

ADEPT: Parliamentary monitoring September 2019

This document is tailored to provide a monthly overview of key activity, debates, questions, reports, PMQs, speeches and bills relevant to the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.

Key dates

11 Sept – 14 Oct – Parliament prorogued
 14 Sept - 2 Oct: Party conferences
 14 Oct – Queens Speech
 31 October: Date UK due to leave the EU

Planning – Housing

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Industrial Strategy & Local Industrial Strategies

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
03/09/19	Ministerial statement	BEIS	BEIS: British Steel Update The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published a Written Ministerial Statement on British Steel Update: http://bit.ly/2IUeCpf
05/09/19	Written Q&A	BEIS	Regional Planning and Development: County Durham: Written question - 284516 Asked by Helen Goodman To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how he plans to use the Northern Powerhouse to increase productivity in County Durham. Answered by: Nadhim Zahawi In his Manchester Speech of 27 July, the Prime Minister made clear this Government's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse as part of its ambitions to level-up the country, unlocking untapped productivity and economic potential in all places, including County Durham. Read more here.

NPPF – Land value capture

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Energy – Local authority projects

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/08/19	Statistics	BEIS	Solar PV deployment: July 2019 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published statistics on Solar PV deployment: July 2019. The statistics can be found here: http://bit.ly/2Zo1CLp
30/08/19	Press Release	Legal and General	Legal & General invests £57m in UK solar portfolios. Read here.
09/09/19	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	Buildings: Solar Power: Written question - 284795 Asked by Peter Kyle To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on making solarized buildings eligible for business rates relief. Answered by: Jesse Norman The Government is continuing to support the take up of solar panels by maintaining the business rates exemption for solar power generating equipment of less than 50kW, between the time of its installation and the next business rates revaluation. Where energy generated is not for self-consumption, solar panels benefit from the tools of the trade exemption and are not rateable.

Digital – Broadband & mobile

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Economy – Fair funding review

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/09/19	News	Dods	Spending Review 2019: Full Document Following the delivery of the 2019 Spending Review from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Spending Review can be read in full here: http://bit.ly/2IBLKsS

			<p>The Chancellor's full statement will be provided as soon as it's available.</p> <p>Sector round ups detailing the commitments that have been set out including new consultations and proposed legislation will be published later today. Our summary documents will also include a selection of reactions from key stakeholders.</p> <p>Please contact your Political Consultant should you have any queries.</p>
04/09/19	News	Dods	<p>Spending Review 2019: Chancellor Sajid Javid's full transcript</p> <p>Read here.</p>
04/09/19	Debates	HoC	<p>Spending Round 2019</p> <p>Read here.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	<p>Non-domestic Rates: Retail Trade: Written question - HL17554</p> <p>Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the 25 per cent contribution that the retail sector currently makes to business rates receipts.</p> <p>Answered by: The Earl of Courtown The Government has taken repeated action to reduce the burden of business rates for all ratepayers including retailers. The Government's Plan for the High Street announced at Budget 2018 provides £1 billion of upfront support through a new retail discount, cutting retailers' business rates bills by a third for two years from 1 April 2019 subject to eligibility.</p> <p>Reforms and reliefs announced since Budget 2016 are reducing business rates by more than £13 billion over the next five years. This includes switching from RPI to CPI indexation, increasing the threshold for the standard multiplier to</p>

			£51,000 and doubling the threshold for Small Business Rate Relief, meaning 675,000 of the smallest businesses pay no business rates at all.
11/09/19	Correspondence	Treasury Select Committee	<p>Correspondence from West Midlands Combined Authority regarding Business Rates</p> <p>Treasury Committee has published Letter from Finance Director for WMCA to Chair, regarding Committee meeting on 4 June 2019 - dated 22 July 2019 Published 04 September 2019 Full letter can be accessed here: https://bit.ly/2m4i5l8</p>
11/09/19	Correspondence	Treasury Select Committee	<p>VOA to Nicky Morgan, regarding the Impact of Business Rates on Business inquiry</p> <p>Treasury Committee has published below correspondence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from VOA to Nicky Morgan, regarding the Impact of Business Rates on Business inquiry - dated 25 July 2019 Published 04 September 2019: https://bit.ly/2kHdtRB • VOA Supplementary Annex A Published 04 September 2019 https://bit.ly/2kHdPaI
12/09/19	Statistics	MHCLG	<p>Live tables on local government finance</p> <p>The latest data tables on local government finance . Borrowing and investment Capital forecast Capital payments and receipts Local Council Tax support Quarterly revenue outturn Receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates Firefighter pensions Highway maintenance expenditure on a non FRS 17 basis All documents can be accessed here: https://bit.ly/2ldeqLE</p>
25/09/19	Debate	HoL	<p>Spending Round 2019 Read here.</p>

