



Chris Heaton-Harris

Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the Greenpeace 'Transform Transport' Campaign.

The Government, as part of the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, announced that they would bring forward to 2030 the date at which sales of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans end. This is to help the UK hit its ambitious, legally binding target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

While decarbonising private vehicles is a key part of this Government's net-zero strategy, I recognise that encouraging people to opt for public transport rather than cars, as well as the increased use of greener, more sustainable modes of travel, such as cycling, will also be vital in helping to achieve this.

The Government is putting in £5 billion of investment in buses, cycling and walking during this parliament, which could result in savings of around two metric tons of CO₂ emissions (2MtCO₂e) from green buses, cycling and walking between 2023 and 2032, as well as delivering up to 3,000 jobs by 2025.

As the Minister for Cycling, I am delighted to see the increased interest in cycling, particularly in light of the coronavirus pandemic. As well as being greener, cycling helps to reduce pressure on public transport and the road network, which has become increasingly important with social distancing advice.

I am therefore very pleased that we have committed to investing an additional £2 billion in cycling and walking over the next five years and have published a bold new action plan to boost active travel.

The first stage of this £2 billion investment has been a £250 million emergency active travel fund spent this year. The fund delivers new pop-up cycle lanes with protected space for cycling, cycle and bus-only corridors, safer junctions and wider pavements. Over 1,000 miles of safe and direct cycling and walking networks are due to be delivered by 2025 with network plans developed and being built out in every town and city in England. This will be accompanied by cycle training, being made available to every school child and adult who wants it.



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A consultation was also held recently on strengthening the Highway Code to enhance protections for cyclists and pedestrians. Among other things, we want to improve the legal protections afforded to vulnerable road users. Indeed, as cycling becomes increasingly popular, it is important that The Highway Code keeps pace with changes to the way that people are travelling and the infrastructure in place to support journeys.

The Government is also looking at ways to innovate our buses and enable fleets across the UK to become greener. In September last year the Government committed £50 million to create our country's first all-electric bus town. Moreover, in February this year, funding of £120 million was announced to support the purchase of at least 4,000 new zero emission buses, as part of the £5 billion of new funding to boost bus and cycling links. This would represent 12 per cent of the local operator bus fleet in England. I look forward to the publication of the first ever National Bus Strategy early next year, funded through £5 billion of new money for buses and cycling. It will include integrated ticketing between operators and modes and more bus lanes, making services faster, more attractive and cheaper to operate.

I welcome that in addition to enhancing connectivity, reducing congestion and improving air quality, these programmes will also support the UK's bus manufacturing sector.

We are fully committed to delivering the biggest investment in the railways since Victorian times, with investment between 2019 and 2024 expected to be £47.9 billion. In recent years key hubs such as Birmingham New Street and Manchester Victoria have been rebuilt, while commuter routes have and will continue to expand through projects like the Thameslink programme, the East-West Rail vision and the Great North Rail Project.

Connecting smaller towns is also important and we have committed £500 million to start reopening lines closed following the Beeching report, reconnecting smaller towns, regenerating local economies and improving accessibility to jobs, homes and education. This will be accompanied by progression of the Midlands Rail Hub scheme in Birmingham and improvements in Manchester and Leeds, alongside Northern Powerhouse Rail to improve east-west links across the Pennines.

In addition to providing record investment in our railways, we are also determined to reform the way the network runs to ensure the best possible delivery of services for passengers. As stated in the Ten Point Plan, we aim to electrify more railway lines; end the complicated franchising model and create a simpler, more effective system. In 2018, Ministers commissioned the Williams Rail Review, tasked with recommending ambitious reforms to bring about better customer service, more reliability, greater accountability and innovation. The Williams Rail Review was in the final stages of drafting at the outbreak of COVID-19, and while we remain as committed as ever to delivering wholesale reform of the rail industry, understandably further work now needs to be done to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the sector. Please be assured that this work is progressing.



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Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY