

# Working together to build towards a zero carbon economy

In the last two months, China, Japan and South Korea have all set new net-zero targets. As have HSBC, PWC, Facebook and also England's fantastic National Health Service.

Companies that have set a net zero target now have a combined global revenue of over \$11.4 trillion. Equivalent to around 13% of global GDP.

Cities like Accra, Durban, New York City and Melbourne have met net zero pledges. As well as universities like Kings College London and the University of Mississippi.

We are at an important inflection point.

Governments, industry and civil society are coming together to take climate action. There is a growing global consensus around a zero-carbon future.

But we know, that to achieve the Paris goals we must halve global emissions over the next decade, and rapidly adapt to our warming climate.

To do this we must all move faster.

Now whilst I recognise that time is short, and that the world is facing an immense challenge with COVID-19, we urgently need to raise our ambition.

So I am asking all countries to submit more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, driving further cuts in carbon emissions by 2030. With all nations committing to reaching net zero emissions as soon as possible.

Ahead of the summit, the UK presidency has defined five areas vital to this zero-carbon future. Clean energy, clean transport, nature-based solutions, adaptation and resilience and, tying it all together, finance.

We have seen that where partners unite around specific issues, like these, they can move faster. Just take clean energy. Globally, the cost of wind power has fallen by 49% and that of solar power by 85% since 2010. In large part, thanks to the countries, companies, cities and regions which have shifted investment, scaled-up technologies and driven down costs.

Over the next 10 days, I hope that these Race to Zero Dialogues will spark new ideas, alliances, action, which will drive progress across our five areas. And it is great to see that the Dialogues include such a wide range of voices. From civil society organisations and young people, to businesses and investors.

If you haven't already, I would urge any companies, cities, regions and universities here today to join the Race to Zero Coalition. The largest ever alliance of businesses and non-state actors committed to reaching Netg Zero

by 2050 at the latest.

My friends, the shift to a zero-carbon economy is underway. Only by continuing to come together can we build the zero carbon, climate resilient future that is essential for our people and our planet.

Thank you

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## [‘What’s next?’ A66 communities update on £1 billion dualling progress](#)

Next week communities along the route of the A66 will be able to find out the latest update on the project when new videos, web chats and brochures about the major upgrade go live.

All remaining single carriageway sections – totalling 18 miles – of the A66 between Penrith and Scotch Corner will be dualled in the £1 billion plans

Meanwhile, since the summer teams of designers have been looking at the road and its junctions to determine what improvements are needed. Environmental specialists have also been carrying out surveys to gain a greater understanding of the ecology and heritage in the area. And this winter ground investigation surveys will take place to look at the ground and soil conditions.

With Highways England on track to get the ball rolling next spring on the planning process for the transformation of the A66 between Penrith and Scotch Corner, now is a great time for residents to find out more about what work has been taking place over the last few months, and what’s next.

Senior project manager Matt Townsend said:

We have been working hard over the summer and autumn, prepping for consultation in spring next year. We are committed to building on the positive relationships we have with communities that live along the route.

In normal circumstances, we would organise local events and update local communities face to face. That’s not possible right now due to the current pandemic and we are therefore having to do things differently.

We know that local people are keen to understand the junction designs and layouts better and find out how they can access and

travel along the A66. We are therefore providing a full project update online from next Monday where people can view plans, watch videos and read our update.

The new brochure will go 'live' at [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A66-NTP](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A66-NTP) on 16 November alongside a new 'What's next?' video setting out next steps for the project before the public consultation.

Anyone who is unable to go online to get the latest information is being advised to contact the project team on 0333 090 1192.

The A66 Northern Trans-Pennine project is the biggest ever investment in a single road project in the north and will transform cross-country journeys – supporting Northern Powerhouse aspirations for better, less-congested connections and economic prosperity and sustainability.

Plans to dual the remaining 18 miles of the 50-mile road were unveiled in May. The transformation includes new bypasses, dualling alongside existing sections of road and major junction improvements.

As well as benefiting local people, the upgrade will support tourism and freight traffic, improving connections between ports in Scotland and Northern Ireland and those in England at Hull and Felixstowe. Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders will also benefit from safer, better-connected facilities.

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## **[Speech to Airport Operators Association, November 2020](#)**

Good morning everyone.

It's a pleasure to join you today (9 November 2020).

Thanks to the [Airport Operators' Association](#) for inviting me to take part.

Though I wish it were at a happier time.

