



NEWS

# Transport & energy infrastructure planning news, April 2018

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## Headline news

### **£3bn upgrade for Trans-Pennine route and Crossrail 2 to advance 'in lockstep'**

On 2 March, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling restated the Government's commitment to extensive transport improvements, announcing plans for £3bn of investment into upgrades for the Trans-Pennine route.

On the same day, the Transport Secretary also announced the launch of an Independent Affordability Review for Crossrail 2, intended to ensure affordability and value for money for taxpayers; the Review is expected to conclude in summer 2018.

Speaking at the Northern Powerhouse conference, Grayling said:

'I want to realise passenger benefits from the £3bn we have ring-fenced for the Pennine route as fast as possible. Network Rail has already begun detailed designs, and provided us with options for the Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade to meet the objectives we've set out - for journey times, capacity and reliability.'

The Department for Transport aims to work closely with local authorities along the route to maximise the benefits accrued, creating new stations and unlocking opportunities for new housing development along the way.

Department for Transport, Grayling: progress on Trans-Pennine route upgrade and Crossrail 2 to advance in lockstep

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## Quote of the month



**Major projects work best when independent reviews, drawing on a wealth of experience, help move them from plans to spades in the ground. I am delighted to chair this crucial review and I look forward to working with the Department for Transport and Transport for London to ensure that Crossrail 2 is the best project it can be.**

Mike Chair, Chair of the Independent Affordability Review, commenting the launch of the Review

# Transport

## National news

### Transforming Cities Fund open for local authority bids

The Transforming Cities Fund has opened for funding bids from local authorities. The fund, launched in autumn 2017 as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy, is designed to support innovative public and sustainable transport projects across the country, to boost productivity and increase prosperity.

So far, half of the £1.7bn in funding has been shared amongst the six metro mayors, to enable them to deliver local transport priorities including light rail, bus rapid transit, and cycling schemes.

The remaining funds will be available to up to 10 English city regions, that will be selected to work in partnership with the Department for Transport to design proposals, concentrating on creating new local transport links to improve access between city centres and suburban areas.

[Department for Transport, Transport Secretary welcomes next step in £1.7 billion fund to transform local journeys](#)

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## Rail

### Government invites private sector to invest in new Heathrow rail link

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has announced further plans to expand and improve the railway network, including a new link between Heathrow Airport and London Waterloo station.

The new route is the first example of the Government inviting third parties to invest in the rail network.

Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, commented at the launch:

'We are investing in the most significant modernisation of the UK rail network since Victorian times, and I want the knowledge and expertise of investors and local partners to contribute to delivering new connections, more services and better journeys for passengers.'

The scheme will follow the new 'Rail network enhancement pipeline', where decisions will follow the 'develop, design, deliver' assessment method to better estimate scheme feasibility and value for money.

[Department for Transport, New Heathrow rail link to lead the way for future transport funding schemes](#)

[Department for Transport, Rail market-led proposals](#)

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## **High Speed Rail Guidance: planning appeal procedures, recovered appeals and call-ins**

The Department for Transport and High Speed 2 (HS2) Limited have published guidance on the process for determining planning appeals, recovered appeals and call-ins in relation to HS2 Phase One. Appeals are to be made to the Secretary of State for

Transport and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The guidance also sets out the expected timescales for determining appeals associated with written representations, hearing and inquiry procedures.

[Department for Transport, High Speed Rail \(London-West Midlands\) Act 2017: planning appeal procedures, recovered appeals and call-ins](#)

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## **HS2 Government funding to deliver woodland hub for communities**

HS2 Minister Nusrat Ghani has announced £450,000 of funding for a new woodland hub, with adventure trails, a café and parking for 600 visitors in Wendover Woods, on the northern edge of the Chilterns in Buckinghamshire.

Ghani commented:

'It is great to see so many exciting local projects such as the Wendover Woods recreational development project benefit from this fund, helping even more people access and enjoy our beautiful countryside. Funding such as CEF and BLEF [Business and Local Economy Fund] will help to ensure that the legacy of HS2 is shared by everyone for generations to come.'

This is the largest grant to have been awarded to any single project from the £40 million HS2 Phase One Community and Environment Fund (CEF), which have been set aside to bring wider environmental and social gains, driving job creation and boosting local economies along HS2's route.

[Department for Transport, £450,000 of HS2 government funding to deliver woodland hub for communities in heart of Buckinghamshire](#)

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## **Crewe hub confirmed for second phase of HS2**

The Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, has confirmed the Government's intention to modify plans for HS2 Phase 2a, with the aim of creating a new transport hub at Crewe which will bring the HS2 service to Stoke on Trent.

The plans include the extension of Platform 5 to allow for the splitting and joining of HS2 services, as well as a more efficient design for the proposed platform on the Manchester independent lines, which will incorporate a new transfer deck to the main station.

The Transport Secretary commented:

'We have listened to people's views on the Crewe Hub consultation, ensuring that the town's proud history as an epicentre of rail journeys is set to continue, as it plays a vital role in delivering Britain's future railway.'

[Department for Transport, Government confirms commitment to Crewe Hub vision](#)

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## **Space**

### **Royal Assent for UK space travel laws**

On 15 March, new laws on space travel gained Royal Assent, in a bid to unlock investment and innovation in the British space industry. The Space Industry Act 2018 will allow commercial space ports to operate within the UK for the first time.

The legislative changes will make commercial space launches from the UK a possibility, allowing companies to deploy satellites, as well as opening up opportunities for hypersonic flight and high-speed point-to-point transport.

Promoting the growth of the UK's space industry is a key aspect of the Government's Industrial Strategy. Alongside the new Act, the Government has pledged financial support for eight major satellite projects, aiming for example to support mapping electronic vehicle charging points, and monitoring air quality in urban environments.

