

ADEPT: Parliamentary monitoring October 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

6 November: Budget announcement

12 December: General Election

31 January: Date UK due to leave the EU

No further recess dates announced

Planning – Housing

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/10/19	Press Release	LGA	LGA responds to latest house building statistics. Read here.
23/10/19	Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Housing: Construction written answer - 62</p> <p>Asked by: Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire) : To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Department is taking to support sustainable house-building. [62]</p> <p>Answered by: Esther McVey (Tatton) :The Department is committed to increasing the sustainability of new homes. On 1 October the government launched a consultation on stronger building regulations that will pave the way for the Future Homes Standard. These 2020 changes aim to cut carbon emissions in new homes by almost a third, while keeping household bills low. We propose that new homes built to the Future Homes Standard from 2025 should have 75-80 per cent fewer carbon dioxide emissions than ones built to current building regulations standards. Developers will be expected to use new technologies such as air source heat pumps and the latest generation of solar panels. A further consultation will follow, in the coming months, proposing changes</p>

NPPF – Land value capture

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
08/10/19	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	<p>Valuation Office Agency: Finance: Written question - 294200</p> <p>Asked by Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of funding for the Valuation Office Agency in order to ensure that it is able to effectively process business rates appeals.</p> <p>Answered by: Jesse Norman The Treasury has provided the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) with the resources it needs to deliver the valuations and property advice required to support the smooth running of the taxation and benefits system. At Spending Review 2019, HMRC (the VOA's sponsor department) received a resource budget increase in line with inflation from 2019/20 to 2020/21. The Treasury continues to work closely with the VOA and HMRC to understand the VOA's resource requirements to deliver its functions and is committed to ensure that the VOA is appropriately funded.</p>
08/10/19	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	<p>Service Industries: Non-domestic Rates: Written question - 294197</p> <p>Asked by Steve Double To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the application of state aid rules to business rates on the hospitality sector.</p> <p>Answered by: Jesse Norman</p>

			<p>While the UK is an EU member state the UK continues to be bound by State aid rules.</p> <p>The Government has taken repeated action to reduce the burden of business rates for all ratepayers, including those in the hospitality sector.</p>
08/10/19	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	<p>Non-domestic Rates: Appeals: Written question - 294199</p> <p>Asked by Steve Double To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the business rates appeal system Check, Challenge, Appeal.</p> <p>Answered by: Jesse Norman Official statistics published by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) on 22 August show that the system is operating as intended with issues being resolved at the appropriate stage. At 30 June 2019, 100,740 Checks and 17,010 Challenges had been registered, of which 89,440 Checks and 6,300 Challenges had been resolved. Most Checks are currently being resolved in 3 months and most Challenges within 12 months.</p> <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government intends to carry out a review of the effectiveness of the Check, Challenge, Appeal system. The VOA is also conducting a customer evaluation of the delivery of the new system.</p>

Energy – Local authority projects

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
21/10/19	Q&A	BEIS	Energy: Costs. Read here.

Digital – Broadband & mobile

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
03/10/19	Q&A	MHCLG	Digital Technology: Urban Areas Read here.

Economy – Fair funding review

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/10/19	Press release	MHCLG	Local government finance settlement 2020-21 proposals unveiled following biggest funding increase in almost a decade. Read here.

Transport – Investment strategy

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
17/10/19	Committee Summary	DfT	Priorities of the new Secretary of State for Transport. Read here.
22/10/19	Press release	Green Alliance & Localis	Local areas will miss opportunities of net zero goals unless Government turbocharges local industrial strategy. Read here.

