

PREM 19/936

PART 1 ends:-

M/S FCO to PM 30.9.82.

PART 2 begins:-

S/S IND to PM 4.10.82

Published Papers

The following published paper(s) enclosed on this file have been removed and destroyed. Copies may be found elsewhere in The National Archives.

Dept of Transport : Lorries,
People and the Environment
Cmd 8439 - Dec 1981

Signed R. Parnman Date 31 Oct 2012

PREM Records Team



Prime Minister

EC JV
② Transport

Mus 30/9

M.S.

Prime Minister

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In the Secretary of State's absence I should like to comment on David Howell's minute to you of 20 September proposing that he should announce our commitment to a maximum lorry weight of 38 tonnes in his speech to the Party Conference of 8 October. Others are better placed than I to judge the chances of success for this proposal in the House. The strong economic arguments for getting on with it were stressed in Cabinet this morning. I would briefly draw your attention to the Community aspects of the problem. TAM-with mcs?

After years of negotiations, other Member States are now largely agreed on a compromise involving a 40 tonne maximum weight. Harmonisation in this field would bring real benefits to our lorry manufacturers and road hauliers and there is pressure for agreement from the Commission and the European Parliament. We have not yet made clear to our partners formally that we are no longer prepared to adopt a 40 tonne limit, as suggested in the December 1981 White Paper. (The Commission are however aware of this.) We are thus in for a rough ride at the December Transport Council. But the problem would be easier to handle if we had a clear position in favour of 38 tonnes.

I hope that, as we have already recommended, David Howell will feel able, as a matter of courtesy, to inform the responsible Commissioner of our views on a 38 tonne limit before any public announcement. In addition, it would be helpful if the Danish Presidency in Brussels could be informed by means of a letter from our Permanent Representative. Both letters could issue on the day of the Conference Speech.

I am copying this minute to other members of E Committee and to the Lord President of the Council, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, the Leader of the House of Lords, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

D.H.

30 September 1982

Douglas Hurd

Transport, May '79, Larry Weights





Prime Minister

②

MS 29/7

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
 Secretary of State
 Department of Transport
 2 Marsham Street
 London SW1P 3EB

28 September 1982

D. Davis

MT

LORRIES PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PMS Box

In your minute to the Prime Minister of 20 September you explained your proposal to tell Conference on 8 October of our decision, reached in E in February, to allow modified increases in maximum lorry weights. I see the force of your point that you must give a firm lead. Provided Michael Jopling is content, I support your intention to go ahead soon in seeking Parliamentary approval for the necessary regulation.

Nevertheless, in dealing with the motion it will be important to defend the Government's record so far as the road programme is concerned. It must not be thought that our acceptance of the motion with its mention of "inadequate roads", opens the way to increases in public expenditure. You would want, I should have thought, to put the emphasis on the effort that has already been made to reduce environmental problems through the provision of bypasses, and on the importance the Government has placed on setting realistic targets. If you judged it appropriate to mention discussions currently being held on obtaining private sector finance, I hope you would emphasize the potential benefits that we look for in terms of efficiency. Whatever the outcome of the talks, and of our deliberations, the contractors should not be led to expect an early and appreciable rise in orders, nor should we forget the commitment in later years that royalties would represent.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and other recipients of your minute.

L. Brittan

L. Brittan

LEON BRITTAN

Transport

Road Freight transport

May 1979



28/05/79



Prime Minister (2)

MCS 27/9

Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

CONFIDENTIAL

27 September 1982

Dear Richard,

The Chief Whip has seen a copy of your Secretary of State's minute of 20 September on Lorries, People and the Environment.

In view of the considerable number of Conservative back benchers who remain opposed to these proposals, Mr Jopling believes that, as things stand at present, the Government could not command a majority on this issue in the House of Commons. The Chief Whip has discussed the names of those concerned with your Secretary of State on a number of occasions and there have been no recent developments which lead him to alter his views.

Mr Jopling thinks, however, that a highly successful debate at the Party Conference could certainly influence the attitude of a sufficient number of Government supporters to reverse this position but he strongly advises that Mr Howell should refrain from saying anything further in relation to the timing or Parliamentary handling of any regulations than he has done so far.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Scholar (No 10) and to the Private Secretaries of the recipients of your Secretary of State's minute.

Yours ever,
M Maclean

M MACLEAN

R Bird Esq
PS/Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street SW1

Tolson, Lloyd
11/09 79

Prime Minister (2)

cc [initials]

[Handwritten initials]

I have asked the
Chief Whip's Office for his comments; and
will resubmit to you then.

MS 21/9

Prime Minister

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

When E Committee discussed lorry weights on 24 June (E(82)16th), I was invited to bring forward in the autumn revised proposals on the timing of the action required to implement our agreed policy.

I had intended to come back to E when it had been possible again to consult backbenchers on the resumption of Parliament. But we now know there is to be a debate on the subject at the Party Conference on 8 October which rather changes the outlook. The wording of the motion (a copy of which is attached) raises no problems: we can accept it. But the debate will again concentrate attention on this controversial issue, at a time which is not of our own choosing.

The reception given to our measures, and the general feelings of the Party on the issue reflected at the Conference, will clearly be critical to our hopes of getting the new weights through Parliament. I must therefore do all I can to take the Party with the Government. This I believe means that my speech to the Conference on 8 October must firmly commit us publicly to our decision on weights, as well as spelling out all the other very desirable elements of our policy on road freight. I cannot leave the issue in the air by suggesting that we may still change tack or that there will be further substantial delay. That would undermine our credibility and our chances of success.

In giving a firm lead, I will have to indicate that the Government is going ahead - and soon - with all the elements of the package, including the heavier weights which are central to the economic and other benefits we are aiming to achieve. Colleagues should be aware that, in practice, this will be a commitment to proceed with the necessary regulations without further delay, and certainly before Christmas.

I am copying this letter to other members of E and to the Lord President, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, the Leader of the House of Lords and the Chief Whip, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

[Handwritten initials]

DAVID HOWELL

20 September 1982



MOTION

That this Conference, aware of the damage to the environment caused by excessive concentrations of traffic on inadequate roads calls on the Government to introduce a package of proposals designed to deal with the heavy lorry.

Transport, May 79
Larry Wright



for E. J. J. J.

Transport
Prime Minister

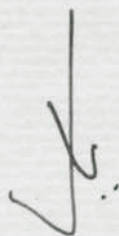
PRIME MINISTER

E: HEAVIER LORRIES

We think David Howell makes the right recommendation in his paper. If the Government believes a policy to be right, and in the national interest, it should be prepared to put up with criticism from the backbenches - and it should be prepared to make considerable efforts to explain why it is right.

Briefly, the arguments in favour of heavier lorries are these:

- (i) They will cut industry's costs by several hundred million pounds a year. It is a much easier way of achieving that objective than, for instance, lowering the NIS.
- (ii) There will in practice be less environmental damage than sticking to the present weight limits. The heavier lorries should have lower axle loads, and there should be fewer of them.
- (iii) Because heavier lorries are already in use overseas, the introduction of them here should enable our manufacturers (Bedford, but also BL) to standardise production.
- (iv) The solution to the problem of heavy lorries charging through Elizabethan high streets is not to be found in limiting the size of the lorries, but in building by-passes - and an internationally competitive road haulage industry will help to generate the tax revenue to pay for it.



21 June 1982



Prime Minister

(2)

14/6

Transport

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

From The Minister of State

14 June 1982

Prime Minister

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT

I am sorry that neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary nor any Minister of State will be able to attend E Committee tomorrow (15 June) owing to absence abroad, but I am writing in order that FCO views should be on record before the meeting.

I fully understand that in view of the domestic criticism the White Paper encountered we have no option but to modify the proposals. Indeed this was decided by the Committee in February. But I am concerned that we should not lose sight of the Community dimension, and that we should not give way to pressure to modify the proposals downward any further.

There has been intensive discussion of the Commission's proposals on this subject in recent months, culminating in discussion at the Transport Council last week. Although the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department of Transport was able to refer to the strong opposition in the UK to heavy lorries and the continued uncertainty over the White Paper proposals, it was evident that there is an emerging consensus on the key maximum weight figure of 40 tonnes and pressure from our partners for a decision in view of the benefits they see from harmonisation. Even if we can secure Parliamentary agreement to a package including a maximum figure of 38 tonnes, we will face an uncomfortable situation in Brussels at the next Transport Council. It is important that we

/should



should have made up our minds on our domestic proposals by then. We shall also have to keep Commissioner Contogeorgis and the future Danish Presidency fully informed about our decision.

We should also do what we can to remind our supporters and public opinion of the very real advantages harmonisation in the Community would bring, in terms of market opportunities both for our vehicle manufacturers and for our road haulage industry in Europe.

For these reasons, I support the suggestion of the Secretary of State for Transport of putting the revised proposals with a 38-tonne maximum weight to the House and to arranging for a debate before the recess.

I am copying this minute to Members of E Committee.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Belstead', with a long, sweeping underline.

(BELSTEAD)

15 JUN 1982

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15 JUN 1982



Transport

PRIME MINISTERLorries, People and the Environment

(E(82)51)

INTRODUCTION

This paper by the Secretary of State for Transport seeks the agreement of the Committee to an early debate and vote in the House on proposals for increases in lorry weights, which he implicitly suggests should now be pared down to the minimum possible.

2. The White Paper "Lorries, People and the Environment" (Cmnd 8439) proposed the following increases in lorry weights:-

- lorries with four axles: from 32½ tonnes to 34 tonnes
- lorries with five axles: from 32½ tonnes to 38 or 40 tonnes, depending on the arrangement of the axles

When the Committee last discussed this issue (E(82)5th Meeting, Item 1) it accepted the Secretary of State for Transport's assessment that these proposals might have to be modified if they were eventually to find acceptance in the House; that the Government's minimum position should be an increase to 38 tonnes in the weight limit for five-axle articulated lorries and that, if necessary, the above proposals for other weight increases would have to be abandoned; but that even these modified proposals should not be proceeded with if further soundings suggested that they were unlikely to be carried through Parliament. The decision to abandon an upper weight limit of 40 tonnes, if necessary, has not been announced publicly. The proposed weight increases are, of course, paralleled by a number of other measures designed to make lorries more acceptable to the public and divert them from environmentally-sensitive areas, which are generally not in dispute.

3. The Secretary of State for Transport acknowledges in E(82)51 that the chances of even the Government's minimum position being endorsed by the House are still uncertain. But he argues that while there is a hard core of backbench

opposition to any increase in lorry weights which will never be won round, a substantial number of nominal backbench opponents are continuing to equivocate only in the hope of persuading the Government to make concessions. His judgement, therefore, is that faced with firm proposals, including the above compromise on lorry weights, much of the backbench opposition will disappear (especially since they will be able to point to further concessions by the Government), thus generating sufficient support for the Government's modified proposals to be carried in the House. I understand that the Chief Whip remains far from certain that even the Government's modified proposals will prove acceptable.

European Community Aspects

4. Discussion in the Community is currently based on a Commission compromise proposal of 40 tonnes gross weight and 11 tonnes drive axle weight. There is a growing consensus around these proposals. There is no support for a gross weight limit of less than 40 tonnes and, indeed, the Italians are holding out for 44 tonnes. Similarly on drive axle weights, the French have shown no signs, as yet, of willingness to move from 12 tonnes.

5. It is not clear how the Danish Presidency will play this issue. In view of the difficulties involved they may not be keen to try to make much progress. There is, therefore, no immediate danger of the UK being totally isolated. But if it is clear that agreement is not going to be reached on lorry weights - which other Member States regard as an important harmonisation measure - the prospects of reaching agreement on other liberalising measures, to which we attach importance, will be reduced. The presentation to the Community of a decision by the UK to legislate for a 38 tonne maximum lorry weight will therefore require very careful handling. This aspect is not addressed in E(82)51. The Secretary of State for Transport and the Foreign Secretary will therefore need to be asked to give further consideration to it if the Committee endorses the Secretary of State for Transport's proposals.



HANDLING

6. You will want to invite the Secretary of State for Transport to introduce his paper. You might then take comments first from the Chief Whip and the Foreign Secretary before seeking views from other members of the Committee. The Secretaries of State for Industry, the Environment, Scotland and Wales and the Chief Secretary, Treasury are all likely to wish to contribute to the discussion.

CONCLUSIONS

7. You will want to record conclusions about:-

- i. whether there should be an early debate and vote on proposals for increases in lorry weights;
- ii. whether the Government's proposals should now be limited to an increase to 38 tonnes for five-axle articulated lorries, with the weight limit for other lorries remaining at 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ tonnes; and
- iii. the need for the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Transport to consider the Community aspects further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P L Gregson'.

P L GREGSON

14 June 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

JV
BI
MAP



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

Prime Minister (2)

MUS 14/5

13 May 1982

Michael Scholar Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Michael,

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

When I wrote to you about this on 15 March I said that my Secretary of State planned to bring forward his package of measures in May and to hold the necessary debate before the Whitsun Recess.

Since then Mr Howell and other Department of Transport Ministers have sought to persuade Government backbenchers of the great environmental and economic advantages of the package, and have obtained useful support from outside bodies - including the CBI, the Freight Transport Association and the NFU - in this task of persuasion. Nevertheless, the Chief Whip takes the view that we are still not absolutely sure of having sufficient support on the Government's side in the House of Commons for the package, and that, in view of the other preoccupations of Members, it is not wise to attempt to adhere to the previous timetable.

Mr Howell, with reluctance, accepts that there must be a little more delay. It is, however, his firm intention to introduce the package in mid-June leading to a debate in early July. In the meanwhile, the three Department of Transport Ministers will continue to make every effort to persuade backbench opinion on the merits of the package, both industrial and environmental. He hopes to make recommendations on the precise timing of the introduction of the package within the next fortnight.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries of other members of "E" and to the Lord President, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, the Leader of the House of Lords and the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

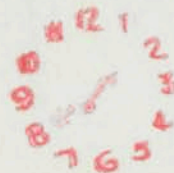
Yours Sincerely

Toby Johns

T. JOHNS
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

3 MAY 1982



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

ce: E
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 Fea CSO, Hunt
 Hunt PGO
 JOL Med Plan
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 16 March 1982
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LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Thank you for your letter of 15 March about your Secretary of State's consultations with Government Backbenchers following the discussion in E Committee on 18 February.

The Prime Minister is content with the approach which your Secretary of State is following.

I am sending copies of this letter to Private Secretaries to other members of E Committee, to David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office), John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Muir Russell (Scottish Office), John Craig (Welsh Office), Jim Buckley (Office of the Leader of the House of Lords), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. C. SCHOLAR

Toby Johns, Esq.,
Department of Transport.

CONFIDENTIAL

cc. J.V.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

①

Prime Minister

Agree to mail approach?

Mis 15/3

15 March 1982

Michael Scholar Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

MAP

BT

Yes
mt

Dear Michael

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

At E Committee (82)5th on 18 February, my Secretary of State undertook to consult the Government's supporters and to report back before making any announcement.

Extensive soundings of Government backbenchers in the Commons lead the Chief Whip and Mr Howell to conclude that support for the package of measures discussed at E is not yet quite firm enough to ensure a convincing majority if the package is brought forward immediately. More time is needed to persuade the Government's supporters of the great environmental and economic advantages of the package. Because of the time required to make and lay orders etc. this rules out a debate before Easter. It is undesirable to give the issue unnecessary prominence in the period between Easter and the local elections. My Secretary of State therefore now plans to bring forward the package in May and if possible to hold the debate before the Whitsun Recess. Mr Howell is confident that by then a majority can be obtained for the measures. He will of course report back before making any announcement.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to other members of E and to the Lord President, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, the Leader of the House of Lords and the Chief Whip, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours Sincerely

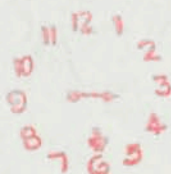
Toby Johns

T. JOHNS
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
CANADA

14 5 MAR 1982



C.P.R.E.

CONFIDENTIAL

Transport

C.B.I.

Ch. P. J. J.

P.0660

PRIME MINISTER

Lorries, People and the Environment

E(82)12

Env. Sec. -

Ind. -

Welsh -

Scottish -

L.P.S. Soc. Sec. -

BACKGROUND

The maximum lorry weight permitted in the United Kingdom is 32.5 tonnes. The Armitage Report recommended in December 1980 that the limits should be raised; in some cases to 44 tonnes.

2. In December 1981 the Government proposed that maximum weights should be increased:

- (a) to 34 tonnes for lorries with four axles;
- (b) to 38 tonnes for lorries with five axles, two of them on the tractor;
- (c) to 40 tonnes for lorries with five axles, three of them on the tractor.

In presenting these proposals the White Paper "Lorries, People and the Environment" (Cmnd 8439) drew attention to a number of steps which the Government had taken or were taking to reduce the environmental problems caused by lorries.

3. In a Supply Day debate on 9 December these proposals were the subject of considerable criticism, some of it from the Government's supporters. Forty of them put down an early day motion (Annex I to E(82)12) which implicitly criticises the Government's policy.

4. In E(82)12 the Secretary of State for Transport argues that the Government cannot command sufficient support for its December proposals on lorry weights to get through Parliament. the necessary Order amending the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (negative resolution). He proposes:

- (a) that the Government should keep to its proposal to allow 38 tonne articulated five axle lorries;

- (b) that in order to achieve this the Government should withdraw as many of its other proposals to increase lorry weights as are necessary to win sufficient back bench support;
- (c) that in presenting the Government's proposals he should concentrate on the measures to reduce the environmental impact of lorries listed in paragraph 2 of E(82)12;
- (d) that he should make a full announcement of the package of proposals in early March; and
- (e) that there should be a full debate on the package as a whole, combined with a vote on the new weight Regulations, in the week of 22 or 29 March.

MAIN ISSUES

5. The Committee will need to consider

- (i) how far the Government should modify its proposals to increase lorry weight limits;
- (ii) the 'sweeteners' in paragraph 2 of E(82)12;
- (iii) the Secretary of State's procedural suggestions.

Weight Limits

6. It is likely that most members of the Committee will support the Secretary of State in the view that, despite the opposition to heavier lorries, the Government should at the very least try to raise to 38 tonnes the weight limit for lorries with five axles; this would be by far the most widely used of the heavier weights proposed in December. Not even to proceed with this part of the proposals would lead to much criticism of the Government from industry. Discussion is therefore likely to centre on how far it is necessary to sacrifice other aspects of the Government's previous proposals, and the economic benefits which would

accompany them, in order to gain sufficient support in the Commons. The Committee will not however be able to reach final agreement on what concessions the Government should offer if it agrees that the Secretary of State should further sound back bench opinion.

7. Annex II to E(82)12 lists three possible modifications to the proposals in Cmnd 8439.

- (a) Abandon the proposal to allow 40 tonne five axles lorries.
- (b) Make no increase on the present 32.5 tonne limit for lorries with four axles.
- (c) Do not increase the 32.5 tonne limit for drawback trailers.

8. On merits there is most to be said for the second concession. Increasing to 34 tonnes the weight limit for four axle lorries would be of particular benefit to small operators; but it is the only part of the Government's proposals of last December which would increase permitted axle weights and thus, in itself, lead to increased road damage. It was only after some hesitation that the Committee agreed to include in Cmnd 8439 the proposal to permit four axled 34 tonners.

9. Of the other two concessions which Mr Howell suggests, that on drawback trailers would have little economic impact: they are little used in this country. Presentationally it could be a helpful move: these vehicles look like a particularly intimidating sort of 'juggernaut'. Keeping the present 32.5 tonne limit for them might be criticised by countries like Germany and Italy whose hauliers make much use of them; but (subject to the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary or the Lord Privy Seal) it should be possible to rebut any such criticisms.

10. Mr Howell's first suggestion is the hardest to defend on logical grounds. 40 tonne five axle lorries are not more environmentally damaging than the four axle vehicles currently in use; their introduction would be economically useful. The 40 tonne lorry however has a symbolic importance to the opponents of heavier lorries.

'Sweeteners'

11. There should be no need to discuss most of the measures to reduce the environmental damage caused by lorries which are listed in paragraph 2 of E(82)12 and on which the Secretary of State merely wishes to repeat what was said in Cmnd 8439 or slightly to modify his Department's existing policies, within agreed expenditure and manpower totals. The tax measures to which he refers (taxing lorries on the basis of laden weight rather than unladen, as at present) will be introduced in this year's Finance Bill. Improved safety requirements for lorries (sideguards and rearguards) are the only completely new measures; I understand that they are not likely to be resisted by the road haulage industry (for which the Secretary of State for Transport is the sponsor Minister).

12. The Committee however will probably want to discuss Mr Howell's revived proposal that the grants paid under section 8 of the Railways Act 1974 to encourage the transfer of freight to the railways should in future apply to Freightliner and Sealink; and that the maximum rate of grant should increase from 50 per cent to 60 per cent. The Committee rejected this proposal in September on the grounds that it was pointless without an increase in expenditure on section 8 grants, which the Secretary of State does not propose. Quite apart from that argument, it might be thought inopportune to announce anything which looks like further support for the railways in present circumstances.

Procedure

14. The Committee may wish to comment on the Secretary of State's proposed Parliamentary tactics, ie an announcement in about the first week in March, followed by a full debate on the package of proposals, including a vote on the weight regulations, in the week beginning 22 or 29 March.

European Communities

15. There is a draft Directive on lorry weights. But it proposes an increase in axle weights to which the Government cannot agree; and is not a constraint on the Government's own decisions.

HANDLING

16. The Secretary of State for Transport will wish to introduce his proposals. Much of the discussion will be concerned with the difficulty of getting support in the Commons for increasing lorry weights: the Lord President's and Chief Whip's comments will therefore be of great importance. The Secretary of State for the Environment may wish to comment on the likely 'environmental' reaction. On the other hand those Ministers with industrial responsibilities will probably want to argue the case for sticking as near as possible to the proposals in Cmnd 8439: the Secretaries of State for Industry, Trade, Scotland and Wales. (Scottish and Welsh producers, far from the Channel ports, would benefit particularly from the cost reductions which heavier lorries would bring).

17. Treasury Ministers will probably want to comment generally; and in particular about section 8 grants.

18. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers may want to comment briefly on Community and international implications.

