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Dear Iain

### **Follow-up to the oral evidence session on 24 January 2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the work of National Highways with the Committee on Wednesday 24 January 2024. During the session we committed to write to you on a few of the issues raised during the session, my responses to which are set out below. I hope this additional information is useful to the Committee – please do let me know if I can help further.

#### **Q62. Charging of Electric Vehicles – Energy Storage Systems**

The Committee asked about the locations of the “energy storage systems” (ESS) on/around the Strategic Road Network. Our £10.6m investment in ESSs will support high-powered chargers in nine Motorway Service Areas (MSA) with poor grid connection.

By the end of March 2024, we had lifted five ESS into place at the following MSAs: Beaconsfield (M40); Clacket Lane Eastbound and Westbound (both M25); Maidstone (M20); and Tebay Northbound (M6). At those MSAs we are working with partners to complete integration work between the ESSs and high-powered chargers, though chargers are already operating at reduced power at three of those MSAs. Once the ESS is commissioned it will provide a power boost.

We are also in the process of completing the preparation work for ESSs to be installed at Strensham Northbound (M5) and Corley Northbound (M6). And we are shortly starting preparation work for future installation of two further ESS at Killington Lake (M6) and Taunton Deane Northbound (M5).

#### **Q.73 Delivery of the £900m budget for smart motorway safety enhancements**

We are currently on track to deliver all £900m investment in safety enhancements by the end of RIS 2 (end March 2025). As of the end of January 2024, £483.6m had been invested against the smart motorway safety improvements in question. The activities included within these safety improvements include:

- Installing more than 150 additional emergency areas. In comparison to January 2022, the programme will see around 50% more emergency areas across the All Lane Running (ALR) network, giving drivers added reassurance. As mentioned during the evidence session, a large proportion of activity to date has been in the design and planning of delivering of this programme. We are confident that all 150 additional emergency areas will be completed by the end of RIS 2;
- Carrying out a series of enhancements to sections of dynamic hard shoulder motorways across the country, for example upgrading the central reservation barrier replacing the existing central reservation barriers with concrete ones;
- Continuing to improve the resilience of operational technology systems, specifically MIDAS, CCTV, signs and signals, on ALR motorways. Almost 3,000 items of equipment are to be upgraded or replaced. Around 1,900 devices will be purchased. Around 600 CCTV cameras and over 1,000 MIDAS devices will be replaced; and
- The acceleration of national programme to install stopped vehicle detection.

#### **Q81. Publication of the air quality annual evaluation**

We have published the [Air Quality Annual Evaluation Report \(AER\) for 2022](#). Among its findings are that two of the sites where speed limits are being used to help manage air quality have seen sustained reductions in the levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) which means the speed limits are no longer needed and can be removed. This is because the measured concentrations are sufficiently below the legal limit, that even when the speed limits are removed, it is highly unlikely that the limit value would be exceeded. We will continue to monitor that the limit value is still met in both locations. We would be happy to brief you further on the detail on the publication, if of interest.

If I can be of assistance on any other matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your sincerely



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