

# Chris Grayling: Investing in transport, delivering a strong economy

Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

***(Check against delivery)***

“Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a Government that is dealing with big decisions.

A government that takes big decisions.

A government that is doing things that others have run away from.

As Transport Secretary, I am proud to be part of a Government who finally, after 50 years of delay, got a Parliamentary majority – on both sides of the house – in favour of expanding Heathrow Airport

Our flagship airport is full, and there are airlines queuing up to fly from it.

There are cities all round the UK which need to be better connected to the outside world.

We have some great airport success stories. Manchester. Belfast. Leeds Bradford. Newcastle. Edinburgh and Glasgow. Cardiff. And of course here in Birmingham.

But we need a strong hub airport to succeed, and the vote in Parliament, with a majority of nearly 300, has set us on the path to delivering that expanded Heathrow.

Beyond Heathrow we have also given our regional airports freedom to expand as well.

Today I can announce our recommitment to one of those airports, Newquay. It is vital to the economy of the South West, and the Government provides support to the crucial air links to London. I can tell you that we will be renewing that support for another four years, and with the jets our fantastic team of Cornish MPs have been calling for.

And while we are on the subject of teams, let me say a word of thanks to mine. My ministers Jo Johnson, Liz Sugg, Jesse Norman and the first female Muslim government minister in the commons – Nus Ghani.

Our two PPSs, James Heapey and Bim Afolami. Our Commons whip, Michelle Donelan and our fresh, new whip in the Lords – someone you might just remember, Lord Young, or Sir George Young as he was when he was Transport

Secretary. And finally Stephen Metcalfe who is Government Envoy for Year of Engineering. Thanks to you all.

Of course it hasn't always been an easy year for aviation.

When I stood in front of you a year ago, I had just returned from Manchester Airport where I met the first flight bringing passengers back after the collapse of Monarch Airlines.

In the following days we brought back nearly 100,000 people.

And when I say we, this was a huge team effort involving other UK airlines, the Civil Aviation Authority and ten Government Departments.

We all worked together to get people home and I am proud of the swift response. It was a tribute to what this country can do in times of change.

The loss of Monarch was a sad day.

But our aviation sector continues to thrive.

The Monarch planes are now flying under different colours.

The slots at the airports were snapped up quickly.

And our successful aviation industry moved on to meet new challenges.

I am proud to live in a country where our industries and our businesses instinctively know how to adapt and grow following changes.

That ladies and Gentlemen is what will happen to this country after Brexit, regardless of the outcome of negotiations.

And those who say that Brexit will mean the planes stop flying are doomsayers who do not know what they are talking about.

## **RAILWAYS**

Ladies and Gentlemen, whilst our aviation sector has had a strong year, the same cannot be said of our railways.

I have already apologised for the disruption caused by the failures in the introduction of the new timetable in May. It was unacceptable.

And I want to say now again how sorry I am that so many passengers had such a difficult time.

For us as Conservatives it was particularly frustrating.

Because the new timetable is part of a big investment programme in the railways, to deliver more trains and more seats for passengers in both the North and the South.

The chaos cannot and will not be allowed to happen again.

But it is clear that the system has greater challenges than a failed timetable introduction.

In the last twenty years the railways have been through an extraordinary period of growth.

The number of trains and passengers travelling has doubled.

Trains are packed. The network is creaking. Passengers experience too many things going wrong.

Which is why today I can announce that we will introduce once click compensation for delays and disruption – making it easier for people to claim compensation.

But I want the railways to work better for customers.

As Conservatives in Government, we are spending more on rail than any Government in modern times.

New trains.

Upgraded tracks.

New routes. Across the North, in the South and in the Midlands.

But after a decade under Labour when things stood still, we have much ground to catch up.

Do you know, they let a Northern Rail franchise with no new investment at all?

Our response.

We let a Northern Rail franchise which is replacing and refurbishing every single train.

Where Labour fail – Conservatives deliver.

But I do not believe the industry is making the most of our investment.

It's clear that the way our railways are run no longer works when the system is under pressure.

Last year we started to evolve towards a more joined up railway. One team running track and train.

But that process of evolution is no longer enough.

That is why two weeks ago I announced an urgent review of the way our railways work for passengers, led by the former Chief Executive of British Airways, Keith Williams.

We need wholesale change, and I have asked Keith to set out the best way of delivering just that. And to do so quickly.

We will publish a White Paper on delivering a rail revolution for Britain next year, and we will begin work immediately to deliver a more passenger focused railway.

But I have news for our opponents. This will not stop us from investing in our railways.

Here in Birmingham Andy Street and I just unveiled plans for the expansion of this City's rail network, by reopening a line which was axed by British Rail 50 years ago.

It's what can be achieved when there is a strong relationship between a Metro Mayor and a Secretary of State.

And yesterday I joined the Andy for the first piece of construction on the site of the new HS2 station.

It's already helping regenerate another part of Birmingham. But crucially HS2 will ease pressure on our overcrowded rail network.

But it was not only rail that put Birmingham on the transport map.

This is one of our great centres of the automotive industry.

And whilst there is much talk about trains and planes, it is what is happening on our roads that will make the biggest difference to you.

I know that most people depend on a good road system in their daily lives.

Demand for road transport has grown. There are more and more cars and lorries on our roads.

More and more people depend on our roads for their livelihoods.

So we have launched the biggest roads upgrade programme for decades, investing every penny you pay in car tax back into improving the roads you drive on.

