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C. A. Duguid

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

4



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

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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

30 October 1981

Dear David,

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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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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*

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MAY 12



Prime Minister

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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).

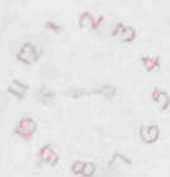
I do hope that you will feel able to agree the package. Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, the members of E Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Tom King

TOM KING

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP

21 OCT 1981



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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.

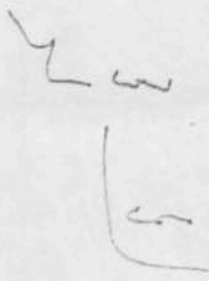
It will, of course, be for you to decide how the road programme should be re-shaped in order to live within whatever provision results from our forthcoming Cabinet discussions. I am under no illusions about the magnitude of the changes which would be required by the figures I have proposed, and I would 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 of Leon Brittan, consisting of a stylized 'L' followed by 'Brittan'.

LEON BRITTAN

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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

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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

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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.

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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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