Transport – Major road network

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
07/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	Roads: Finance: Written question - 293735

			<p>Asked by Sandy Martin To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will fund the improvement to junctions on the A14 with the A1156 (East of Ipswich) and A12 (North), the A1189, the A1214 and A12 (South) and the A1156 (West of Ipswich) as requested by the New Anglia LEP and associated organisations.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman The Department is considering this and other proposals for enhancements to the Strategic Road Network as part of the second Road Investment Strategy. The Strategy, which will set out an investment plan for 2020 to 2025, is expected to be announced shortly.</p> <p>Development work for improvements to Copdock Interchange (the junction between the A14 and A12(South)) is being supported with funding from the Port Infrastructure Fund, as announced on 26 September.</p>
07/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Roads: Finance: Written question - 293734</p> <p>Asked by Sandy Martin To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291482, what the length of time was between the submission of a strategic outline business case by the relevant sub-national transport body and the communication of an initial assessment of the proposed scheme by his Department for the most recent scheme costing over £100 million for which his Department provided such an assessment.</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman All Strategic Outline Business Cases which were submitted to the Department on 31st July have gone through a robust assessment process over the summer. This followed guidance made available on gov.uk.</p>

			<p>The Department has been in contact with Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs), including Transport East, to discuss the outcomes of the assessment process for all regions' Strategic Outline Business Cases, including that for the provision of a North Ipswich bypass. Formal advice on the scheme will be sent to Suffolk County Council shortly.</p>
21/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Roads: Repairs and Maintenance: Written questions - 347 Asked by: Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) : To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to encourage local authorities to use recycled plastic to repair potholes . [347]</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) :The Government is committed to exploring innovative ideas and processes for more environmentally friendly ways of constructing, repairing and maintaining road surfaces. As part of the Live Labs research programme in conjunction with the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) and private partners, the Department for Transport Organisation > Executives > Departments/dgs > Hm Government Departments > Department for Transport announced in January 2019 funding of £1.6 million to Cumbria County Council to extend a trial for the selection and testing of recycled plastic in surfacing and structural treatments on the local road network. This trial will assess the suitability and durability of the plastics additives from minor patching work and pothole repairs through to major resurfacing. As part of the Live Labs programme, projects will be evaluated and the findings disseminated to highway</p>

			authorities throughout the UK. The Government will encourage local highway authorities to adopt those policies, processes and new ways of working, successfully trialled through the Live Labs Programme.

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

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/10/19	Debate	HoC	Shared Rural Network. Read here.

Transport – Automated electric vehicle bill

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Transport – rail

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
01/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Rolling Stock: Modernisation: Written question - 291104</p> <p>Asked by Gillian Keegan To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to encourage the modernisation of train carriages.</p> <p>Answered by: Paul Maynard The department sets out its requirements for passenger satisfaction in each franchise agreement. The passengers' traveling environment contributes to passengers' satisfaction scores. As part of the franchise competition process bidders are asked to submit proposals for</p>

			<p>initiatives to enhance rolling stock to deliver consistently high standards for passengers. This may be through refurbishment of existing rolling stock or the procurement of new trains.</p>
01/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>High Speed 2 Railway Line and East-West Rail Link: Written question - 290719</p> <p>Asked by Daniel Zeichner To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet Colleagues on a potential intersection between East West Rail and High Speed 2; and what plans he has to implement a connection between those lines.</p> <p>Answered by: Paul Maynard The HS2 and East West Rail lines are planned to intersect in the Calvert area to enable access to the HS2 Maintenance Depot from the East West Rail lines. There is no intention for any integration of passenger or freight services between the two lines.</p>
01/10/19	Debate	HoC	<p>South Western Railway:</p> <p>Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North) (Ind) I thank the Speaker for having granted this debate. I recognise that the performance of South Western Railway is not a new subject, rehearsed as it was in this Chamber by the right hon. Member for Twickenham (Sir Vince Cable) less than a year ago and as it has been repeatedly in general debates touching on rail issues. Read here.</p>
07/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>East Midlands Railway: Written question - HL17793</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on greenhouse gas emissions of their decision that East Midlands Trains should order 165 new bi-mode vehicles to fulfil their franchise commitment as compared with an all-electric fleet using renewable energy.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton Passengers expect high quality rail services and we are committed to electrification where it delivers passenger benefits and</p>