CONCLUSIONS

19. You will want to reach conclusions on:



- (a) the modifications to the Cmnd 8439 proposals on lorry weights which the Secretary of State for Transport suggests may be necessary;
- (b) the measures to limit the adverse environmental effects listed in paragraph 2 of E(82)12;
- (c) the procedure which the Secretary of State proposes.

20. If the Committee agrees that the Government's proposals on lorry weights should not be decided finally until the Secretary of State for Transport has further sounded out back bench opinion, you will probably want to invite him to consult the Committee again before making any public statement. He could be invited either to seek the Committee's agreement; or merely to inform colleagues: the choice depends in part on how discussion goes at this meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL
PL

P L GREGSON

17 February 1982



Transport
BI
AD

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

12 January 1982

✓
MP

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 23 December about the inclusion in the Transport (No 2) Bill of provisions to enable licensing authorities to take environmental considerations into account in dealing with applications from road haulage operators.

The Transport (No 2) Bill is already well behind the timetable which we had originally envisaged, and Legislation Committee will need to satisfy itself that it does not contain anything which could avoidably delay its passage further. Subject to that, and to the views of our other colleagues, I would have no objection to including the provisions you have in mind, provided that they could be drafted in time to be part of the Bill as introduced without holding up its preparation. However I would not wish to see these provisions added to the Bill during its passage unless it were decided that this was absolutely essential.

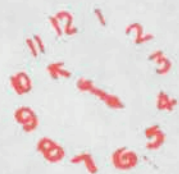
I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

John [unclear]
Francis Pym

FRANCIS PYM

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

12 JAN 1982





DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

BI
AD
2.

Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

MP 30/11
23 December 1981

Joe Lewis

ML

TRANSPORT (NO 2) BILL

The package of measures announced in my White Paper on Lorries, People and the Environment includes a commitment to strengthen the powers of the road haulage licensing authorities to enable them to take adequately into account environmental considerations in dealing with licence applications from road haulage operators. This would require primary legislation, and the White Paper says that the Government will seek an early opportunity to introduce it.

Back in the summer Norman Fowler had taken the view that there was not going to be room for this in either of the two Transport Bills envisaged for this session. As there was policy approval from the original discussion in E the subject was included in the Government's list for possible Private Members' Bills, but unfortunately there was no taker.

I am anxious to do all I can to strengthen the Government's hand for the full debate we have promised on the White Paper and the crucial vote on the amending regulations on lorry weights in the spring. The delay in bringing forward the

Transport (No 2) Bill provides the opportunity for acting to show that the Government means business on this particular environmental measure in our White Paper package, and I should like to add a single clause for this purpose. Instructions are ready and I understand the clause would be straightforward to draft.

Tightening up control on lorry operating centres would be popular on both sides of the House. And it is not likely to be opposed by the road haulage industry itself because the measure will affect mainly those small hauliers who tend to damage the industry's image by operating from totally unsuitable bases in backyards or actually on the street.

I would therefore be grateful for your agreement, subject of course to the drafting of this clause not holding up introduction of the Bill, to the inclusion of this measure. If it was likely to delay introduction then I would hope you could agree to introducing this item at a later stage.

I am copying this to colleagues on E and L Committees, to First Parliamentary Counsel and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours
cc

Daw

DAVID HOWELL

30 DEC 1987

11 12 1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9

Shaw, Giles (*Pudsey*)
 Shaw, Michael (*Scarborough*)
 Shelton, William (*Streatham*)
 Shepherd, Colin (*Hereford*)
 Shersby, Michael
 Silvester, Fred
 Sims, Roger
 Skeet, T. H. H.
 Smith, Dudley
 Speed, Keith
 Speller, Tony
 Spence, John
 Spicer, Jim (*West Dorset*)
 Spicer, Michael (*S Worcs*)
 Sproat, Iain
 Squire, Robin
 Stainton, Keith
 Stanbrook, Ivor
 Stanley, John
 Steen, Anthony
 Stevens, Martin
 Stewart, A. (*ERenfrewshire*)
 Stewart, Ian (*Hitchin*)
 Stokes, John
 Stradling Thomas, J.
 Tapsell, Peter
 Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
 Temple-Morris, Peter
 Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
 Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
 Thompson, Donald
 Thorne, Neil (*Ilford South*)
 Thornton, Malcolm

Townend, John (*Bridlington*)
 Townsend, Cyril D. (*B'heath*)
 van Straubenzee, Sir W.
 Vaughan, Dr Gerard
 Viggers, Peter
 Waddington, David
 Wakeham, John
 Waldegrave, Hon William
 Walker, Rt Hon P. (*W'cester*)
 Walker, B. (*Perth*)
 Walker-Smith, Rt Hon Sir D.
 Wall, Sir Patrick
 Waller, Gary
 Walters, Dennis
 Ward, John
 Warren, Kenneth
 Watson, John
 Wells, Bowen
 Wheeler, John
 Whitelaw, Rt Hon William
 Whitney, Raymond
 Wickenden, Keith
 Wiggin, Jerry
 Wilkinson, John
 Williams, D. (*Montgomery*)
 Winterton, Nicholas
 Wolfson, Mark
 Young, Sir George (*Acton*)
 Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
 Mr. Anthony Berry and
 Mr. Robert Boscawen.

Lorries, People and the Environment

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

7.21 pm

Mr. Albert Booth (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to move,

That this House, believing that the measures proposed in the White Paper "Lorries, People and the Environment" are inadequate to solve the problems of existing heavy lorries, is opposed to any increase in heavy lorry weights.

Few transport issues have aroused such widespread and continuing concern as the proposal to raise the legal limits for the weights of heavy lorries that run on the roads of this country. In view of the previous decision taken by the House on the issue, it is understandable that the Government should have proceeded with considerable caution in their approach to their own proposals. Having set up the Armitage committee, having published its report a year ago and having read carefully, I hope, the 58 recommendations that the committee made, the Government have taken 12 months before putting their proposals in a White Paper and laying it before the House. That is understandable. What is almost impossible to understand is why the White Paper bears only the faintest resemblance to the Armitage proposals.

In a previous debate, I was among those who criticised the Armitage proposals for not going far enough. However, the White Paper contains only the faintest shadow of the safeguards that Armitage proposed. It does not begin to approach what is required to deal with the problems of today's heavy lorries, let alone the heavier lorries that are proposed. It is therefore not surprising that most, if not all, of the major bodies that have made representations to the Government on the issue have expressed their considerable opposition.

The Association of County Councils has expressed considerable disappointment. That puts things mildly. The Association of District Councils has said that the White Paper opens the floodgates to a storm of protest. That reflects the situation more fairly. The Association of Metropolitan Associations has expressed its total rejection of the Government's heavy lorry proposals in the White Paper. Most environmentalist bodies concerned with Armitage are totally dismayed at the proposals in the White Paper. Even the road haulage industry must be embarrassed at the lack of a package that embraces the heavyweight lorry proposal in a defensible way.

I wish to endear myself to hon. Members by giving two assurances. First, I do not intend to speak on each of the 58 recommendations of the Armitage committee. Secondly, I realise that many hon. Members wish to express views. I shall therefore restrict my remarks to a few of the issues. This is not to say that I consider them the only issues or the most important issues. I hope that will be understood.

I wish to deal first with the Government's proposition that heavier lorries will mean fewer lorries. On that, the Government rest a number of their assertions in favour of what they propose. The Government's proposition flies in the face of experience in this country and of the statistical evidence taken by Armitage. In fact, statistical evidence and experience show that each time there has been an increase in the maximum permitted weight of lorries, there

Question accordingly negated.

Question. That the proposed words be there added, put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 32 (*Questions on amendments*), and agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER forthwith declared the main *Question*, as amended, to be agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House welcomes the progress achieved by Her Majesty's Government in the search for a satisfactory revised Common Fisheries Policy, particularly in relation to conservation and marketing; confirms that such a policy must maintain the need to secure an exclusive 12 mile limit, preference outside 12 miles to protect particularly dependent fishing communities, adequate quotas for the United Kingdom, effective conservation measures and a Community-wide system of enforcement as well as improvements in the marketing arrangements hitherto in force; and urges Her Majesty's Government vigorously to continue, in consultation with the fishing industry, the search for a solution on the outstanding issues.

[Mr. Albert Booth]

has been a big increase in the number of heavy lorries on our roads. I wish to take only three of the most recent and, I think, apposite increases to demonstrate what I say.

In 1955, when the 24-ton lorry was permitted for the first time on our roads, the number of lorries over eight tons unladen weight was 5,000. In 1960 the figure was 11,000. When the 32-ton articulated lorry—the lorry that has given rise to considerable concern—was first allowed on our roads, the number, by the same definition, increased from 24,000 in 1965 to 55,000 in 1970.

The most recent increase of any significance followed the introduction of the 30-ton fixed four-axle lorry in 1972. The number of heavy lorries, by the same definition, was 96,000 in 1975, and that number had increased to 121,000 by 1979. There is no evidence that the increase in the maximum permitted weight will do other than encourage, for understandable reason, those in the road haulage business to go for more freight business. They are able, by virtue of the increased lorry weights, to compete more effectively with the railways, helped by the motorway programme carried out during the period to which I have referred. With each increase in lorry weights, the amount of freight carried by rail, expressed on a tonne mileage basis, has declined both in percentage and absolute terms, whereas the amount carried by lorries on our roads has increased.

In 1953, more freight in ton mileage terms was carried on the railways than was carried by lorries on the roads. By 1979, lorries were carrying five times as much freight in ton mileage terms as the railways. On the evidence available and in the light of experience it is almost impossible to believe that an increase in the permitted weight of lorries, as proposed in the White Paper will mean fewer lorries on the roads. The indications are that there will be more. This affects what the Government—

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Howell): The right hon. Gentleman is dealing with a very important point. I think he said—I hope I do not misrepresent him—that the Armitage report did not support the view that there would be fewer lorries if they were allowed to carry a full load. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman is correct. Paragraph 360 of the report reads:

“Heavier lorries should reduce the total amount of lorry traffic on the roads. If heavier lorries were allowed, the reduction in lorry traffic compared to what the traffic would otherwise be, might be about 450 million—500 million miles by 1990”

Paragraph 361 reads:

“It has been suggested in evidence that allowing heavier lorries might increase lorry traffic, through the attraction of business from competing modes, principally the railways. This is not likely to be very significant.”

All the scientific evidence refutes what the right hon. Gentleman said.

Mr. Booth: I agree that this is an important issue. What Armitage said in those chapters contradicts the statistical evidence.

Mr. Howell: The right hon. Gentleman said that Armitage contradicted the proposition that there would be fewer lorries if they were allowed to carry the full load. That is not so. He should withdraw what he said.

Mr. Booth: I shall not withdraw what I said, because the statistical evidence taken by Armitage bears out what

I said. I do not want to waste the time of the House. I shall discuss that matter with the right hon. Gentleman later. However, I assure him that I have checked the figures carefully. If he wants to check them, he should turn to table 4 on page 6. That table shows the actual tonnage by road, rail, coastal shipping, and so on. Table 5 on page 7 shows that 22.8 thousand million-ton miles were carried by rail in 1953 as opposed to 19.7 thousand million-ton miles by road. That bears out my contention. The right hon. Gentleman will see in the same table that in 1979 road was carrying 64 thousand million-ton miles, and rail was carrying only 12.2 thousand million-ton miles. That is exactly what I said—that five times as much freight was carried by road as by rail.

The statistical evidence taken by Armitage bears out exactly what I said. Armitage's assumption about road damage, particularly in a free market as opposed to the Community where there is strict quantity control licensing on heavy lorries, is little more than an assumption and does not relate to the statistical evidence.

Mr. Gary Waller (Brighouse and Spensborough): I do not want to get bogged down in an argument about statistics with the right hon. Gentleman, but he is being selective. Between 1949 and 1979, the number of lorries in Great Britain increased by only 74 per cent., whereas road vehicles generally increased by 500 per cent. Can he explain that other than that there was a trend towards heavier lorries, which reduced the number on the roads?

Mr. Booth: The hon. Member for Brighouse and Spensborough (Mr. Waller) is being selective. If he is talking about the total number of vehicles, including cars, over the past decade, there has been a greater increase in the number of lorries of three axles or more than in the number of cars. If he is talking about heavy lorries, I must point out that that my definition was 8 tons unladen weight. If he is talking of lower weights, he will find that, even at the lowest weights taken by Armitage, an enormous increase in the number of the heaviest lorries is needed before there is any fall-off in the number of smaller lorries.

I am not being selective. Experience in this country has shown that the railways have lost freight in absolute and percentage terms to roads as we have increased lorry weights and built motorways. That is not being selective; that is reality. That is the experience of this country.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Would the right hon. Gentleman read table 32, which deals with the estimated number of heavier lorries?

Mr. Booth: I have read the estimated number. I have also read—the hon. Lady does not appear to have done so—the actual number of lorries in Armitage and the actual number of goods vehicles. Table 1 on page 5 shows that the number of lorries of over 8 tons unladen weight has risen consistently from 1946 to 1979. The number of lorries “not over 1½ tons” has also risen consistently during that period. It is only the small category of lorries of unladen weight between 1½ tons and 3 tons that has shown any sign of decline, and that only during the past five years. The hon. Lady should listen to what I say if she wishes to take part in the argument. The actual numbers, as opposed to the estimates support my contention.

That is important, although not conclusive, to the Government's argument about road damage. The

Government claim that road damage would be reduced by the introduction of heavier lorries. Again, that statement needs to be questioned against evidence and experience. To be fair, the Government say that, although some of the lorries that they are proposing are more damaging, the fact that the number would come down pro rata to the increase in their permitted payload would more than offset the increased damage caused by those lorries.

Mr. Peter Fry (Wellingborough): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the evidence given to the Select Committee on Transport, Sir Henry Chilver, the vice-chancellor of the Cranfield Institute of Technology, said "if we move into the heavier lorries, we would indeed, if we transferred goods to the heavier lorries, do less damage"? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept the opinion of one of the leading experts on this subject in the country?

Mr. Booth: That is a highly selective quotation, if the hon. Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Fry) will allow me to say so. The overwhelming bulk of qualified technical opinion is that the damage that an individual lorry does tends to rise with the sum of the fourth power of its axle weights. Whether the bigger lorry does more or less damage depends on the axle weights and how many there are.

Armitage said that 90 per cent. of the damage to our roads was done by the heavy lorry. If the statistical evidence supports the idea that there will be more larger lorries on the roads, there will be even more damage.

Let us suppose that the Government are right and that the number of lorries drops in strict proportion to their increase in payload. If the operators of the 32.5-ton gross weight lorry, which will be allowed under the Government's proposals to run at 40 tons, say "We do not need so many lorries now. We shall scrap a number pro rata, and run the remaining number on our roads at 40 tons", they will still do 15 per cent. more damage, according to the calculation in the Armitage report. The reason includes the fact that the Government are proposing that most of the new lorries will be allowed to have two or more axles at heavier weights. The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. He cannot have read the Armitage report if he does not accept that the 34-ton lorry that he proposes has a higher damage and standard axle number than the existing 32.5-ton lorry.

The Government are proposing that every axle weight on a 32.5-ton lorry should be allowed to be more heavily loaded. That is bound to do more damage. It is proposed that the 38-tonners should have higher steering and drive axle weights than the 32.5-tonners.

The right hon. Gentleman proposes a 40-ton vehicle. According to the Armitage test, the lorry proposed by the right hon. Gentleman does the least damage to our roads. Again according to the Armitage test, it would do less damage than some existing lorries. However, it would still do more damage than the 44-ton lorry. That lorry will be allowed to run with a higher steering axle weight and higher semi-trailer axle weight than the existing 32.5-ton lorry. The White Paper, in paragraph 25, states: "people wrongly believe that there are plans afoot to make lorries even bigger."

In addition, in paragraph 30, it states:

"It is essential to ensure that heavier lorries can be no bigger than the biggest lorries we have at present."

Why does the Secretary of State contradict himself? In the same paragraph as he says that it is essential that lorries should not be any bigger, he states:

"The Government also proposes to increase the legal limit on articulated vehicle length to 15.5 metres".

Therefore, there is no doubt that an increase in vehicle dimensions is being proposed for articulated vehicles.

There are two other proposals in the White Paper that will also result in bigger vehicles on the roads. First, I refer to the increase in specialised vehicles. At present, they are built to limits appropriate to the loads that they carry. A petrol tanker is a good example. Today, the petrol tank is built to carry a payload that brings the vehicle's total weight to 32.5 tons. However, if the Government's proposals are carried, petrol tankers will have tanks that are big enough to carry a payload that will bring the total gross lorry weight to 40 tons—if it is a two-drive axle lorry—or to 38 tons, if it is a single drive axle lorry. Therefore, there will be bigger lorries.

I am even more concerned that the proposed increase in weight will act as an incentive towards using many more trailer combinations on our roads. Those combinations are undoubtedly longer. We do not see many on British roads, but they are on the roads in Germany and other countries and they are considerably bigger than our biggest articulated wagons. They are longer by an amount that is greater than my height and I am not the shortest Member of Parliament. Therefore, the lorries will be far too big for many of our roads, which are unsuitable even for existing lorries and were never designed to take 40-ton lorries.

The White Paper claims that we should accept heavier lorries because the Government have a trunk road programme that gives high priority to bypasses. Of course, bypasses relieve some of the most serious effects of heavy lorries. If that claim were borne out, several people might be influenced. The Government's evidence to the Armitage committee was that 400 additional bypasses were required. That was a conservative estimate in both senses of the word. The County Surveyors Society said that 600 or more additional bypasses were justified on economic grounds alone.

The truth is that only 21 bypasses are under construction. The White Paper brings forward a further 11 bypasses for construction. That will leave 31 of the bypasses in the suspended list. I hope that the Secretary of State will bear in mind that that includes the Dalton bypass on the A590 in my constituency. Indeed, that is a classic example of a road that is unsuitable for 40-ton lorries. The programme will leave 32 of the bypasses in the 1984 onward reserve list and 37 that will not start before 1984. The road haulage industry regards that as part of an inadequate road programme. The British Road Federation contends that road construction is now half what it was 10 years ago. Traffic, particularly heavy lorry traffic, has increased during that period.

I was interested to note the question tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Newport (Mr. Hughes), which was answered on 30 November in col. 46 of *Hansard*. It gave the Government's estimate of the amount of new road to be opened next year. The question reveals that the Government's estimate is that only 39 miles of new motorway and trunk road will be opened next year. In 1978, 87 miles were opened. In fairness to the Government and their predecessors, I should add that 264 miles were opened in 1971.

The Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Of course, 1971 was some time ago. The right hon. Gentleman complains about the low

[Mr. Kenneth Clarke]

mileage figures for next year. Will he look, in the same answer, at the number of miles to be opened in 1983? The right hon. Gentleman will find that a dramatic increase is expected, over and above any of the mileages achieved under the last years of the Labour Government.

Mr. Booth: I could point to dramatic increases in mileage under the Labour Government. I cited 1982, because presumably that is the year that the Government have in mind for the introduction of heavier lorries. They intend to introduce such lorries although they are cutting expenditure on trunk road construction. Within a total transport expenditure cut of £220 million, at 1979 survey prices—I cite the Government's estimates for expenditure—they are cutting trunk road construction.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for having given way yet again. I shall not intervene again in his speech. However, he knows that we are reducing expenditure only because we are getting a better bargain for the taxpayer, because contract prices are lower than forecast. Will the right hon. Gentleman concede that we are delivering the trunk road programme in full? As he has got the answer in front of him, will he give the mileage for 1983 and compare it with the mileages under the last years of the Labour Government? In 1983 there will be a dramatic increase in the mileage of new roads to be opened. That undermines the point that the right hon. Gentleman was trying to make by saying that we are failing to deliver the bypasses.

Mr. Booth: I have not got the answer in front of me, but I read it carefully before attending the debate. I chose 1982, because that programme was entirely within the Government's control. If I had chosen the programmes for 1981, 1980 or 1979, some of the roads opened would have been begun under the Labour Government. Equally, if I had chosen 1975, some of the roads would have been started under a Labour Government. I chose a year that seemed appropriate. I listened with great interest to the Under-Secretary of State when he said that there had been a cut in expenditure because we were getting better value for money. That is a nice change in defensive argument. Not long ago we were told that the Department of Transport's budget was being cut because the Government—reasonably, from their point of view—expected the Department to make some contributions to public expenditure savings. If such cuts have been made to achieve better value for money, it makes a delightful change of tune.

Generally, the White Paper pays little regard to Armitage's serious proposals about how to deal with the problems of heavy lorries. It offers a reduction in lorry noise that will be barely detectable to the human ear and that is to be introduced by means of regulations that will come into force in 1983. It offers further reduction which might be brought about in the future by collaborative research and development. It does virtually nothing more to deal with the problems of ground vibration, fumes and safety standards, on which it is particularly non-committal.

The White Paper appears to deny the evidence of water and gas boards and local authorities that heavy goods vehicles are damaging to our cities' underground services. That is particularly noteworthy as Manchester has just

produced direct evidence that when heavy vehicles were re-routed underground services suffered enormous damage on the new routes.

The White Paper dismisses as insignificant the effect of heavy lorries on bridges, in spite of the fact that the Institution of Highway Engineers says that we shall probably have to spend another £100 million on improvements to cope with the proposals.

One of the clearest signs that the Government are backing away from the serious issues that heavy lorries raise is their failure to make any proposals for more effective control of operators and more effective enforcement of lorry weights. Illegal running and overloading are serious problems. With the introduction of heavier lorries, even the displacement of a metre either way can make a significant difference to axle loading and damage to the roads. The Government have no proposals for the adequate staffing of enforcement bodies. They do not propose a programme of dynamic weigh bridges which will be needed to check the heavier lorries.

If the Government seriously believe that little can be done to reduce the harmful effects of heavier lorries, the White Paper is at least honest. Any Armitage recommendations that the Government do not ignore are confined to further research and investigation. The recommendations that they accept can be delivered in only a few cases because the resources are not to be made available. The Government are vague about what should be studied and what should be discussed.

In only one area is the White Paper hard and fast and crystal clear in its recommendations—where it proposes the increase in heavy lorry weights. It is so clear about that that the Government have already published for consultation their draft regulations to introduce the increases in weights under the construction and use regulations.

Heavy lorries are seen by most who suffer from them as vehicles which produce intolerable noise, fumes, vibration damage and congestion. Hon. Members know, from the Government's response in the White Paper, that it will be a long time before there is any improvement. We cannot do much to deal with that, but we can do something to ensure that in the meantime conditions do not become much worse. We should vote for the motion.

7.53 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Howell): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'this House, believing that environmental and social problems arising from heavy lorries must be tackled comprehensively and vigorously and that industry should be helped to keep down transport costs, welcomes the Government's commitment to a continuing and substantial programme of by-pass construction to which further additions are steadily being made, and considers that decisions should not be taken on the White Paper until there has been adequate time to consider fully all the measures proposed in the light of consultations on the draft amending Regulations published for that purpose.'

I am glad to have the opportunity of setting out in more detail the proposals in the Government's White Paper for grappling with the heavy lorry problem. I shall deal with some of the arguments expressed by the right hon. Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Booth). I find less attractive the Opposition's attempt to bounce us into decisions on a White Paper that the right hon. Gentleman has recognised involves matters of great complexity that deserve careful discussion.



ru SD

Transport

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 December, 1981.

Dear Alice

Thank you for telephoning through the text of a further revision of the proposed amendment to tomorrow's Supply Day Motion on People, Lorries and the Environment.

As I told you on the telephone, the Prime Minister would prefer some revision of the last few lines of the amendment. I enclose a version which incorporates these changes.

The Prime Minister would be content for this version now to be tabled.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and Nicholas Huxtable (Lord President's Office).

Yours ever

Mike Patten

Mrs. Alice Baker,
Department of Transport.

W. P. S.

DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE SUPPLY DAY MOTION

People, lorries and the environment

That this House, believing that environmental and social problems arising from heavy lorries must be tackled comprehensively and vigorously and that industry should be helped to keep down transport costs, welcomes the Government's commitment to a continuing and substantial programme of by-pass construction to which further additions are steadily being made and considers that decisions should not be taken on the White Paper until there has been adequate time to consider fully all the measures proposed in the light of consultations on the draft amending regulations published for that purpose.

8 December 1981



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

7 December 1981

Dear Mike *MA*

I attach a draft of the amendment my Secretary of State proposes to table to the Opposition Motion on "Lorries, People and the Environment" due to be taken at next Wednesday's Supply Day.

Mr Howell realises the amendment is long, but feels strongly that an amendment restating the Government's position in detail, whilst still adopting a neutral line, is necessary if the Government is to command the support of its backbenchers. This message was made to him forcefully when he met both the Transport and elements of the Environment and Industry backbench committees last Thursday evening.

The Secretary of State feels there is much to be said for tabling the amendment today so as to give colleagues time to consider the Government's attitude. With apologies therefore for the short notice I should be grateful if you could let me know today whether the Prime Minister is content with the terms of the amendment.

I am copying this to David Heyhoe in the Lord President's Office and Murdo Maclean in the Chief Whip's Office.

Yours ever
C R Edwards

C R EDWARDS
Private Secretary

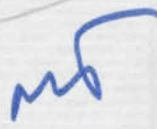
DRAFT AMENDMENT

That this House, believing that the environmental and social problems arising from heavy lorries must be tackled comprehensively and vigorously and that industry should be helped to keep down transport costs, welcomes the measures already taken by the Government, including the commitment to a continuing and substantial programme of bypass and motorway construction already in hand, to which further additions are steadily being made, together with the progressive introduction of quieter, cleaner and safer vehicles; notes that local authorities already have extensive power to protect residential and other areas from heavy traffic and welcomes Government encouragement to use these powers and its intention to pursue the proposals in the Armitage Report for "lorry action areas", to strengthen the powers of road haulage operators' licensing authorities and to improve enforcement procedures; notes the intention to introduce new controls to ensure that heavier lorries would be no bigger than present big vehicles; and considers that it should not be rushed into taking a precipitate view on the White Paper 'Lorries, People and the Environment' until there has been adequate time to consider all the measures proposed fully and as a whole and in the light of consultations on the draft amending regulations published for that purpose.

Transport

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Mr. Gow



HEAVY LORRIES STATEMENT

David Howell had a tough time in the House. He was attacked so vehemently from the Government benches that the Opposition found their work done for them.

Albert Booth, leading for the Opposition, argued that the statement and accompanying White Paper did not meet the commitment given by Mr. Fowler that he would respond in detail to each of the Armitage recommendations. He also argued that the Government's decisions ducked the issue of taxation for heavy goods vehicles.

John Peyton then rose. From Britons who lived, worked, or shopped in the streets of our towns, he said, Mr. Howell's statement would get "a welcome a good deal short of rapturous". The heavier lorries would bring much greater damage and inconvenience, at a time when the Government was making negligible progress on trunk roads and bypasses. The bitter pill would have been more palatable if it had been accompanied by some reference to lorry routes. This led Stephen Ross to call for the return of Mr. Peyton as Transport Minister, as he had stuck at a 32 ton limit. David Crouch was simply "appalled" by the announcement. He gave notice that he would vote against the proposals. Anthony Kershaw joined in the attack, and Robin Maxwell-Hyslop told Mr. Howell that he should have had the courtesy to listen to a debate on the subject in the House after becoming Minister, before coming to make this statement. Only Peter Fry offered any support from the Government benches.

From the Opposition benches, Ted Leadbitter, George Foulkes, and Jack Straw joined general criticism.

Mr. Howell tried to defend his proposals, and made it clear that there would be time for consideration before the House was

asked to approve them. But he had a poor day, and his troubles were increased because he gave the impression that he was not the master of his brief on this subject.

MA

1 December 1981



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 1111

Secretary of State for Industry

1 December 1981

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1

NBPM

Dear David,

THE PROPOSED WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Thank you for copying to me your minute of 26 November to the Prime Minister and the draft of your proposed announcement about the White Paper on Lorries, People and the Environment.

I have only one comment on the draft. I would prefer to see the second sentence of paragraph 3 rephrased on the following lines:

"The lorry gives offence to many people and the nuisance it causes will become progressively worse unless we take decisions now which will change the trend over the coming years"

I feel that the present text goes rather too far with its reference to the lorry being an offensive element in the environment which will make the environment progressively worse and there is no doubt that it would not be well received by a struggling vehicle industry.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to colleagues of E Committee, and the Lord President and both Chief Whips, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and Sir Robert Armstrong.

You are
Peter

12 DEC 1981



affect the broad basis of the decision I have taken today, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman and the House to approve the situation as it stands.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Secretary Howell: statement.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. By, I am sure, a momentary oversight, you have forgotten that I have spoken on these matters from the Front Bench. I might have had a fairly valuable contribution to make—[*Interruption.*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. As usual, I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman. He has given me the opportunity to say that I do my very best to ensure that those on the Front Bench who run back up to the Back Benches, are not given the same preference as real Back Benchers. I think that is fair and I am quite sure that the hon. Gentleman's sense of fair play will lead him to agree with me.

Mr. Faulds: I am happy to yield to your suggestion, Mr. Speaker, because we are about to have the happy introduction of moderation, reason and true femininity in contrast to the tough adamantine type that we usually have to suffer.

Mr. Speaker: We shall have the statement first. Mr. Secretary Howell—

Mr. Kenneth Lewis (Rutland and Stamford): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I simply draw your attention to the fact that some hon. Members, who are not in the happy position of being able to go from the Front Bench to the Back Benches, have difficulties in being called—never mind the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds).

Later—

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Without repeating the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds), may I ask you, Mr. Speaker, how you decide which Front Bench spokesmen can be called to speak from the Back Benches? Are all Front Bench spokesmen equal? Some of us regard the matter that has just been discussed as at least as important as Front Bench responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker: I believe that I called one of the hon. Gentleman's colleagues who is a member of his union, if that is what is worrying him. Otherwise, I am not anxious to make a firm rule that no one who speaks from the Front Bench can ever be called when he is on the Back Benches. If it were the will of the House, of course, I would respond to it, but I have not yet had any indication of that.

Lorries, People and the Environment

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Howell): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on lorries, people and the environment.

Heavy lorries have been the subject of continuing debate and controversy for over 10 years. The problems are complex and intractable, but decisions have to be taken. We need above all to end the present uncertainty about future lorry weights which is currently placing a handicap on investment in the commercial vehicle industry:

To clarify the issues, the Government appointed Sir Arthur Armitage in July 1979 to conduct an independent inquiry into the whole problem of lorries and their effects on people and the environment. Sir Arthur and his four independent assessors took evidence very widely, and reported in December 1980. The Government are very grateful to them for their wide-ranging report. It has aroused great interest. A large number of people and organisations have put their views to me and there have been two debates in the House. The Government thought it right to take time to consider fully the many points that have been raised.

The effect of big lorries on people and communities is a matter of deep concern. The lorry is an offensive element in the environment, and it will make the environment progressively worse unless we take decisions now which will change the trend over the coming years. Our aim is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport in the future, which will mean a better environment as well as a healthier economy.

The measures the Government will be taking to achieve this objective are outlined in a White Paper published today. These measures are directed to keeping lorries away from the places where people live, through the provision of more bypasses, to making the vehicles quieter and cleaner, and, in particular, to keeping their numbers down.

However, to keep costs down, road transport must be efficient and economic. Our present maximum weight limits on lorries place an economic handicap on much of our industry.

Mr. Norman Atkinson (Tottenham): Disgraceful.

Mr. Howell: Our regulations prevent many existing lorries from being loaded to their full technical weight carrying capacity. This is wasteful. It makes transport costs higher than they need be, which in turn feeds through into prices and makes our exports less competitive.

The Government agree with Armitage's rejection of the heavier axle weights proposed by the European Commission. We have also announced our rejection of a maximum weight as high as 44 tonnes, which was the heaviest vehicle recommended in the Armitage report. All the safeguards suggested in the report have been considered very carefully and the Government are now convinced that maximum lorry weights can safely be raised to 34 tonnes for four-axled vehicles, and 40 tonnes on five axles. These changes are set out in draft amending regulations which are being circulated today by my Department for consultation. Copies are available in both the Vote Office and the Library of the House.

Transport

[Mr. Howell]

The proposals outlined in the White Paper will apply to Northern Ireland and, where appropriate, will be given effect through separate action under the relevant Northern Ireland legislation.

As well as bringing economic benefits to industry and ultimately to the consumers, through savings in industry's transport costs of around £150 million a year, there will be benefits to the environment. The heavier vehicles will be no bigger than the biggest vehicles on the roads today. Their higher load capacity will enable industry to meet demands for freight services with fewer vehicles than would otherwise be needed. There will be safeguards in the regulations on the design of the heavier vehicles to protect roads, bridges and underground services.

We cannot afford delay. To do nothing would help neither the environment nor the economy. Freight users, vehicle operators and manufacturers are unable to plan ahead while the present uncertainty lasts. It is through the decisions taken now, and the actions initiated, that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking.

Mr. Albert Booth (Barrow-in-Furness): Does the Secretary of State for Transport recall that his predecessor, in the debate on the Armitage report, said:

"Whatever we decide on this issue,"—

he was referring to heavy lorry weights—

"I shall make a comprehensive statement on Armitage covering all of the main recommendations."—[*Official Report*, 17 June 1981; Vol. 6, c.1088.]

The Secretary of State's statement lamentably fails to measure up to that undertaking, as does the White Paper which it introduces. To that extent he will be judged as having reneged on his predecessor's undertaking.

The lorries that the Secretary of State is proposing will be more damaging to the roads of this country than the 44 tonne lorries proposed by Armitage, when measured by Armitage's own criteria. The Secretary of State is proposing to allow on the roads of this country a 38-tonne lorry with a 10.5 drive axle—a higher drive axle weight than any at present on our roads.

Why has the Secretary of State made no proposal whatever to allocate to heavy goods vehicles the higher costs that they impose on road building and maintenance, to which the Armitage report referred? Why is the Secretary of State ducking the heavy goods vehicle taxation issue, which Armitage highlighted very effectively?

Why is the Secretary of State ignoring 90 out of the 91 recommendations in the Foster report relating to lorry operator licensing?

The Secretary of State's offer to have a study made of the need for lorry action areas in a number of our cities—when compared with the clearcut Armitage proposal that the Government should make grants to local authorities to cope with some of these problems and recoup that cost by taxation of the heavy goods vehicles—is lamentably inadequate.

The bypass commitment in the White Paper, measured against the requirement, as acknowledged by the Government, for 400 bypasses, is like feeding a peanut to a hungry elephant. It recognises the problem but responds to it by a pathetic gesture. The minor amelioration of a

major problem is a figleaf behind which the Secretary of State cannot hide a massive concession to the road freight haulage lobby.

Those who are now suffering from the effects of the present heavy lorries will be among those who are most disappointed or shocked by the Secretary of State's announcement.

Mr. Howell: I do not accept the right hon. Gentleman's version and interpretation of what I have said this afternoon or of the White Paper. The proposals in the White Paper are comprehensive and cover—indeed, go beyond—the full range of points made in the Armitage report.

The overall effect of the proposals, as there would be up to 10,000 fewer lorries, would mean that there would be 5 per cent. less road damage for any given level of activity.

The right hon. Gentleman mentioned the question of higher taxation on the lorries which do the most damage. The White Paper makes it clear that we have taken the powers to prepare for that, and we propose to go in that direction. There is no question of ducking that. In the Department, we are making a new assessment of track costs to enable us to move along that path. I do not understand, therefore, why the right hon. Gentleman raised that point.

It is true that the Armitage report made several proposals concerning lorry action areas. We have already started to discuss them with local authorities. We are not shelving the idea, but it raises a number of sensitive and difficult local issues, as the right hon. Gentleman knows full well. He would be the first to criticise if we rushed into general undertakings before discussing matters properly and fairly with the local authorities.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the proposals as being a concession to the freight industry. He is totally wrong in that respect. There is a major advance for the environment within our grasp here, because there will be lorries which are no bigger and which will be greatly reduced in number. At the same time, they will benefit industry in terms of more investment and more jobs. If he is not in favour of that, it is a strange departure from what I understood his position to be.

Mr. John Peyton (Yeovil): Is my right hon. Friend aware that those who live, walk and push prams in the narrow streets of many of our towns and villages are likely to accord to his proposals a welcome that falls a good deal short of rapturous?

Is my right hon. Friend aware that his observations on the environment and on keeping lorries away from people would carry a good deal more weight if the road programme were not at such a low ebb and if progress on bypasses were not so sluggish? Is he further aware that his proposals would be more palatable if some reference had been made to his preparedness concerning ideas on lorry routes? There appears to be nothing forthcoming there.

Mr. Howell: I am aware that the present lorry size and weight are very unpopular. If there were any suggestion about bigger lorries—apart from the 1½ ft. extra on the cab—and if we were talking about lorry trailers, I should be wholly against it. We are talking of the same size of lorry loads and about fewer lorries. While I certainly do not expect rapture, I believe that this is a move in the right direction, towards civilising the lorry.

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Heavy lorries have been the subject of continuing debate and controversy for over 10 years. The problems are complex and intractable, but decisions have to be taken. We need above all to end the present uncertainty about future lorry weights which is currently placing a handicap on investment in the commercial vehicle industry.

To clarify the issues the Government appointed Sir Arthur Armitage in July 1979 to conduct an independent inquiry into the whole problem of lorries and their effects on people and the environment. Sir Arthur and his four independent assessors took evidence very widely, and reported in December 1980. The Government is very grateful to them for their wide-ranging Report. It has aroused great interest. A large number of people and organisations have put their views to me and there have been two debates in this House. The Government thought it right to take time to consider fully the many points that have been raised.

The effect of big lorries on people and communities is a matter of deep concern. The lorry is an offensive element in the environment, and it will make the environment progressively worse unless we take decisions

/now which

now which will change the trend over the coming years. Our aim is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport in the future, which will mean a better environment as well as a healthier economy.

The measures the Government will be taking to achieve this objective are outlined in a White Paper published today. These measures are directed to keeping lorries away from the places where people live, through the provision of more by-passes; to making the vehicles quieter and cleaner; and, in particular, to keeping their numbers down.

However, to keep costs down, road transport must be efficient and economic. Our present maximum weight limits on lorries place an economic handicap on much of our industry. Our regulations prevent many existing lorries from being loaded to their full technical weight carrying capacity. This is wasteful. It makes transport costs higher than they need be, which in turn feeds through into prices and makes our exports less competitive.

The Government agrees with Armitage's rejection of the heavier axle weights proposed by the European Commission. We have also announced our rejection of a

/maximum weight

maximum weight as high as 44 tonnes, which was the heaviest vehicle recommended in the Armitage Report. All the safeguards suggested in the Report have been considered very carefully and the Government is now convinced that maximum lorry weights can safely be raised to 34 tonnes for 4 axled vehicles, and 40 tonnes on 5 axles. These changes are set out in draft amending regulations which are being circulated today by my Department for consultation. Copies are being placed in the Library of the House.

The proposals outlined in the White Paper will apply to Northern Ireland and, where appropriate, will be given effect to through separate action under the relevant Northern Ireland legislation.

As well as bringing economic benefits to industry and ultimately to the consumers, through savings in industry's transport costs of around £150m a year, there will be benefits to the environment. The heavier vehicles will be no bigger than the biggest vehicles on the roads today. Their higher load capacity will enable industry to meet demands for freight services with fewer vehicles than would otherwise be needed. There will be

/safeguards in

safeguards in the regulations on the design of the heavier vehicles to protect roads, bridges and underground services.

Mr Speaker, we cannot afford delay. To do nothing would help neither the environment nor the economy. Freight users, vehicle operators and manufacturers are unable to plan ahead whilst the present uncertainty lasts. It is through the decisions taken now, and the actions initiated, that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 November 1981

Dear Anthony,

PROPOSED WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 26 November with the attached draft oral statement.

The Prime Minister suggests that in order to make the statement more balanced, there should be some mention of those Armitage proposals which the Government has turned down. She recalls that when E Committee discussed these matters in September there was an estimate of savings for industry at large of £150m. per year, and that these savings were particularly attractive given that they were unmatched either by increased public expenditure, or by heavier taxation. The Prime Minister suggests that it would be helpful to deploy this point in the statement. Finally, the Prime Minister suggests the deletion of the last sentence of the antepenultimate paragraph of the statement ("It makes no sense at all in our present economic circumstances"): she thinks that this sentence adds nothing to the sense, and could stimulate opposition.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chief Whip, the Lord President and the Chief Secretary, HM Treasury.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Scholten

Anthony Mayer, Esq.,
Department of Transport.

✓ cc Mr Lingham
Mr Dugard

1.

CONFIDENTIAL

Didn't we bring down
one of the reports

Prime Minister

proposals? Ought that to
be mentioned in that the
statement is balanced not.

Prime Minister

— Content with this draft statement,
which would be given
on Tuesday? MAF 26/11

PROPOSED WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

As I indicated in my minute of 19 November about this proposed White Paper, my intention is to announce publication, which we have now agreed should be on 1 December, by way of an oral statement. I should be grateful to know whether a statement on the lines of the attached draft would raise any difficulties.

I am copying this to colleagues on E Committee, including the Lord President and both Chief Whips, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

JH.
2

DAVID HOWELL
26 November 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT STATEMENT: LORRIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In July 1979 the Government appointed Sir Arthur Armitage to conduct an independent inquiry into the whole problem of lorries and their effects on people and the environment. Sir Arthur and his four independent assessors took evidence very widely, and reported in December 1980. The Government is very grateful to Sir Arthur and his assessors for their wide-ranging report.

The Report contained much complex argument and made a number of recommendations covering a wide range of issues. It has aroused great interest. A large number of people and organisations have put their views to me, and there have been two debates in this House. The Government thought it right to take time to consider fully the many points that have been raised. As a result the Government now has a much clearer understanding of the issues and of the practical measures that need to be put in hand.

The effect of big lorries on people and communities is a matter of grave concern. The lorry is an offensive element in the environment, and it will make the environment progressively worse unless we take decisions now which will change the trend over the coming years. Our aim is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport in the future, which will mean a better environment as well as a healthier economy.

The measures the Government will be taking to achieve this objective are outlined in a White Paper published today. These measures are directed to keeping lorries away from the places where people live, through the provision of more by-passes; to making the vehicles quieter and cleaner; and, in particular, to keeping their numbers down.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Government recognises that the lorry is essential to the functioning of the whole economy. Indeed, it is the only possible means of delivery and collection from farms, shops and most factories and warehouses. Our exports depend on it. The cost of road transport is a fundamental part of the cost of living. To keep costs down road, transport must be efficient and economic.

Our present maximum weight limits on lorries place an economic handicap on much of our industry. Our regulations prevent many existing lorries from being loaded to their full technical weight carrying capacity. This is wasteful. It makes transport costs higher than they need be, which in turn feeds through into prices and makes our exports less competitive. It makes no sense at all in our present economic circumstances.

*Suggested in
sentence is
deleted - it
and the nothing
would be
concern
opposed.*

The Government has considered very carefully all the safeguards suggested in the Armitage Report, and is now satisfied that maximum lorry weights can safely be raised to 34 tonnes for 4 axled vehicles and 40 tonnes on 5 axles. As well as bringing economic benefits to industry, and ultimately to the consumers, there will be benefits to the environment. Industry will be able to meet demands for freight services with fewer vehicles than would otherwise be needed. There will be safeguards in the regulations on the design of the heavier vehicles to protect roads, bridges and underground services.

Our objective will not, of course, be achieved overnight. But we cannot afford delay. To do nothing would help neither the environment nor the economy. Freight users, vehicle operators and manufacturers are unable to plan ahead whilst the present uncertainty lasts. It is through the decisions taken now, and the actions initiated, that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking.

CONFIDENTIAL



✓ A. Oswald
NBPM
2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref: H/PSO/19451/81

Your ref:

25 November 1981

De David

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In writing to the Prime Minister on 19 November you sought the agreement of colleagues to publication of the White Paper on 1 December, preceded by an announcement by PQ on 25 November. I am happy with these arrangements. I share your concern about the sort of reaction we can expect and I wonder whether the Government might find it has to debate the subject sooner than the timing you suggest (as happened the last time on Armitage).