It is precisely 8 months – to the day – since we gathered for the AOA annual dinner.

It was a memorable night.

Over 800 guests packed in to the Grosvenor House Ballroom, one of London's most spectacular venues.

Celebrating another record-breaking year for UK airports.

However, in hindsight, that dinner has taken on greater significance.

It was the last time the airport industry was able to gather on such a scale.

The last time many of you were able to interact and socialise with colleagues.

The last time things were 'normal', before all our lives changed so dramatically.

Just a week after that dinner, we were in lockdown.

Looking back to the speeches that evening, of course we all knew the threat posed by the virus was extremely serious.

And unlike anything aviation had faced before.

Yet the industry's experience since then, as 2020 has unfolded, has been far more devastating than anyone could have imagined at the beginning of March (2020).

Without doubt the toughest ever year for commercial aviation.

And it's a matter of immense regret that last week we had to tighten restrictions once again to stem the spread of this wretched virus.

I know this was another dire blow for aviation.

To support businesses, the [Chancellor last week extended the furlough scheme until March \(2021\)](#).

And the government will be ready to talk to firms who are most acutely affected.

But of course, we're not alone in taking tougher action.

One thing we've always known about Covid is that it's no respecter of borders.

That's why virtually every nation around us is currently in some form of lockdown.

Many airports across Europe closed or operating a skeleton service.

We know that a new UK lockdown means more uncertainty, more worry, and more hard times for aviation.

But if we'd failed to act last week, with the virus spreading so fast, the prospects for this industry, and many others, would have been even bleaker.

[Events over the weekend affecting passengers and freight coming from Denmark where the virus has mutated into mink and back into humans again](#) demonstrated the need for vigilance.

And the need for us to work together so we can act quickly and decisively.

Let me make it clear.

The safe and sustainable return of international air travel depends on us getting infections under control.

A view shared by almost every nation. every chief medical officer and scientific expert

But, as we enter perhaps the darkest hour for aviation, I do see hope.

## **A new recovery**

We've learned a lot over those 8 months.

We're much better informed than we were last spring.

We know far more about the virus, how it spreads, and what we need to do to keep it at bay.

We know more about protecting the health of passengers and staff at airports.

And more about patterns of infection around the UK, and internationally.

Which has, for example, allowed us to start including islands as a sub-national approach to the travel corridor list.

The [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office continues to update Covid advice to passengers](#).

Which now references the relevant domestic guidance on travel within the United Kingdom, together with developing risks in other countries and regions.

This more bespoke route called for by the travel sector will help British nationals make more informed decisions about journeys.

And – of course – we know a lot more about testing now.

With daily NHS capacity having reached more than half a million people a day by the end of October (2020).

And through the new [Global Travel Taskforce](#).

Which I co-chair with the Health Secretary.

I want you to know that we've been making good progress on a 'test to release' programme to launch once we're out of lockdown.

This will consist of a single test for arrivals into the UK, provided by the private sector and at the cost of the passenger.

Allowing a much reduced period of self isolation.

Beyond the lockdown, this should encourage many more people to book flights with confidence knowing there is an option that allows them to shorten self isolation.

We have been working extensively with health experts and the private testing sector on the practicalities of the new regime.

For example, making sure that it doesn't impact on NHS capacity.

We will report to the Prime Minister very soon, with recommendations how we can support the recovery of international tourism and travel and increase consumer confidence.

In addition to this arrivals regime, we are working with partner countries to consider self-isolation and testing options that could be performed before departure.

I know it's been confusing for passengers trying to understand different testing regimes for each nation.

So we are leading international work to develop a framework for international travel to provide global consistency.

An accepted international standard if you like.

The type of lateral flow tests currently being trialled in Liverpool also give hope for optimism.

This is a highly accurate swab test that gives results in less than an hour, and doesn't need to go to a lab.

Ultimately, it could open the way for non-quarantined air travel.

The primary solution to the aviation crisis is getting passengers flying safely again.

Ultimately, through the development of an effective vaccine.

But before that, through effective testing.

And we will consider all options that can help aviation recover safely.

## Supporting industry

These measures will build on the help we've already provided this year.

Furlough support for 55,000 aviation employees.

This alone worth £1 billion to £2 billion to the sector.

Then there have been loans and tax deferrals.

And £1.8 billion to the industry through [Covid Corporate Financing](#).

In fact this accounts for 11% of total national funding under the programme across our entire economy – just to aviation.