			<p>good value for money for taxpayers, but we will also take advantage of state-of-the-art new technology to improve journeys.</p> <p>In line with the Department for Transport's processes for appraising transport investments, an economic appraisal including the environmental impacts has been carried out using the DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance, incorporating DEFRA guidance on transport related environmental impacts. Using this methodology, benefits from reduced greenhouse gas emissions are assessed over a 60 year appraisal period.</p> <p>We expect the new bi-mode trains to deliver an overall better environmental performance than the existing diesel trains on this route and so contribute to further improving this record.</p>
07/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Midland Main Railway Line: Electrification: Written question - HL17854</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw</p> <p>To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 11 July (HL16737), what plans they have (1) to review their decision to deploy new bi-mode trains on the Midland Main Line in the light of the substantial cost reductions being made on current electrification projects, and (2) to compare the present and future costs associated with the bi-mode trains in the light of experience with such trains on the Great Western Main Line.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton</p> <p>The Department does not plan to review the decision to deploy bi-mode trains on the Midland Main Line. The new East Midlands franchise, which was awarded to Abellio in April 2019, will deliver new bi-mode intercity trains from 2022. These trains offer operational flexibility and resilience on both electrified and non-electrified sections of the network.</p> <p>Rolling stock procurement and operational costs are a matter for train operators or owners. East Midlands Railway is committed to the procurement and operation of these</p>

			bi-mode trains as set out in the Franchise Agreement.
08/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Trains: Exhaust Emissions: Written question - HL17794</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to cease ordering bi-mode rolling stock in order to contribute to the Railway Industry Task Force's aim to secure an 80 to 100 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2040; and if not, why not.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton The Government has set an ambitious, legally binding target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the UK by 2050. The rail industry must play its part in achieving this target. We are working with Network Rail to develop a costed decarbonisation network strategy which will inform decisions on the scale and pace of rail decarbonisation. This work will consider the full range of available technologies and identify which is most appropriate for each part of the rail network. Decisions on rolling stock will be taken as part of this wider strategy, alongside decisions on infrastructure. Bi-mode trains are able to use the parts of the network that are currently electrified and have the flexibility to run in only electric mode in the future.</p>
08/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Thameslink Railway Line: Power Failures: Written question - HL17792</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take following the power surge on Thameslink Class 700 trains which caused delays to the Govia Thameslink Railway service; whether, during procurement of those trains, the question of power surges was mentioned in the specification of these trains; and if so, whether such problems were anticipated.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton Following the loss of power on 9 August which affected the operation of Class 700</p>

			<p>Thameslink and Class 717 Moorgate trains, Ministers and officials have held discussions with Siemens, the manufacturer of the trains, and Govia Thameslink Railway, the train operator. Investigations are being undertaken by both Siemens and Govia Thameslink Railway to understand why some trains did not restart and what needs to be done to ensure that trains restart in future. The investigations are considering, amongst other things, the Thameslink trains' conformance with power supply compatibility standards that were specified in the procurement of the trains.</p>
16/10/19	Press Release	RIA	<p>RIA welcomes publication of the Rail Enhancements List. Read here.</p>
21/10/19	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Rolling Stock: Written questions – 179</p> <p>Asked by: Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Pacer trains are due to be in operation on 1 January 2020; and on which routes those trains are planned to be in operation on that date. [179]</p> <p>Answered by Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry): Our absolute priority is ensuring passengers in the north benefit from new trains, more services and increased capacity as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Northern retired the first of its 102 Pacers in August and it plans to remove two thirds by December 2019. Northern advises that, subject to receiving appropriate dispensation, up to 34 (11 Class 142 and 23 Class 144) Pacers will remain in the fleet for a short time into 2020 to cover the delay in delivery of new trains into the franchise. If these trains were not allowed to continue in the fleet, then a large number of services would need to be cancelled and causing disruption for passengers across the North. Northern's current plan is to remove all 142s by February 17, 2020 and to remove 144s by May 17, 2020.</p> <p>The Pacers will operate mainly in South Yorkshire including Sheffield to Gainsborough Central, Huddersfield and Doncaster as well as areas of West Yorkshire and Manchester .</p>