I too see lorry weights as part of the wider problem of the lorry in the environment. I wholeheartedly support what you say about that. Because of public expenditure constraints the environmental package offered in the White Paper is not as robust as we all would have liked. But the presentation is as positive as possible. No doubt during the eventual Debate the Government will place maximum emphasis on the environmental gains from fewer lorries, on the noise objectives being proposed and on progress being made with the Roads Programme. These are pluses for the environment, and strengthen the argument that the environmental and social implications of heavy and heavier lorries have been fully assessed, as well as the economic considerations. I suspect that the handling of the package in public debate will be a crucial factor.

I am copying this letter, plus a note of amendments we should like to see made to the draft, to the recipients of yours.

Yours etc
[Signature]

MICHAEL HESELTINE

The Rt Hon David Howell MP

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
DOE AMENDMENTS (23 11 81)

Paragraph 13, first sentence should read:

"Controls over the routes lorries may use are a useful means of protecting residential and other areas from traffic."

Paragraph 15, final sentence:

delete "in a variety of urban and rural situations"

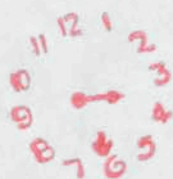
Paragraph 20 after third sentence (ending "decibels")

delete "But that is not enough" and insert:

"These requirements would of course apply equally to foreign vehicles using our roads. But these noise limits are not enough."

CONFIDENTIAL

25 NOV 1981





cc. A. Duguid

From the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3EB

24 November 1981

Dear David,

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

I have seen a copy of your minute of 19 November to the Prime Minister, and the draft White Paper.

I am generally content with what you propose. Though it is clear in the draft amending regulations, to be published simultaneously with the White Paper, that we intend to raise the gross weight of four axle lorries to 34 tonnes in line with the Armitage recommendation, it would be preferable to spell this out in the White Paper itself. This is, as you probably know, a matter of some importance to the container operators - who would like us to go even further than Armitage. The container operators may well also have some difficulty with the height limits proposed. I can see the presentational problem in going further than the Armitage proposal in the White Paper; but a very small increase in the limit could probably accommodate the operators. I hope therefore that you will be prepared to respond sympathetically to any reasonable representations they may make.

Notwithstanding these reservations, I would expect the container operators, through the General Council of British Shipping, to do their best to support the general case for heavier lorries over the crucial next few months.

CONFIDENTIAL



From the Secretary of State

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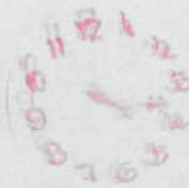
I am sending copies of this letter to E Committee colleagues, the Lord President, the Chief Whip, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A large, stylized handwritten flourish or set of initials, possibly 'Jus', written in dark ink.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'John Biffen'.

JOHN BIFFEN

12-5 NOV 1984



CONFIDENTIAL

Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-233 8545 (Llinell Union)

ODDI WRTH YSGRIFENNYDD
PREIFAT YSGRIFENNYDD
GWLADOL CYMRU



3 p.p.s.

~~cc. A. Dwyer~~

WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
01-233 8545 (Direct Line)

FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR WALES

CONFIDENTIAL

24th November 1981

Dear Anthony

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This is to confirm a telephone call to your office yesterday evening.

My Secretary of State is content with the draft White Paper on the understanding that paragraph 32 is redrafted on the basis agreed by officials as follows:

".... it will be necessary to examine these structures individually to see what may need to be done. This work is already in hand for the Severn Bridge and the Government will ensure that it can be used safely by lorries up to 40 tonnes; work will also be undertaken on the other long structures on trunk roads to ensure that the same applies to the whole trunk road system. Other bridge owners"

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, members of E Committee, the Chief Whip, the Secretary of State for Scotland and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever
J F Craig
J F CRAIG
Private Secretary

R A J Mayer Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
LONDON

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25th Anniversary



~~EE~~ A. Duguid

✓

NSPM

PRIME MINISTER

ARMITAGE REPORT ON HEAVY LORRIES: DRAFT WHITE PAPER

The Secretary of State for Transport sent me a copy of his minute to you of 19 November on this subject.

2. I understand that the by-pass schemes which are referred to in the draft White Paper can be accommodated within the reduced provision for roads recently agreed in MISC 62, and on that basis I am content with the draft and that an announcement should be made on 1 December.

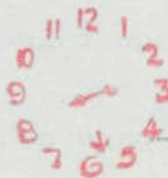
3. I am sending copies of this minute to the recipients of yours.

L.B

LEON BRITTAN



25 NOV 1981



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Transport

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 November 1981

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 19 November, to which was attached a draft White Paper announcing the Government's intentions on lorry weights and the package of environmental measures.

The Prime Minister agrees to the publication of the White Paper as proposed by your Secretary of State. She has, however, suggested a couple of drafting points, which I have set out in the attachment to this letter.

I am sending copies of this letter, and its attachment, to Private Secretaries to members of E Committee, including the Lord President and the Chief Whip, and to the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales and Sir Robert Armstrong.

M. C. SCHOLAR

Anthony Mayer, Esq.,
Department of Transport.

20

DRAFT WHITE PAPER:
LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

Paragraph 16 of the draft White paper would, perhaps, be improved by a couple of sentences somewhere after the first sentence which explain why it is not practicable for a much greater volume of transport to go by rail.

The final paragraph might be redrafted as follows:

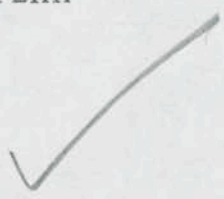
"The measures outlined in this White Paper have a clear purpose, though the problems themselves are complex and intractable. It is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport, which means a better environment as well as a healthier and more competitive economy. These objectives cannot be achieved overnight: road improvements take time and the lorry fleet can only be changed as vehicles are replaced. But further delay would handicap our industry and postpone environmental gains. It is by acting now that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking."

SCAD

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH



From the Minister



The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
LONDON SW1

23 November 1981

Handwritten signature

DRAFT WHITE PAPER ON LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Thank you for copying to me your minute of 19 November to the Prime Minister. ^{TRM}

I have no objection to your proposal to make an oral statement on 1 December announcing publication of this White Paper and draft amending regulations, or to giving prior notice of that fact in your reply to a Parliamentary Question on 25 November.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and other members of E Committee, the Lord President, the Chief Whip, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Handwritten signature of Peter Walker

PETER WALKER

23 NOV 1981





Secretary of State for Industry

✓ MCS

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB

TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

23 November 1981

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1

Dear David,

Thank you for copying to me your minute of 19 November to the Prime Minister about the Armitage Report. ^{on string}

I am in general content both with the draft and with the timetable you propose. One point strikes me, however. There is no express acknowledgement of the problems facing urban communities where (as in my own constituency) heavy lorries have to use the urban network to reach the docks, container depots etc. A specific paragraph reassuring them that heavier axle loads will mean fewer lorries with negligible impact on the environment ought perhaps to be considered. But I would not want this to hold up publication which is urgently needed.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Your
Patrice

24 NOV 1981

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sc Ad

CONFIDENTIAL



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

22 November 1981

Dear David

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

I have seen your minute of 19th December to the Prime Minister, and the draft White Paper it covers. The Home Office interest in this is confined to the police enforcement aspect. The draft is entirely acceptable from this view point, and I would therefore see no objection to publication on 1st December as you propose.

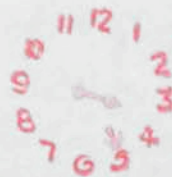
I am copying this to recipients of your minute.

Yours truly
David Howell

The Rt. Hon. David Howell, M.P.

CONFIDENTIAL

23 NOV 1991



MR. SCHOLAR

Yes mb

*on Dec 1st

Prime Minister

(13)

Agree to the publication of the White Paper* attached to Mr Howell's minute at

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Stage A, subject to the points at X and Y?

MCS 20/11

It will never be convenient to publish this report because of the predictable outcry from the rail and environmental lobbies. But the issue has been delayed for many years, imposing a real handicap on our industries. E Committee recognised the strength of the economic case and there seems to us to be everything to be said for getting on with publication.

When David Howell makes his statement it will be important to orchestrate a constructive response from the CBI and others. I imagine that there will also be a potted summary of the main arguments issued as a press notice.

X | Looking through the draft, I feel the opening paragraphs explain the problem clearly. The opening sentence of paragraph 16 says, in effect, "it would be nice if all transport could go by rail". The paragraph seems to me to need a couple of sentences to explain why that is not at all practicable.

At paragraph 30, the draft has a difficult task in reconciling the claim that lorries will be no bigger with the slight increase on the legal limit on articulated vehicle length. But I think it deals with this problem as well as it can.

Finally, the conclusion seems to me to lack conviction. I think the following redraft is a slight improvement:

y | "The measures outlined in this White Paper have a clear purpose, though the problems themselves are complex and intractable. It is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport, which means a better environment as well as a healthier and more competitive economy. These objectives cannot be achieved overnight: road improvements take time and the lorry fleet can only be changed as vehicles are replaced. But further delay would handicap our industry and postpone

environmental gains. It is by acting now that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking."



ANDREW DUGUID

20 November 1981

PRIME MINISTER

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We agreed in E Committee on 23 September to make an increase in maximum lorry weights up to 40 tonnes, and to announce the Government's intentions as part of a package of environmental measures in a White Paper to be published, together with draft amending regulations, in November.

I see lorry weights as part of a much wider problem, which powerfully affect the tactics for handling the matter. The wider problem is that the lorry is an offensive element in the environment and will make the environment progressively worse unless we take decisions now which will reverse the trend over the coming years. These decisions have to be directed to keeping lorries away from the places where people live, making them quieter and cleaner, and keeping their numbers down.

I have agreed with Francis Pym that there should be a full debate on our proposals in due course, following a two-month consultation period for the draft amending regulations on weights and dimensions. I will be publishing these latter separately, and circulating them widely for consultation (which is a statutory requirement), at the same time as the White Paper. The precise timing of a debate, to which the Government is already committed, will obviously depend on the Parliamentary situation in February and March.

The issue of lorry weights remains as controversial as ever. Michael Jopling has some serious misgivings about the reception which our proposals will have from our own backbenchers, and there can be no doubt that since we took our decision in September the prospects of getting adequate backbench support have - for wider political reasons - deteriorated considerably.

The main environmental groups made it quite clear when I met them earlier this week that they will strenuously oppose any increase in weights, and my own soundings have tended to confirm Michael Jopling's view that they will indeed have the sympathies of a substantial number of our supporters. Whilst industry will certainly be pressing the contrary economic arguments which finally persuaded us in E Committee, we will have to recognise that these have a much less obvious and ready political appeal, however presented. However, it is vital that we press on towards decisions on weights so that industry can know what to build and order.

In these circumstances the task will therefore be to utilise the period between the White Paper and the vote in the Spring on the amending regulations to give our supporters full opportunity for comment while emphasising through all possible channels the benefits to the economy and the users of heavy vehicles, and the environment, which flow from our proposals. Even so it would be wrong to imply that our backbenchers will necessarily support us all the way when it comes to the Spring vote and we will have to consider tactics as the weeks go by.

The press are now carrying some reports of an imminent announcement. This means, if we are to keep any sort of initiative in our hands, that we must publish our White Paper

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just as soon as we can. 1 December is I think now the earliest practical date, and I should be grateful for the agreement of colleagues to announce publication that day by way of an oral statement on the basis of the attached draft which has already been the subject of extensive consultation with officials in the Departments mainly concerned. I have a PQ about our intentions down for answer on 25 November and I should like to be able to give notice then of my intention to make a statement in the following week.

In order to meet this publication date I should be grateful for a reply by close of play on Monday evening, 23 November.

I am copying this to colleagues on E Committee including the Lord President and the Chief Whip, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

JH.
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DAVID HOWELL
19 November 1981

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DRAFT - 18 NOVEMBER 1981

LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. The period since the war has been one of great changes in the field of freight transport. The development of road vehicles has been particularly marked. This, and the advantages lorries offer to the customers in terms of speed, flexibility and quality of service, has led to an increasing reliance on these vehicles. There has been the development of the motorway and trunk road network; the concentration of manufacture into bigger production units, increasingly interdependent on one another and serving national and international markets; the general trend towards containerisation and the bulk handling of goods; and the increasing preponderance of Europe in the pattern of our international trade movements.

2. The impact of big lorries on people and the communities through which they pass is now a matter of grave public concern. They are far too noisy and in the many towns and villages for which there is still no bypass the effects are intolerable. People rightly look to the Government to do something about this situation which is already bad and will certainly get worse if nothing is done.

3. The Government is determined to tackle these environmental and social problems vigorously. At the same time, its approach will be essentially practical bearing in mind the needs of industry in a period of economic revival. The Government cannot ignore the fact that the lorry is now an essential part of our national transport arrangements, and indeed it is the only possible means of delivery

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and collection from farms, shops and most factories and warehouses. Our economy has benefitted enormously from the development of road transport. There is no way in which we could maintain our present standard of living without it. Anything which affects the cost of road transport inevitably affects the cost of living for everyone.

4. This presents a challenge. In the shops we want the goods the lorry brings, and to be able to buy them at competitive prices. Yet elsewhere, outside in the street and on the roads, and in our homes and places of work, we dislike lorries for their noise, ^{vibration} fumes/and dominating size - and we would like to be rid of them. How best can we reconcile these conflicting desires?

5. One of the first acts of this Government was to appoint an independent inquiry under Sir Arthur Armitage to consider the whole problem of lorries and their impact on people and the environment, and to report on how best to ensure that future developments serve the public interest. Sir Arthur and his four independent assessors * took evidence very widely, and presented their Report in December 1980. The Report has aroused great interest. Many people and organisations have expressed their views on it, and there have been two debates in the House of Commons. The Government is grateful to Sir Arthur and his assessors, and to those who have commented on the Report. There is now a clearer understanding of the issues and a much firmer basis for decision on the practical measures which need to be put in hand.

6. The central conclusion in the Armitage Report is that the public interest would best be served by maintaining and developing the economic benefits from heavy lorries and at the same reducing their

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adverse effects. The Government agrees with this approach. We have the technical skills and resources over time to make heavy lorries as quiet as cars. We must aim to provide modern roads for all substantial flows of heavy traffic. We must frame our regulations so that operators can make the most efficient use of their vehicles. In this way we shall get on top of the problem. There will be fewer lorries, and they will be quieter, cleaner, safer and more efficient. New bypasses will be built to keep them away from where people live. This White Paper sets out the measures/^{with} which the Government now proposes to initiate this change for the better.

ROADS

7. By far the most effective way of reducing the environmental problems lorries cause is to keep them away from where people live. Obviously we cannot achieve complete separation: lorries will always have to come into towns to make deliveries, for example. But we can do a very great deal to make life better by taking the through traffic out of towns and villages.

8. The Government has already drawn up a trunk road programme to give high priority to bypasses and to motorways which take lorries out of historic towns and villages. More than half the historic towns in England which lie on trunk roads have already been bypassed: within the last few months new bypasses of Beverley, Canterbury and Wimborne have been opened to traffic. In all, 215 out of the 275 towns on trunk roads in England with populations over 10,000 now have bypasses. The programme of new schemes under construction and in preparation will take traffic out of many more. Major schemes currently under construction include bypasses of

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(Oxon)

Accrington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bowes, Colchester, Dorchester-on-Thames, Gloucester, Ipswich and Skipton. The schemes started this year will provide relief from through traffic for more than 20 communities. The programme announced in last year's Roads White Paper provides for the design and construction of dozens of bypasses over the next few years.

9. The Government has however reviewed the trunk road programme again in the light of the Armitage Report to see what scope exists for adding even more bypasses. The Secretary of State for Transport has already announced during 1981 a number of important additions to the programme published in last year's Roads White Paper. For example, the Government recently took over work on the extension of the planned Newcastle Western Bypass so that it will also bypass Gosforth, and resumed work on the Chapel-en-le-Frith and Whalley Bridge Bypass. It has been decided that the bridge which carries the M63 over the Manchester Ship Canal is to be widened as soon as possible and this will facilitate the construction of a direct link from the Carrington petro-chemical complex to the motorway to take heavy traffic off the local residential roads.

And we have just announced a new bypass for Bicester on the A41. The continuing need to restrain public expenditure inevitably imposes severe restrictions on our ability to do all that we would wish. Nevertheless the Government has now decided that in the light of progress made in the past two years it is practical within our present resources to add more new schemes to the programme. New bypasses will be provided for Quorn and Mountsorrel on the A6 in Leicestershire; Beckington on the A36 in Somerset; Iwade on the A249 in Kent; and Winchelsea in Sussex. Work will now be resumed on the A43 Blisworth Bypass in Northamptonshire. In addition, increased priority will be given to the bypasses for Newport (Shropshire),

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Wisbech and West Walton, Narborough, Kelsall, Brockworth and Bridport, all of which will now be included in the main programme.

10. The substantial completion of the motorway system in Central Scotland has made available high quality roads avoiding built-up areas and used by large numbers of heavy goods vehicles. Elsewhere, bypass construction has been an important feature, particularly on the new A9 to Inverness. Over the next few years there will be an increasing number of bypasses in Scotland. 'Roads in Scotland 1980' listed 26 bypass schemes in the trunk road programme up to 1985, with special emphasis on improving conditions on main arteries such as A75 and A94.

11. The situation in Wales is similar. Schemes recently completed include the Brecon and Dolgellau bypasses. Work is well underway on the Carmarthen bypass and has recently started on a major scheme, which will take through traffic out of the centre of Colwyn Bay, as well as on the Bangor bypass. Contracts are also currently being placed for the Hawarden and Llanfair P.G. bypasses and tenders should be invited early next year for the extension of the dual-carriageway in the Taff Valley, which will relieve substantial built-up areas. In addition, other schemes in the trunk road programme will take traffic out of towns such as Conwy, Holywell, Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr.

12. As well as having central responsibility for the trunk road and motorway programme, the Government also provides support to County Councils in England and Wales and to Regional and Island Councils in Scotland, which are the Highway Authorities for local roads in /

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their respective areas. Under these arrangements there has been a sustained programme of investment in rural and urban by-passes and relief roads, as well as other environmental improvements to the local road network. For example, in England more than 50 local schemes of significant size, to a total value of about £300m, which will relieve rural and urban communities from the effects of heavy lorry traffic, are currently under construction; completions and new starts on such schemes are running at a level of over 20 per year. The Government is determined to maintain its encouragement to local authorities to give priority where possible to such schemes.

Lorries on the Road

13. Controls over the routes lorries may use are a useful means of protecting residential areas and other unsuitable places from traffic. Local authorities have had extensive powers to control the routing of lorries in their areas for environmental reasons for many years, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1967 and the "Dykes Act" of 1973. The more bypasses there are for through traffic, the easier it becomes to introduce control schemes without merely shifting the nuisance from one place to another, but they still need careful planning. Local authorities have in general put their powers in this field to good and responsible use and they do not need any extension or change in those powers.

14. A popular suggestion is that heavy lorries should be restricted to a national network of lorry routes - perhaps even to motorways - but unfortunately this is not practicable. The intractable problem is that any network comprehensive enough to avoid hopelessly long and complicated detours by lorries would have to include many existing urban roads, and the resulting concentration of traffic on them would be unacceptable to those who

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live there. Plans in the mid-1970's for a national lorry route network had to be abandoned because of these environmental objections. Nor would it make sense to exclude heavy articulated lorries from particular categories of road, for example, C and unclassified roads. This would heavily increase the costs of many businesses in rural areas, including farms, which rely on heavy road transport. And as most of the minor road system is used by only very small numbers of heavy lorries, the benefits of putting the traffic into a larger number of small lorries would be very limited and would not justify the penalty on farming and village industries.

15. Even with a vigorous programme of new bypasses and the active development of local control schemes there will still be some places which remain badly affected by substantial flows of heavy lorries, and where local restrictions on lorries cannot offer a practicable solution and a bypass is not in prospect. The Armitage Report suggested that some of the worst of these places could be designated as "lorry action areas", in which special steps could be taken to alleviate the effects of lorries. The Government considers that this proposal is well worth further study and will be inviting the co-operation of the local authorities and others concerned in studying it further in a variety of urban and rural situations.

Fair Competition

16. There would of course be no need for all these measures to deal with the lorry problem if only the goods could be carried by rail instead. The railways certainly have an important part to play within our national transport system and the Government

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will continue to give them every encouragement in attracting as much suitable freight traffic as they can. We welcome the Railways Board's strategy of developing their services to attract freight on to rail in all those areas where rail is the most suitable mode. Rail is competing for traffic by concentrating on long distance train loads - including the combined transport container service offered by Freightliner - and also developing scheduled services in wagon or lorry load quantities through their specialised network.

17. The present scheme of Government grants under Section 8 of the Railways Act 1974 is being used by the Government to achieve environmental benefits by providing an incentive to freight handlers to send their goods by rail where, for commercial reasons, they might not otherwise do so. This scheme has given good value, and it will be continued. Indeed the Government could see no reason for it being restricted to the railways and would also like to encourage the use of inland waterways as well to take traffic off the roads. The necessary powers to extend Section 8 type grants to the inland waterways were accordingly ^{sought,} and ~~obtained~~ in Section 36 of the Transport Act 1981. Pipelines and coastal shipping also play a significant role within our national transport system, particularly in the carriage of crude oil and petroleum products in bulk. Pipelines, for example, have increased their carryings of this traffic three-fold in the last decade and now account for some 8% of all goods moved, measured in tonne-kilometres. The Government welcomes this development.

18. If the railways are to play their full role in the national freight transport system they must be able to compete with road haulage on equal terms. It is the Government's aim to ensure that the framework of regulation and taxation puts road and rail

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on an equal footing. The customers must meet the fair track costs of the services they use, whether road or rail. Fair competition means, in particular, that each category of heavy lorry should pay in motoring taxation at least the full road track cost attributed to it. The Government aims to change the structure of lorry taxation from unladen weight to laden weight, taking into account the number of axles for the heavier lorries. This change will enable the Government to achieve a much closer match between the road costs imposed by different classes of lorry and the taxation paid. The first step has been taken. The Transport Act 1981 sets out the framework for a change in vehicle excise duty to a gross weight basis. It is the Government's intention to implement this restructuring as soon as practicable.

