

# Transport & Energy Infrastructure planning news



AUGUST 2017

## Headline news

### Transport Secretary backs 'affordable' Crossrail 2

Following weeks of speculation and calls from different stakeholders, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan have agreed on the need for Crossrail 2 in London - to support its growth, and for boosting productivity and attracting investment.

The Mayor has recently launched the preliminary draft charging schedule for the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy 2 (MCIL2); the levy is expected to fund 15% of the total Crossrail 2 costs over its life. However, the joint statement issued by the Transport Secretary and the Mayor on 24 July said:

'[...] the Mayor and Transport Secretary want to see how London could fund half of the scheme during construction.'

The joint statement also clarifies that the Transport Secretary and the Mayor will work in the coming months 'to examine ways to improve affordability while maximising the key benefits of the scheme, learning lessons from Crossrail 1, ahead of this autumn's Budget'.

## National infrastructure news

Government is investing over £450bn in infrastructure projects

In its latest annual report on major projects, the Infrastructure and

Projects Authority (IPA) reports that the Government's Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) is now worth £455.5bn, and that the major infrastructure projects are spread across 17 Government departments.

The annual report specifies that the infrastructure and construction sector is now the largest area of growth on the GMPP, having reached a record value of £222.5bn; the report also specifies that over 60% of the included projects are likely to be successfully delivered.

### Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill introduced in Parliament

On 4 July, the Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill was introduced in the House of Commons by Communities Secretary Sajid Javid. The Government's aim is for the Bill to actively support the roll-out of full-fibre broadband and future 5G communications in the UK.

The Bill is aimed at enabling 100% business rates relief for operators who install new fibre on their networks, incentivising in this way major investments in the broadband network. The Government expects the Bill's provisions to support a more productive economy and boost the prospect for economic growth in the near future.

The 100% rate relief 'will apply for 5 years and be backdated to 1 April 2017'.

### PPG updates to explain requirements of 2017 EIA Regulations

DCLG has updated national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), to explain the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 that came into force on 16 May this year (see Lichfields' May 2017 ►►)

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH



This government is taking the big transport decisions for Britain's future like HS2 and Heathrow, while delivering the biggest investment in roads and rail for a generation. At the heart of our approach is a plan to make transport work for the people who use it and for the wider economy.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, announcing the Transport Investment Strategy on 5 July 2017

## THE LICHFIELDS PERSPECTIVE

There is growing disquiet about quite how London-centric Treasury investment in infrastructure is currently proving to be. Whether MPs (and others) are asking for regional comparisons of per capita spending on transport infrastructure, or about railway spending in the north, the Government is rightly having to work very hard at getting the data right and explaining/ addressing the obvious disparities across Britain.

Giorgio Wetzl, Planning researcher

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Planning News for details).

The PPG now reflects the 2017 Regulations' rules on competency: an environmental statement (ES) has to be prepared by competent experts, and 'accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise, or qualifications of such experts, sufficient to demonstrate that this is the case'. In addition, the PPG now explains how if a scoping opinion has been obtained, an ES must be 'based' on the most recent version, '...so far as the proposed development remains materially the same as the proposed development which was subject to the opinion or direction' - a significant change in law, as reflected in previous PPG guidance.

Many other PPG revisions have also just been published (on 28 July); they principally cover detailed development management procedures and reflect recent changes in planning law.

## Transport

### National news

#### New Transport Investment Plan for Britain launched by Government

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has unveiled the Government's Transport Investment Strategy, which details the new long-term approach that the Government is taking over infrastructure spending.

The underlying aim is for the Strategy to contribute towards the creation of a more balanced economy, meaning that investment will prioritise projects that are capable of helping rebalancing the country's economy, by way of supporting new housing, improving transport reliability and tackling congestion.

The Transport Investment Strategy specifies that the Government is producing its second Road Investment Strategy (the first was published in 2014) that will cover the period after 2020. As explained in the Strategy, the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS 2) will take a 'more structured and comprehensive approach to local consultation'. The intention is for it to:

'[...] map local and regional housing and growth ambitions across England - a process made possible by Highways England's direct engagement with all 39 local enterprise partnerships and closer working with local planning authorities.'