21/10/19	Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: Capital Investment: Written answer – 223</p> <p>Asked by: Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) : To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Government's announcement of 10 October 2019 on an infrastructure revolution, what his timescale is for the (a) enhancements pipeline for Network Rail in Control Period 6 between 2019 and 2024 and (b) market led investment proposals for the rail industry. [223]</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry): The Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) was published on 16 th October 2019 and lists all schemes currently in the pipeline and can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-network-enhancements-pipeline-autumn-2019-update A core principle of the RNEP is that the Government only ever commits to the next stage of development. Timescales for the development of market-led proposals are determined by the pace at which promoters develop them as they are market-led. However, we continue to engage with the promoters of a number of proposals submitted to the department through the 2018 call for ideas.</p>
23/10/19	Q&A	DfT	<p>Transport: Sustainable Development: Written answer - 621</p> <p>Asked by: Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to promote greener alternatives for (a) long-distance and (b) international transport. [621]</p> <p>Answered by: George Freeman (Mid Norfolk): Transport needs to undergo radical transformation to meet our legally binding carbon budgets and achieve net zero by 2050. The UK's first Transport Decarbonisation Plan was announced on 15 October and will</p>

			bring together a bold and ambitious programme of coordinated action needed to end the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050. It will build on our existing modal strategies, including Road to Zero, the Aviation Green Paper, the Clean Maritime Plan and our work with the Rail Decarbonisation Task Force and OLEV and is expected to be complete next year.
24/10/19	Q&A	DfT	<p>HS2: Oral answer - 900110</p> <p>Asked by: Michael Fabricant (Con) (Lichfield) : What recent discussions he has had with Douglas Oakervee on potential alternative routes for High Speed Two phases 1 and 2a; and if he will make a statement. [900110]</p> <p>Answered by: Paul Maynard (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport): I understand the intense interest that there will be across the House in this issue. The Oakervee review is ongoing and will consider all three phases of the project. I met Douglas Oakervee last week for an administrative discussion about the review, and once the review is finalised the Department has committed to making it public.</p> <p>Michael Fabricant: It is not just the cost of HS2, but the route: it does not even connect with Birmingham New Street or Heathrow, or meet its original intention of connecting with the channel tunnel. It does none of those. Doug Oakervee has told me that the amount of time they have to consider all this is very limited—it is very challenging indeed—and there is not enough time to consider alternative routes, so will the Minister consider giving them more time to do just that?</p> <p>Paul Maynard: As I say, we have not put any time limit on Mr Oakervee's findings, and he will report when he is ready to do so. As my hon. Friend will know, the current plans for phase 1 would see passengers connecting to Heathrow via Old Oak Common, and services would also call at Euston where</p>

passengers can make onward travel plans, including to Eurostar at King's Cross St Pancras.

Graham Stringer (Lab) (Blackley and Broughton): Any change to the route of HS2 is likely to lead to further delays and extra cost. Is not the solution to HS2 to put competent people in charge of delivering it, and not to mess about with it and give an advantage to those who are opposed to it?

Paul Maynard: I have no doubt that Mr Oakervee is watching proceedings here carefully this morning to hear what colleagues have to say. That will be one of the issues that comes within his terms of reference and he will be reporting on.

Dame Cheryl Gillan (Con) (Chesham and Amersham): It is reported in New Civil Engineer this morning that the advisory panel to the so-called independent Oakervee review has been asked to sign non-disclosure agreements in an attempt to stop leaks. How can it be right that a publicly funded project is again trying to conceal information about its viability by gagging the very people who have in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of this dreadful project?

