

Growing the UK's haulage industry

The UK has lost market share in long distance haulage. Lower labour rates and lower taxes on vehicles in parts of the EU have allowed undercutting of UK hauliers. The UK did introduce the HGV levy to require foreign hauliers to make some contribution to road costs in the UK, as otherwise their trucks did not pay VED and they often evaded refuelling here to take advantage of lower taxes elsewhere. This has been cancelled for a year.

Now we are independent we need to reconsider our haulage industry. The first thing should be to restore the HGV levy on foreign trucks using our roads and to make sure the UK haulier does not pay twice for using our highways. The idea of the HGV charge was to make a charge for use of our roads by lorries not paying VED.

We could look at the balance of containers that come to the UK unaccompanied and those coming with a tractor unit and driver from the continent. Maybe more could be brought in more cheaply by a continental driver delivering the container to an EU port and a UK driver picking it up at the UK harbour.

The railway needs to bid for more of the longer distance work within the UK, offering single container or waggon marshalling at sufficient locations where UK drivers and haulage companies can pick up the load for the final delivery journey. This becomes more of an option with the decline of passenger use.