The Investment Strategy also features a proposal for the creation of a new major road network; this would see a share of the annual National Road Fund handed to local authorities, with the expectation being for the councils to improve or replace the most important A roads that fall under their management.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

'The Transport Investment Strategy sets out a blueprint for how we can harness the power of transport investment to drive balanced economic growth, unlock new housing projects, and support the Government's modern industrial strategy.'

#### NIC launched call for 'visionary ideas' for Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has launched a competition to seek 'visionary ideas' for 'development typologies' across the UK's Growth Corridor of Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford.

The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition is aimed at finding innovative proposals that are able to provide effective links between infrastructure, housing and economic development, in order to create 'successful places to live and work for generations to come'. The deadline for entries is 3 August.

NIC's Chairman Lord Adonis said:

'Today, I'm calling on leaders in architecture, economics, policy-making and planning, as well as local residents, to help shape that future, and put forward ideas that will make this Growth Corridor an attractive place to live and work for generations to come.'

#### Humber Bridge now Grade I listed

The Humber Bridge has been given Grade I listed status by Culture Secretary Karen Bradley, after a recommendation made by

Historic England; the Humber Bridge is one of nine places listed in relation to a celebration of Hull's heritage.

The Humber Bridge was opened in July 1981 and has been considered the longest single-span suspension bridge for over 16 years, given its 1,410m length.

To celebrate the listing, Historic England has also published a blog which celebrates '7 iconic bridges of England' which have been listed.

## Air

#### Timetable for Airports NPS delayed in wake of election

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has signalled a delay in the designation of the Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) that will guide the planning process for Heathrow's third runway expansion as specified in the update delivered via Written Ministerial Statement at the Commons:

'The timing of the election, in particular the need to re-start a Select Committee inquiry into the draft Airports NPS means we now expect to lay any final NPS in Parliament in the first half of 2018, for a vote in the House of Commons.'

Alongside the NPS update, the Transport Secretary has published the Government's Decision Document regarding the consultation launched earlier this year on a new flight regime for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. New rules published by the Government will reduce the amount of noise the three airports are legally allowed to make, and will provide local residents with a 5-year guarantee about the noise level they will be exposed to.

In indirectly related news, Heathrow Airport has also announced that residents living near the Airport will be able to apply for the Heathrow's Quieter Homes Scheme; the scheme will offer to the 700 homeowners most affected by aircraft noise the chance to upgrade their noise insulation free of charge.

#### Government launches plans for a new UK Aviation Strategy

The Department for Transport has launched a call for evidence to inform ►►

the first stage of development for a new UK aviation strategy to 2050 and beyond. The announcement was made by the Transport Secretary Chris Grayling at the launch of a £1bn programme to double the size of Manchester Airport's Terminal 2.

The consultation document explains the UK Government's overall aims and approach to aviation and seeks views from the public on the proposed approach, and the issues that the Government should explore through the development of the strategy.

The six themes the Government has set out are the following:

1. Customer service
2. Safety and security
3. Global connectivity
4. Competitive markets
5. Supporting growth while tackling environmental impacts
6. Innovation, technology and skills.

Consultations on each of these themes will run throughout 2017 and 2018, with the intention of publishing the final aviation strategy by the end of 2018. Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, said:

'Our new aviation strategy will look beyond the new runway at Heathrow and sets out a comprehensive long-term plan for UK aviation. It will support jobs and economic growth across the whole of the UK.'

The call for evidence closes on 13 October.

## Edinburgh Airport plans major housing and business development scheme

Edinburgh Airport has unveiled plans to close its secondary runway and redevelop it for a business and housing complex; currently, the 36 hectare plus site is rarely used due to improvements in aircraft technology that have reduced the need for such infrastructure.

The chief executive officer at Edinburgh Airport Gordon Dewar said:

'We have long believed that the land around Edinburgh Airport is a valuable strategic asset, from which local communities and the economy should benefit. This venture will accelerate that process and we look forward to working with John Watson and his team, and the Scottish government and

City of Edinburgh Council, to promote opportunities to put the land to good use.'

Construction could start as soon as next year, if planning permission is granted.

