when you write to us with the further information promised during the evidence session.

Best wishes,

Iain Stewart MP

Chair of the Transport Select Committee