We have stepped up to strengthen protection for consumers too.

By backing the ATOL protection scheme.

And we took action on flight slots earlier in the year.

So airlines didn't have to operate empty flights to hold on to valuable slots.

## Regional connectivity

Inevitably most of the focus has been on international aviation.

But I also want to stress the government's determination to boost domestic connectivity as we rebound from Covid.

Back in May, [we invested £5.7 million to safeguard flights from London to Belfast and Derry airports in Northern Ireland](#).

Regional flights are going to be even more important in the months ahead as we seek to repair and reconnect our economy.

Binding every part of the union together.

And linking regional airports with global hubs.

That's why we're continuing to work on our [Regional Air Connectivity Review](#).

To ensure it reflects the changing nature of the industry.

And I particularly welcome your engagement through the Expert Steering Group and bilateral discussions.

## Longer term

It's crucial we rebuild for the longer term too.

It's hard to appreciate right now but the prospects for aviation in the long

term are very positive indeed.

We just need to get through this.

Not only will there be significant pent-up demand for air travel once Covid's fully under control.

But this is a unique sector where we know that the market's going to continue growing over the coming years and decades.

And with the UK industry now showing real leadership on decarbonising flights, and tackling noise and pollution.

It will earn the right to grow.

By becoming part of the solution to climate change, rather than part of the problem.

This crucial work has continued this year with the [Jet Zero Council](#), launched by myself, the Business Secretary and the Prime Minister uniting industry and government to deliver a greener, brighter future for UK aviation.

So while it's impossible to overstate the seriousness of the current Covid crisis.

Aviation will recover.

And when it does, it will be a more resilient industry.

With new technology making it cleaner.

And therefore primed to meet the needs of the years ahead.

## **Brexit**

Alongside Covid work, we are also working hard on negotiations with the EU as we approach the end of the transition period.

You may have voted for Brexit, or voted Remain like me, but we need to ensure that what's on the table does not cross the UK's fundamental principles, as set out in our approach document.

As of today, significant differences remain between the UK and European Union.

But we are keen to try and bridge them in intensive talks.

We approach negotiations determined to get a deal if there is one possible.

But although the outcome remains far from certain, we are committed to ensuring that flights are able to operate safely and punctually between the UK and EU regardless of how the negotiations conclude.

And, thanks to existing international agreements, this will happen.



So let me finish with a couple of important observations.

First, at a time like this, it's more vital than ever that we continue to work together.

Over the past month, I've attended 5 different aviation audiences.

On technology.

Decarbonisation.

Tourism and travel.

Airlines.

And today, airport operators.

They not only provide an opportunity for me to update the industry on the latest developments in government.

But we also try and ensure that as many DfT officials as possible take part in discussions and listen in.

And finally.

I want to thank every single airport across the UK for what you've done this year.

The way you've responded to the crisis has been extraordinary.

Maintaining essential movement of goods and freight.

Providing a safe environment for customers and staff.

Doing your utmost to protect jobs.

Calmly and professionally adapting to hugely difficult circumstances.

You are incredibly important.

And the next few weeks are incredibly important too, to regaining control of infections, and reversing the spread of the virus.

And of course implementing test and release to shorten quarantine.

So once we emerge from the lockdown, we can roll out new systems to help people travel again.

Giving passengers confidence to book flights in safety.

And thereby getting aviation back on its feet once again and back in the air for good.

Thank you.

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# New general licences for the control of wild birds

Defra has today (9 November) published three new general licences for the control of wild birds, ahead of them coming into force on 1 January 2021.

This follows the completion of Defra's review and user survey into general licensing, details of which will be published at a later date.

The new licences (GL40, GL41, GL42) will replace the current general licences (GL34, GL35 and GL36) which expire on the 31 December. From 1st January 2021, licence users will need to act in accordance with the new licence conditions.

General licences are permissive licences, meaning that users do not need to apply for them, but they must comply with their terms and conditions, when undertaking licensed acts. They allow users to kill or take certain species of wild birds for defined purposes such as preventing serious damage to certain commodities such as livestock and crops, for the purposes of conserving wild birds, plants and animals, or for public health and safety reasons.

The publication of the new licences will allow user groups to become acquainted with the changes before they officially come into force on 1 January.

Defra will publish the finalised licences, with further detail in two areas – conditions on protected sites and trapping – later this year, in advance of the licences coming into effect on 1 January 2021.