19. There remains the important question of the calculation and allocation of road track costs to different road users. The Armitage Report generally endorsed the present basis on which these costs are assessed and allocated, although they made two detailed proposals for change. It will be important to keep the methodology of assessment under review to keep pace with improved techniques and changing circumstances, and the Government will ensure that this is done.

Noise and Pollution

20. People dislike in particular the noise^{,vibration} and pollution of heavy lorries. Quieter and cleaner vehicles would contribute enormously to an improved environment and the Government is determined to achieve this. There has already been some improvement in lorry noise, which will be reinforced by new regulations coming into force in 1983, reducing the maximum noise limit for the heaviest vehicles from 92 to 88 decibels. But that is not enough. The

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Government's target is progressively to reduce the perceived noise from new heavy lorries coming onto the road to less than half the 1981 level, so that by 1990 they would be no noisier than most 1981 new-model cars, and the Government will press other European countries to adopt this target.

21. In acting firmly in this way to reduce lorry noise at source, the Government must ensure that British industry is at least as well placed as its competitors in meeting this major technical challenge. The Government will therefore set in hand a collaborative programme of research and development, involving vehicle and engine manufacturers.

22. This programme will take forward the work in this country which has already produced the Quiet Heavy Vehicle (QHV). This vehicle, with a 320 horse power turbo-charged diesel engine, demonstrated that a drive-past noise level of about 80 decibels is achievable with a vehicle capable of operating at over 40 tonnes, though with a cost penalty of about 8% and some penalty in payload. The programme of operating trials for the QHV is now coming to an end. The new programme will develop the techniques already demonstrated and show how they may be applied to production vehicles. As noise limits are lowered, the contribution of vehicle systems other than the engine to the total measured noise becomes significant. But a major part of the future programme will be concerned with the development of quieter engines.

23. The new programme is intended to lead to the development of a "production" quiet heavy vehicle for the 1990's - the QHV 90. The programme will concentrate on noise reduction ^{at source,} which in itself will help reduce airborne vibration. Additionally the programme

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will look at ways of improving lorry suspensions (affecting ground borne vibration), smoke emissions and general safety standards.

Safer Lorries

24. The Armitage Inquiry made a number of recommendations aimed at improving the vehicle itself. The Government's proposals on environmental standards, noise pollution and vibration, have already been set out. Improving the standards of vehicles is a continual task. For example, higher braking standards and rear under-run guards for all new heavy lorries will be required next year. In the longer term the Government intends to make side guards mandatory. A programme of research and trials on reducing spray from heavy lorries is also nearing completion. The Government hopes this research will produce effective solutions to the problem.

Lorry Weights and Dimensions

25. People's dislike of heavy lorries has been brought to the surface particularly by controversy over lorry weights and dimensions. Many people wrongly believe that there are plans afoot to make lorries even bigger although no-one ever urged that upon Armitage. However Armitage did consider proposals to increase lorry weights and these have become fiercely controversial. It is not possible in the scope of this White Paper to do justice to all the detailed arguments that have been put forward. In what follows the main issues are discussed briefly as background to the Government's conclusions.

26. The typical "juggernaut" on our roads today is an articulated vehicle with a 12.2 metres (40 feet) trailer, and a total overall length, including the tractor unit, of about 15 metres; and with

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4 axles - 2 on the tractor and 2 on the trailer. Our regulations limit its maximum weight to 32.5 tonnes (a limit set in 1964), and its length to 15 metres (a limit, set in 1968, which permitted the carriage of international standard 40 foot freight containers).

Vehicles of this same size are used throughout the whole of Europe. In practice articulated lorries on the Continent are no bigger than they are here, though most countries' regulations now permit a length of 15.5 metres. But the big difference is that every other European country (except Switzerland and the Republic of Ireland) allows higher weights ranging from 38 to 44 tonnes. Many of them require the vehicle to have an additional axle (making 5 axles in all) if the vehicle weighs more than 36 tonnes. The importance of the extra axle is that it spreads the weight and reduces the impact on roads and bridges. Our lorries are therefore the same size as every other European country's lorries but we allow less weight to be put in them so that we have more big lorries on the road than would be the case if we allowed them to be fully loaded.

27. For more than ten years our industry has been pressing successive Governments to raise the maximum permitted weight to European levels. There are clear environmental and economic arguments for doing this. Much of our trade with Europe is now transported entirely by road, and goods shipped to and from other parts of the world are increasingly carried in standard 40 ft freight containers. But for any journey starting by road in this country the load must conform with ^{lower} our weight limits on road vehicles. This increases transport costs for our exporters in particular. Our industrial costs generally are higher than they would be if operators were allowed to load their vehicles more fully. The present arrangements therefore cost money as well as putting too many vehicles on the road. A national survey of the

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savings that operators could make indicates that, with an upper limit of 40 tonnes, industry could ^{over time} reduce by 12% the number of heavy articulated lorries they ^{would otherwise} use. There would be savings in transport costs of around £150m per year, including useful savings in diesel fuel. Firms located in Scotland, Wales and the West Country, furthest from European markets, would stand to gain especially. In addition, the British commercial vehicle industry would benefit from having a domestic market for the types of heavy lorries which already predominate in continental markets.

28. But there are of course major matters of concern about any proposed increase in maximum lorry weights. Would an increase really reduce the numbers or would it merely stimulate additional traffic? Even if the lorries were no bigger, would they be noisier? Would they do more damage to roads? Would they damage buildings through greater vibration, or underground pipes? Are the margins of safety in our bridges sufficient? These are all questions ^{on} which the Armitage Inquiry took detailed evidence as a result of which they proposed increases in lorry weights up to a new maximum at 44 tonnes subject to a number of safeguards.

29. The Government has re-examined very carefully the proposals and the safeguards suggested by Armitage, and the questions that have been raised about them during the last year. The Government has decided that it would not be right to go as far as the Report and has rejected the 44 tonne proposed maximum. However the Government is satisfied that the maximum gross weight limit can ^{safely} be raised to 40 tonnes.

There would be benefits to the environment, and major economic benefits as well. With heavier weights industry will be able to

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meet an upturn in demand without the increase in heavy lorry traffic which would otherwise occur. The benefit in reduced lorry traffic will be permanent; the reduction in road transport costs will not be on a sufficient scale to stimulate a significant amount of additional traffic. The main safeguards on the design of the individual vehicles are set out below.

30. It is essential to ensure that heavier lorries can be no bigger than the biggest lorries we have at present. There will be new restrictions on length and height to ensure this. The size of the heavier vehicles will be limited to dimensions which are just sufficient to accommodate a standard international freight container. The existing limit of 2.5 metres on the width of lorries generally is in line with this, and will be retained. A new limit of 12.2 metres (40 feet) will be fixed for the length of the load-carrying platform of articulated vehicles. A new limit of 4.2 metres on height is proposed for the heavier vehicles, including any container carried by them.

There have never been legal limits on height before but the new one will just accommodate the continued use of standard containers 8' 6" high, and rule out the carriage of higher containers on vehicles of normal construction. The Government also proposes to increase the legal limit on articulated vehicle length to 15.5 metres, but this is only to accommodate the slightly longer tractor units that have come into general use during the last ten years. These tractor units have advantages: they are more stable, they allow better accommodation for the driver and more space for equipment to meet higher standards of safety and noise prevention. It would be foolish to discourage their use.

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31. The responsibility for infra-structure - roads, bridges and underground services - lies with the Government itself, the local authorities and the statutory undertakers. The Government would refuse to accept increases in lorry weights if these posed significant costs in public expenditure on these public assets. The Government is however quite satisfied that with appropriate rules on axle arrangements, axle weight and spacing, the effect of the heavier vehicles on infrastructure will be marginal and in some respects slightly favourable. A small increase in the maximum weight of a single drive axle from 10.17 tonnes to 10.5 tonnes will be permitted, but the total axle loading from the reduced number of heavy vehicles on our roads will be slightly less than it would be if the regulations were unchanged. The evidence shows that these changes will have no significant effects on underground services nor will groundborne vibration be increased; and overall, there should be a reduction of about 5% in road damage from heavy articulated road transport.

32. The Government has looked particularly at the additional effect of heavier vehicles on bridges and has concluded that for spans of less than about 75 metres (which constitute the vast majority of bridges) the overall additional effect is not significant. There are, however, a few long structures on which a build up of heavy traffic including 40 tonne vehicles could in certain circumstances give rise to significantly greater loading effects. The scale of increase is not large but it will be necessary to examine these structures individually to see what may need to be done. This work is already in hand for the Severn Bridge and will be undertaken on the other long structures on trunk roads to ensure that the whole trunk road system can be used safely by lorries of up to 40 tonnes. Other bridge owners will similarly need to consider their longer span bridges and may impose weight restrictions if special circumstances require this. With regard to other highway structures - such as retaining walls - the effect will vary according to local circumstances, but in general the evidence is that 40 tonne lorries will not give rise to additional problems on any significant scale.

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33. The heavier vehicles will be required straightaway to meet the same standards for noise, pollution and safety as existing 32.5 tonne vehicles, and to meet the improved standards the Government is preparing as these come into force. The Government agrees with the Armitage Report that the greater impact of the heavier lorry in a collision would only increase marginally the severity of accidents, and that this factor would be far outweighed by the expected reduction in the number of lorries which will reduce the number of accidents in which lorries are involved.

34. Changes in lorry weights and dimensions require amendments to the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, and these are being circulated in draft to all organisations concerned, as required under the Road Traffic Act 1972. Following consultation, Regulations will be laid before Parliament.

Assessment of Environmental Effects

35. The Armitage Report noted that techniques to measure environmental effects were not well developed. The Report recommends that the Departments of Transport and the Environment should develop a technique for national and local use, for example in assessing the effects of a scheme diverting lorries from one road to another. The Government sees merit in this. Preliminary proposals have already been discussed with the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment and the local authority associations are being invited to consider them.

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Operators' Licensing

36. The Government accepts that the powers of the licensing authorities should be strengthened to enable them to take adequately into account environmental considerations in dealing with licence applications from road haulage operators.

Difficulties can often arise from the place from which the vehicles are operated, which may even be the backyard of a small operator's home. The recommendations of the Armitage Inquiry would allow such factors to be taken into account in controlling lorry "operating centres". These recommendations are in line with those made by the Foster Committee in 1978. Primary legislation would be required, and the Government will seek an early opportunity to introduce it.

Enforcement

37. The maintenance of vehicles is firmly the responsibility of operators but the Government enforces the necessary standards to protect the public. To combat problems caused by exhaust from lorries, the Government intends that work on objective smoke test methods should continue. One type of equipment is being installed on a trial basis in heavy goods vehicle testing stations. Alternative methods are also being explored to find the most effective and cheapest way of enforcing higher standards on exhaust emission. Several organisations are working to develop and evaluate axle weight indicators. This is being monitored by the TRRL and when a sufficiently accurate and reliable device is available at a reasonable cost the Government will make it a mandatory requirement.

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38. Roadside checks are limited by available manpower and suitable sites adjacent to main roads. Despite manpower restrictions, the Department of Transport, together with Trading Standards staff, has achieved a great deal in terms of increasing the number of lorries weighed by its enforcement staff. The Government's programme of installation of dynamic weighbridges at suitable locations has already resulted in increased numbers of vehicles being weighed. This programme will continue.

Speed Limits

39. There are a number of anomalies in the speed limits that apply to different types of lorry, but the most important and economically significant of these is the restriction to 40 miles per hour for lorries using unrestricted dual carriageway roads, including roads such as the A1 which are nearly up to motorway standard, while for motorways the lorry speed limit is 60 miles per hour. As regards road safety, 40 miles per hour is too low a limit for lorries on this type of road. If lorries adhered to it, they could present a serious hazard to other road users. Armitage recommended an increase to 50 mph. This is supported by the police and the Government will bring forward amending regulations to implement this recommendation.

Conclusion

40. The measures outlined in this White Paper have a clear and simple purpose, though the problems themselves are complex and intractable. It is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport in future which will better serve our aspirations to an

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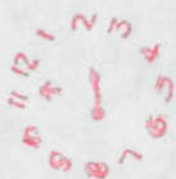
improved environment as well as a healthier economy. Our objectives cannot, of course, be achieved overnight. The present lorry fleet can only be changed at the rate at which the vehicles can be replaced, and road improvements take time. But that is no reason for delay - quite the reverse. It is through the decisions taken now, and the actions initiated, that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking.

Freight Directorate
Department of Transport

18 November 1981

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19 NOV 1981



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C. A. Duguid

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

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Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AT

MS 11/11

11 November 1981

ms.

Transport

Dear Francis

Thank you for your letter of 30 October about the handling of our response to Armitage.

I am hoping that publication of the White Paper can be achieved in the week beginning 30 November. As you will know from Michael Jopling's letter of 2 November, the Whip's Office have some serious misgivings about the reception which this White Paper will have from our own backbenchers. Of course, I accept that there will be difficulties whenever the White Paper is published but I believe it is important that we now press ahead and set out the Government's position as soon as possible.

will request if requested

I appreciate your concern that a prior meeting with Government backbenchers on the Transport Committee might lead to pressure for an immediate statement, which would be difficult to resist. The relatively long period envisaged between publication of the White Paper and a debate suggests that there is less urgency about trying to persuade backbenchers of the merits of our decision in advance of publication. As far as industry is concerned, they are already doing what they can to press their views on Armitage and we know that they are geared up to mount a publicity campaign as soon as the Government announces

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its decisions, which should have a favourable impact during the two month consultation period following publication. I therefore agree that we should not seek to encourage comment by industry and others in advance of the publication of the White Paper.

I am copying this letter to the Chief Whip and to members of E Committee.

Yours in
David

DAVID HOWELL

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Transport

res 30/10
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

30 October 1981

Dear David,

art

cc A. Dugard

Thank you for your letter of 9 October about the handling of our response to Armitage in the light of the E Committee discussion on 23 September.

I think your proposal that you should announce the decision to publish the White Paper at the end of November is entirely reasonable and I agree that there should be a debate in due course following the two-month period of consultation. The precise timing of this debate on the final regulations will depend on the Parliamentary situation in February and March of next year, which is likely to be a particularly difficult period for the legislative programme.

On the question of a prior meeting with Government backbenchers on the Transport Committee, I must confess to misgivings about this suggestion. I appreciate that you would talk only in general terms about our thinking on Armitage, but it would seem inevitable, as you yourself indicate, that knowledge that a decision has been taken would become widespread. Pressure for an immediate statement would follow and this would be difficult to resist. Could we not manage things in a manner less likely to cause difficulties? Might it not, for instance, be better first to meet with just the officers of the Transport Committee on a confidential basis? Even that course would entail some risk.

I am concerned too about the stimulation of comment by the industry and others before publication of the White Paper. Would not such comment be more helpful if it were to be made during the two-month consultation period following publication? I wish to avoid any impression that we are being compelled to make some announcement as a result of premature disclosure of our decision. I should be happy to discuss this with you and the Chief Whip if you feel that would be helpful.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

Francis Pym

FRANCIS PYM

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

30 OCT 1981

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8 9

cc ADuguid



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-2123301
SWITCHBOARD 01-2127676

Secretary of State for Industry

22 October 1981

Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1

NBPM

Dear David,

ARMITAGE

Thank you for copying to me your letters of 9 October to Leon Brittan and Francis Pym.

2 Your suggestions concerning additional bypasses are desirable in terms of providing a counter-balance on our position on lorry weights but, as you imply, the question is primarily one of expenditure.

3 I am also content with the proposed timetable set out in your letter to Francis Pym. It is important that we make clear our intentions at the earliest opportunity to remove uncertainty from the minds of manufacturers and users of heavy lorries. We must press ahead with our plans for raising lorry weights in order that industry may take advantage of them at the earliest possible date.

4 I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

*Your
Pat*

23007

1965
MAY 12 11 25 AM
L. B. GARDNER



Prime Minister

4

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

My Ref: H/PSO/18204/81

20 October 1981

Dear Leon

ms

ARMITAGE

In his letter to you of 9 October David Howell sought your agreement to a package of by-pass schemes which could be announced with the Armitage proposals, including some longer-term schemes which would not incur more than marginal expenditure until the mid-1980s.

I strongly support his views on the need for the package and on the importance of a clear commitment to continuing progress in the future - which would be manifested in particular by announcement of the longer-term schemes. The strong opposition that our Armitage proposals will undoubtedly encounter reflects widespread concern about the heavy lorry problem as it is perceived already to exist. By-pass schemes offer the best cure for the problem in medium-sized and small towns and in rural areas and it is certain that an increased commitment to such schemes will be widely seen as a just and indispensable feature of proposals that will bring substantial economic benefits to industry. The cost of the main longer-term schemes referred to by David Howell (some £20 - 30m a year spread over three or more years) is modest in comparison with the estimated savings in transport costs from heavier lorries of £150m a year (all at current prices).

I do hope that you will feel able to agree the package. Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, the members of E Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Tom King

TOM KING

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP

21 OCT 1981



CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

Transport (2)

cc. Mr Dwyer



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

19 October 1981

mt

2 Davis,

ARMITAGE

Thank you for your letter of 9 October about the proposals you have on by-pass building, which you hope can accompany your statement on The Armitage Report when Parliament reassembles.

As you say, the essential point is that new road-building proposals must be accommodated within our plans for public expenditure, both those set out in the Public Expenditure Survey and also our less specific expectations about the years beyond. As you now know I have found it necessary to propose to Cabinet that a reduction of £50 million should be made in the uncommitted element of the central government's capital spending on roads in 1982-83; and that £75 million should be found in each of 1983-84 and 1984-85. A reduction of £35 million in local authority capital spending on transport, mainly roads, for each year of the Survey period is also proposed.

It will, of course, be for you to decide how the road programme should be re-shaped in order to live within whatever provision results from our forthcoming Cabinet discussions. I am under no illusions about the magnitude of the changes which would be required by the figures I have proposed, and I would imagine that even under the most favourable assumptions quite a few by-pass schemes would have to be squeezed out of the PES period. I suggest therefore that before we reach any conclusion on your proposal to add more by-passes to the programme it would be useful for our officials to carry out a quick examination of the effects of the expenditure levels agreed by Cabinet for the PES years, and of the consequences for your suggestion that a number of large schemes should be planned for the immediate post-PES years.

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On the local authority side, I would endorse your policy of favouring schemes relevant to Armitage in your RSG approvals.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the other members of "E" Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Handwritten signature

LEON BRITTAN

CONFIDENTIAL

2 pp's (4)

Prime Minister



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

MUS 13/10

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Lord President of the Council
and Leader of the House of Commons
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
London
SW1

9 October 1981

Dear Francis

ARMITAGE

I have been considering how we should handle our response to Armitage in the light of the E Committee discussion on 23 September.

We have started work on the preparation of the White Paper, and I am taking up with the Chief Secretary what we can say about additional bypasses which the Committee agreed were an essential part of the package.

Provided that way ahead is clear, I propose to talk to the backbench transport committee on 12 November, and I think we should expect around that time increased speculation in the media that our response will include the 40 tonne lorry and a package of environmental measures. It will help us if in November, industry, and especially the major firms, press their views as strongly as possible both at the local level and in the national media, and I shall be doing what I can to encourage this. I hope colleagues will also take every opportunity they can to press on their industrial contacts the importance of this.

I envisage publication of the White Paper at the end of November, together with draft amending regulations. The next two months would be a period of consultation; I and Kenneth Clarke would see MPs individually, or in groups as appropriate, and interested organisations would be able to comment on the draft regulations (an opportunity that the Road Traffic Act requires me to give them). I would then be ready

CONFIDENTIAL

to lay the statutory instrument with the final regulations before Parliament in the second half of February, and I hope a full debate could be arranged as soon as practicable after this.

I should be grateful for your views on this proposed timetable. I am copying this letter to the Chief Whip and to members of E Committee.

*Yours
David*

DAVID HOWELL

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EE

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC, MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1

9 October 1981

Leon

ARMITAGE

E Committee agreed on 23 September that I should now press ahead with the preparation of a package of measures to accompany the publication of our Armitage proposals at the end of November. I am writing to Francis Pym about the ways in which we can muster support for the proposals themselves. I have to present to the best advantage what we have done to relieve towns and villages from heavy traffic by building by-passes, and our plans to do more, within existing public expenditure ceilings.

Our record so far is good. Among the schemes started this year are by-passes to relieve more than 20 communities. We have already announced a number of additions to the programme since the last White Paper, including particularly the extension of the planned Newcastle Western By-Pass so that it will also by-pass Gosforth and the A6 Chapel-en-le-Frith and Whalley Bridge By-Pass.

Whether we can win the Parliamentary and public support we need will depend more on our being seen to be ready to sustain a steady progress of similar improvements in future. Besides existing commitments on schemes which could start quickly there is fortunately an additional package of small longer-term schemes which could be announced with the Armitage proposals.

Norman Fowler had, I understand, considered including these in an announcement in July. They comprise four new, but inexpensive, schemes, included by-passes of Quorn and Mountsorrel in Leicestershire and Beckington in Wiltshire; the revival of one by-pass scheme which is at present suspended; and the promotion of 6 by-passes from the reserve list to the main programme (which indicates their priority without directly increasing our spending). I now think that I could add one or two more revived small schemes to this list.

None of these schemes would be ready to start before 1983 at the earliest, and the costs of preparation and construction could, if necessary with some rephasing, be accommodated within present expenditure levels. The announcement of a package of this sort is the least that we can do to demonstrate our commitment to getting heavy lorries away from people. I hope that you will see no objection.

My control of local authority road expenditure is less direct. But I could, within present expenditure levels, give effect to our policy in this autumn's Transport Supplementary Grant settlement by making allocations which reflect the priority given by county councils to Armitage schemes.

Our chances of succeeding with the Armitage proposals would be greatly improved if our announcement could look further ahead and offer some hope of relief to a larger number of places on the trunk road network. This would mean picking up some of the very popular, but unfortunately mostly very expensive, by-passes on which preparation was suspended some 18 months ago. The main ones are the by-passes of Stockport/Hazel Grove, Newark, Batheaston/Swainswick (to the east of Bath) and Axminster. A list of such schemes is enclosed.