Paul Maynard: Mr Oakervee is trying to ensure that he works consensually with the panel to ensure that they reach a single report. The management of the panel and the individuals on it, who cover a wide range of views, is a matter for Mr Oakervee.

Tim Farron (LD) (Westmorland and Lonsdale): HS2 is an investment for the north of England, but it would be a lot more popular in the north of England if the trains actually stopped somewhere in the far north of England. At present, there are no plans whatsoever for HS2 trains to stop in Cumbria, even though the Lake District is the biggest visitor destination in the country after London. Will the Minister fix this immediately?

Paul Maynard :The hon. Gentleman is perhaps tempting me to go a little too far in presuming that everything is going ahead. I do not want to pre-empt Mr Oakervee's report, but he will be aware that under the previous plans, classic-compatible trains will run north of Wigan and will therefore be able to stop at a range of stations, including Kendal, Oxenholme in the Lake District and Carlisle . That is part of what the West Coast Partnership will be able to consider.

(Mr Speaker):I congratulate the right hon.

Member for Aylesbury (Sir David Lidington) on his moderately demonstrative tie.

Sir David Lidington (Con) (Aylesbury): From you, Mr Speaker, I take that as a compliment. Will my hon. Friend instruct HS2 Ltd that it and its contractors should follow its own construction code and give local residents along phase 1 due and proper advance notice of the enabling works that it intends to carry out, instead of the high-handed, peremptory and arrogant approach that HS2 Ltd is currently taking?

Paul Maynard: I am disappointed to hear what my right hon. Friend has to say and I am more than happy to meet him to obtain further details. It is very important that HS2 Ltd continues to work with local communities rather than acting upon them when it carries out these works. I look forward to hearing further details.

Rachael Maskell (Lab/Co-op) (York Central): Not only has the Williams review yet to see the light of day, but the Oakervee report is ready. His team has pulled out all the stops to get this to the Minister next week, so why is the Secretary of State saying that he will not publish it until after the general election? Is it because he intends to cut off the economic opportunities of the north, or is he worried that it will upset voters in the south?

Paul Maynard :I will take no lectures from the hon. Lady on how to support the north

			economically, or indeed, in transport terms. I am delighted that she lives in a world of alternate reality—neither the Secretary of State nor I have received Mr Oakervee's report. She clearly knows more than I do, or maybe she is making it up. [Interruption.]
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Devolution deals

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
02/10/19	Oral answer	HM Treasury	<p>Northern Powerhouse Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): I thank Ministers for providing funding to help evidence and establish the business case for reopening Middlewich railway station—a key priority for my constituents. What wider fiscal steps are they taking to support my constituency by supporting the northern powerhouse and midlands engine? Sajid Javid: I thank my hon. Friend for working tirelessly on behalf of her constituents to ensure that more infrastructure, including rail and road, is delivered locally. She will know that one of the first commitments of the new Administration was to Northern Powerhouse Rail and further funding for the midland's engine. She may also know that yesterday I announced a White Paper on further devolution, which I think she will welcome too.</p>

Environment – 25 year environment plan

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
08/10/19	Debate	HoC	Government Plan for Net Zero Emissions Read here.
18/10/19	Debate	HoC	The Climate Emergency Read here.
22/10/19	Written Q&A	BEIS	<p>What steps she is taking to support the development of the new clean-energy technologies: Written question: 900051</p> <p>Asked by: Michael Tomlinson (Mid Dorset and North Poole) : What steps she is taking to</p>

			<p>support the development of new clean-energy technologies. [900051]</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Skidmore (Kingswood) :The move to cleaner economic growth is one of the greatest industrial opportunities of our time, and our Clean Growth Grand Challenge sets out how we will maximise advantages for UK industry.</p> <p>We have allocated £102.5 million to the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's 'Prospering from the Energy Revolution' challenge and invested in the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.</p>
29/10/19	Q&A	BEIS	<p>Carbon Emissions: Written question - HL138</p> <p>Asked by: Lord Taylor Of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to make 2025 the new target for zero carbon emissions. [HL 138]</p> <p>Answered by: Lord Duncan Of Springbank: Our independent advisors, the Committee on Climate Change, made clear in their report on Net Zero, published on 2 May 2019, that they do not consider it credible for the UK to aim to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions earlier than 2050. We have legislated in line with this advice; to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and end the UK's contribution to climate change.</p>
29/10/19	Press release	DEFRA	<p>Landmark Environment Bill moves forward. Read here.</p>

