



**Department
for Transport**

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From the Parliamentary
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Dear

Peter & Daniel,

Thank you for your joint letter 26 September from the East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group on levelling up roads connectivity and improvements and the strategic importance of the East of England region as key international gateway for the rest of UK.

I have read your letter with keen interest and I will address the key issues in the order the East's two sub-national transport bodies, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East raise.

As you note in your letter, on 9 March the Secretary of State for Transport made a statement to Parliament announcing that some road and rail infrastructure projects will take longer to deliver than originally planned and others will be deferred. He also noted that schemes originally being considered as part of the pipeline of schemes for potential inclusion in the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) between 2025 and 2030 will continue to be developed, but for consideration for inclusion during RIS4, beyond 2030.

This includes the schemes that you note in your letter, A12/A14 Copdock Interchange (Junction 55), A120 Braintree to the A12, A11 Fiveways Junction, M11 Junction 13 and A47/A1101 Elm Road Junction.

The RIS pipeline remains the mechanism through which new major schemes, such as those you have listed, are developed and their delivery planned for potential inclusion in future road periods.

With regards to the Oxford to Cambridge roads study, this is awaiting Ministerial sign off. The study has identified a number of priority locations within the geography for further development work. This development work will take place during the RIS3 period with a view to potential interventions being implemented beyond RIS3 and subject to the usual value for money and wider business case approval.

Turning to your point about funding for the region's Major Road Network (MRN) projects, I understand fully the importance the Group attaches to the MRN schemes currently being considered (Army & Navy Sustainable Transport Package; A12 Improvements; and Norwich Western Link) and the benefits they will bring to those local areas. I appreciate the concerns locally that decisions have not yet been announced. The Outline Business Cases submitted by the relevant Councils are currently proceeding through our assessment and decision-making process and are on the last leg of this clearance in HM Treasury. I hope to announce decisions soon.

On rail infrastructure, Ely was one of the rail infrastructure schemes included in the Network North announcement on the 4 October. The full publication can be found using the link below:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65294b416b6fbf0014b75641/network-north-transforming-british-transport.pdf>

We are currently considering next steps for delivery, but all schemes will be subject to the development and approval of business cases and will undergo all formal governance, in line with relevant fiscal and legal duties.

On your statement about decarbonising road vehicles, in March 2022 the Government published its Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy, setting out its plan to deliver this. There are now over 48,100 public chargepoints across the country, including more than 8,900 rapid devices. The Government expects the majority of public chargepoints to be delivered by the private sector, with over £6 billion already committed by the UK charging industry to be spent before 2030. Government investment is focused in two areas where the commercial case is not as strong – local on-street charging infrastructure and supporting rapid charging along the strategic road network.

Local authorities have a crucial role in developing local EV charging strategies and facilitating local provision – especially for residents without access to off-street charging. The Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund will provide local authorities in England with significant funding to work with industry and transform the availability of charging for drivers without off-street parking. This will ensure the transition to EVs takes place in every part of the country, by supporting tens of thousands of local chargepoints.

The LEVI Fund will deliver a step change in the deployment of local, low power charging infrastructure across England and accelerate the commercialisation of the local charging infrastructure sector.

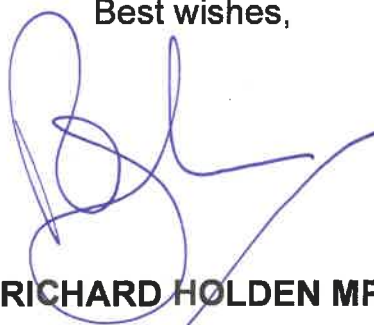
The Rapid Charging Fund (RCF) will fund a portion of the cost of upgrading the electricity grid at strategic locations where it is currently uncommercially viable to do so. The RCF will ensure that the private sector can continue to expand the charging network and future-proof electricity network capacity 10 years ahead to a minimum of 2035, with a stretch target of 2050.

I note your comment on private investment for new connections or improvements to strategically important roads. Currently, the vast majority of inter-urban roads in England are toll free for all vehicles, other than estuarial crossings which sometimes require tolls or charges to support their construction and operation. The Government has no plans to change this arrangement. Within this generally free-to-use model, the Government is open to considering proposals for alternative funding mechanisms for enhancements to the network.

Finally, in developing RIS2, the Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs) were engaged as important partners, whose strategies and studies provided robust information on the priorities for each part of the country. The Government recognised the aspirations of these bodies as they progressed in maturity. The National Highways licence already requires National Highways to engage with and take reasonable account of the views of local highway authorities and other relevant stakeholders with a significant stake in the long-term development of the network, of which STBs are part. The Government is not currently planning to review or re-issue the licence, however, at such a time as we do, this is a specific clarification of the existing licence that could be considered.

Thank you for taking the time to write in.

Best wishes,



RICHARD HOLDEN MP

MINISTER FOR ROADS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT

P.S. It was great to address your
APG Reply. R.

