

Press release: M20 motorway Junction 10A granted development consent

Consent has been granted to construct the M20 Junction 10A; a new interchange on the M20 east of Junction 10 that will incorporate a new two-lane dual carriageway link road to the existing A2070 Southern orbital Road (Bad Munstereifel Road), together with other associated improvements. The consent also includes the option to construct an 'Alternative Scheme' which, in addition to the above, would include the provision of a new access in the form of a roundabout from the new A2070 link road to the proposed Stour Park Development site, located immediately south of the proposed A2070 link road.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by Highways England on 19 July 2016 and accepted for examination on 11 August 2016. Following a six month examination during which the public, statutory consultees and interested parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State for Transport on 1 September 2017.

The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity to be involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authorities and other interested parties were able to participate in the six month examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views before making its recommendation.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said: "The Planning Inspectorate has again demonstrated its ability to examine Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008."

"This provides developers and investors with the confidence to build and improve the infrastructure this country needs to secure future economic growth."

The decision announced today supports the recommendation made by the Planning Inspectorate. It is the 69th NSIP application to be examined and decided, and the 20th transport project.

The Secretary of State's decision and statement of reasons, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#)

Ends

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email:

pressoffice@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate, National Infrastructure Programme of Projects details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months. It can be viewed at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

Speech: Transport investment in the north

Introduction

I'm really pleased to have been asked to deliver the closing address at today's (30 November 2017) conference.

And what a choice of venue.

I hope there is no deliberate symbolism in asking a Westminster politician to talk to a northern audience about investment in the north in a building devoted to medieval warfare, hunting and instruments of torture.

Before anyone gets any ideas, let me make absolutely that clear I am a northerner as well – both in terms of where I grew up and who I represent in parliament.

And very glad I am too that these days we decide which regions get what resources through sensible means, such as consultation exercises, elections and civil dialogue.

Investment debate

Even so, the truth is that anyone who follows the debate about transport investment in the north might have got the impression that, of late, things have become somewhat gladiatorial.

Well, my view is that that, in itself, is no bad thing.

In fact, one of the reasons that the government pushed hard for metro mayors, and for the creation of sub-national transport bodies like TfN, and why we're making good progress on giving statutory status to TfN, is because we want regions across the UK to speak with a more powerful voice.

So if we're hearing free and frank debate, including at conferences like this one, something's going right.

Our record

But no one should mistake that debate for a divergence from our shared goals – that of building a transport-fuelled Northern Powerhouse.

Or still more serious a mistake – that the government is somehow washing its hands of transport in the north.

Because speaking as a northern MP who now has a seat in government, it's incredibly exciting to have a hand in delivering the things I called for when I was a backbencher.

When I took up the rail brief 17 months ago, there was already good progress underway.

In 2014, 15 minutes had been knocked off the journey between Liverpool and Manchester by upgrading the track.

In 2015, electrification of the route between Liverpool and Wigan was completed, securing quicker, more reliable journeys.

We upgraded Manchester Victoria, and built new stations at Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge.

In 2016, we awarded new Northern and TransPennine Express rail franchises, which will deliver new trains, 500 new carriages, over 2,000 extra services, and room for 40,000 more passengers per week.

These new franchises mean that, by 2020, rail travel in the north will have been transformed.

All the trains will be brand new or completely refurbished, and all the Pacer trains will be gone.

Also in 2016, we committed £60 million for TfN to develop plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail.

And this year, we opened the Ordsall Chord, connecting Manchester's three main railway stations for the first time; all part of the Great North Rail Project, on which we are spending over a billion pounds to deliver better services across the north, with more seats and faster journeys.

Still to come

And there are many more important rail projects underway right now.

The upgrade of Liverpool Lime Street station.

The extra services between Blackburn and Manchester, Bishop Auckland and Darlington – starting next month.

Next year, upgrades between Manchester and Blackpool via Bolton and Preston will be complete.

Followed by a new fleet of Azuma Class 800 trains on the East Coast Main Line.