Environment – Waste

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/10/19	Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Waste Disposal: Written Answers - 3807</p> <p>Asked by: Sandy Martin (Ipswich): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to inform local authorities of changes to the financing of waste</p>

			<p>collection as a result of the policies in Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England published on 18 December 2018. [3807]</p> <p>Answered by: Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane): Earlier this year, the Government published three consultations: 'consistency in household and business recycling', 'reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system' and 'introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers'. The consultations sought views on the policies in our Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) including the financing of waste collections.</p> <p>During the consultation period, we held events for local authorities where we invited views on the proposals in the consultations. We have also made it clear to local authorities that the Government is committed to funding any additional net costs that the new policies will bring. We have also made local authorities aware that the reform of the packaging regulations will mean that they receive funding to pay for the collection of packaging materials for recycling.</p> <p>The Environment Bill was introduced on 15 October https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2019-2020/0003/20003.pdf . It contains the draft legislation relating to the policies in the RWS. We will continue to have regular discussions as we develop our final proposals which we will consult on in 2020.</p>

Environment – Air Quality

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
21/10/19	Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Pregnancy: Air Pollution – Written answer – 785</p> <p>Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the study published in Nature Communications on 17 September 2019, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the presence of sooty carbon particles in the placentas of pregnant women caused by polluted air. [758]</p>

			<p>Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane) :Although the Secretary of State (SoS) for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has not had any recent discussions with the SoS of the Department of Health and Social Care on the presence of sooty carbon particles in the placentas of pregnant women caused by polluted air, Defra officials work closely with counterparts across Government Departments to ensure policies to improve air quality are joined up, to reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health and the environment.</p> <p>Our Clean Air Strategy focussed on delivering national emissions commitments to reduce the emission of five key pollutants (including PM2.5) by 2030 and committed to the setting of a new ambitious long-term target to reduce concentrations of PM2.5. In addition, our landmark Environment Bill builds on this ambition and includes a duty to set an ambitious legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter, the pollutant that causes the greatest harm to human health.</p>
21/10/19	Greater London Authority	Press release	<p>London Kids exposed to 5 times more air pollution on school run. Read here.</p>
22/10/19	DEFRA	Written Q&A	<p>Agriculture: Carbon Emissions: Written question - 730</p> <p>Asked by: Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) : To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to establish (a) a baseline for existing carbon dioxide emissions from agriculture (b) an agreed methodology for measuring emissions and (c) a pathway for zero emissions by 2050 and a methodology for assessing progress towards that target; and if she will make a statement. [730]</p> <p>Answered by: George Eustice (Camborne and Redruth) : a) In the UK, agricultural Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions statistics are calculated and updated annually, with the data forming part of the UK's National GHG Inventory. The UK's reporting methodology is built on scientific</p>