Transport – Investment strategy

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
05/09/19	Press Release	DfT	<p>New government-funded cycling routes revealed across England. Funding boost for National Cycle Network. Read here.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	<p>Transport: Finance: Written question - 286791</p> <p>Asked by Douglas Chapman To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the recommendation of the National Infrastructure Assessment to provide devolved, long-term transport funding to all city regions.</p> <p>Answered by: Rishi Sunak The government is carefully considering the National Infrastructure Commission's recommendations, including on transport funding for cities. It is already investing significantly in intra-city transport with the £2.5 billion Transforming Cities Fund set up in 2017 which provides devolved funding to six Mayoral Combined Authorities outside of London and competitive funding to up to twelve shortlisted city regions. The National Infrastructure Strategy will be published later in the autumn setting out the government's assessment of the NIC's recommendations, alongside ambitious plans for future capital spending.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Aviation: Renewable Fuels: Written question - 286606</p> <p>Asked by Gareth Thomas To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set targets for the proportion of aviation fuel required to be sustainable sources; and if he will make a statement.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman</p>

			<p>The Government is encouraging the production and use of sustainable alternative aviation fuels in the UK. Recent changes to the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) mean that renewable aviation fuels are eligible for reward, in the form of tradeable certificates.</p> <p>Additionally, the Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition (the F4C) makes up to £20 million of capital funding available to projects that will produce low carbon waste-based fuels to be used in aeroplanes and lorries.</p> <p>The Government welcomes the aviation sector's positive progress in responding to the challenge of addressing its impact on climate change, including through new and innovative projects to convert waste to jet fuel. As the new Minister of State for the Future of Transport, I am actively considering further policies that the Government can put in place to assist the long-term uptake of sustainable alternative fuels in this sector.</p>
11/09/19	Speeches	NIC	<p>Sir John Armitt speech to Cities Summit Read here.</p>

Transport – Major road network

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
03/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>M65:Written question - 282295</p> <p>Asked by Graham P Jones To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to work with Transport for the North to expand the M65 to Bradford and Leeds.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman The Department announced in March 2019 that Highways England would work with Transport for the North on a study looking at options for improving road links between the M65 and north and west Yorkshire. The output of this</p>

			study will inform consideration of the case for future investment.
03/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Roads: Carbon Emissions: Written question - 282530</p> <p>Asked by Alex Sobel</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the amount of CO2 produced in the production and maintenance of roads; and what assessment he has made of options for reducing those emissions through the use of more environmentally-friendly materials.</p>
05/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Motorways: Repairs and Maintenance: Written question - 284896</p> <p>Asked by Nia Griffith</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is his Department's policy to include in contracts for motorway maintenance and upgrade work (a) penalty clauses for contractors failing to complete work within an agreed time frame and (b) set hours during which such work is to be carried out in order to (i) minimise disruption at peak times and (ii) ensure timely completion of that work.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman</p> <p>Highways England's contractual arrangements for contractors that maintain and repair the Strategic Road Network provides for both financial reward and penalty depending on performance against the agreed cost for work undertaken. There is also redress for poor quality including non-compliance with contract, standards, or statutory obligation, and for failure to deliver to agreed timetables; ranging from contractors having to bear the cost of correcting defective work through to contract termination.</p>

			Works are planned and scheduled so as to minimize disruption whilst not compromising value for money.
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>M62: M606: Written question - HL17683</p> <p>Asked by Baroness Pinnock To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made with plans for a proposed new link road to connect the M62 westbound to the M606; whether capital funding has been allocated for that link road; and whether a timetable for construction has been determined.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton The M62/M606 Chain Bar scheme was included in the first Road Investment Strategy (2015-2020). Subsequently, work on the scheme was paused in October 2017 because it demonstrated low value for money, and therefore no capital funding has been allocated for the remainder of the first Roads Investment Strategy. The Department is currently making decisions on the content of the second Road Investment Strategy which will include an affordable, deliverable investment plan for 2020 to 2025. We expect to announce final decisions on this strategy in the coming months, on which schemes will be included and their delivery timetables.</p>

Transport – Sub-national Transport Boards (STBs) – (TfN, TfSE)

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Transport: Coastal Areas: Written question - 281770</p> <p>Asked by Carolyn Harris To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has plans to allocate funding to local transport and connectivity projects in seaside towns.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman</p>

			<p>We want to unlock the potential of every corner of the UK. Local transport funding decisions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are devolved to the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive, respectively. For England, we welcome proposals from Local Enterprise Partnerships, Sub-national Transport Bodies, local authorities and others on transport investment. These bodies are best placed to prioritise investments in their local areas, including to support coastal towns. When the Department for Transport considers proposals, investment decisions are made based on a rigorous and fair appraisal process that ensures spending goes to the projects and programmes where it is most needed and delivers greatest value-for-money for both taxpayers and passengers.</p> <p>The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's Coastal Communities Fund also supports improvements in productivity in the coastal economy through projects promoting investment in innovation, infrastructure or skills provision.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>A303: Stonehenge: Written question - 285383</p> <p>Asked by Vicky Foxcroft To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the estimated cost is of the A303 Stonehenge improvement scheme.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman The estimated cost is £1.7 billion (or £1.92 billion including VAT).</p>

Transport – Automated electric vehicle bill

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/09/19	Press Release	Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership	LowCVP calls for closer integration of life cycle assessment to inform technology choices Read here.

Transport – rail

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
03/09/19	Ministerial Statement	DfT	DfT: HS2 Update. Read here.
03/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>East Coast Railway Line: Written question - 281757</p> <p>Asked by Catherine McKinnell Department for Transport East Coast Railway Line To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions his Department has held with Network Rail on future priorities for investment in the East Coast Main Line for Control Period 7 (CP7) 2024–2029.</p> <p>A Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris Answered on: 03 September 2019 The Government has announced Control Period 6 investment of up to £780m in the East Coast Main Line (ECML), which demonstrates Government's commitment to the ECML. The Department is working with stakeholders, including Transport for the North, to identify and assess further potential enhancements for the East Coast Main Line. We will take staged decisions to progress further enhancements through the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline process.</p>
03/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Rolling Stock: Fossil Fuels: Written question - 282177</p> <p>Asked by Stephen Twigg To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to remove fossil fuel-powered rolling stock from UK railways by 2040.</p>

			<p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris</p> <p>In February 2018 the Government challenged the industry to produce a vision for how all diesel-only trains could be removed from the rail network by 2040. In response, an industry taskforce, led by Malcom Brown, has identified technologies that can be used to decarbonise rail: electrification and both hydrogen and battery power.</p> <p>We are working with Network Rail to develop a decarbonisation strategy for the rail network to ensure that rail makes its contribution to achieving the Government's target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Great Northern Railway Line: Written question - 284399</p> <p>Asked by Catherine West</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to support the transfer of the Great Northern Rail Line from Govia Thameslink to Transport for London.</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris</p> <p>A decision on the transfer of these services will be dependent on a successful business case being made and will also have to be aligned with the Department's plan for the future of TSGN. This plan will have to take into account the recommendations of the Williams Rail Review, which reports in the autumn.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Heathrow Airport: Railways: Written question - 285455</p> <p>Asked by Luke Pollard</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow is; and whether the project is fully funded.</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris</p> <p>The Government supports the development of a Western Rail Link to Heathrow, subject to a satisfactory business case and the agreement of</p>

			<p>acceptable terms with the Heathrow Aviation industry. The Western Rail Link to Heathrow is included in the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, and in line with our normal rail investment process, the scheme is fully funded to its next business case review point.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Trains: Fuel Cells: Written question - 287613</p> <p>Asked by Luke Pollard To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential for hydrogen trains to operate on the UK rail network in the next five years.</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris In February 2018 the Government challenged the rail industry to produce a vision for how all diesel-only trains could be removed from the rail network by 2040. In response, an industry taskforce, led by Malcom Brown, has identified hydrogen alongside electrification and battery power as technologies that can be used to decarbonise rail. The Department is working to accelerate the development of new low-carbon technologies so that they can be deployed on the network as soon as possible. We are currently funding a project that will see the UK's first operating hydrogen train tested on Network Rail's mainline infrastructure. We are working with Network Rail to develop a decarbonisation strategy that will identify appropriate decarbonisation technologies, including hydrogen, for each part of our rail network. This strategy will ensure that rail makes its contribution to achieving the Government's target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Great Western Railway: Trains: Written question - HL17588</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw</p>

			<p>To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the contracted level of reliability in regard to failures in the service specified in the contract between the Department for Transport and Hitachi for provision of CL800 Inter City Express trains for the Great Western Railway.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton</p> <p>The contract for the provision of Class 800 Inter-City Express trains for the Great Western Railway between the Secretary of State for Transport and Agility Trains West includes an availability-based performance regime where deductions from payments are made if trains are not made available for passenger service. As such, while the agreement between the Secretary of State and Agility Trains West does not include a contracted level of reliability it states a number of circumstances, including failures of trains in service, where payment deductions apply.</p>
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railway Signals: Written question - HL17706 Read here.</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw</p> <p>To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to encourage Network Rail to generate the electricity it consumes from standby electricity generators for its signalling instalments from renewable energy sources.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton</p> <p>Network Rail is conducting a study to assess the potential for large scale renewable energy generation across its estate. The long-term aim of the project is to see Network Rail generating renewable electricity for both train traction and other uses. The Department for Transport recently funded a demonstrator project that has connected 100 solar panels to</p>

			the Wessex route's traction system, with energy from the panels set to power signalling and lights.
09/09/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>High Speed 2 Railway Line: Written question - 282546</p> <p>Asked by Craig Tracey To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to reports that the Chair of HS2 Ltd, Mr Allan Cook has written to his Department stating the high-speed line cannot be delivered within its £56bn budget, what steps he is taking to update Parliament on the new cost projections for High Speed Two; when he plans to publish the findings of Mr Cook's review; and if he will make a statement.</p> <p>Corrected answer by: Paul Maynard The Prime Minister has appointed Douglas Oakervee to chair an independent review of HS2 to consider whether and how we proceed with the project. The review will consider all existing evidence on the project and consider a number of aspects of the programme, including its benefits and impacts; affordability and efficiency; deliverability; and scope and phasing, including its relationship with Northern Powerhouse Rail. The Review's full terms of reference are available on gov.uk. Allan Cook's findings will be part of the evidence for this review. A final report will be sent to the Department in the autumn to inform the Government's decision on the next steps for the project. We will publish this Review and take decisions on the HS2 project once we have considered the findings. The Government has published Allan Cook's assessment and is available in the libraries of both Houses.</p>
16/09/19	Press Release	DfT	<p>Transport Secretary acts on HS2 ancient woodland clearances during Oakervee review. Read here.</p>

24/09/19	Press Release	Labour Party	Labour Fringe 2019: What will rail look like under a Labour Government? Read here.
24/09/19	Press Release	Labour Party	Labour Fringe 2019: The Transport Infrastructure Revolution: Why we need it and how we can get it? Read here.
26/09/19	Press Release	Midlands Connect	True benefits of HS2 REVEALED for the first time; extra capacity would mean improved rail services for 73 stations on existing network. Read here.
30/09/19	Press Release	Conservative Party	Conservative Fringe 2019: The Railway Interview Read here.

Devolution deals

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
05/09/19	Written Q&A	Cabinet office	<p>Cabinet Office: Training: Written question - 284585</p> <p>Asked by John Lamont To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has for training on devolution for the Civil Service.</p> <p>Answered by: Kevin Foster It has never been more important for civil servants to understand devolution. As we leave the EU a whole range of powers will return from Brussels and the Civil Service must be ready to understand how those powers interact with the devolution settlements. My department champions devolution capability right across the Civil Service through the flagship Devolution and You programme. Our learning and development offer is extensive, ranging from online training to immersive workshops, work shadowing and written guidance. Departments and devolved administrations also create tailored devolution training on their specific policy areas and priorities. We are constantly reviewing Devolution and You to develop additional training. For example, we are working right now on enhancing our work shadowing and interchange scheme so more civil servants can spend time directly working in different administrations and different parts of the UK.</p>

20/09/19	Press Release	LGA	LGA sets out Queen's Speech seven-point plan to boost public services. Read here.
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Environment – 25 year environment plan

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Environment – Waste

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Environment – Air Quality

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/09/19	Debate	HoC	Vessel Emissions: River Thames Read here.

Brexit – BEIS, Defra, HCLG, DExEU & committees

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/09/19	Debate	HoC	European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 6) Bill Read here.
06/09/19	Debate	HoC	UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Read here.