[Department for Transport, New laws unlock exciting space era for UK](#)

[Space Industry Act 2018](#)

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# Energy

## National news

### Government considers using planning to boost green home heating

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published a call for evidence on decarbonising household heating as part of its Clean Growth Strategy. It builds on the Government's commitment to phase out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating in new and existing buildings off the gas grid, during the 2020s.

The call for evidence explains more on the uptake of 'clean heating':

'Areas with suitable planning requirements, or with projects already aimed at improving fuel poverty, health, air quality or infrastructure, or decarbonisation, may be good places to support action on heat. This could involve working with local authorities to create a hub, offering support for local authorities or communities to develop projects, or offering subsidy through local authorities as a way of managing and targeting any future subsidy. Future reviews of the NPPF and the Planning Policy (sic) Guidance may provide an opportunity to encourage this sort of action at a local level.'

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 'A future framework for heat in buildings: call for evidence'

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## Other infrastructure news

### £95 million of funding for full-fibre broadband projects

As part of the Chancellor's Spring Statement, thirteen areas across the UK are to receive support from the government's £190 million Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) programme.

The programme aims to boost access to ultrafast, full fibre infrastructure, which at present is only accessible to 3% of the population. The Government hopes to improve access by investing in a series of projects which will stimulate the market, making the full fibre infrastructure a viable option under commercial applications.

This will involve rolling out the technology across public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, that would act as 'anchor tenants'; this would enable surrounding homes and businesses to have the option to link into these hubs. There are also plans to use existing broadband and transport networks for the installation, to make greater savings when rolling out the new infrastructure. Improving the country's connectivity to support its digital economy has been a key focus of the Government's Industrial Strategy to date, and the LFFN programme is seen as a vital part of this work.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, £95 million for local full-fibre broadband projects

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## Wales news

### Valleys' road improvements need to maximise benefits

The Welsh Government's Local Government and Public Services Secretary, Alun Davies, has met experts from various organisations, including business, house builders and public sector stakeholders, to discuss how to maximise the benefits of the A465 Heads of the Valleys road.

Alun Davies said:

'The A465 – the Heads of the Valleys road – is one of the key east-west strategic links in Wales. Part of the Trans-European Road Network, it is an international gateway for our economy in South Wales [...] We are working to make the most of the opportunities from this, building on the Valleys Taskforce's ambitious plans, including a commitment to close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales.'

Welsh Government, Valleys road improvements must bring wider benefits

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## London news

### Public support for Oxford Street pedestrianisation

Plans to pedestrianise the eastern end of Oxford Street have been supported by around half of the respondents in a recent consultation held by Transport for London (TfL).

TfL's vision for Oxford Street aims to make it easier to walk throughout the area, creating safe, accessible and well-designed public spaces, whilst addressing issues around road safety and poor air quality in the area. The improvements also aim to boost local businesses, and improve capacity and the quality of the public realm ahead of the opening of the Elizabeth Line later this year.

Of the 12,000 respondents to the consultation, around 43% were in favour of the scheme going ahead, 19% supported the scheme although they had some concerns that needed to be addressed, whilst 30% said they were not in favour.

TfL and Westminster Council are set to review the feedback over the coming months, before moving forward with the plans.

[City of Westminster, Oxford Street Transformation, consultation response](#)

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## **New rapid charge points for electric vehicles across London**

The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has launched a programme which will create a new network of rapid charge points for electric vehicles across the capital. The new points can fully charge a car in 20-30 minutes, making a substantial improvement on the equivalent older technology which can take up to 12 hours.

Fifty-one of the planned one hundred charging points will be provided specifically for taxis, helping to encourage firms to switch to zero-emission vehicles ahead of the Mayor's ban on diesel-powered vehicles next year.

The news coincides with an announcement from the WWF that if the phasing out of sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles were brought forward from 2040 to 2030, pollution could be cut by a further 30%.

[Mayor of London, Mayor marks key milestone of 100 rapid charging points across London](#)

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## **Statement on House of Commons Transport Committee on Heathrow**

Responding to a House of Commons Transport Committee report on the draft Airports National Policy Statement, Keith Price, the chairman of the London Assembly's Transport Committee, has reaffirmed the need to invest in the infrastructure connecting Heathrow with elsewhere.

The report outlined the case for runway expansion in the South East, setting out that a new North West Runway scheme at Heathrow would be the most appropriate, providing the best connectivity for passengers and freight, value for money and greater strategic benefits than other possible schemes.

There are several recommendations in the report calling for more detail around the proposed connections to and from the airport, including a condition to be included in the National Policy Statement for the project to ensure:

'Approval [should] only be granted if the target for no more airport-related

traffic can be met, or that as a condition of approval, capacity be released at the airport, after construction, only when the target is met.'

Keith Price commented:

'The transport infrastructure must come before the airport expansion - and there would need to be significant capacity upgrades on routes to an expanded airport. It's not just more passengers that will need travel to and from Heathrow; it's also an increased quantity of freight.'

[Commons Select Committee, Airports National Policy Statement: more work needed before Parliamentary approval](#)

[London Assembly, Statement from the Chairman of the Transport Committee on Heathrow](#)

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## The Lichfields perspective



**The new announcement on the £3bn Trans-Pennine upgrade programme clearly confirms the Government's vision for funding Northern Powerhouse transport improvements. The launch of the Crossrail 2 Independent Affordability Review indicates too that while the Government is committed to increasing its investment in the North, London should find new ways to fund the infrastructure it needs, at the same time ensuring that the scale of investment guarantees good value for money for London and for the wider UK's taxpayers.**

Giorgio Wetzl, Policy Researcher

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