		<p>understanding developed through the joint Defra -Devolved Administration funded £12.6m Agricultural GHG Research Platform. As such it accurately reflects and captures UK agricultural conditions and practices. Government also publishes emissions data online, the most recent update from April this year is available here: https://data.gov.uk/dataset/9a1e58e5-d1b6-457d-a414-335ca546d52c/provisional-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics</p> <p>b) The methodology used to estimate emissions from agriculture is compliant with guidelines set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This ensures transparency, accuracy, completeness and allows comparisons between countries. Along with 193 other signatories to the Paris Agreement, the UK has committed to using a common approach on emissions reporting, which is vital for robust and consistent reporting of global GHG emissions reductions.</p> <p>c) On 27 June, the UK became the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding target to achieve net zero [100% reductions] GHG emissions from across the UK economy by 2050, bound by the Climate Change Act. The Act also introduced carbon budgets which cap emissions over successive 5-year periods and must be set 12 years in advance. The Committee on Climate Change, our independent advisors, assesses emissions data to judge whether the UK is on course to meet its carbon budgets, and reports this progress to Parliament and the Devolved Administrations annually. The Government then has a statutory obligation to respond to this advice, laying out the progress and policies underway to meet our targets. This week the Government announced that a new independent Office for Environmental Protection will be established to scrutinise environmental policy and law. The office's powers will cover all climate change legislation and hold the Government to account on its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>The Government recognises the importance of reducing emissions further in the food,</p>
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			<p>farming and land use sectors. The Clean Growth Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan set out the Government's ambition for how this will be achieved, including through environmental land management, strengthening biosecurity and control of endemic diseases in livestock, and encouraging use of low emissions fertilisers. This year we have started developing a new emissions reduction plan for agriculture, in which we will set out our long-term vision for a more productive, low-carbon farming sector in England.</p> <p>Our new Environmental Land Management Scheme will be underpinned by payment of public money for the provision of environmental public goods. Trees and woodland can contribute to numerous environmental goods and services. Activities to be paid for may include tree planting and woodland creation, and woodland management, including through natural regeneration. Trees and woodlands have multiple benefits and can contribute to many of the environmental outcomes we want to achieve, including mitigation of and adaption to climate change.</p>
23/10/19	Press release	Asthma UK	<p>Toxic air is scourge on nation's health, warns charity in response to new air pollution study. Read here.</p>
25/10/19	Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Air Pollution: Written answer - 2664</p> <p>Asked by: Mr Jim Cunningham (Coventry South) : To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to reduce levels of fine particulate matter in the air. [2664]</p> <p>Answered by: Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane): Our Clean Air Strategy, published in January 2019, proposes a comprehensive suite of actions required across all parts of Government to improve air quality and maximise public health benefits. This includes national regulations to reduce emissions from domestic burning, industry and farming, alongside an improved framework for local</p>

			<p>Government to tackle more localised issues. By implementing the policies in the strategy, we aim to reduce fine particulate matter concentrations and halve the number of people living in areas above the World Health Organisation guideline level for fine particulate matter by 2025.</p> <p>The measures in the Environment Bill take forward key aspects of this strategy, and give local authorities more effective tools for tackling domestic burning in smoke control areas, which will help reduce harmful particulate matter pollution. Through the Bill, we will also introduce a framework for setting legally binding environmental targets, along with a specific duty on Government to set a target for fine particulate matter, which will deliver significant public health benefits.</p>
28/10/19	Q&A	HMT	<p>Infrastructure: Written answer - 3520</p> <p>Asked by: Kelvin Hopkins (Luton North) : To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government will take a systematic approach to the UK's infrastructure in the proposed National Infrastructure Strategy as advocated by the Institution of Civil Engineers ; and whether this will include a programme of comprehensive electrification of Britain's rail track to help meet the UK's climate change obligations. [3520]</p> <p>Answered by: Jesse Norman (Hereford and South Herefordshire): The National Infrastructure Strategy will be informed by the recommendations from the National Infrastructure Commission 's first National Infrastructure Assessment and will set out the Government's long-term vision for infrastructure across the whole of the UK, including action on meeting the UK's target of net zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>The Department for Transport published its Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline earlier this month, which includes electrification schemes. In addition, Network Rail is developing a Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy which also serves to inform the Government's</p>

			decisions on electrification, alongside other technologies such as battery and hydrogen.
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Brexit – BEIS, Defra, HCLG, DExEU & committees

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
03/10/19	Committee summary	Public accounts committee	Exiting the EU: supplying the Health and Social Care sectors – summary. Read here.
08/10/19	Debate	HoC	Preparations for Leaving the EU. Read here.