



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
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Iain Stewart MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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12th August 2023

Dear Iain,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral evidence to the Transport Select Committee on 19 July for the inquiry into the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS). During the hearing, I committed to write to the Committee on some of the issues raised and provide some further information.

Further information on Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)

We agreed to provide some information around the expected timetables to tender for contracts, and an indication of the planning process costs for LTC.

Over £800m has been spent on the Lower Thames Crossing project to date. This is not solely on planning costs and is across the project, including technical surveys and investigations, land purchasing costs as well as on the three major National Highways contracts to deliver the Lower Thames Crossing.

National Highways announced on 18 July that Skanska has been named the preferred bidder for the Kent Roads contract on the Lower Thames Crossing project. This is the second of three major National Highways contracts that will deliver the Lower Thames Crossing. In January 2023, the Roads North of the Thames contract was awarded to Balfour Beatty and a separate contract for the Tunnels and Approaches is expected to be awarded later this year.

Publication of the National Road Traffic Projections

We agreed to provide some information on whether the inputs and processes for the National Road Traffic Projections were available publicly.

The National Road Traffic Projections 22 (NRTP22) were published in December 2022. The report gives details of the background to the projections, the inputs, the assumptions, the scenarios used to consider uncertainty, the outputs and validation of the results. Alongside the report, the outputs of the modelling are published in summary tables, and in a format that allows others to manipulate the data into the format most useful to them.

The inputs for the modelling can also be found in the databooks the DfT publishes. The Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) databook was used for the Core Scenario, and the Common Analytical Scenario (CAS) databook details the variables that change in the uncertainty analysis. Further descriptions of the CAS are published in the TAG Uncertainty Toolkit.

The model that is used to produce the projections is the National Transport Model (NTM). Due to the considerable level of complexity, the digital infrastructure used and some of the sensitive inputs, it is not appropriate to make the model fully available to the public. However, there are numerous technical reports, including peer reviews, published for external scrutiny.

The department engages widely about the NTM, as well as the NRTP. This includes ongoing collaborative discussions with the Joint Analysis Development Panel (JADP). JADP was established in 2015 and brings together academic and professional experts with senior departmental analysts. It is co-chaired by DfT's Chief Analyst, Amanda Rowlatt, and Professor Peter Jones, University College London. The panel provides expert advice to the Department for Transport (DfT) on its modelling and appraisal methods and strategies. There are annual reports of the activities with the panel published online.

Congestion forecasts on the Strategic Road Network

We agreed to provide some information on whether the Department has published congestion forecasts on the Strategic Road Network.

The National Road Traffic Projections (NRTP) include datasets on Lost Time (in seconds) by road type which is used to generate projected SRN congestion figures. The outputs have been published in summary tables alongside data that can be easily manipulated for the user's purposes.

References to lorry parking in Road Investment Strategy 3

We agreed to provide some information on whether lorry parking is recognised within Road Investment Strategy 3.

The Department recognises the role that HGV driver facilities and lorry parking adjacent to the motorway and major A road network has in supporting HGV drivers hours and working time compliance, safety and security when lorries

spend a night away from base. Driver facilities on the strategic road network complement those on local roads, and industrial and distribution parks.

National Highways considers the case for having an expanded role in lorry parking provision in its strategic road network Initial Report, published in May 2023. The Department has consulted on the Initial Report and the outcomes of the consultation will be included in the draft RIS, which we expect to be published later in 2023.

The draft revised NNNPS includes a recognition of the national need for more lorry parking. This includes last mile journeys for Heavy Goods Vehicle, and providing the facilities our Heavy Goods Vehicle drivers need to keep our country moving. It also recognises the need for provision of driver facilities, for example at Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs).

I hope this additional evidence is helpful to the Committee for its inquiry.

Best wishes,



RICHARD HOLDEN MP

MINISTER FOR ROADS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT