

Written evidence submitted by Moto Hospitality Limited (RDF0016)

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Introduction

This Moto response to the transport Committee's investigation into the immediate challenges to the effective operation of the UK's road freight supply chain speaks to our own experience within the broader road freight supply chain picture.

At Moto, we are committed to investing in the best facilities for HGV drivers who we see as a key part of the wider economic infrastructure of the UK. We provide these drivers with a wide range of services which include parking, fuel, hot food and drink, washing and shower facilities as well as being open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and take our responsibility to support HGV drivers very seriously.

Consultation response

1. Long-term and short-term challenges to the effective functioning of the road freight supply chain.

1.1. Making HGV drivers day to day better. While we recognise the package of measures that Government introduced in September to help people to become HGV drivers, there is also a need to make the day to day realities of being an HGV driver better in order to attract more people to the profession.

Through our own customer insight work we know that HGV drivers' main concerns are parking availability, security, choice of food that is available (particularly later in the evenings), cleanliness of showers and the cost of parking.

If Moto and other MSA operators are effectively to address the issues HGV drivers have, it is imperative that we find ways of providing more spaces at managed sites that have the full range of services available e.g., toilets, showers, food, drink, security in the right geographic locations

1.2. Providing enough spaces in the right locations. As the Department for Transport correctly identified, in 2017 there was a shortage of overnight parking spaces of more than 3,500. Unfortunately, this situation has not improved. To this end, we see our role centring around our ability to provide enough parking spaces and accompanying facilities in the right geographical locations.

We believe that demand from HGV drivers will continue to grow, although we would add that this is likely to be focussed around key locations in the South East. While some parts of our network can easily cater for increased demand, as they are in less popular locations, 16 of our locations record over 100% occupancy for exactly the opposite reason.

To begin to address this we are in the process of expanding capacity at four of our sites (Tamworth, Grantham, Reading and Donnington) and are applying for planning consent to build a new dedicated HGV truck stop at Wrotham, in Kent. The Kent location would prove popular with many drivers due to its proximity to London, and was also a 'problem area' identified in the House of Commons debate on HGV Driver Regulation in October 2017.

1.3. Existing site upgrades. We are investing in number of significant projects around the UK to ensure that our sites provide the best services to HGV drivers, in line with their key concerns as detailed above.

We have invested over £40m in the new Rugby Services which has provided much needed additional HGV parking and has had almost 100% occupancy from opening and are also in the middle of a major investment in our Donnington site, where we are adding new food Brands, installing additional showers, refurbishing our toilet facilities, and adding additional HGV parking spaces.

We also have plans for further investment across Moto sites in 2022, which will provide further benefits to HGV drivers. These include high capital expenditure towards additional security measures, and new HGV parking at our Tamworth, Grantham, Reading and Donnington sites. 50% of our existing shower facilities will also be refurbished before Easter 2022, and we will be rolling out more food Brands, such as Pret a

Manger and KFC, to satisfy the requests from many drivers that they would like a wider range of food choices available at our locations.

In order to further accelerate the transformation of our HGV facilities and those of other MSA operators on our motorways we urgently need further information from the Government on its delivery plans for the £32.5 million ringfenced for investment in roadside facilities for HGV drivers.

2. The potential effects of the Government's policies and regulations on the efficient operation of the supply chain, including cabotage rules and drivers' hours.

2.1.Planning: Expanding HGV parking areas at our sites is a challenge, as this work is often unpopular with local communities and, in turn, local authority planning departments. There is currently no legislation in place to assist MSA's in navigating these complex local dynamics and obtain the planning consent that is needed to extend parking facilities. Without this, that would be accelerated by strong Government intervention, 1 it will be very challenging for us to keep up with the demand and expectation to provide the necessary facilities to HGV drivers.

3. The potential effects of the Government's policies and regulations on road safety Infrastructure, including roads, facilities, ports and airports, with a particular focus on capacity, resilience and interoperability.

3.1.The UK urgently needs more HGV parking capacity to tackle congestion and fly parking in heavily congested areas such as the South East. As we saw in late 2020, a lack of this provision leads serious congestion and results in delays for businesses and consumers.

3.2.Assistance or a change in policy around planning for HGV parking facilities such Wrotham would allow us to create significant momentum in helping solve some of the most pressing everyday issues faced by our HGV community. In turn, this would lead to a more efficient and reliable service for businesses and consumers.

4. Decarbonising road freight.

4.1. Guidance. The Government's ambitions in this area are admirable, especially the recent commitment that all new heavy goods vehicles in the UK will be zero-emission by 2040. However, embedding zero carbon infrastructure for domestic EVs presents a huge logistical challenge that we must be addressed as soon as possible. While we appreciate the proactive steps the Government is taking in this area, such as funding trials of zero emission technology for the HGV sector, we urgently need clarity on the overall direction of policy in this area so that we can begin to prepare for the key role that businesses like ours will play in the transition

4.2. Key barriers. Based on our experience with the roll out of EV provision over and above the target of six superfast charging points per site by 2023, we wish to highlight three key issues we are currently experiencing that will be amplified for EVs in the HGV category:

4.2.1. Power infrastructure and associated capital costs. Looking at the projected demand for EVs, a great many of our sites will need to be connected directly to Grid in order to service the level of demand that we will see in 10 – 15 years' time. As a minimum, we need to allow 4-5 years to get those connections consulted upon and delivered. The sooner we can begin that process the better.

4.2.2. Investment. Leveraging Government funding will allow us to better prepare to support the anticipated demand as detailed above. In turn, this will build for the anticipated remove a key barrier to accelerated HGV EV take up and could halve the burden on local Government, the National Grid and MSA operators as we will not have to go through an interim infrastructure build process. As things currently stand, it does not seem commercially viable to invest in the provision we will require in the future, hence clarity on funding streams and guidance on how to access it will be key for the sector.

4.2.3. Planning permission and landlord consent. These two factors are currently huge barriers to achieving the domestic EV infrastructure roll out that is vital for our businesses and the successful evolution of the EV market. For example, we are seeing landlords refuse permission for the installation of new charging points with no reasoning provided, and local authorities initially refusing permission for vital charging sites. In one case this was because the charging points were deemed to have taken too great an amount of green space in a set area of a site, not taking into account the full

extent of green areas from across the site or indeed the fundamental requirement for the work to take place. We fully expect these issues will continue for the EV HGV infrastructure roll out if mechanisms to smooth this process are not implemented.

Conclusion

To effectively address the issues affecting HGV drivers, it is critical to establish a course of action that will result in the provision of providing more HGV parking spaces at managed sites, that have the full range of essential services available. This can be underpinned by the opening of a collaborative dialogue between MSAs and local planning authorities, and the support of the Government in encouraging landlords to realise the benefits that can be realised from the provision of leading HGV driver facilities.

At Moto, we are committed to investing in the best facilities for HGV drivers who we see them as a key part of the wider economic infrastructure of the UK. Although we recognise that the Government is aware of the issues that have been raised and are pleased to see the recent financial commitment to improve roadside services for HGV drivers, we believe that further support, particularly around planning, is needed to allow us to deliver these essential services to some of the UK's hardest-working people.

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