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Dear Isabel,

Thank you for your letter of 11 February, congratulating the progress made on cycle safety in London and proposing a number of other developments that you would like to see further developed.

Our discussions around cycle safety are a vital part of ensuring cyclists are safe on London's streets. I look forward to a further discussion with Sir Peter Hendy on this same issue in early April.

Taking your suggestions in turn:

Mandatory Enforcement of Cycle Lanes

You asked me to explore whether we could transfer the powers from the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003 to the Traffic Management Act 2004 and bring the relevant parts of the Traffic Management Act 2004 into force so that enforcement of mandatory cycle lanes could be decriminalised.

We are looking into implementation of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, but no decision has been taken yet. In 2012-13 London authorities issued around 850,000 penalty charge notices for moving traffic contraventions. We are currently looking at the evidence of how that has impacted on improving safety and reducing congestion. We would not take a decision to go ahead with this before carrying out a full consultation exercise to seek the views of all road-users and stakeholders on giving authorities outside London these powers.

Updating the Highway Code

We have no plans to update the Highway Code at present.

Cycle Priority at Side Roads

I understand my officials have already been in discussion with TfL about the issue of cycle priority at side roads. There are already ways to provide this, as set out in Local Transport Note 2/08: Cycle Infrastructure Design. LTN 2/08 is guidance, not mandatory, and TfL can consider other design options if they feel it appropriate. As existing regulation provides flexibility in this area, we do not believe further regulatory change is needed.

As you say, the Department is moving forward with the revision of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, which will include a wide range of measures to help local authorities deliver better cycling facilities. Some of these are already being trialled by Transport for London, who have been closely involved in the development of the new regulations. A public consultation on the draft Regulations will be held later this year.

Side Guard Exemptions

National regulations contain a number of exemptions from the general requirement to fit sideguards on modern HGVs. From October 2014, all new HGVs will require EU approval and the EU sideguard standard contains fewer exemptions than existing national rules. However, as you are aware, once HGVs enter service in the UK, under current rules the operator is allowed to use existing exemptions to remove the sideguards on some vehicles.

I recognise this is not appropriate, and have asked officials to prepare a consultation to ensure that these vehicles continue to be fitted with sideguards. Consideration will also be given to the possibility of retrofitting sideguards to some of the currently exempt vehicles, although it appears that costs significantly outweigh the benefits.

Embedding safety training into the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence Certificate

We are considering whether driver CPC should in future include a mandatory safety module. There is also an active European review of driver CPC and we are keen to establish more about what that review recommends before proceeding with any plans in isolation.

My officials have previously invited TfL officials to have a specific meeting to explore further the art of the possible. I should like to extend that invitation again.

Enhanced Driver Direct Vision

The next critical step is to establish whether and what the standard for future vehicles should be. My understanding, which officials checked again

recently, is that there is not yet a proposed standard to consider. When there is, we will need to be led by the evidence – including how it might affect the numbers of lorry journeys (and hence risk), axle loading and other safety aspects.

We are seeking some changes to the text of the general circulation directive. They include strengthening the references to safety objectives. We anticipate explaining our position further before the next scheduled European Parliament vote on 18 March. However we are currently in a negotiating process and seeing what support we have from other Member States and do not want to pre-empt the outcome of that by saying exactly what we will be putting forward.

Your officials were aware of our reservations about some of the European Parliament's proposed amendments in late October. It is unhelpful that your office, in a press release, misrepresented these differences as the UK Government blocking European proposals.

National Digital Speed Map

We are not currently undertaking any digital speed mapping activity in DfT. Given the increasing prevalence of camera based technology in cars, some form of camera focused intelligent speed adaptation is also possible and may be more economically viable than creating and maintaining a speed map. We are aware that Euro NCAP has within its draft Roadmap for 2016-20 milestones relating to speed and impaired driving, one of which mentions speed adaptation but the methodology for this is left to the manufacturers. We are also aware that there is increased European Commission interest in some form of intelligent speed adaptation. We will continue to engage at EU level on this.

Alcohol Interlock Programme

Experience suggests that devices are effective while in use, but that drivers revert to offending once the interlock restriction is removed. Better results have been experienced where a programme is closely supervised and supplemented by educational interventions including counselling.

We are aware of increasing EU wide interest in these devices and are engaging with the EU on the issue so we can learn from the experience of others. We have no current plans for the wider use of interlock technology.

The Government is introducing a range of measures to improve the enforcement of drink and drug driving offences such as removing the requirement to offer those whose breath test is slightly over the limit a replacement blood or urine test. This proposal is contained within the De-Regulation Bill currently in Parliament. In addition to these measures,

portable evidential breath testing devices are expected to be available in late 2014 and will offer significant time savings in enforcing the drink driving offence.

I trust you find this response helpful and I look forward to our continued engagement in the future.



STEPHEN HAMMOND