None of these would involve more than marginal expenditure before 1984-85, but these four alone would cost, at present prices, something like £80-£100m, spread over three or more years in the mid-1980s. Even though an announcement would carry no commitment as to the time that they might start, money spent on preparation would clearly be wasted unless there is a reasonable prospect that funds on the scale necessary to carry out these schemes, as well as existing priorities, will be available either from public resources or from a mixture of public and private funds.

My own view is that to recognise this prospect is not only good tactics but good sense. Since road schemes require long lead times, it is not too soon to start planning for the upturn in the economy which we expect. I should therefore like to start now with the preparation of additional schemes drawn from the list at the annex, and to announce next month that I am doing so. I do not consider that this would be inconsistent with our general position on public expenditure, but I should, of course, be glad to know whether you see any difficulties on that score.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, the members of E Committee, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever
David

DAVID HOWELL

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New schemes: A6 Quorn and Mountsorrel Bypass *
A36 Beckington Bypass *
A595 Egremont Bypass
A596 Wigton Bypass

Revived: A6(M) Stockport N-S Bypass
A46 Newark Relief Road
A4/A46 Batheaston/Swainswick Bypass
A35 Axminster Bypass
A43 Blisworth Bypass *
A259 Winchelsea Bypass

and, probably,

A27 Pevensey Bypass
A249 Iwade Bypass

* Would be included in smaller package in
any event.

[-9 OCT 1981

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Transport
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

CONFIDENTIAL

Timothy Lankester Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Ann
12

22 September 1981
23/9

Dear Tim,

HEAVIER LORRIES: THE ARMITAGE REPORT

I regret that it will not be possible for a Minister from this Department to be present at E Committee tomorrow when E(81)91 is discussed. I can however say that my Minister supports the measures proposed.

I understand that discussions are continuing between officials on the detailed limitations intended to apply to vehicles between 32.5 and 40 tonnes in weight. These could reduce the economic benefits in food distribution that the introduction of larger lorries might otherwise have made possible, and we would hope that due consideration will be given to this aspect in framing the detailed proposals.

I am copying this to the Private Secretaries of other members of E Committee and of the Secretary of State for Transport; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

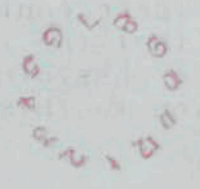
G H STEEL
Assistant Private Secretary



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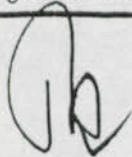
23 SEP 1987

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PRIME MINISTERHEAVIER LORRIES: ARMITAGE REPORT*Original returned
to J. Hoskyns*

1. We think there is a very strong case for accepting David Howell's proposals in E(81)91. We see the predominant issue as industry's competitiveness. The Government rightly urges economic realism on others. Here is an opportunity to show our own realism; to help industry with savings of at least £150 million per year; make exports to the continent easier; and give a boost to our domestic truck-making industry, while putting pressure on them to adopt more advanced standards. To reject this would be quite inconsistent with our efforts to help industry in other fields, like energy costs.
2. The package already contains substantial concessions to the environmental lobby by saying no to 44 tons and to 34 tons on four axles. We do not think there is scope for further dilution or delay.
3. A rejection of the package would be strongly criticised by industry and would receive a very temporary welcome from a few quarters who would quickly revert to complaining about existing lorries. Of course many local pressure groups have genuine problems but they can only be resolved by re-routing and, within public expenditure constraints, by-passes. Some of the more serious environmentalists should recognise that this package represents a step forward in terms of road damage, noise and fewer trucks. Any political benefits of rejection would in our view be very small and short-lived.
4. It is significant that the most vociferous opponents to the Armitage proposals are, in one guise or another, the railway lobby (for obvious reasons) and now the TGWU who realise that better, larger lorries will also mean fewer ones - and thus fewer jobs for lorry drivers.

JOHN HOSKYNS

Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG

GWYDYR HOUSE

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER

Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)

01-233 6106 (Linell Union)

Oddi wrth Ysgufennydd Gwladol Cymru



The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

J Verbar
A Dugard
A wa Hys.

WELSH OFFICE

GWYDYR HOUSE

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER

Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)

01-233 6106 (Direct Line)

From The Secretary of State for Wales

CONFIDENTIAL

22 September 1981

David Davis

HERITAGE REPORT

You wrote to Michael Jopling on 17 September about the political implications of your proposals for heavier lorries. I support the proposals but I should just draw your attention to likely reactions in Wales over and above the counter-arguments we may expect from those concerned with conservation and the heritage.

First, people in Wales (and industry in particular) will want to know what effect the measures will have on ease of transportation of goods in and out of the Principality. Your officials will no doubt be able to confirm the acute sensitivity of public opinion here to any suggestion of restrictions on the use of the Severn Bridge. Good communications are a big selling point in our drive for inward investment to replace declining steel and coal industries in South Wales, and any suggestion of uncertainty as to whether 40 tonne lorries could use the bridge and in general get to and from Wales easily would be presentationally very difficult from my point of view. (The timing of the provision of the new bridge at Chepstow will also be of public interest). There may well be regions other than Wales where this same point arises.

Secondly, I could not easily re-order my trunk road improvement schemes to deal with heavier lorries in the way you have in mind for England. As it is, most major schemes in my programme are aimed at improving the flow of industrial traffic and at the same time relieving towns and villages of the noise and congestion already caused.

/It is

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
LONDON



It is however the Severn Bridge that concerns me most, and it would be very desirable for your White Paper to give some specific assurances that any necessary measures will be taken to enable the heavier lorries to use the bridge freely (and indeed other cross border routes). I am not clear what technical safeguards you have in mind in paragraph 3 of your paper. Could we, for example, repeat your predecessor's assurance given last February (Volume 999 Col 44-5) that under normal traffic flow conditions the heavier vehicles will be acceptable?

/ I am sending copies of this letter to those who received yours.

John Gummer

Alis

27 SEP 1981

REGISTRY OF MOTOR VEHICLES
LONDON

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PRIME MINISTER

Heavier Lorries: The Armitage Report
(E(81) 91)

BACKGROUND

In E(81) 91 the Secretary of State for Transport asks the Committee to approve a variety of increases in lorry weights, in line with some but not all of the recommendations of the Armitage Report; a package of environmental measures to make the decision more acceptable publicly; and, as a basis for detailed consultations, the publication of a short White Paper setting out the Government's response to the Armitage Report and of draft Regulations to implement increases in lorry weights and dimensions.

2. The Armitage Report was published in December 1979 and recommended various increases in lorry weights to secure economic benefits and also a wide range of measures which might be taken to mitigate the environmental effects. The Government has announced, in reply to a Supply Day Debate on the Report on 17th June, that it does not accept Armitage's recommendation that the maximum lorry weight should be increased to 44 tonnes on 6 axles. The Secretary of State for Transport now proposes that the maximum weight for a 5-axle lorry should be increased to 38 or 40 tonnes, depending on the precise arrangement of the axles, in line with the recommendations of the Armitage Report; but that the weight limit for 4-axle lorries should remain at 32.5 tonnes and should not be increased to 34 tonnes as Armitage recommended, because of the increased road damage this would cause.

3. As the former Secretary of State for Industry reported to you on 27th July, E(EA) failed to reach agreement at two meetings it held in July. The Sub-Committee recognised the strength of the economic case for an increase in lorry weights (the total savings to industry are now estimated at around £150 million a year) and saw it as one of the few measures which the Government could take to help industry significantly without additional public expenditure. It was not, however, persuaded that the environmental measures then proposed offered a convincing answer to the strong, though not always well founded, opposition on environmental grounds to any increase in lorry weights, both in Parliament and more generally.

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4. Since then the Secretary of State for Transport, and his predecessor, have attempted to strengthen the environmental measures within the constraints of public expenditure. The main proposals are for more by-passes, for major reductions in lorry noise by the end of the decade, and for the adjustment of Departmental research priorities to give greater emphasis to the development of quieter and more acceptable lorries.

5. The main question now before the Committee is whether the environmental package proposed in E(81) 91 is sufficiently attractive to enable the Government to win acceptance of the introduction of heavier lorries with the substantial financial benefits that will bring to industry. A problem with the environmental measures is that critics will point out that they will take effect over a number of years whereas the heavy lorries will be introduced much more quickly. On the other hand, heavier lorries need not necessarily be noisier and more damaging to roads. The private sector of industry will be critical of the Government if increases are not approved.

6. The decision cannot be put off for much longer. The Opposition could table another critical motion, and the Select Committee on Transport are waiting for a full statement of the Government's intentions. The European Commission will publish their new proposals on lorry weights soon, and discussions, in which the Government will be expected to declare its views, will follow shortly after that. The EC discussions have already been delayed pending the Armitage Report and further significant delay is unlikely to be acceptable.

7. The EC discussions raise a difficult question of timing. The Secretary of State for Transport wishes to publish an early White Paper and, simultaneously, draft Regulations on increasing lorry weights and dimensions. Although the Commission's revised proposals are thought closely to parallel the Secretary of State's, the final consensus in the EC may well differ from them in some respects, it could be embarrassing for the Government to announce its decisions on the Armitage Report only to have to modify them in the light of whatever agreement is finally reached in the EC. The Committee will, therefore, want to consider whether the publication of draft Regulations should be delayed, at least until after

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the United Kingdom Presidency. The White Paper will probably also need to retain some flexibility, although there will be an opportunity to consider this in detail when the text is circulated by the Secretary of State.

HANDLING

8. After the Secretary of State for Transport has introduced his paper you might ask the Secretary of State for Industry to comment on the economic case for heavier lorries and the Secretary of State for the Environment to give his views on whether the environmental package is satisfactory. The Chief Secretary will wish to comment on the economic case and the Lord Privy Seal on the European aspects and the timing problem referred to in paragraph 7 above. The Chief Whip will also wish to advise on the questions of timing and of handling. The Secretary of State for Social Services is attending on a personal basis, in view of his close involvement in this issue before his re-appointment.

9. It should not be necessary to work through the details of the items in the environmental package; if necessary, it should be possible for the Ministers concerned to sort out any particular problems out of Committee. The main question is whether the environmental package as a whole is sufficient to enable the Government to go ahead with the increases in lorry weights. If that is accepted, you will want to go on to discuss handling and timing, and the case for publishing a White Paper and draft Regulations on lorry weights.

CONCLUSIONS

10. You will wish to record conclusions on:-
- (i) - the proposed increases in lorry weights;
 - (ii) - the environmental package;
 - (iii) whether an early White Paper should be published and the timing of publication of draft Regulations on lorry weights.

If the Committee favours an early White Paper you will wish to ask the Secretary of State for Transport to circulate a draft for clearance in correspondence.

REA

Robert Arms trong

22nd September 1981

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Transport



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

17 September 1981

Sea Nuclear

ARMY
R

ARMITAGE REPORT: HEAVIER LORRIES

1975

As you will know from Keith Joseph's exchange of minutes with the Prime Minister on ²⁷30 July and 3 August respectively, there is to be a discussion of this issue in E Committee with a view to reaching a decision in time for an announcement soon after the recess. It would be helpful if we could have your advice on the Parliamentary tactics in time for this discussion which will be on 23 September.

Colleagues in E(EA) have already accepted the strength of the case for moving on the lorry weights issue on grounds of the economic benefits this would bring to industry generally and also the public gain to be achieved from having fewer heavy articulated vehicles on the roads. The main question for E Committee to decide is whether this can be presented with other associated environmental measures as a sufficiently attractive package to win support in Parliament. I enclose a copy of the paper I will be circulating.

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You will see that paragraphs 13 and 14 of the draft paper propose that we announce a decision early in the new session so as to keep the political initiative in our hands and forestall the possibility of another critical motion by the Opposition. Given the need to allow time for study of our announcement (which could take the form of a White Paper) and for formal consultation on the draft regulations on lorry weights and dimensions, we could then promise a full debate in February or March.

Parliamentary opinion would obviously be affected by the reception accorded to our announcement, and the way in which public debate developed over the subsequent months. I think that we can show that we have moved a long way to meet our supporters, in particular by rejecting the 34 tonne vehicle (on grounds of road damage) as well as the 44 tonne vehicle. There is quite a good story to tell also on bypasses and lorry noise. And we can show how the package as a whole is directed towards achieving a more-efficient industry operating fewer and progressively quieter and cleaner vehicles running on an increasing number of bypasses. This may not be enough for some of our supporters, and I should welcome your advice on how we can best proceed.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to the Prime Minister, Peter Carrington, Patrick Jenkin, Michael Heseltine, Leon Brittan, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours

David

DAVID HOWELL 

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~DRAFT 17 SEPTEMBER 1981~~

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY

HEAVIER LORRIES: THE ARMITAGE REPORT

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

1. An efficient and competitive freight transport industry is vital to the whole economy. Whilst rail will continue to have an important role to play within the national transport system, there can be no turning back from our massive reliance on road transport, and in particular on the big lorries that now account for over half the freight movement. But the general public dislike of "juggernauts" is real and entirely understandable. I believe we should tackle the economic and environmental issues simultaneously with a set of measures which I can say will achieve within a practicable time-scale a more efficient and competitive road haulage industry operating fewer and progressively quieter and cleaner lorries, running on roads which will skirt round an increasing number of towns and villages. I want to make a start on this right away because delay will do nothing to help either the economic or the environmental problems that are with us here and now. This will require a package of measures the elements of which are set out below.

Lorry Weights

2. The Sub-Committee on Economic Affairs has considered my predecessor's proposals for increasing maximum lorry weights from 32.5 tonnes to 40 tonnes, along with a number of other measures, in response to the recommendations of the Armitage Report on Lorries, People and the Environment. They recognised the strength of the economic case for such increases which, by allowing industry to use lorries more productively, would bring total

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savings estimated at around £150m a year. It would be one of the few measures the Government could take to help industry significantly without incurring any further public expenditure.

3. What makes the expensive heavier lorries economically worthwhile, and why industry is pressing so strongly for them, is that with each vehicle carrying a greater load fewer of them would be needed. The TGWU has seized on this point because it would mean fewer drivers. Research by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory has indicated that with an upper limit of 40 tonnes there would be a reduction of 11% in the number of heavy articulated vehicles. This would be an important public gain which I would want to emphasise in any announcement. I would also stress that new controls on lorry size would ensure that the heavier vehicles would be no bigger than big lorries are at present. And - as my predecessor recommended to colleagues in E(EA) - I would make it clear - if colleagues agree - that we are rejecting the 34 tonne vehicle on 4 axles recommended by Armitage, and requiring all vehicles above our present 32.5 tonne limit to have a fifth axle, to secure a substantial reduction in road damage. There would be further technical safeguards to protect bridges and underground services, and to ensure that the heavier lorries would be no worse than existing vehicles in respect of noise, vibration, pollution or road safety.

4. All this would show the Government's determination to take environmental considerations into account in its decisions on weight.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Roads

There is no doubt that the provision of new roads to take lorries out of our towns and villages is seen by many of our supporters as the key requirement for dealing with lorries. I agree. As Armitage recognised, my existing trunk road programme is entirely in line with this objective and includes many schemes taking traffic out of historic towns and villages. The real issue is the pace of the programme. In present economic circumstances we cannot do all we would wish, but we have done and are doing a great deal for which we can take credit. Even within existing resources my predecessor had already found it possible to add four schemes on which I hope we can make a start in 1982, including one major by-pass to which Sir Arthur Armitage drew specific attention. In selecting schemes to go forward great weight is already attached to the environmental benefits they bring. Looking further ahead, I propose to promote several highly desirable by-passes now in the Reserve List to the main programme (which will not in practice increase the demand on resources), and to add three or four other small ones. Taken together with the real progress currently being made on our existing programme, this gives us a good story to tell.

Noise and Pollution

6. There has been some improvement in lorry noise and pollution which will be reinforced by regulations coming into force in 1983. But Armitage recommended a much tougher programme of reductions in this key area. It would mean progressively reducing the perceived noise from new heavy lorries coming onto the road ^{to} less than half the 1981 level,

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so that by 1990 they would be no noisier than most 1981 new-model cars. I believe that we should commit ourselves to a reduction of this order in the European discussions which are about to begin. Consultations with the UK industry have indicated that it is an achievable target, given the necessary effort and R & D backing. But in acting firmly to show our determination to reduce lorry noise at source, we must also ensure that our industry will be at least as well placed as their competitors in meeting this major technical challenge.

7. What I propose is a collaborative programme of research and development involving vehicle and engine manufacturers. It would take in not simply noise, but also ways of making heavy lorries more acceptable by improving smoke emissions and general safety standards. It would look particularly at technical ways of developing quieter and cleaner vehicles, and also at the possibility of developing even better engines and vehicles towards the end of the century. There might also be one or two demonstration projects. Discussions between officials in my Department and the Departments of Industry, Energy and Environment have suggested that ^{in principle} it would be feasible to re-order existing programmes of R & D within existing overall budgets. If colleagues think that this would be a useful part of our response to Armitage I will put detailed proposals on this to the colleagues concerned very shortly.

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Transfer of Freight to Rail and Waterways

8. There is a general support on both sides of the House for the grants which are available to assist the railways to take freight traffic off the roads under Section 8 of the 1974 Railways Act. We can take credit for having already extended this type of grant to inland waterways in the new Transport Act. And I propose also to increase the maximum rate of grant from 50% to 60%, retaining flexibility to pay smaller grants in appropriate circumstances, without altering the character of the grant but it may become increasingly difficult, within the public expenditure constraints, to sustain our present policy that no acceptable case will be refused.

Lorries on the Road

9. Controls over the routing of lorries can have a useful effect on the environment locally. They require careful planning to avoid merely shifting the nuisance from one place to another, and I agree with Armitage's view that local authorities have in general exercised their extensive powers, which they have had for many years, responsibly. As the scope for diverting lorry traffic is often limited, Armitage proposed that some of the worst affected places could be designated as "lorry action areas" in which special steps might be taken (eg the provision of double glazing) to alleviate the effects of lorries. Cost must be a major obstacle to anything like this. But it is well worth exploring and I propose with the Secretary of State for the Environment to invite the co-operation of the local authorities and the Civic Trust in studying it further (perhaps leading to a pilot project).

CONFIDENTIAL

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Operators' Licensing

10. A measure to strengthen the licensing authorities' powers regarding the environmental suitability of the place from which vehicles are operated would be welcomed. I have not been able to fit this into either of the two Bills I am planning for next session, but it would be a suitable subject for a Private Members Bill and I am pursuing this possibility.

Taxation of Lorries

11. We have already taken steps in the new Transport Act to enable the Chancellor to ensure that each category of heavy lorry pays in taxation the full track costs attributed to it. These changes will put competition with railways on a fairer basis.

Other measures

12. In a comprehensive statement on Armitage I would also need to respond to other recommendations on a great variety of subjects including the development of techniques for measuring the environmental impact of lorries on people and buildings; the method for assessing road track costs; encouragement of local authorities to use planning powers and controls over lorry parking more effectively - particularly in inner urban areas; enforcement techniques; roadside enforcement checks to deal severely with excessive smoke and overloading; the development of standards to control vibration; and lorry speed limits.

Timing: The Next Steps

13. The decision between the conflicting industrial and environmental views on lorry weights is a difficult matter of political judgement. I believe it will be necessary to reach a

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decision in time for an announcement very soon after the recess if we are to keep the political initiative in our hands. Otherwise the Opposition could well table another critical motion in the autumn. There will also be resumed discussion in Brussels of the European Commission's proposals which have now been modified to agree with the European Parliament's recommended 40 tonne maximum limit. And I am under increasing pressure from industry for an early decision to end the uncertainty which is inhibiting new investment and to show that the Government means business when it talks about wanting to help industry.

14. The Select Committee on Transport recommended that the Government should make a full statement of their intentions in respect of the Armitage recommendations as a whole and that more than the usual time should be made available to the House to debate any amending regulations to increase maximum lorry weights. The Government has accepted those recommendations and my predecessor told the House it is our intention to publish a statement setting out our response to the Report as a whole. I suggest that a short White Paper would be appropriate for this purpose. Simultaneously I would publish draft amending regulations on weights and dimensions and invite comments from organisations concerned, as required under the Road Traffic Act. This would pave the way for the promised full debate in February or March.

RECOMMENDATION

15. I invite my colleagues to agree that I should now proceed with the preparation of a comprehensive statement, in the form of a White Paper, accepting the case for increasing maximum lorry weight up to 40 tonnes on 5 axles, as recommended by Armitage, and as part of a package of measures outlined above with the broad objectives I have indicated.

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 August 1981

THE ARMITAGE REPORT

The Prime Minister has read Sir Keith Joesph's minute of 27 July, and agrees that the Secretary of State for Transport should put a paper to E Committee after the recess.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Members of E Committee, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Transport, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

T. P. LANKESTER

I.K.C. Ellison, Esq.,
Department of Industry.

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister



PRIME MINISTER

THE ARMITAGE REPORT: HEAVIER LORRIES

 R
 27/7

The Sub Committee on Economic Affairs, at its meetings on 14 and 21 July, has considered proposals for increases in maximum lorry weights put forward by the Secretary of State for Transport (E(EA)26 and 29) in the context of the Government's response to the Armitage Report, which was published last December.

2 The Sub-Committee recognises the strength of the economic case for an increase in lorry weights; indeed, this is one of the few measures which the Government could take to help industry significantly which does not involve a direct increase in public expenditure. It is not, however, persuaded that the proposals for measures to reduce the impact of heavier lorries which have so far been put forward offer a convincing answer to the strong, though not always well-founded, opposition on environmental grounds to any increase in lorry weights, both in Parliament and more generally.

3 To decide between these conflicting industrial and environmental objectives will require a major and difficult political judgement, and for that reason I recommend that the Secretary of State for Transport should put a paper to the Committee on Economic Strategy after the Recess. In the meantime E(EA) has invited him to consider further with the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Chief Secretary, Treasury and the other Ministers principally concerned what further measures might be agreed in order to increase the chances of winning Parliamentary and public acceptance of his proposals. The Secretary of State for Transport will also consult the Chief Whip on tactics.