And we're working with Network Rail and Rail North on options for upgrades between Manchester, Leeds and York to deliver more seats and faster journeys.

I could go on – but I think the point is clear.

That's the to-do list of a government taking very seriously its responsibilities towards northern transport.

And I haven't even mentioned the billions we are spending on northern roads.

Recent announcements

Now, I hope these projects will be familiar to most people in the room.

But I'd also like to touch on some recent announcements that might be less familiar.

Such as the [Rail Strategy we announced yesterday](#).

The [HS2 productivity report](#) also out today.

The [Transforming Cities Fund, announced in last week's budget](#).

And the new Nexus rolling stock announcement for Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland.

Rail strategy

Let me take the rail strategy first.

It's a story that begins with privatisation, over 20 years ago.

On all the measures that matter most, privatisation has succeeded.

We have one of the most improved railways in Europe, and the safest.

Passenger numbers have more than doubled.

In the north, too, whether one is looking at journeys within the different regions of the north, or to and from the north and elsewhere in the country, passenger numbers are all significantly up over the last 20 years.

Today, for instance, TransPennine Express is one of the country's fastest growing operators.

But just because something has worked, doesn't mean it can't be improved.

I understand why the railways were privatised in the way they were, with the trains and the tracks split into separate companies.

But the railway of the mid-1990s is very different from that of today.

And delivering the kind of improvements I've been talking about on a working railway is tough.

Doing so across different teams with complicated contracting arrangements is even tougher.

And when things go wrong, a lack of a joined up approach can make things much worse for passengers.

Solutions can take too long.

Communication with passengers is poor.

Train companies take the blame for the failings of Network Rail.

And Network Rail as an infrastructure company has not always been incentivised to focus on the best possible customer service.

So last year we announced that we would start bringing back together the operation of track and train on our railways.

And today I am very pleased to announce that, as part of our reforms, the first line on which track and train operations will be jointly run will be the East Coast Main Line, connecting London, Yorkshire, the north east and Scotland.

From 2020, we're going to introduce a new generation of long-term partnerships between the public sector and a private partner.

Both track and train will be operated by a single management, under a single brand and overseen by a single leader.

It will mean a better railway, better able to meet today's challenges.

Whether it's planning essential repairs, putting in place improvements that can squeeze in an extra service to meet demand, or responding quickly to a problem on the network – the line should be much better run by one team of people working together.

HS2

Let me move on to talk about HS2.

Today we're publishing a report written following discussions with 100 employers, local authorities and universities across the country.

It sets out how HS2 will improve northern productivity by raising regional growth, leading to a wider range of jobs and careers, which in turn will make it more attractive for graduates to stay in the north – among many other benefits.

But one thing that is very clear is that both central government and local public bodies of all kinds need to work together and plan ahead for HS2 if we are to maximise its benefits – whether to housing, education, local businesses or anything else.

HS2 is coming.

It's going to transform travel in our country and in the north.

And local areas need to get HS2-ready.

Nexus trains

That's some of what we've announced today and yesterday.

But there were also some big announcements for the north in the budget last week.

Foremost among which is our commitment to spend £337 million replacing the 40-year-old trains on the Tyne and Wear Metro.

The Metro was Britain's first light rapid transit system and first step-free railway.

Today it remains the second largest metro system in the country.

But its trains are showing their age.

So Tyne and Wear is going to have a new fleet, with the first deliveries coming in 2021 – creating a state of the art Metro once again.

Transforming Cities Fund

The other big announcement in the budget was the government's new [Transforming Cities Fund](#).

And it's an idea inspired by this city.

Leeds has long had ambitions to improve transport across the city – ambitions the government shares.

So when a proposed a trolleybus scheme didn't get the approval it needed last year, we pledged to put £173 million into an alternative.

First Group and local leaders since raised an extra £100 million on top.

Now Leeds is getting:

- new buses
- new park and ride sites
- real-time information for passengers
- and accessibility improvements

The aim is to double bus patronage in Leeds within 10 years.