## Rail

### Consultation on proposed amendments to High Speed 1 safeguarding directions

The Department for Transport is carrying out a consultation regarding a review of the High Speed 1 (HS1) safeguarding directions originally issued in 1990 and 1994, and updated in 1996.

The proposed changes include the number of surface safeguarded areas to be halved, and for all HS1 safeguarded areas in the administrative areas of Dover District Council, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Sevenoaks District Council and Thanet District Council to be removed.

According to the consultation, HS1 Ltd. has already carried out 'some informal consultation with the local authorities which may be affected'.

The consultation runs until 13 August 2017.

### HS2 unveils station design and Euston development partner shortlist

High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd has announced the design contracts' shortlists for the new HS2 stations at London's Old Oak Common, Birmingham Curzon Street and Birmingham Interchange, as well as the names of the bidders for the long-term development around London Euston station.

On the latter, the winning bidder is expected to advise on, and promote, mixed-use development opportunities (up to 22 hectares) which will include new homes, offices and retail spaces above and around the redeveloped London Euston station.

Network Rail Property's Managing Director, David Biggs, commented:

'The opportunities are vast. A regenerated Euston Station not only affords us the ability to improve connectivity and exceed the expectations of those travelling by train. It also allows

us the rare chance to create new space for homes and businesses, to craft a desirable destination for people to live, work and meet.'

## Road

### Over £6bn road upgrades announced by Government

Transport Minister Jesse Norman has announced a £6.1bn package of road improvements, part of the wider £23bn Government's plan to upgrade the England's road network.

The £6.1bn-worth schemes include 55 road improvements across the country; amongst these are the opening of 9 schemes, consultations on a further 10 and the publication of final plans for another 29 projects. These will be delivered by Highways England, the organisation responsible for the country's motorways and main roads.

Commenting on the announcement, Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

'Road users across England should soon be seeing the benefits of these improvements in their daily lives, which are designed to link people better with their jobs, friends, family and local amenities, as well as connecting businesses with customers.'

## Energy

### Government launches plan to boost emerging energy storage industry

The Government and Ofgem have unveiled a plan to support the development of local energy storage facilities, with the aim of giving homes and businesses more control over the way they store and use energy.

The report, *Upgrading our energy system*, published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, identifies the planning system as one of the potential constraints that could block the spreading of these new technologies; accordingly, the report calls the Government to 'review the planning regime to look at whether it could be simplified for storage facilities'.

The report also states that the ►►

Government will engage with relevant stakeholders and bodies (including local planning authorities and devolved administrations) to review the planning framework; among the aspects to be reviewed, the document identifies the potential for looking at 'the national planning threshold for storage facilities and planning guidance associated with storage'.

## Gas

### Wrexham Energy Centre granted development consent

UK Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark has granted development consent for the Wrexham Energy Centre at Kingmoor Park South, near Wrexham. The proposal is for a combined cycle gas turbine ('CCGT') power station that includes up to two gas turbines capable of generating up to 299 MWe.

The examining authority's recommendation to grant development consent to the proposal is accepted, with the decision letter concluding:

'Given the national need for the proposed development, as set out in the relevant National Policy Statements referred to above, the Secretary of State does not believe that this is outweighed by the Development's potential adverse local impacts, as mitigated by the proposed terms of the Order.'

## Wind

### Go ahead given for south west Scotland wind farm

The Scottish Government has granted consent for a 50-turbine wind farm on the border of East Ayrshire and Galloway.

The 170MW project, proposed by Swedish energy group Vattenfall, was subject to a public local inquiry in late 2015, following an application made in 2013.

Interestingly, the Scottish Ministers considered information provided by the Company 'regarding their aspirations to provide a community shared ownership offer' (payments of community benefits of £5000 per megawatt to a community partnership and a community shared ownership scheme) but found, '... it is not sufficient to determine the net benefit that this might bring to the economic position of the area'.

The Scottish Ministers therefore disagreed with the Reporters' view that the Company's offer to allow the community to obtain a share of the development was a matter to which they and Scottish Ministers should have regard. The Scottish Ministers therefore did not take this offer into account in their determination of the application. ■