

The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP  
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero  
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero  
3 Whitehall Place  
London SW1A 2AW

27th January 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

We wish to bring your attention to a significant initiative that aligns with your Department's commitment to achieving the UK's net zero targets: The Road to Net Zero project, a collaborative endeavour between the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee UK (HAUC(UK)) and Transport for London (TfL).

Launched in March 2022 with funding from the TfL Lane Rental scheme, this project represents a systematic approach to reducing carbon emissions in the street works and road works sector. As the UK continues to demonstrate leadership in climate action, recently advancing to third place in the Climate Change Performance Index, we believe this project offers practical solutions to support the Government's ambitious target of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 81% by 2035.

The Road to Net Zero project takes an innovative, systems-based approach to sustainability in infrastructure works. Rather than viewing carbon reduction as merely an additional cost, we recognise it as an opportunity to deliver broader societal benefits. Our work has revealed that lower-carbon alternatives in street works and road works often generate greater long-term value when considering the total impact on communities, local businesses, and the environment.

A key component of our initiative is the development of an 'Optioneering Tool' that will enable construction firms, local authorities, and utility providers to make evidence-based decisions about construction methods, materials, and traffic management strategies. This tool will help quantify the environmental, economic, and social impacts of different approaches, making it easier for stakeholders to choose more sustainable options.

We are pleased to report that our project has garnered significant support from major industry players. Leading utility providers and infrastructure contractors have already expressed strong endorsement of our approach and have committed to piloting our Optioneering Tool and integrating its insights into their carbon reduction strategies. This widespread industry backing underscores the project's potential to drive meaningful change across the sector.

One critical choice, in terms of potential for avoiding the damage and disruption of street works, is whether to substitute open-cut excavations (trenching) with one of the long-established and highly technologically developed trenchless technologies. Depending on the context of the street works, these can greatly reduce or avoid altogether disruption to traffic, avoid reinstatement scars in the road (and their potential for future pothole formation as they deteriorate) and use more carbon-efficient equipment and materials.

Our objectives align perfectly with HAUC(UK)'s five-year vision and your Department's goals for energy security and net zero transition. We are working to revolutionise the UK's street works and road works sectors through comprehensive strategies and innovative solutions that will significantly reduce carbon emissions while maintaining essential infrastructure services.

Given your Department's crucial role in driving the UK's net zero agenda, we would welcome the opportunity to:

1. Schedule a meeting to present our findings and discuss how the Road to Net Zero project can support your Department's objectives
2. Explore possibilities for Government support in accelerating the adoption of lower-carbon methods across the sector
3. Collaborate on policy frameworks that could incentivise more sustainable practices in infrastructure works

Would you be willing to meet with our project team to discuss these opportunities in more detail? We believe that by working together, we can accelerate the transition to more sustainable infrastructure practices and support the UK's journey to net zero.

We look forward to your response and the possibility of collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

David Capon  
CEO JAG(UK), Co- Chairman for HAUC(UK) and Road to Net Zero project team leader