4 It will be important to reach a firm decision soon after the Recess: the Opposition could well put down another Motion designed to get the Government to state its intentions; the European Commission will circulate their own proposals shortly;



and, if it were thought that the Government was proposing increases in lorry weights simply to fall into line with proposed European legislation, this could compound the already considerable political difficulties which we will face on this issue.

5 I am sending a copy of this minute to the Members of E, to the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Transport, to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, to the Chief Whip, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

14

K J

27 July 1981

Department of Industry
Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street

1861 JUL 11

12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11



COMMISSION

July 11, 1861

Department of Industry
Washington, D.C.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
THAMES HOUSE SOUTH
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

Tel: 211 6402

✓ MAP

[Handwritten signature]

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

17 June 1981

Dea Norman

ARMITAGE REPORT: SUPPLY DAY ENERGY DEBATE

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 15 June to Francis Pym.

I accept the reasoning in your letter for accepting the Opposition Motion, if it is in the terms you expect. I note that, in doing so, you would intend to leave the door open for some increase in the present lorry weight limit. I also note from paragraph 358 of the Armitage Report that most of the 12-15% fuel saving envisaged with 44 tonne lorries could still be achieved if we were to settle on the 40/42 tonne limit proposed by the EEC. In energy policy terms, that sort of saving is well worth having.

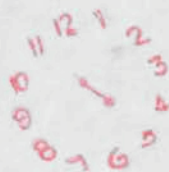
I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Dea

D A R HOWELL

Dan

17 JUN 1981





~~Ad 9nd~~

✓ MP

From the Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3EB

17 June 1981

Dear Norman,

ARMITAGE REPORT: SUPPLY DAY DEBATE *with PM*

You wrote to Francis Pym on 15 June concerning the Supply Day Debate on the Armitage Report.

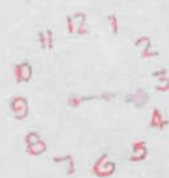
As you know, the British shipping industry, as a major operator of container services, has welcomed the Armitage recommendations as a package. However, its interest is primarily in securing an increase in gross lorry weights at the lower end of the scale, notably from 32.5 tonnes for a four axle lorry to 34 tonnes or more. I am content therefore to go along with your proposals for handling the tactical situation in the House on the understanding that our options for proposing increases at the lower end of the scale will remain fully open.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other Cabinet colleagues, Michael Jopling and Sir Robert Armstrong.

John Biffen

JOHN BIFFEN

17 JUN 1981





Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Transport
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1

17 June 1981

✓
MFD

Dear Secretary of State

ARMITAGE REPORT: SUPPLY DAY DEBATE

I have seen a copy of your letter to Francis Pym of 15 June, and of Keith Joseph's letter of today's date about the line to take in response to the Opposition Motion on Armitage. I understand that at a meeting this afternoon it was agreed that the Motion should be accepted. This letter confirms that I am content with that line.

I also understand that in your speech during the Debate, and in a Written Answer, you wish to announce the advancement of a number of by-pass schemes. I recognise, of course, that the Debate on Armitage provides a suitable occasion for outlining your plans to alleviate the nuisance caused by heavy lorries in towns. But I hope that you will feel able to do so in terms which will not lead to embarrassment if it should become clear later in the year that not all of these schemes can be afforded within the public expenditure totals which emerge from the discussions which we are about to embark upon in Cabinet.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

May Feldstein
Private Secretary
NIGEL LAWSON
(approved by the Financial
Secretary and signed
in his absence)

0/0

0/0

17 JUN 1987



610

Brief for debate on Wednesday 17th June 1981
on an opposition motion the Armitage report on
lorries people and the environment

Contents

- A. Background
- B. Armitage report recommendations
- C. European Dimension
- D. Government's position
- E. The Heavy Lorry - Arguments for and Against
- F. Political Points

A. Background

Before the last Labour Government left office, Mr. William Rodgers, Labour's Secretary of State for Transport, announced that he would be setting up an independent enquiry into the heavy lorry and its effect on the environment. On coming into office, Mr. Norman Fowler accepted this commitment and appointed an independent enquiry, headed by Sir Arthur Armitage, to look at the problems of the heavy lorry. This enquiry reported back on 9th December, 1980. The Government is still considering the report.

B. Armitage report recommendations

1. Heavier Lorries - from present 32.5 tonne maximum up to 44 tonne maximum on 6 axles. But -
2. Not Bigger Lorries - should be new controls on vehicle size. Most important, to limit length of trailer. Also control on height. Small increase in length by $\frac{1}{2}$ meter - from 15m to 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ m would be on tractor, not trailer, to improve safety, noise insulation and driver comfort (sleeper bunk in cab).
3. Increased Speed Limits - from 40 to 50 mph travelling on unrestricted dual carriageways. Police support for such a change is quoted.
4. Improved Vehicle Standards - Various improvements are suggested for future research and/or discussion in EEC (e.g. on noise, braking, spray, etc.).
5. Reversal in Government's Policy of Reducing Road-Building - special need for by-passes round historic and other towns and villages badly affected by traffic.
6. Creation of "Lorry Action Areas" - special subsidies where traffic nuisance is great and by-passes cannot easily be provided - for better noise insulation of houses; better

road surfaces; and, in extreme cases, relocation of traffic generators, such as factories.

7. Improved and Extended "Section 8" Grants - (from 50-60%) to industry for new rail connections - and extension of S.8 scheme to include Freightliners and Speedlink; and also waterways and pipe-lines.
8. Higher Taxes on heaviest lorries which do not cover true costs.

C. European Dimension

The background to the Armitage report is that the end of 1978, the European Commission produced a draft directive proposing that EEC countries should harmonise the maximum permitted weight of lorries travelling in the Community to cut haulage costs and improve conditions for trade and competition in the Community. The maximum limit suggested was 44 tonnes. This draft directive was submitted both to the Council of Ministers and to the European Parliament.

The transport Committee of the European Parliament has meanwhile produced its own recommendations in the Carossino report. This report recommended a compromise between the member states of a maximum of 40 tonnes on 5 axles and a maximum axle weight of 11 tonnes. During a plenary session debate in May, the EDG, with a few exceptions, supported the Carossino report, but failed to get an amendment passed recommending a lower axle weight of 10.5 tonnes. However, they did manage to win acceptance for some amendments concerning safety and the environment. In particular, the parliament agreed that national governments would be required only to 'inform' the Commission about their policies on 'no go' areas or lorry cordon rather than as the Commission suggested "be required to consult" the Commission about national policies. The Parliament is now waiting for the Commission's reaction to the Carossino report.

D. Government's Position

The first point to be made is that the report is not a government report - it is totally independent.

The Government has welcomed the report, but has not taken a view on whether or not it would support its findings. The Secretary of State has guaranteed that there would be no final decisions before a Parliamentary debate.

However, the Government has acted to implement one recommendation of the report already. The present Transport Bill provides for increased taxation for heavier lorries, reflecting relative costs of heavier lorries on road damage.

E. Heavier Lorries - Cases for and Against

Introduction

The Transport Committee has had meetings with various organisations concerned with transport to listen to views and discuss the findings of the Armitage report on heavy lorries.

These organisations were :

The Freight Transport Association and the CBI
Friends of the Earth
British Rail
General Council of British Shipping

Although opinions differed strongly on the question of the findings of the Armitage report it emerged that there were some parts of the report which should give some cause for concern.

Evidence from the CBI FTA

The CBI and FTA were enthusiastically in favour of Armitage's recommendations. They made the following points:

- 1) Implementation of Armitage proposals would offer industry savings of as much as £500 millions per annum with negligible public expenditure implications.
- 2) The report has positive environmental implications as well. All Sir Arthur Armitage's recommendations are aimed at improving environmental protection. The Department of Transport has stated that there would be no need for additional expenditure on road and bridge strengthening arising from the recommendations. If Armitage's weight and axle configurations were accepted, by 1990 there could be a reduction in the operating fleet of 15,000. This would save fuel and would mean that lorries would be less of a nuisance to the public.
- 3) Bringing UK weights more in line with EEC proposals will be of great benefit to industry, although for environmental considerations, the CBI and FTA support Armitage's recommendations of slightly lower axle weights. In particular, it would facilitate trade with the EEC.
- 4) The recommendation to increase the speed limit for lorries from 40 mph to 50 mph on roads designed for 70 mph cars will save an estimated £225m per year.

Evidence from British Rail

British Rail were concerned about some aspects of the Armitage report and its proposals to increase lorry weights and dimensions.

In particular

- 1) In certain circumstances heavier lorries will cause more damage to bridges and pavements than the existing heaviest vehicles. Both the proposed 34 tonne and 38 tonne articulated vehicles could become over-loaded on the rear axle of the trailer when a lorry is badly loaded, or when some of the back of the load has been dropped. A possible solution would be to permit no vehicle above the existing 32.5 tonnes 2 + 2 configuration unless it has a 3 axle trailer.

Any increase in vehicle length must increase the likelihood of bridge damage due to the difficulty in manoeuvrability of long vehicles.

- 2) BR are also worried about the safety recommendations of the report. Armitage does not recommend anti-locking braking systems. BR think that as much care and cost should be spent on regulations for lorry design as that spent on ensuring safety on trains.
- 3) The recommendation of an increase of £800 in VED for existing heaviest vehicles is not high enough or discriminating enough. Vehicles that travel longer distances will profit at the expense of others which do not.

The VED cost still will not cover the higher percentage of new road construction costs recommended by TRRL report LR910.

4) Bridges

With the arrival of heavier and heavier lorries in recent years there has been a rapid rise in the incidence of impact damage to BR bridges. If the trend towards heavier bigger and faster lorries continues, the evidence suggests that damage incidents will continue to worsen in the future. In many cases BR cannot reclaim costs from those who caused the damage. Thus the road haulage industry is externalising some of its costs.

BR believes that the contention that the Armitage recommendations will necessitate no extra spending on bridge strengthening is wrong. The measures should not be introduced until the carrying capacity of all bridges has been assessed against the new loading and action taken to strengthen bridges as necessary.

Other areas where time and money are required to carry out investigations include :

- Long span bridges
- Bridges continuous over several supports
- Widened bridges
- Spandrel walls of arched bridges
- Retaining walls

5) Enforcement

Railway operations are subject to constant supervision by the Railway Inspectorate. BR believes that it is essential that sufficient resources be devoted to enforcing lorry regulations as well. Otherwise BR is subject to unfair competition. In particular, action to curb illegal operators is needed. There should be higher penalties for hauliers who break the law. Also greater effort is needed to eliminate overloading.

The General Council of British Shipping

The GCBS is the representative body of the British Shipping Industry. Membership includes all UK shipping companies operating container services.

The GCBS made the following points about Armitage.

- 1) At the moment UK container operators operate at a disadvantage to other European operators. Although all shippers use the same types of containers, UK regulations restrict container gross weights to 21-22 tonnes. Thus they can be underloaded by weights of up to about 6 tonnes in comparison with other West European containers carrying the similar goods for export. The economic consequences of underloading are hard on UK operators in a trade where rates are usually quoted on a 'per box' basis. Harmonisation is therefore desirable.
- 2) There are two basic sizes of containers -
 - the 20 footer (about 70-75% of total) -
 - gross weight 20-24 tonnes
 - mostly 8'6" high
 - the 40 footer (about 25-30% of total)
 - gross weight limit 30 tonnes (average loaded weight considerably less)
 - mostly 8'6" high

On the road these are carried by 4 axle artics. The GCBS would like the maximum weight on 4 axles to be increased to 34-35 tonnes and perhaps 38 tonnes on 5 axles (which could be useful if companies invested in triaxle trailers or converted the existing bi-axle trailers). It is very unlikely that container operators would find it economic to go to the 40-44 tonne configurations.

The 4 axle artics are likely to suffer the highest tax penalty if the government follows Armitage when they implement the new gross weight basis for tax, because 4 axle artics are classified by Armitage as the type causing most road damage. This is unfortunate as very few containers actually run at maximum weight and an unfair tax burden is in effect a penalty on international trade and exports.

- 3) The GCBS were not happy with the height limit. At present there is no limit, but Armitage recommends a limit of 4.2 metres. This is not enough for the standard 8'6" container. The height limit should be raised to 4.25 metres at least or preferably to 4.35m if the rarer 9'6" box is to be accommodated. These limits are lower than for a double decker bus.
- 4) The GCBS reminded the committee that container operators can show a good record on rail usage - more than 90% of containers travel on land by rail.

Friends of the Earth

Friends of the earth expressed disappointment with the Armitage report. In particular, they said that

- 1) The report says that heavier lorries will reduce numbers, but there is no evidence to suggest this will be the case. In fact the opposite has occurred.
- 2) They were disappointed that Armitage did not take up the potential for transfer of freight to rail. Armitage says the potential is small - about 40m tonnes but since this is long haul freight the effect would be to reduce road ton miles by about 8%. This could mean a 20% drop in heavy lorry mileage. Armitage actually admits that a heavier faster lorry could mean transfer of freight away from rail.
- 3) They welcomed the increased taxation of heavy lorries.
- 4) They were dubious about the effect of a general increase in road building in reducing the impact of the heavy lorry. Firstly, the heavier lorry could be here next year, road building will take a lot longer. The cost of building and maintaining roads will be very high indeed. The existing infrastructure is not used to its full advantage anyway.
- 5) Safety
Armitage does not recommend the anti locking braking systems despite annual savings of 60 lives. He also says nothing about the problem of spray from heavy lorries. Instead Armitage actually proposes an increase in maximum speeds on dual carriageways; that will exacerbate the problem. We need better enforcement of existing speed limits.

- 6) Noise

There is no reason why we should wait until 1990 before noise levels on new lorries are reduced to 80 decibels. The technology is already here. The recommendation for monitoring noise levels is very vague and with the recent demise of the Noise Advisory Council makes FOE pessimistic about the future.

- 7) Armitage justifies heavier lorries on economic grounds but the savings of £150m in the first year and £210m per year by 1990 are negligible.

The proposals include the 4 axle 34 tonne long vehicle estimated to be 15% more damaging than the present 32.5 tonne lorry.

Armitage dismisses the damage to underground services in six lines but the National Water Council quoted a figure of £50m on the annual repair bill for sewerage and water mains. Road traffic is responsible for much of this damage. Armitage says there is "insufficient evidence" to estimate damage or cost of the proposals on underground structures, then proceeds regardless.

8) Bridges

The Husband report on bridges stated that on long span bridges the weight of all the axles (gross weight) and the length of the vehicle are crucial. Armitage discounts the figure of £100m that will be needed to strengthen longer bridges as it will be spent even if we do not accept higher weights. However, it is another bit of evidence of the cost to the community from the present fleet of heavy lorries. Furthermore, Armitage produces a figure of £1200m in bridge maintenance that would be needed if the EEC proposals were implemented, but then reduces that to nothing by slightly reducing axle weights and altering axle spacings. He obviously assumes that road hauliers are precise in the way they load their lorries. They are not.

- 9) More research should be done into the effects of air and ground borne vibration. Armitage is imprecise on this.

F. Political Points

Most members will probably have strongly held views on the question of heavy lorries and the Armitage report recommendations, however it might be helpful if members questioned the government on its willingness to implement certain environmental and safety recommendations of the report. In particular the following recommendations :

- a) The width for all lorries should remain at 2.5 metres and a height limit of 4.2 metres should be imposed. There should be a limit on the length of semi-trailers of 12.2 metres.
- b) The government should adopt as explicit aims of policy that an EEC directive should be agreed requiring lorries to be manufactured to a maximum noise level of 80dB (A) and that a new limit should be introduced as soon as practicable in the light of discussions with manufacturers and operators and no later than 1990 (the Government has already announced its support for this proposal).
- c) The government and local authorities should pay particular regard to the effect of lorries on the environment when assessing priorities for new road schemes (ie will the government give more emphasis to by-passes?)

- d) The Government should pursue improvements in lorry safety ie
- more stringent braking standards
 - research into means of reducing spray
 - Underrun and other guards (eg side guards) should be mandatory for all new lorries.
- e) More roadside checks and better equipment to assess levels of smoke emission.
- f) Better policing of overloading, particularly of foreign lorries whose record of overloading is bad.
- g) The Government should make Section 8 grants more widely available - eg. to canals.
- h) The Government should act to ensure that lorry control schemes can be better enforced.

Conservative Research Department,
32 Smith Square, SW1

15.6.81
KM/KM

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The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

WELSH OFFICE

GWYDYR HOUSE

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From The Secretary of State for Wales

17 June 1981

D. Edwards

✓ MRP

ARMITAGE REPORT: SUPPLY DAY DEBATE *201P*

Thank you for your letter of 15 June. I agree the line you propose. There has been much opposition in Wales to the proposal to increase permitted heavy lorry weights. In particular, local highway authorities in the rural areas are very concerned about the effect of the proposals on old bridges and on roads supported by dry stone walls. Representations from the public and local civic societies - and I have received many - all express concern about the effect on the environment generally.

However, cheap and efficient transport is also important, particularly in regions such as Wales which are on the periphery of the national economic system. I also take your point about the benefits of having fewer vehicles. Finding the right balance and the best way of presenting the various arguments will not be easy but I agree with the approach set out in your letter.

/ Copies of this letter go to the recipients of yours.

Norman Fowler
NCF

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

17 JUN 1987





10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

You saw Mr. Fowler's letter, proposing to accept the Opposition motion on lorries tomorrow.

In the course of the day, Keith Joseph objected to foreclosing options in this way - see his letter below. But he has been persuaded that it is not practicable for the Government to oppose the motion, as there could be considerable difficulty in getting Government troops through the lobby against the terms of the Opposition motion. There will therefore be no amendment, and the motion will be accepted.

MJD

[Handwritten signature]

16 June 1981



Secretary of State for Industry

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB

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16 June 1981

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Paymaster General and
Leader of the House of Commons
Privy Council Office
Whitehall SW1

Dear Chancellor

ARMITAGE REPORT: SUPPLY DAY DEBATE

I have seen a copy of Norman Fowler's letter to you of 15 June.

It is of course unfortunate that the Opposition should have chosen the Armitage Report as the subject of a Supply Day debate before we have had a chance collectively to discuss the recommendations of that Report and to agree our response. But I think it would be a mistake to pre-empt consideration of the report by agreeing in tomorrow's debate that we are not prepared to go as far as Armitage proposed in respect of lorry weights (or by giving any commitment on any other recommendation). I believe that a comprehensive response to the Report is required and I would prefer to see us reserve our position. I hope we could promise an early response and use the opportunity presented by tomorrow's debate to explain that heavier lorries do not mean larger lorries and to draw attention to the economic and environmental benefits that would flow from increases in permitted lorry weights. This does of course mean opposing the motion but on the grounds that we have yet to make up our minds on the issue and on the many other and wide ranging recommendations in the Report.

I am sending copies of this letter to Norman Fowler and to the other recipients of this.

Catherine Bell

pp KEITH JOSEPH
(Approved by the Secretary of
State and signed in his
absence)

16 JUN 1981



CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EE

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,
Paymaster General and Leader of the
House of Commons
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister

Mr Fowler has it in mind
to accept the Opposition
motion on lorries next
Wednesday. Content?

15 June 1981

MAD 15/6

Dear Chancellor,

ARMITAGE REPORT: SUPPLY DAY DEBATE

The Opposition have chosen the Armitage Report as the subject for a three hour Supply Day Debate next Wednesday. Although we do not yet know the terms of the Motion they propose to put down, we believe it will be along the following lines:

This House, conscious of the problems caused by the existing heavy lorry, is opposed to the recommendations of the Armitage Report to raise maximum weights to 44 tonnes.

If our information is correct and the Motion is tabled in these terms, I hope that colleagues will agree that we should accept it.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

The Armitage Report has a range of recommendations on the control of heavy lorries, including weight increases from our present maximum 32.5 tonnes to higher figures - 34, 38, 40 and 44 tonnes depending on the number and arrangement of axles. There is a great deal of concern amongst members of the public, and amongst our own backbenchers, about heavier lorries generally, and the Motion as drafted would be extremely attractive to a significant number of our supporters. In focussing on 44 tonnes the Opposition have chosen what is certainly the most contentious of all the Armitage proposals and I think there is a real risk of our actually losing the vote if we were to oppose it.

At the same time, I would intend to make clear that there are economic arguments for raising our present weight limit of 32.5 tonnes. These are being urged on me by all sectors of industry. With the weights proposed by Armitage the savings in transport costs from using fewer more efficient lorries is estimated at £180m per year at current prices. And as the vehicles would be subject to the same controls on size, noise etc, the reduction in numbers would bring actual environmental benefit.

The question is how best we can keep the initiative in our hands and avoid having our options unnecessarily pre-empted at this stage. We have stressed all along that Armitage was an entirely independent inquiry, refuting allegations that it was merely a device designed to enable us to put lorry weights up as high as possible. Acceptance of a motion rejecting the extreme Armitage proposal would reinforce these arguments. We have made it plain that the Government is in no way committed to accepting its recommendations and I think this opens a tactical way to capitalise on a motion in these particular terms.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

The evidence is that most of the industrial and environmental benefits would come from an increase in maximum weight to something less than 44 tonnes. Although nearly all other European countries allow 38 tonnes, only a few allow 44 tonnes vehicles, and the European Parliament has recently recommended a weight limit of 40 tonnes. To exclude the 44 tonne vehicle would affect only a few heavy traffics - the main ones being bulk liquids, steel, construction materials and fully loaded containers.

In my view, therefore, there is much to be said for accepting an Opposition motion in the terms above. In short, rejecting the 44 tonne vehicle offers, in my view, the best way forward at the present time if we are to preserve options to bring forward at an early stage proposals for lesser increases in weight, should we decide to take this course, without running the risk of a total defeat. We would of course come back to Parliament with specific proposals if and when we decide what the new limits should be. Our proposals would have to be part of a complete package of proposals including many of the less controversial and more publicly acceptable proposals of the Armitage Report.

I should be grateful if you and other colleagues to whom I am copying this letter could let me know very quickly whether they agree with this line.

I am sending copies of this to the Prime Minister, other Cabinet colleagues, Michael Jopling and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours Sincerely,

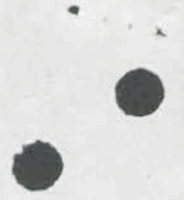
Anthony Mayes

NORMAN FOWLER

(Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence.)

CONFIDENTIAL

15 JUNI 1969



CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

N/S to see.

NS RA

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Leader of the House of Commons
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON SW1

21 March 1981

Francis

HEAVIER LORRIES: ARMITAGE REPORT

When I wrote to you on 9 January about the Armitage Report I said that I would be putting a paper to colleagues towards the end of January. But the unforeseen opportunity to have a debate on 27 January has now changed the picture. I have said that I will consider further representations on all this until mid-March. I will then be putting proposals to colleagues. I therefore would hope to be in a position to make a statement between Easter and Whitsun indicating the Government's intentions.

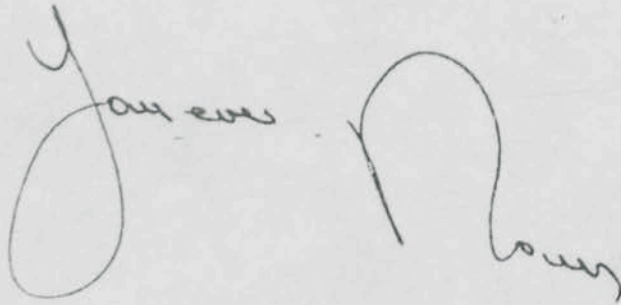
If we do decide to increase lorry weights, then we have two options on the timing of a debate. First, we could have a debate fairly soon after Whitsun, which would clear the way for me to start the statutory processes (negative resolution) for changing the lorry weight regulations. Alternatively, the debate could be set back to the Autumn, when we would need to put through the House the necessary orders for changing the lorry weight regulations. The snag with this option is that it would concentrate the debate on the issue of increased lorry weights and not the wider range of Armitage's environmental and other proposals.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

As you know there is strong feeling in the House on this issue. Michael Foot has asked you at Business Questions to allow a full general debate before there is any question of considering an order. There is no doubt that many of our own side would agree with this. It is a difficult question and perhaps the best solution is to discuss all this when I have been to colleagues on the actual policies the Government will wish to follow.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Lord Scames, the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Norman Fowler". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper.

NORMAN FOWLER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1981 MAR 11 12 1
10 00 11 12 1
10 00 11 12 1

3 MAR 1981



Transport

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

VMS

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

9 January 1981

Francis

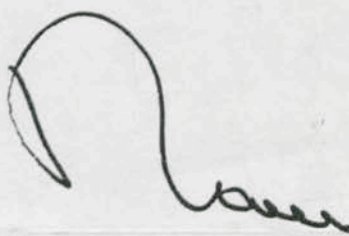
HEAVIER LORRIES

I wrote to Norman St John Stevas on 5 December about the need for an early debate on this contentious matter. It has once again become the focus of public attention following the publication last month of the report of the inquiry under Sir Arthur Armitage into the whole question of lorries, people and the environment.

Norman St John Stevas told me, in his letter of 15 December, that the best he could do within the next couple of months would be to arrange a short debate after 10.00 p.m. Unfortunately the issues are not of the kind that can be adequately dealt with in that way. The question of heavier lorries has now been at issue for over 10 years and the Armitage report at long last offers a realistic basis on which to settle it. I believe we should grasp the opportunity while it lasts. But I am in no doubt that the House must first be given the chance to express a view in a full debate.

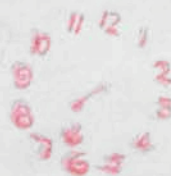
I shall be putting a paper on all this to E(EA)
later this month.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister,
the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

You are


NORMAN FOWLER

14 JAN 1981





Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Transport
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

15th December 1980

De An.

VMS

LIMITS OF WEIGHT OF LORRIES

Thank you very much for your letter of 5th December asking that time be found on the Floor of the House for a debate on the findings of the inquiry under Sir Arthur Armitage into the possibility of increasing the limits of weights of lorries allowed into this country. I understand that Sir Arthur has now reported and that his inquiry comes down in favour of substantially increased weight limits.

I appreciate that this a controversial issue and that a debate would be appropriate, and I have instructed my officials to take up this matter with the Chief Whip's office. However, I understand that there is virtually no chance that a debate can be scheduled in January or February during "prime time" on the Floor of the House. It should prove possible to arrange a short debate after 10.00 pm and if this is an acceptable substitute, I shall discuss it with the Chief Whip.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Norman Fowler

Norman Fowler, Esq
Minister of Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 3EB

17 DEC 1980



MAR 1980

Transport

Inquiry on Lorries, People and the Environment

OLD ADMIRALTY BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AZ TELEPHONE 01-273-3045

PRESS NOTICE

9 December 1980

ARMITAGE REPORT ON LORRIES PUBLISHED

1. Today the report of the Armitage Inquiry on Lorries, People and the Environment was published. The assessors joined with Sir Arthur Armitage in presenting the report to the Minister of Transport as a jointly agreed report.

2. Sir Arthur Armitage said:

"This is a practical report in which I and highly qualified independent assessors have studied all major aspects of the problem. Our recommendations are necessary on economic grounds. They would bring large cost savings. The recommendations give greatly increased protection to the environment and to the public. I believe that their adoption would serve the public interest. We have the opportunity of making major economic savings and at the same time improving the environment and the effect of lorries on people and we should take it."

*"Report of the Inquiry into Lorries, People and the Environment", HMSO, 1980 (£8.50). Available from HMSO bookshops.

3 The main conclusions and recommendations of the report are as follows:

(1) LORRIES DO TOO MUCH DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

- Lorries are too intrusive, too noisy and too smelly and people are apprehensive about them
- lorries affect some places particularly badly
- examples include historic and other towns and villages on major routes and some places on major arterial routes eg. Archway Road in London
- matters will get worse unless action is taken.

(2) NO BIGGER LORRIES

- new controls on size to be introduced
- for the first time ever legal limits to be placed on the height of lorries, the size of containers and the length of the trailers of articulated lorries
- extra $\frac{1}{2}$ metre on the length of tractor units of articulated lorries to improve driver comfort, manoeuvrability and safety and make room for more noise insulation
- otherwise, all limits on dimensions of lorries, trailers and containers to be frozen at current sizes.

(3) QUIETER LORRIES

- very large reductions in noise limits proposed, down to 80 dB(A)
- a new control on low frequency noise proposed.

(4) MORE ROAD BUILDING

- more bypassing of historic and other towns and villages on major routes proposed. This is the only way to save some of the worst affected places
- lorry owners to pay their full share of additional costs in extra taxation.

(5) LORRY ACTION AREAS

- lorry action areas to be identified, ie. those in need of special help because of lorry nuisance. Special subsidies to be paid eg. for noise insulation, better road surfaces, and exceptionally relocating badly sited factories and other generators of lorry traffic. Hauliers to pay costs in higher taxation.

(6) OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- encouragement to further use of rail by improved, higher Section 8 grants
- lorry parking off the streets should be provided at the expense of lorry owners
- control of lorry depots on environmental grounds by extending the powers and duties of licensing authorities.

(7) SAFER AND BETTER LORRIES

- lorries to be fitted with under-run guards at front and rear and lightweight side guards, to save the lives of about 200 motorists, pedestrians and cyclists per year

- lorry brakes to be improved
- ways of reducing spray should be developed
- new limits to control ground-borne vibration
- better enforcement against smoky lorries, with new objective tests
- more enforcement and tougher penalties against overloading.

(8) LORRIES TO PAY THEIR WAY

- the heaviest lorries do not at present pay for all their allocated road track costs
- tax on them to be increased immediately so that they do; for example about £800 increase in annual VED on a 32 ton lorry
- extra costs to be allocated to lorries in respect of the costs of the accidents in which they are involved
- balance of taxation to be shifted away from lightest lorries and on to more damaging heaviest lorries.

(9) EEC PROPOSALS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN PRESENT FORM

- EEC proposals for heavier lorries are unacceptable in their present form

- major changes are desirable on axle spacing and axle weight particularly to protect bridges. The 11 tonne axle and 24 tonne tri-axle proposed by the EEC would be particularly damaging
- many safeguards would be required to protect the environment and road safety.

(10) A BETTER BARGAIN THAN EEC LORRIES

- maximum lorry weights can and should be increased provided that the lorries:
 - (i) are in no respect bigger - in width, length or height - than other lorries
 - (ii) have greater safety factor than existing lorries
 - (iii) create less noise and overall lead to an improvement in the environmental effects of lorries
 - (iv) do no more damage to bridges and roads than existing lorries
- these criteria can be satisfied. Heavier lorries would be subject to all the improvements proposed for existing lorries
- damage to bridges can be avoided by keeping the limit on a single driving axle down to 10.5 tonnes; retaining our present limits on the weights of other individual axles; and limiting tri-axles to 22.5 tonnes, with appropriate spacings

- subject to all the above the following maximum weights are recommended for articulated lorries:

(i) 4 axle lorries, 34 tonnes

(ii) 5 axle lorries with 2 axles on the tractor,
38 tonnes

(iii) 5 axle lorries with 3 axles on the tractor,
40 tonnes

(iv) 6 axle lorries, 44 tonnes

- these lorries would give very large savings in transport costs, possibly of £120 million - £130 million a year now and £170 million - £190 million by 1990
- they give positive improvements in the environmental effects of lorries
- they would help UK lorry manufacturers
- they place no new barriers in the way of any reasonably practicable EEC agreement.

(11) OVERALL IMPACT

- taking the combined effect of the measures there would be improvements for the environment and for the public
- overall there would be great economic savings.

Note to Editors

1. The Minister appointed Professor Sir Arthur Armitage and 4 independent expert assessors to undertake an independent inquiry with terms of reference as follows:

"To consider the causes and consequences of the growth in the movement of freight by road and, in particular, of the impact of the lorry on people and their environment; and to report on how best to ensure that future development serves the public interest."

2. The assessors were:

Sir Henry Chilver, Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield
Institute of Technology

Professor P J Lawther, Professor of Environmental and
Preventive Medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital
and the London Hospital Medical Schools

Miss Audrey Lees, County Planning Officer of Merseyside
County Council (from 24 November 1980, Controller of
Transportation and Development, Greater London Council)

Professor Ray Rees, Professor of Economics at
University College, Cardiff

3. The inquiry began work in September 1979. It received over 1800 written submissions and also heard oral evidence from 34 organisations.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

8 December 1980

Dear Mike,

/ As agreed I attach a copy of the Press Notice being issued tomorrow by Sir Arthur Armitage on his report on lorries. Our officials will be providing the necessary briefing for the Prime Minister's Questions tomorrow morning.

Yours,

Anthony

R A J MAYER
Private Secretary

attachement put to PM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET
SW1P 3EB



cc. Press office.

*With the Compliments of
the Private Secretary to the
Minister of Transport*

CONFIDENTIAL

2.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

The Rt Hon Norman St John Stevas MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister

*The main points in
the Armitage Heavy haul
report are brought out
in the attached Press*

5 December 1980

*Notice. Ministers will
not wish to react to*

*the proposals
immediately.*

Dear Chancellor,

MA

*MA
8
12/11*

One of the more contentious questions I am going to have to deal with in the coming months is whether the present limits on the weights of lorries allowed in this country should be increased. You will recall that there was a good deal of trouble in the House about this matter before the Election. I eventually decided that the right approach was to set up an independent inquiry to look into the whole question of lorries, people and the environment, with particular reference to the question of lorry weights, and I appointed Sir Arthur Armitage in July 1979 to carry out this task. I will be receiving his report next Monday, 8 December, and it will be published the following day.

Because of the unusually contentious background I have been at pains to ensure that this inquiry should be kept genuinely independent of the Department. This has succeeded

CONFIDENTIAL

1

remarkably well. But the result is that neither I nor my officials have any advance knowledge of the conclusions to which Sir Arthur has come or the recommendations which he will make. But whatever he may say it is clear that no change in lorry weights in this country could be achieved unless Parliament was clearly in favour. This is why both Kenneth Clarke and I have given assurances during the course of Sir Arthur's inquiry that no decisions on lorry weights will be taken by the Government until the House has had time to consider the report and to express a view. And if we do not keep the initiative in our own hands I think it is almost inevitable that the opposition would try to force the pace by selecting the subject as an issue for a supply day debate.

It will obviously be a little time before the Government can expect to be in a position to reach a considered view on the report. But I shall be under great pressure from our own industry, the road hauliers, the vehicle manufacturers and shipping interests generally, to move as fast as possible to make the Government's position clear. And this apart, the whole question of lorry weights is again likely to become a live political issue in Brussels during the Dutch Presidency of the community in the first half of 1981. I understand that they will be pressing for a European standard maximum lorry weight.

All this, I fear, points to the probable need for a debate fairly early in the New Year. I shall continue to keep you informed of developments.

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I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours Sincerely,
Anthony Mayes

NORMAN FOWLER

(Approved by the Minister
and signed in his absence)

CONFIDENTIAL

- 8 DEC 1980



Transport- DS

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 July 1979

Dear Sir

The Prime Minister has seen your Minister's minute of 2 July, setting out the procedure he proposes for the independent inquiry into the heavy lorry and the environment, and nominating those he wishes to use for the inquiry.

The Prime Minister is content with the proposed format and with the choice of Sir Arthur Armitage. She is also content with those nominated as expert assessors. In the case of the economics/statistics role she would have a strong preference for Douglas Hague from the two names submitted.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Mike Hopkins (Northern Ireland Office), Kenneth MacKenzie (Scottish Office), George Craig (Welsh Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), David Laughrin (Civil Service Department) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Mike Pattison

Mrs. E.C. Flanagan,
Department of Transport.

M

1. MR. LANKESTER ✓
2. PRIME MINISTER
-

Mr. Fowler has now selected Sir Arthur Armitage to undertake the independent inquiry into the heavy lorry and the environment which you approved in May. His attached minute explains why he believes that a single "wise man" is the best procedure, and asks your approval of the format and choice.

He intends to use expert assessors in three subjects areas: he has in mind the following -

Economics/statistics

✓
Douglas Hague or ~~Ray~~ Rees
(Professor of Economics at
Cardiff University)

Environment

Miss Audrey Lees (County Planning
Officer of Merseyside County
Council)

Science and technology

✓
Sir Henry Chilver (Vice
Chancellor of the Cranfield
Institute of Technology)

Are you content with these proposals?

2 July 1979

MA
Yes - please use Douglas
Hague if possible
MS

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed to the proposal in my minute of 15 May that I should go ahead with an independent inquiry into the heavy lorry and the environment. I have now further considered the form the inquiry should take, and possible membership; and consulted Ministers primarily concerned.

As I indicated in my earlier minute, I see advantage in a single "wise man" to conduct the inquiry, with expert assessors to advise him on technical matters. He would in effect act as a tribunal, hearing and assessing evidence. I think this the best way to keep the inquiry reasonably short.

A one man inquiry would also avoid argument about the balance of a conventional committee. A distinguished figure unconnected with any of the interests will be seen to be impartial: the views and judgements he arrives at should carry the necessary weight as a basis for Government's decisions. By this means we should also be more likely to get a clear outcome, without the risk of issues being masked - even of having no recommendations at all - if the search for a consensus on a committee did not succeed.

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE

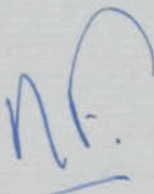
The right person needs also to be able to deal firmly and incisively with those submitting evidence - and to analyse it; and sufficiently distinguished to attract high quality assessors. A lawyer or academic versed in public affairs would fit the bill. I should like to approach Sir Arthur Armitage, currently Vice Chancellor of the University of Manchester and Professor of Common Law there, who meets this criteria.

I should want to discuss the question of assessors with Sir Arthur before coming to final decisions. But three subject areas will certainly call for expert assessors: economics/statistics, environmental matters (by which I mean essentially planning matters), and science and technology. I list in the annex the names I am considering.

Michael Heseltine and George Younger agree with these proposals and names. None of the other Ministers to whom I am copying this minute has raised any objections and Sir Ian Bancroft is content.

I would be grateful for your agreement to the form of the inquiry and to my asking Sir Arthur Armitage to take it on: I have not, of course, yet approached him.

I am copying this minute to Michael Heseltine, Humphrey Atkins, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards and Michael Jopling, and also to Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir John Hunt.



NORMAN FOWLER
2 July 1979

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCEASSESSORS

For the economics/statistics area, the names I am considering include Professor Douglas Hague, Professor of Managerial Economics at Manchester Business School; and Professor Ray Rees, Professor of Economics at Cardiff University.

I think Miss Audrey Lees, County Planning Officer of Merseyside County Council would be an excellent environmental assessor (it is particularly important to avoid here anyone who would be regarded as representing an environmental pressure group since that would open up the arguments about balance which a one man inquiry is intended to avoid).

The outstanding candidate as science and technology assessor would, in my view, be Sir Henry Chilver, Vice Chancellor of the Cranfield Institute of Technology.

1914
MAY 15
1914



Transport



~~PRIME MINISTER~~

NBM

R 23/5

The Minister of Transport sent the Chancellor of the Exchequer a copy of his minute to you of 15 May on the proposed inquiry on the movement of freight by road.

2. There appears to be no clear-cut authoritative evidence on the economic impact of the heavy lorry (whether increases in industrial efficiency might be offset by the higher expenditure on road construction, road maintenance and other costs) let alone the social and environmental impact. An independent inquiry should help to ventilate the issues and give guidance on the right decision.

3. I therefore support the Minister of Transport's proposal to establish an inquiry with the same terms of reference as those announced by his predecessor. I also support the guidance he proposes to give to the inquiry.

I am sending copies of this minute to Humphrey Atkins, Michael Heseltine, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Norman Fowler and to Sir John Hunt.

W. J. B.

JOHN BIFFEN
22nd May 1979



1979



CONFIDENTIAL

Transport

b.c. Mr. James
Mr. Ryder



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 May 1979

HEAVY LORRIES INQUIRY

The Prime Minister has seen the Minister of Transport's minute of 15 May, and is content that he should go ahead as he proposes in that minute.

I subsequently spoke to your office, and was told that an announcement would be made by Written Answer tomorrow (Tuesday 22 May). I asked that the announcement should be made after 3.30 p.m. if it was to be made tomorrow.

I am copying this letter to Tony Battishill (H.M. Treasury), Joe Pilling (Northern Ireland Office), David Edmonds (Department of Environment), Kenneth MacKenzie (Scottish Office), George Craig (Welsh Office) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

N. J. SANDERS

Mrs. E.C. Flanagan,
Department of Transport.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in the bottom right corner of the page.

CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L



Prime Minister

I have seen the Minister of Transport's minute to you of 15 May on the proposal for an inquiry into the issue of the lorry and its impact on the environment. I am generally opposed to enquiries which add little to already available knowledge, but in view of the history here and the tight timetable proposed by the Minister of Transport I agree with his proposals.

I entirely agree that the essential condition of the inquiry is that it should be impartial. We should be very vulnerable to criticism if the Inquiry team did not command the full respect of interested environmental groups and experts, as well as of the road freight transport industry.

I agree with the terms of reference proposed, and my officials will speak to those of the Minister of Transport about names.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Geoffrey Howe, Humphrey Atkins, Norman Fowler, George Younger and Nicholas Edwards and to Sir John Hunt.

WJH

MH

18 May 1979

C O N F I D E N T I A L

18 MAY 1979

12 1
11 2
10 3
9 4
8 5
7 6



Prime Minister

NOTE

Asked Tpt to
announce like the
3.30 if they did it on 22/5.

Agree that Mr Fowler
should announce ^{that the}
inquiry will go ahead?
Mr Heseltine (Flas A) is
content.

12 18/5

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PRIME MINISTER

There is great public and press interest in the issue of heavy lorries. The road haulage industry is strongly in favour of heavier lorries. Our predecessors announced an inquiry which would cover this issue within wide terms of reference. I would be very unwilling to go back on the idea of such an inquiry. The public (and party) criticism which we will encounter would be a serious embarrassment to us. We need to have the advantage of announcing the inquiry will proceed to prevent speculation growing in the next few days.

The one essential condition of the inquiry is that it should be manifestly impartial. There is genuine public concern about the environmental impact of heavy lorries. They seem to many people to be dangerous, too noisy, to pollute the air, and to be disruptive of the communities through which they travel. No one has taken an overall look at the impact of the lorry, which would provide the basis for decisions. There are no easy solutions where there are conflicts between economic costs and environmental improvements but we have to be sure that we do not sacrifice the efficiency of the road freight transport industry.

h

Approved

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

The focus of attention - and, indeed, the principal point on which to take a decision - is the maximum weight of lorries allowed on our roads, at present restricted to 32.5 tonnes. Other EEC countries have maximum weights of 38 tonnes or more, and the Commission is endeavouring to get agreement to a common scheme. The previous Government's policy was that no increase could be agreed unless it was fully satisfied this would be consistent with the needs of road safety and the environment. Some of the interests involved are suspicious of the motives of the Department, following the theft and publication last Autumn of an internal minute from which the Press inferred that the then Secretary of State was being advised to have an inquiry with narrow terms of reference rigged in favour of the hauliers. The chosen terms of reference were wide:

"To consider the causes and consequences of the growth in the movement of freight by road and, in particular, of the impact of the lorry on people and their environment; and to report on how best to ensure that future developments serve the public interest."

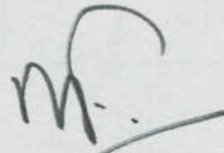
Such is the sensitivity of the subject, I think my best course is to keep the terms of reference unchanged but make it clear when I announce how and by whom my inquiry is to be conducted that I want the report quickly - say, by the end of this year - and that it must face squarely the question of lorry weights.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

I am considering the best form for an inquiry - I see some advantage in one "wise man" with expert assessors - and names, and will put these forward shortly after the necessary interdepartmental consultations.

I am sending copies of this minute to Geoffrey Howe, Humphrey Atkins, Michael Heseltine, George Younger and Nicholas Edwards and to Sir John Hunt.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'NF' with a flourish underneath.

NORMAN FOWLER
15 May 1979

C O N F I D E N T I A L



15 MAY 1979