Following the review:

- The licences more clearly define the birds that can be controlled for certain purposes. For example, jackdaws and rooks will no longer be able to be controlled for conservation purposes because the evidence does not demonstrate that predation has a population-level effect on wild birds.
- It is now a licence condition that the requirements of GL33 'Trapping wild birds: standard licence conditions' must be complied with to ensure the welfare of trapped birds in line with agreed standards.
- Improvements have been made to the usability and readability of the licences.

The new general licences will once again be available for use on and around protected sites, provided that the user complies with any conditions that apply to that site and has consent from Natural England where needed.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

We have undertaken an extensive process to review the scientific evidence as well as over 4,000 responses to our general licence user survey, to help ensure we have a long-term licensing system which balances the needs of users and our wildlife.

We have taken on feedback to help ensure these new licences are fit for purpose, and will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure our licensing process is robust for wildlife and workable for users going forward.

The 3 new general licences will come into effect from 1 January 2021, for one year.

Where species can no longer be controlled under the General Licence for certain purposes, an individual licence will be needed from Natural England. These species have been removed because of lack of evidence of widespread need and so an individual licence application will require specific evidence of need, proportionality and whether alternatives have been considered.

### **The three new general licences are:**

- WML GL40: general licence to kill or take certain species of wild birds to conserve endangered wild birds and flora or fauna. Species covered: carrion crow, jay, magpie, Canada goose, Egyptian goose, monk parakeet, ring-necked parakeet, sacred ibis, Indian house-crow.
- WML GL41: general licence to kill or take certain species of wild birds to preserve public health or public safety. Species covered: jackdaw, feral pigeon, Canada goose, monk parakeet.
- WML GL42: general licence to kill or take certain species of wild birds to prevent serious damage and prevent the spread of disease. Species covered: carrion crow, jackdaw, magpie, feral pigeon, rook, woodpigeon, Canada Goose, monk parakeet, ring-necked parakeet, Egyptian goose, Indian House crow.

### **Gulls**

Due to their poorer conservation status, herring gulls and lesser black-backed gulls were taken off the general licences last year. Users can continue to [apply to Natural England for an individual licence](#) for control of these species.

It is likely that demand for gull licences under both the health and safety and conservation purposes in 2021 will be beyond what can be allowed to support the recovery of these species, and individual licensing will require strong evidence of proportionality in order to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on overall populations.

## Protected sites

European protected sites are subject to specific requirements given their particular importance to conservation in the UK. These include a process for ensuring that any impacts on the site, such as disturbance to protected bird species, are properly considered before an authorisation such as the general licences, is made.

Following the General Licence Review, Defra can confirm that the new general licences will be available once again for use on or around European protected sites, provided that users in these locations abide by any site-specific conditions on the licence. These conditions are targeted at specific sites to ensure that vulnerable bird species are protected from disturbance which could impact their populations.

[As in the previous system, users will need to ensure they have the appropriate consent from Natural England for activities](#) that may cause damage to protected features on Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The detail of the protected sites conditions are being finalised and will be published later.

If you have further questions, you can contact the Defra enquiry line at 03459 33 55 77 or email: [GLenquiries@defra.gov.uk](mailto:GLenquiries@defra.gov.uk).

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## [UK statement on situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh: 6 November 2020](#)

World news story

Delivered by Nicola Murray, Deputy Head of Delegation, at the OSCE Permanent Council on 6 November 2020.



Thank you Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom welcomes last week's talks in Geneva. We urge both parties to implement the agreed steps from the meeting, including cooperating fully with the ICRC and abiding by the agreement not to target civilian populations. We remain deeply disappointed that the previously agreed humanitarian ceasefires are not holding. The United Kingdom strongly condemns continued targeting of civilian areas. We are deeply concerned that the number of civilian casualties continues to grow. We urge both parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law.

It is unacceptable that civilians remain in both direct and indirect danger whilst this conflict continues. Our thoughts remain with those affected and those who have lost loved ones.

The United Kingdom welcomes the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate the repatriation of the remains of the deceased and provide vital support to those who have been displaced. On 30 October the United Kingdom announced a further £1million in funding to the ICRC. The humanitarian situation remains dire and as long as this conflict continues it is the civilians who will bear the unacceptable consequences. We urge both parties to recognise that there is no military solution to this conflict, and to return to the negotiating table, without preconditions, for a settlement under the auspices of the Minsk Co-Chairs.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate the UK's full support for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in their role in mediating negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

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