Department for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Trudy Harrison MP

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Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

7 October 2021

Dear Huw,

At the Transport Select Committee session on Wednesday 15 September, my predecessor, Rachel Maclean MP, agreed to write on a number of matters raised by the Committee. As you will be aware, since then, I have been appointed to take over the role of Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport and look forward to driving the decarbonisation of transport and delivering the objectives of the transport decarbonisation plan. As such, I am writing to address the points helpfully raised by committee members during the last session.

Starting with the point raised by Karl McCartney MP about the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from private cars over the past 10 years.

Our published vehicle licencing statistics show that at the end of 2020, average CO_2 emissions from licenced cars in Great Britain was 138.4 g/km, this is a reduction from 2010 where average CO_2 emissions were 165.2g/km.

Average emissions should continue to reduce year on year as a result of stricter CO_2 emission limits on vehicle manufacturers, the increased uptake of zero emission vehicles by consumers and fleets, and as many of the older vehicles with higher emissions become uneconomical to repair and are ultimately taken off our roads.

Our statistics also report total CO_2 emissions from cars and taxis in 2019 were $68MtCO_2e$, which is a fall of 7% since 2009.

Karl McCartney MP also requested further information on the point raised on the proportion of people who buy an EV who do not wish to go back to a petrol or diesel car.

Zap-Map, a website dedicated to informing consumers about all aspect of EVs and charging, ran a poll in November 2020, to measure satisfaction amongst their users on EV in comparison to internal combustion engine vehicles (ICE). Zap-Map reported that of the 2000 respondents, 91% said “no thanks” to replacing their EVs with a petrol and diesel vehicle. In contrast, less than 1% stated that they would return to an ICE vehicle. Further details of the poll can be found using the following link: New survey reveals EV switchers don’t look back - Zap-Map.

Gavin Newlands MP stated that in 2020, local authorities in Scotland were spending £1.91 on charging infrastructure per head, compared to £0.45 in English local authorities and asked for up-to-date figures.

The data referred to is from the devicepilot Pain Points report. This data was obtained by devicepilot through Freedom of Information requests of 379 district councils across the UK. This type of information is not collated by HMG therefore we are unable to provide updated figures.

However, the DfT does publish quarterly electric vehicle charging device grant scheme statistics which are available on GOV.UK.

The latest statistics release on 19 August 2021 provides a regional breakdown of grants awarded under the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme and the Workplace Charging scheme. It also provides information on grant funding awarded to local authorities under the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). Further details are available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/electric-vehicle-charging-device-grant-scheme-statistics-july-2021.

The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles works closely with the devolved administrations, including Scotland, on supporting the transition to zero emission driving across the UK. The OZEV plug-in vehicle grants and the majority of funding programmes for charging infrastructure are available on a UK wide basis. Where funding is not across the whole of the UK, the devolved administrations receive additional funding through the Barnett formula in the usual manner. It is then for those administrations to decide how that funding should be spent.

Gavin Newlands MP asked when the rail freight growth target would be put in place.

Government has committed to introducing a growth target for rail freight as set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, and the recently published Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

The target – although not a ceiling - will strengthen the place of rail freight on the national network and create new opportunities for growth and investment, giving confidence to the sector's customers and investors. We work in close engagement with the freight sector and Great British Railways on the development of an appropriate growth target. Details of specific timing is in the process of being considered as part of the programme to implement the Williams-Shapps Plan.

Gavin Newlands MP asked about the delivery of the Government commitment to support 4,000 new zero emission and the location of the 50 buses on the road mentioned in the session.

As you know, the Government launched the £120 million Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme in March this year. The scheme was open to local transport authorities who were able to bid for funding to introduce zero emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them in their areas.

This funding will support the introduction of up to 500 zero emission buses and associated infrastructure. Six local transport authorities have submitted business cases under the fast track process. The Department will announce which business cases have been successful and award funding in due course. The Department is working with a further 17 local transport authorities under the standard process and will award funding to a second group of successful local transport authorities by the end of March 2022.

In addition, the Government also announced the award of £50 million of funding from the All-Electric Bus Town or City scheme to the West Midlands Combined Authority to support the Coventry Electric Bus City. This will fund up to a further 300 electric buses and the infrastructure needed to support them. We expect the first orders to be placed for these buses later this year.

In response to the committee's request I have asked department officials to review the figures for the Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme. I am pleased to say that since February 2020, this scheme has funded 145 zero emission buses in England with over 50 of these on the road (over 120 including Government-funded London buses). The table below shows the number of zero emission buses supported by the Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme in England:

Bidder	Number of buses	Status
Brighton & Hove Buses	20	Funding allocated
First West Yorkshire	9	On the road
Go North East	9	On the road
Nottinghamshire County Council	4	Buses ordered
Stagecoach Manchester	32	On the road
The Big Lemon	3	On the road
Transport for London	63	On the road
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	5	On the road
Buses on the road	**121**	
Total buses funded	**145**	

When discussing the £2 billion committed in support of active travel over the next five years, Ben Bradshaw MP asked what that is as an overall percentage of transport spend.

The department is currently engaged in this year's spending review, which is ongoing.

As the bids cover a three-year period it would be more appropriate to provide an overall percentage of spend compared with other transport modes once the settlement has been confirmed.

Finally, Ben Bradshaw MP asked what action will be taken on local authorities, who have used government funding to create cycle routes and then removed them a few months later due to protests.

Capital funding for this financial year is focused on delivering our longer-term ambitions for walking and cycling, in line with Government objectives set out in Gear Change. We want to support authorities in their longer-term objectives to bring about mode shift to active travel by providing high quality, permanent infrastructure to enable more people to walk and cycle for more of their journeys.

Earlier tranches of active travel funding were delivered at a rapid pace in response to the COVID-19 emergency and the urgent need to socially distance and provide relief to public transport capacity. As we move towards future tranches of funding, we want to support authorities in their longer-term objectives to bring about mode shift to active travel by providing high quality, permanent infrastructure to enable more people to walk and cycle for more of their journeys.

In allocating funding for active travel measures, the Department issued funding guidelines to authorities setting out what was expected when delivering schemes. It was made clear that the performance of an authority with earlier tranches of active travel funding will be taken into account in allocating future funds. The purpose of this condition was to help target future funding at those authorities that have a proven track record of delivery, while safeguarding value for money for the taxpayer.

I hope you find this reply helpful and look forward to meeting with yourself and committee members in due course.

Kindest regards,

Trudy

TRUDY HARRISION MP

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT