

PRIME MINISTER

DRAFT WHITE PAPER: LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We agreed in E Committee on 23 September to make an increase in maximum lorry weights up to 40 tonnes, and to announce the Government's intentions as part of a package of environmental measures in a White Paper to be published, together with draft amending regulations, in November.

I see lorry weights as part of a much wider problem, which powerfully affect the tactics for handling the matter. The wider problem is that the lorry is an offensive element in the environment and will make the environment progressively worse unless we take decisions now which will reverse the trend over the coming years. These decisions have to be directed to keeping lorries away from the places where people live, making them quieter and cleaner, and keeping their numbers down.

I have agreed with Francis Pym that there should be a full debate on our proposals in due course, following a two-month consultation period for the draft amending regulations on weights and dimensions. I will be publishing these latter separately, and circulating them widely for consultation (which is a statutory requirement), at the same time as the White Paper. The precise timing of a debate, to which the Government is already committed, will obviously depend on the Parliamentary situation in February and March.

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The issue of lorry weights remains as controversial as ever. Michael Jopling has some serious misgivings about the reception which our proposals will have from our own backbenchers, and there can be no doubt that since we took our decision in September the prospects of getting adequate backbench support have - for wider political reasons - deteriorated considerably.

The main environmental groups made it quite clear when I met them earlier this week that they will strenuously oppose any increase in weights, and my own soundings have tended to confirm Michael Jopling's view that they will indeed have the sympathies of a substantial number of our supporters. Whilst industry will certainly be pressing the contrary economic arguments which finally persuaded us in E Committee, we will have to recognise that these have a much less obvious and ready political appeal, however presented. However, it is vital that we press on towards decisions on weights so that industry can know what to build and order.

In these circumstances the task will therefore be to utilise the period between the White Paper and the vote in the Spring on the amending regulations to give our supporters full opportunity for comment while emphasising through all possible channels the benefits to the economy and the users of heavy vehicles, and the environment, which flow from our proposals. Even so it would be wrong to imply that our backbenchers will necessarily support us all the way when it comes to the Spring vote and we will have to consider tactics as the weeks go by.

The press are now carrying some reports of an imminent announcement. This means, if we are to keep any sort of initiative in our hands, that we must publish our White Paper

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just as soon as we can. 1 December is I think now the earliest practical date, and I should be grateful for the agreement of colleagues to announce publication that day by way of an oral statement on the basis of the attached draft which has already been the subject of extensive consultation with officials in the Departments mainly concerned. I have a PQ about our intentions down for answer on 25 November and I should like to be able to give notice then of my intention to make a statement in the following week.

In order to meet this publication date I should be grateful for a reply by close of play on Monday evening, 23 November.

I am copying this to colleagues on E Committee including the Lord President and the Chief Whip, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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DAVID HOWELL  
19 November 1981

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DRAFT - 18 NOVEMBER 1981

## LORRIES, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### INTRODUCTION

1. The period since the war has been one of great changes in the field of freight transport. The development of road vehicles has been particularly marked. This, and the advantages lorries offer to the customers in terms of speed, flexibility and quality of service, has led to an increasing reliance on these vehicles. There has been the development of the motorway and trunk road network; the concentration of manufacture into bigger production units, increasingly interdependent on one another and serving national and international markets; the general trend towards containerisation and the bulk handling of goods; and the increasing preponderance of Europe in the pattern of our international trade movements.

2. The impact of big lorries on people and the communities through which they pass is now a matter of grave public concern. They are far too noisy and in the many towns and villages for which there is still no bypass the effects are intolerable. People rightly look to the Government to do something about this situation which is already bad and will certainly get worse if nothing is done.

3. The Government is determined to tackle these environmental and social problems vigorously. At the same time, its approach will be essentially practical bearing in mind the needs of industry in a period of economic revival. The Government cannot ignore the fact that the lorry is now an essential part of our national transport arrangements, and indeed it is the only possible means of delivery

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and collection from farms, shops and most factories and warehouses. Our economy has benefitted enormously from the development of road transport. There is no way in which we could maintain our present standard of living without it. Anything which affects the cost of road transport inevitably affects the cost of living for everyone.

4. This presents a challenge. In the shops we want the goods the lorry brings, and to be able to buy them at competitive prices. Yet elsewhere, outside in the street and on the roads, and in our homes and places of work, we dislike lorries for their noise, <sup>vibration</sup> fumes/and dominating size - and we would like to be rid of them. How best can we reconcile these conflicting desires?

5. One of the first acts of this Government was to appoint an independent inquiry under Sir Arthur Armitage to consider the whole problem of lorries and their impact on people and the environment, and to report on how best to ensure that future developments serve the public interest. Sir Arthur and his four independent assessors \* took evidence very widely, and presented their Report in December 1980. The Report has aroused great interest. Many people and organisations have expressed their views on it, and there have been two debates in the House of Commons. The Government is grateful to Sir Arthur and his assessors, and to those who have commented on the Report. There is now a clearer understanding of the issues and a much firmer basis for decision on the practical measures which need to be put in hand.

6. The central conclusion in the Armitage Report is that the public interest would best be served by maintaining and developing the economic benefits from heavy lorries and at the same reducing their

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\*Sir Henry Chilver MA, DSc, FEng; Professor P J Lawther CBE, DSc, MB, BS, FRCP;  
Miss Audrey Lees BArch, ARIBA, DipTP, FRTPI;  
Professor Ray Rees MSc (Econ)

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adverse effects. The Government agrees with this approach. We have the technical skills and resources over time to make heavy lorries as quiet as cars. We must aim to provide modern roads for all substantial flows of heavy traffic. We must frame our regulations so that operators can make the most efficient use of their vehicles. In this way we shall get on top of the problem. There will be fewer lorries, and they will be quieter, cleaner, safer and more efficient. New bypasses will be built to keep them away from where people live. This White Paper sets out the measures/<sup>with</sup> which the Government now proposes to initiate this change for the better.

## ROADS

7. By far the most effective way of reducing the environmental problems lorries cause is to keep them away from where people live. Obviously we cannot achieve complete separation: lorries will always have to come into towns to make deliveries, for example. But we can do a very great deal to make life better by taking the through traffic out of towns and villages.

8. The Government has already drawn up a trunk road programme to give high priority to bypasses and to motorways which take lorries out of historic towns and villages. More than half the historic towns in England which lie on trunk roads have already been bypassed: within the last few months new bypasses of Beverley, Canterbury and Wimborne have been opened to traffic. In all, 215 out of the 275 towns on trunk roads in England with populations over 10,000 now have bypasses. The programme of new schemes under construction and in preparation will take traffic out of many more. Major schemes currently under construction include bypasses of

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Accrington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bowes, Colchester, Dorchester-on-Thames, Gloucester, Ipswich and Skipton. The schemes started this year will provide relief from through traffic for more than 20 communities. The programme announced in last year's Roads White Paper provides for the design and construction of dozens of bypasses over the next few years.

9. The Government has however reviewed the trunk road programme again in the light of the Armitage Report to see what scope exists for adding even more bypasses. The Secretary of State for Transport has already announced during 1981 a number of important additions to the programme published in last year's Roads White Paper. For example, the Government recently took over work on the extension of the planned Newcastle Western Bypass so that it will also bypass Gosforth, and resumed work on the Chapel-en-le-Frith and Whalley Bridge Bypass. It has been decided that the bridge which carries the M63 over the Manchester Ship Canal is to be widened as soon as possible and this will facilitate the construction of a direct link from the Carrington petro-chemical complex to the motorway to take heavy traffic off the local residential roads.

And we have just announced a new bypass for Bicester on the A41. The continuing need to restrain public expenditure inevitably imposes severe restrictions on our ability to do all that we would wish. Nevertheless the Government has now decided that in the light of progress made in the past two years it is practical within our present resources to add more new schemes to the programme. New bypasses will be provided for Quorn and Mountsorrel on the A6 in Leicestershire; Beckington on the A36 in Somerset; Iwade on the A249 in Kent; and Winchelsea in Sussex. Work will now be resumed on the A43 Blisworth Bypass in Northamptonshire. In addition, increased priority will be given to the bypasses for Newport (Shropshire),

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Wisbech and West Walton, Narborough, Kelsall, Brockworth and Bridport, all of which will now be included in the main programme.

10. The substantial completion of the motorway system in Central Scotland has made available high quality roads avoiding built-up areas and used by large numbers of heavy goods vehicles. Elsewhere, bypass construction has been an important feature, particularly on the new A9 to Inverness. Over the next few years there will be an increasing number of bypasses in Scotland. 'Roads in Scotland 1980' listed 26 bypass schemes in the trunk road programme up to 1985, with special emphasis on improving conditions on main arteries such as A75 and A94.

11. The situation in Wales is similar. Schemes recently completed include the Brecon and Dolgellau bypasses. Work is well underway on the Carmarthen bypass and has recently started on a major scheme, which will take through traffic out of the centre of Colwyn Bay, as well as on the Bangor bypass. Contracts are also currently being placed for the Hawarden and Llanfair P.G. bypasses and tenders should be invited early next year for the extension of the dual-carriageway in the Taff Valley, which will relieve substantial built-up areas. In addition, other schemes in the trunk road programme will take traffic out of towns such as Conwy, Holywell, Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr.

12. As well as having central responsibility for the trunk road and motorway programme, the Government also provides support to County Councils in England and Wales and to Regional and Island Councils in Scotland, which are the Highway Authorities for local roads in /

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their respective areas. Under these arrangements there has been a sustained programme of investment in rural and urban by-passes and relief roads, as well as other environmental improvements to the local road network. For example, in England more than 50 local schemes of significant size, to a total value of about £300m, which will relieve rural and urban communities from the effects of heavy lorry traffic, are currently under construction; completions and new starts on such schemes are running at a level of over 20 per year. The Government is determined to maintain its encouragement to local authorities to give priority where possible to such schemes.

## Lorries on the Road

13. Controls over the routes lorries may use are a useful means of protecting residential areas and other unsuitable places from traffic. Local authorities have had extensive powers to control the routing of lorries in their areas for environmental reasons for many years, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1967 and the "Dykes Act" of 1973. The more bypasses there are for through traffic, the easier it becomes to introduce control schemes without merely shifting the nuisance from one place to another, but they still need careful planning. Local authorities have in general put their powers in this field to good and responsible use and they do not need any extension or change in those powers.

14. A popular suggestion is that heavy lorries should be restricted to a national network of lorry routes - perhaps even to motorways - but unfortunately this is not practicable. The intractable problem is that any network comprehensive enough to avoid hopelessly long and complicated detours by lorries would have to include many existing urban roads, and the resulting concentration of traffic on them would be unacceptable to those who

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live there. Plans in the mid-1970's for a national lorry route network had to be abandoned because of these environmental objections. Nor would it make sense to exclude heavy articulated lorries from particular categories of road, for example, C and unclassified roads. This would heavily increase the costs of many businesses in rural areas, including farms, which rely on heavy road transport. And as most of the minor road system is used by only very small numbers of heavy lorries, the benefits of putting the traffic into a larger number of small lorries would be very limited and would not justify the penalty on farming and village industries.

15. Even with a vigorous programme of new bypasses and the active development of local control schemes there will still be some places which remain badly affected by substantial flows of heavy lorries, and where local restrictions on lorries cannot offer a practicable solution and a bypass is not in prospect. The Armitage Report suggested that some of the worst of these places could be designated as "lorry action areas", in which special steps could be taken to alleviate the effects of lorries. The Government considers that this proposal is well worth further study and will be inviting the co-operation of the local authorities and others concerned in studying it further in a variety of urban and rural situations.

## Fair Competition

16. There would of course be no need for all these measures to deal with the lorry problem if only the goods could be carried by rail instead. The railways certainly have an important part to play within our national transport system and the Government

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will continue to give them every encouragement in attracting as much suitable freight traffic as they can. We welcome the Railways Board's strategy of developing their services to attract freight on to rail in all those areas where rail is the most suitable mode. Rail is competing for traffic by concentrating on long distance train loads - including the combined transport container service offered by Freightliner - and also developing scheduled services in wagon or lorry load quantities through their specialised network.

17. The present scheme of Government grants under Section 8 of the Railways Act 1974 is being used by the Government to achieve environmental benefits by providing an incentive to freight handlers to send their goods by rail where, for commercial reasons, they might not otherwise do so. This scheme has given good value, and it will be continued. Indeed the Government could see no reason for it being restricted to the railways and would also like to encourage the use of inland waterways as well to take traffic off the roads. The necessary powers to extend Section 8 type grants to the inland waterways were accordingly <sup>sought,</sup> and ~~obtained~~ in Section 36 of the Transport Act 1981. Pipelines and coastal shipping also play a significant role within our national transport system, particularly in the carriage of crude oil and petroleum products in bulk. Pipelines, for example, have increased their carryings of this traffic three-fold in the last decade and now account for some 8% of all goods moved, measured in tonne-kilometres. The Government welcomes this development.

18. If the railways are to play their full role in the national freight transport system they must be able to compete with road haulage on equal terms. It is the Government's aim to ensure that the framework of regulation and taxation puts road and rail

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on an equal footing. The customers must meet the fair track costs of the services they use, whether road or rail. Fair competition means, in particular, that each category of heavy lorry should pay in motoring taxation at least the full road track cost attributed to it. The Government aims to change the structure of lorry taxation from unladen weight to laden weight, taking into account the number of axles for the heavier lorries. This change will enable the Government to achieve a much closer match between the road costs imposed by different classes of lorry and the taxation paid. The first step has been taken. The Transport Act 1981 sets out the framework for a change in vehicle excise duty to a gross weight basis. It is the Government's intention to implement this restructuring as soon as practicable.

19. There remains the important question of the calculation and allocation of road track costs to different road users. The Armitage Report generally endorsed the present basis on which these costs are assessed and allocated, although they made two detailed proposals for change. It will be important to keep the methodology of assessment under review to keep pace with improved techniques and changing circumstances, and the Government will ensure that this is done.

## Noise and Pollution

20. People dislike in particular the noise<sup>,vibration</sup> and pollution of heavy lorries. Quieter and cleaner vehicles would contribute enormously to an improved environment and the Government is determined to achieve this. There has already been some improvement in lorry noise, which will be reinforced by new regulations coming into force in 1983, reducing the maximum noise limit for the heaviest vehicles from 92 to 88 decibels. But that is not enough. The

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Government's target is progressively to reduce the perceived noise from new heavy lorries coming onto the road to less than half the 1981 level, so that by 1990 they would be no noisier than most 1981 new-model cars, and the Government will press other European countries to adopt this target.

21. In acting firmly in this way to reduce lorry noise at source, the Government must ensure that British industry is at least as well placed as its competitors in meeting this major technical challenge. The Government will therefore set in hand a collaborative programme of research and development, involving vehicle and engine manufacturers.

22. This programme will take forward the work in this country which has already produced the Quiet Heavy Vehicle (QHV). This vehicle, with a 320 horse power turbo-charged diesel engine, demonstrated that a drive-past noise level of about 80 decibels is achievable with a vehicle capable of operating at over 40 tonnes, though with a cost penalty of about 8% and some penalty in payload. The programme of operating trials for the QHV is now coming to an end. The new programme will develop the techniques already demonstrated and show how they may be applied to production vehicles. As noise limits are lowered, the contribution of vehicle systems other than the engine to the total measured noise becomes significant. But a major part of the future programme will be concerned with the development of quieter engines.

23. The new programme is intended to lead to the development of a "production" quiet heavy vehicle for the 1990's - the QHV 90. The programme will concentrate on noise reduction <sup>at source,</sup> which in itself will help reduce airborne vibration. Additionally the programme

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will look at ways of improving lorry suspensions (affecting ground borne vibration), smoke emissions and general safety standards.

## Safer Lorries

24. The Armitage Inquiry made a number of recommendations aimed at improving the vehicle itself. The Government's proposals on environmental standards, noise pollution and vibration, have already been set out. Improving the standards of vehicles is a continual task. For example, higher braking standards and rear under-run guards for all new heavy lorries will be required next year. In the longer term the Government intends to make side guards mandatory. A programme of research and trials on reducing spray from heavy lorries is also nearing completion. The Government hopes this research will produce effective solutions to the problem.

## Lorry Weights and Dimensions

25. People's dislike of heavy lorries has been brought to the surface particularly by controversy over lorry weights and dimensions. Many people wrongly believe that there are plans afoot to make lorries even bigger although no-one ever urged that upon Armitage. However Armitage did consider proposals to increase lorry weights and these have become fiercely controversial. It is not possible in the scope of this White Paper to do justice to all the detailed arguments that have been put forward. In what follows the main issues are discussed briefly as background to the Government's conclusions.

26. The typical "juggernaut" on our roads today is an articulated vehicle with a 12.2 metres (40 feet) trailer, and a total overall length, including the tractor unit, of about 15 metres; and with

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4 axles - 2 on the tractor and 2 on the trailer. Our regulations limit its maximum weight to 32.5 tonnes (a limit set in 1964), and its length to 15 metres (a limit, set in 1968, which permitted the carriage of international standard 40 foot freight containers).

Vehicles of this same size are used throughout the whole of Europe.

In practice articulated lorries on the Continent are no bigger than they are here, though most countries' regulations now permit a length of 15.5 metres. But the big difference is that every other European country (except Switzerland and the Republic of Ireland) which has special problems with mountain roads allows higher weights ranging from 38 to 44 tonnes. Many of them require the vehicle to have an additional axle (making 5 axles in all) if the vehicle weighs more than 36 tonnes. The importance of the extra axle is that it spreads the weight and reduces the impact on roads and bridges. Our lorries are therefore the same size as every other European country's lorries but we allow less weight to be put in them so that we have more big lorries on the road than would be the case if we allowed them to be fully loaded.

27. For more than ten years our industry has been pressing successive Governments to raise the maximum permitted weight to European levels. There are clear environmental and economic arguments for doing this. Much of our trade with Europe is now transported entirely by road, and goods shipped to and from other parts of the world are increasingly carried in standard 40 ft freight containers. But for any journey starting by road in this country the load must conform with our <sup>lower</sup> weight limits on road vehicles. This increases transport costs for our exporters in particular. Our industrial costs generally are higher than they would be if operators were allowed to load their vehicles more fully. The present arrangements therefore cost money as well as putting too many vehicles on the road. A national survey of the

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savings that operators could make indicates that, with an upper limit of 40 tonnes, industry could <sup>over time</sup> reduce by 12% the number of heavy articulated lorries they <sup>would otherwise</sup> use. There would be savings in transport costs of around £150m per year, including useful savings in diesel fuel. Firms located in Scotland, Wales and the West Country, furthest from European markets, would stand to gain especially. In addition, the British commercial vehicle industry would benefit from having a domestic market for the types of heavy lorries which already predominate in continental markets.

28. But there are of course major matters of concern about any proposed increase in maximum lorry weights. Would an increase really reduce the numbers or would it merely stimulate additional traffic? Even if the lorries were no bigger, would they be noisier? Would they do more damage to roads? Would they damage buildings through greater vibration, or underground pipes? Are the margins of safety in our bridges sufficient? These are all questions <sup>on</sup> which the Armitage Inquiry took detailed evidence as a result of which they proposed increases in lorry weights up to a new maximum at 44 tonnes subject to a number of safeguards.

29. The Government has re-examined very carefully the proposals and the safeguards suggested by Armitage, and the questions that have been raised about them during the last year. The Government has decided that it would not be right to go as far as the Report and has rejected the 44 tonne proposed maximum. However the Government is satisfied that the maximum gross weight limit can <sup>safely</sup> be raised to 40 tonnes.

There would be benefits to the environment, and major economic benefits as well. With heavier weights industry will be able to

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meet an upturn in demand without the increase in heavy lorry traffic which would otherwise occur. The benefit in reduced lorry traffic will be permanent; the reduction in road transport costs will not be on a sufficient scale to stimulate a significant amount of additional traffic. The main safeguards on the design of the individual vehicles are set out below.

30. It is essential to ensure that heavier lorries can be no bigger than the biggest lorries we have at present. There will be new restrictions on length and height to ensure this. The size of the heavier vehicles will be limited to dimensions which are just sufficient to accommodate a standard international freight container. The existing limit of 2.5 metres on the width of lorries generally is in line with this, and will be retained. A new limit of 12.2 metres (40 feet) will be fixed for the length of the load-carrying platform of articulated vehicles. A new limit of 4.2 metres on height is proposed for the heavier vehicles, including any container carried by them.

There have never been legal limits on height before but the new one will just accommodate the continued use of standard containers 8' 6" high, and rule out the carriage of higher containers on vehicles of normal construction. The Government also proposes to increase the legal limit on articulated vehicle length to 15.5 metres, but this is only to accommodate the slightly longer tractor units that have come into general use during the last ten years. These tractor units have advantages: they are more stable, they allow better accommodation for the driver and more space for equipment to meet higher standards of safety and noise prevention. It would be foolish to discourage their use.

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31. The responsibility for infra-structure - roads, bridges and underground services - lies with the Government itself, the local authorities and the statutory undertakers. The Government would refuse to accept increases in lorry weights if these posed significant costs in public expenditure on these public assets. The Government is however quite satisfied that with appropriate rules on axle arrangements, axle weight and spacing, the effect of the heavier vehicles on infrastructure will be marginal and in some respects slightly favourable. A small increase in the maximum weight of a single drive axle from 10.17 tonnes to 10.5 tonnes will be permitted, but the total axle loading from the reduced number of heavy vehicles on our roads will be slightly less than it would be if the regulations were unchanged. The evidence shows that these changes will have no significant effects on underground services nor will groundborne vibration be increased; and overall, there should be a reduction of about 5% in road damage from heavy articulated road transport.

32. The Government has looked particularly at the additional effect of heavier vehicles on bridges and has concluded that for spans of less than about 75 metres (which constitute the vast majority of bridges) the overall additional effect is not significant. There are, however, a few long structures on which a build up of heavy traffic including 40 tonne vehicles could in certain circumstances give rise to significantly greater loading effects. The scale of increase is not large but it will be necessary to examine these structures individually to see what may need to be done. This work is already in hand for the Severn Bridge and will be undertaken on the other long structures on trunk roads to ensure that the whole trunk road system can be used safely by lorries of up to 40 tonnes. Other bridge owners will similarly need to consider their longer span bridges and may impose weight restrictions if special circumstances require this. With regard to other highway structures - such as retaining walls - the effect will vary according to local circumstances, but in general the evidence is that 40 tonne lorries will not give rise to additional problems on any significant scale.

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33. The heavier vehicles will be required straightaway to meet the same standards for noise, pollution and safety as existing 32.5 tonne vehicles, and to meet the improved standards the Government is preparing as these come into force. The Government agrees with the Armitage Report that the greater impact of the heavier lorry in a collision would only increase marginally the severity of accidents, and that this factor would be far outweighed by the expected reduction in the number of lorries which will reduce the number of accidents in which lorries are involved.

34. Changes in lorry weights and dimensions require amendments to the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, and these are being circulated in draft to all organisations concerned, as required under the Road Traffic Act 1972. Following consultation, Regulations will be laid before Parliament.

Assessment of Environmental Effects

35. The Armitage Report noted that techniques to measure environmental effects were not well developed. The Report recommends that the Departments of Transport and the Environment should develop a technique for national and local use, for example in assessing the effects of a scheme diverting lorries from one road to another. The Government sees merit in this. Preliminary proposals have already been discussed with the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment and the local authority associations are being invited to consider them.

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## Operators' Licensing

36. The Government accepts that the powers of the licensing authorities should be strengthened to enable them to take adequately into account environmental considerations in dealing with licence applications from road haulage operators.

Difficulties can often arise from the place from which the vehicles are operated, which may even be the backyard of a small operator's home. The recommendations of the Armitage Inquiry would allow such factors to be taken into account in controlling lorry "operating centres". These recommendations are in line with those made by the Foster Committee in 1978. Primary legislation would be required, and the Government will seek an early opportunity to introduce it.

## Enforcement

37. The maintenance of vehicles is firmly the responsibility of operators but the Government enforces the necessary standards to protect the public. To combat problems caused by exhaust from lorries, the Government intends that work on objective smoke test methods should continue. One type of equipment is being installed on a trial basis in heavy goods vehicle testing stations. Alternative methods are also being explored to find the most effective and cheapest way of enforcing higher standards on exhaust emission. Several organisations are working to develop and evaluate axle weight indicators. This is being monitored by the TRRL and when a sufficiently accurate and reliable device is available at a reasonable cost the Government will make it a mandatory requirement.

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38. Roadside checks are limited by available manpower and suitable sites adjacent to main roads. Despite manpower restrictions, the Department of Transport, together with Trading Standards staff, has achieved a great deal in terms of increasing the number of lorries weighed by its enforcement staff. The Government's programme of installation of dynamic weighbridges at suitable locations has already resulted in increased numbers of vehicles being weighed. This programme will continue.

## Speed Limits

39. There are a number of anomalies in the speed limits that apply to different types of lorry, but the most important and economically significant of these is the restriction to 40 miles per hour for lorries using unrestricted dual carriageway roads, including roads such as the A1 which are nearly up to motorway standard, while for motorways the lorry speed limit is 60 miles per hour. As regards road safety, 40 miles per hour is too low a limit for lorries on this type of road. If lorries adhered to it, they could present a serious hazard to other road users. Armitage recommended an increase to 50 mph. This is supported by the police and the Government will bring forward amending regulations to implement this recommendation.

## Conclusion

40. The measures outlined in this White Paper have a clear and simple purpose, though the problems themselves are complex and intractable. It is to ensure a more civilised development of freight transport in future which will better serve our aspirations to an

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improved environment as well as a healthier economy. Our objectives cannot, of course, be achieved overnight. The present lorry fleet can only be changed at the rate at which the vehicles can be replaced, and road improvements take time. But that is no reason for delay - quite the reverse. It is through the decisions taken now, and the actions initiated, that we can achieve over the years ahead the improvements we are seeking.

Freight Directorate  
Department of Transport

18 November 1981

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