And what's worked in Leeds can work elsewhere, so last week the Chancellor unveiled our new £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Fund.

Half to be shared by the 6 areas with elected metro mayors.

With other cities in England to bid for the remainder.

Liverpool City Region will get £134 million.

And Greater Manchester £243 million.

Just like in Leeds, we want the money to drive productivity and spread prosperity, by improving local transport links and making it easier for people to get around and access jobs.

And we want changes that benefit every citizen, especially those struggling at the margins.

It will be up to cities to tell us what improvements they want, but we want truly transformational changes.

Conclusion

So I hope those remarks are sufficient to suggest that the government hasn't quite given up on the north just yet.

In fact, we're only just getting going.

But suffice it to say, for now, that in coming months and years, we are going to be working with the north and for the north.

There'll be plenty of debate and discussion on the way.

But during my time in the job, I'll be focused on deeds.

On delivery.

That's how we'll all be judged in the future.

On what we, working together, do for the north.

Thank you for your time.

[News story: Education Secretary visits](#)

School of the Year

Education Secretary Justine Greening heard first-hand how the transformation of a school in Romford from the bottom 10% to the top 1% in the country has changed its pupils' lives.

[Broadford Primary School](#) hosted the visit on Thursday 30 November after it was crowned 'School of the Year' at the 2017 TES Schools Awards.

Meeting with pupils and teachers, the Education Secretary saw how the school, which rose from Special Measures in 2011 to Outstanding in 2014, gained this prestigious accolade.

To help raise standards the school introduced a training programme for phonics to help improve literacy levels for pupils, and has started a coaching scheme for its teachers to support their career development. Since July last year it has been a National Teaching School, helping to share its example of best practice with schools across the country.

As a result of the hard work of teachers like those at Broadford Primary School and the government's reforms, there are now 1.9 million more children being taught in schools that are rated good or outstanding than in 2010.

Secretary of State for Education Justine Greening said:

We want all children to get a world-class education and help create a Britain that is fit for the future. We already have 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 – standards are continuing to rise and by sharing best practice and celebrating excellence in our schools we can continue to build on this success.

Broadford Primary is a deserving winner of the TES School of the Year 2017 award. It has been a pleasure to meet with pupils and teachers today and to see how their hard work has transformed this truly outstanding school. We want every child to reach their potential, wherever they are growing up having access to a highly quality education – like that offered at Broadford – is at the heart of our ambition.

The TES School Awards ensure great schools are recognised for their efforts, and Broadford Primary is a deserving winner of School of the Year 2017.

Malcolm Drakes, Executive Headteacher at Broadford & Mead Primary said:

At Broadford Primary our vision is to ensure that no child's future is limited by their background. To be able to show Justine Greening

the different strategies that we have used to raise aspirations and outcomes for some of Havering's most vulnerable pupils was a real privilege. For the Secretary of State to take the time to talk to teachers, listen to pupils and demonstrate a very clear understanding of some practical ways we can improve our system for the benefit of the most vulnerable was so encouraging.

Our Learning Federation has promoted meaningful links with businesses like Bloomberg and PwC. To hear today about the Skills Summit and the Department for Education's efforts to make these links more structured is very positive. To provide a golden thread all the way through a child's education, linking their experiences and lessons to future employment will only aid mobility.

Now in its ninth year, the [TES awards](#), which are run by the TES, a news outlet for the profession, recognise the outstanding contributions made by schools and teachers. Broadford Primary School was celebrated for its achievements at a gala event at London's Grosvenor House earlier this year.

Press release: UK-Taiwan trade talks boost agriculture, energy and pharmaceutical industries

UK – Taiwan bilateral trade grew to £5.35 billion last year and Ministers want to continue strengthening trade links. In today's talks (1 December), held in London, Ministers agreed to set up new sector 'dialogues' on trade in agriculture and energy.

They also signed an agreement to make it easier for UK specialist medicines to be used in Taiwan, and agree to build on the UK's £176 million of financial services exports to Taiwan last year.

The talks come on the same day that Taiwan's China Airlines' new London to Taipei flight begins, re-establishing a direct route between the UK and Taiwan for the first time in 5 years.

International Trade Minister Greg Hands said:

With its vibrant economy and thriving consumer base, Taiwan presents huge opportunities for British companies to strengthen our trade links. Exports to Taiwan grew 21% in the last 5 years, and there's room for more growth as we satisfy Taiwan's demand for quality British goods like Scotch Whisky.

Our new trade dialogues in agriculture and energy will offer UK expertise in leading industries and I look forward to continuing to work together closely further deepen our trade and investment links.

During the talks, an agreement was signed which will make it easier for UK and Taiwanese businesses in biotechnology and pharmaceutical fields to protect their intellectual property. This will support leading UK industries like pharmaceuticals, helping companies export products like cutting-edge genetic medicines to Taiwan knowing their rights will be protected.

The new dialogues on agriculture and energy will also bring big opportunities to UK companies. Taiwan plans to increase its renewable energy production from 4% to 20% of supply by 2025, much of it from offshore wind farms, and as the world's leading offshore wind producer, the UK is poised to be a key partner in this.

The new agricultural dialogue is also a boost for UK farmers as Taiwan is the largest per-capita pork consumer in Asia. Both Ministers used the talks to underline their commitment to resolving the remaining steps that would see Taiwan lift its ban on British pork as soon as possible.

The ministers also agreed to deepen links between the UK and Taiwan's leading financial sectors, building on the UK's £176 million of financial services exports to Taiwan last year. In particular, the UK will offer its expertise in financing renewable energy projects and fintech development in Taiwan.

Vice Minister of Economic Affairs Mei-Hua Wang said:

The UK and Taiwan have a very strong trade and investment relationship, and as the UK leaves the EU, Taiwan looks forward both to strengthening bilateral trade flows and to expanding mutual cooperation. We have confidence in the UK economy, the world's fifth largest, and we consider it one of the priority destinations for Taiwanese investment in Europe.

We also hope more UK investors make use of Taiwan's excellent investment environment in the Asia-Pacific region. I look forward to working further with Minister of State Greg Hands and I hope we can together unlock new business opportunities and resolve our trade issues, including the UK's outstanding applications on agricultural exports to Taiwan.

Notes to editors

1. The first UK Taiwan trade talks took place in 1991 and have happened almost annually since.
2. UK-Taiwan bilateral trade grew to £5.35 billion in 2016, supported by a 60% growth in UK services exports to Taiwan in the last 5 years.
3. Taiwan is the third largest market for single malt whisky exports and

the fourth largest overall worth £175 million in 2016.

Further information

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Press release: Green light for new Kent motorway junction

Junction 10a will serve communities and businesses around Ashford, improving journeys by relieving pressure on the existing junction 10 and helping boost growth and jobs in the area.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced the decision in a letter to the Planning Inspectorate, who reviewed the plans last winter. Today's news paves the way for construction work to begin early next year.

Chris Welby-Everard, Regional Delivery Director for Highways England in the South East said:

This major new motorway junction is the biggest boost for Ashford since the arrival of international rail services nearly 20 years ago. Junction 10a will unlock job-creating developments in the local area and will take pressure off the existing junction 10. It will bring jobs, better infrastructure for local services and help maintain the quality of life in and around Ashford.

Without Junction 10a in place, future economic growth would have been constrained. Today's news will bring real confidence that we will have the road capacity needed to enable a major programme of economic and commercial development and house building.

I am grateful to all the local authorities and stakeholders in the area who have worked with us to gain this planning consent, including the 900 local people who took part in our consultation last year. We will continue to work closely with our partners going forward, especially people with homes and businesses nearest to the proposed new junction.

The new junction is part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in major roads. Junction 10a will be constructed about half a mile south of the existing junction 10. It will use two bridges and connect to the existing A20 and a new dual carriageway link road built to the A2070 near Sevington.

Work on the improvements will begin early next year and the new junction is expected to open to traffic in 2019.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.