We're expanding capacity on the motorways, with a smart motorways programme that's adding space for motorists from Portsmouth to Oldham. It means an extra lane and less traffic for you.

We've just opened the last leg of motorway grade road from London to Newcastle. Heaven knows why that didn't happen years ago. And it certainly didn't happen when Labour was in power.

Today they accuse us of doing nothing for the North, when it was they who neglected it for so long, leaving us to play catch-up today.

And the same is true across the country...

We're moving ahead with dualling the A303, providing crucial improvements for the South West.

We're upgrading the A14 through East Anglia.

We're starting work on a new crossing to ease the pressures on the M25 at Dartford.

But we know it's not just motorways and big A roads that need investment.

We're also upgrading the Major Road Network – the next tier down of roads which play such an important part in good regional connections.

And today I can announce the details of the first five schemes which will now start in development.

- A new section of the York Outer Ring Road.
- Modernising Gallows Corner in East London.
- The infamous farmyard bottleneck, Grizebeck Bypass, near Barrow in Furness.
- The A614 near Ollerton in Nottinghamshire.
- And new slip roads in Thurrock.

We will work with those local authorities and full details of their schemes will be available in the spring.

I'm also acutely aware that we have problems with the conditions of our roads in many areas.

Potholes are a blight on every motorist. And too many are caused by poor road repairs.

We're already spending record amounts on fixing potholes.

But I will be setting out further plans in the coming weeks to tackle this blight.

But it's not just about building and maintaining roads.

There is a revolution coming in the way we use those roads.

Low emission cars.

Driverless vehicles.

Smart data that improves the way we plan journeys.

Three weeks ago we held the first international zero emission vehicle summit, attracting visitors from around the world, as well as great UK innovators.

Making the transition to a new generation of ultra low and zero emission vehicles is one of the most important challenges of our time.

We have to meet the challenge of climate change, when road transport is one of the biggest contributors to it.

We have to improve air quality in our cities. The health of our citizens makes that essential.

That's why we are committing to ending the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2040, and to making rapid progress towards greener vehicles now.

But I do want to be clear about this.

Newer diesel cars today are cleaner than ever before and of course there will be a role for diesel in years to come while technology evolves.

But for most motorists in and around major towns and cities we want an electric or ultra-low emission vehicle to become the obvious choice for you.

Thanks to help from this Conservative government, motorists are already buying into the need for change. One in twelve of the new cars sold in August were low emission vehicles.

That number will rise.

And we are doing everything we can to support that transition.

Supporting research into battery technology at the Faraday Centre.

Incentivising buyers of low emission vehicles, cars, buses and vans.

It's one of the great challenges for our generation, and we will meet it.

It's more than an electric revolution, though.

We are now rapidly approaching the era of the driverless car.

Every new model launched today seems to do more and more for itself.

We expect the first truly driverless cars to be on our roads within three or four years.

It is going to transform our lives.

With more opportunities for the elderly and disabled to be mobile.

Changing the way people use cars in our Cities.

And helping deliver much better public transport.

But it's not just about our Cities.

I'm only too aware of the need to improve public transport in our rural areas and smaller towns.

We're already seeing the first signs of change that can improve that. New bus

services are starting that respond to a click on your mobile phone, rather than following a set route.

And new types of vehicle will help, like the driverless pods being developed by Westfield here in the West Midlands.

It's a revolution that will truly transform lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen. We are driving real change for the travelling public, and for those who ship freight around the country.

More capacity.

Greener journeys.

Smart use of technology.

Supporting our flourishing shipping industry and ports.

Spending money supporting new cycle routes in our Cities.

But above all investing in transport in a way that Labour never did.

They always promise the earth. They're doing it again now.

But in Government they deliver very little.

The transport investments we are making will be essential to our country in the post-Brexit world.

If we are to be a dynamic, entrepreneurial country, a truly Global Britain, we need the roads, railways, ports and airports to support that. There is much to do. There are problems to solve. But we will deliver for Britain.

## **BREXIT**

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me say a word about Brexit.

You know that I was the first Cabinet Minister to declare publicly for Brexit.

I believe passionately that Britain is doing the right thing.

I have represented Britain on different European Councils for the past eight years. I have seen the workings of the EU, and what it needs to do to secure its future.

But I believe that the EU's needs are not Britain's needs. That we are better outside, as good friends and neighbours, not part of the march towards a federal Europe.

So no one should doubt my Brexit credentials.

We are doing the right thing.

And so is our Prime Minister.

I want us to make sure we get out.

I want us to be in charge of our own destiny.

But I also want a partnership in trade, security and research. It makes sense for all of us. I hope we can agree that partnership.

And yes, we are making preparations in case we cannot. We are planning for all eventualities right across our transport system – and we have been for months and months.

Under Theresa May this country will not accept a deal that is bad for Britain.

Or one that is bad for the union that is the United Kingdom.

So that is why we are backing our Prime Minister.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It's almost a hundred years since the first Labour government.

They have always taken Britain backwards.

They have always cost people jobs.

They sit on the sidelines promising everyone everything, and then leave most people worse off.

And they have never been so extreme and dangerous as they are today.

We cannot allow the election of the most extreme Labour government we have ever seen.

So we have to stick together.

We have to unite to deliver Brexit.

And then take the battle to a group of Marxists who would wreck this country for decades.

It is a historic task, and one where we must succeed."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.