



Department for Transport

Dame Meg Hillier MP
House of Commons
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From the Secretary of State
The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

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Dear Dame Meg,

Update on Department for Transport spending

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Public Accounts Select Committee to update you on my Department's plans to deliver transport investment over the coming years.

Yesterday, in a Written Ministerial Statement, I was pleased to confirm that this Government will make over £40bn of capital investment in our transport network across the next two financial years, driving significant improvements to rail and roads right across our country.

High inflation and supply chain disruption has made it difficult to deliver on our capital programmes and we recognise that some schemes are no longer deliverable in their original timelines. We have therefore had to make the decision to delay some schemes to enable the delivery of the rest of our capital plan. Full details are set out in my ministerial statement, but I wanted to write to you personally given the important work of the committee.

Roads

The A27 and A5036 projects in the Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) 2 will be deferred to RIS 3 (covering 2025 – 2030). Other schemes earmarked for RIS 3 (2025-30) will continue to be developed and considered for inclusion within RIS 4, which will run from 2030-2035. This is to help ensure better planned and efficient schemes can be deployed more effectively.

To date we have spent over £800m on planning the Lower Thames Crossing. It is one of the largest planning applications ever, and it is important we get this right. We remain committed to the Lower Thames Crossing, and the Development Consent Order process will be an important opportunity to consult further to ensure there is an effective and deliverable plan.

In order to allow time for this process, and given wider pressures on RIS, we will look to rephase construction by 2 years.

Rail

With over £20 billion spent on HS2 Phase One already, we will prioritise delivering the first opening stage of HS2 on schedule, with the first high-speed rail services running between new stations at Old Oak Common in west London and Curzon Street in Birmingham by the early 2030s.

We remain committed to delivering HS2 services to Euston and will address affordability pressures to ensure the overall spending profile is manageable. We will take time to ensure we have an affordable and deliverable station design, with a view to delivering the station alongside high-speed infrastructure to Manchester, while the High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill continues through Parliament. We will re-phase construction of HS2 Phase 2a between Birmingham and Crewe by two years.

Work continues to develop HS2 East, the proposed route for HS2 services between the West and East Midlands, and to consider the most effective way to take HS2 trains to Leeds.


Active travel

We are investing more than £3bn into active travel up to 2025 and are still committing to at least £100m in total for 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is in addition to £1.3bn through other sources such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) and National Highways, and around £1bn from across Government.

My Ministerial Statement provides further detail on my Department's spending plans. These are the difficult but responsible decisions we are taking, that put the priorities of the British people first. By controlling inflation and reducing government debt, we can continue our record investment into our national infrastructure.

I have also written to Iain Stewart MP, Chair of the Transport Select Committee.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Harper', with a stylized, cursive script.

The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT