

Western Gateway STB Board Meeting - DfT Updates – June 2026

£271 million to clean up shipping and power coastal communities

UK shipping and coastal communities will benefit from a £271 million boost to develop green boat fuel and boost innovation in the maritime sector, which could support thousands of skilled jobs.

The funding has been awarded from the seventh round of the Clean maritime demonstration competition (CMDc) and the second round of zero emissions vessels and infrastructure (ZEVl) fund and will give successful companies grants to help decarbonise the maritime sector by developing clean maritime fuels and infrastructure.

Delay Repay changes will make rail travel easier under Great British Railways

Rail passengers will be able to claim Delay Repay directly from wherever they buy their ticket, making it quicker and easier to apply for compensation.

Currently, passengers have to contend with a complex system across 14 different train companies, which creates confusion and frustration.

As part of the government's plans to simplify our railways and ensure passengers are treated fairly when travelling, compensation claim systems for delayed trains will be merged into one easy-to-use service under Great British Railways (GBR).

Customers will also be able to apply through third-party retailers like Trainline.

Department for Transport Operator DFTO takes next steps towards Great British Railways

Shadow GBR moved to a new phase in March 2026 with Laura Shoaf joining the DFTO board, creating a solid foundation for the next stage of rail reform.

DFTO board also welcomed Tony Poulter, former GBR Transition Team Non-Executive Director. Developments bring experts together to continue to pave the way for the creation of GBR in 2027. In her new role on the DFTO board,

Laura will continue her critical role in ensuring passengers' and staff's voices are heard in the way the railway is run, now and in the future.

Tony Poulter will also join the DFTO Board, bringing significant passenger and commercial experience. As a member of the Department for Transport (DfT) Board, he has provided specialist support and strategic advice on Rail Reform.

The Zero Emissions Truck and Van grants and the Depot Charging Scheme aim to help businesses make the switch to electric vans and trucks.

Businesses across the UK are being backed to roll out electric vans and trucks with £1 billion of funding – saving them cash, cleaning up millions of journey miles, and helping hauliers become more resistant to global price changes.

The Zero Emissions Truck and Van grants and the Depot Charging Scheme (DCS) aim to tackle two of the biggest barriers to businesses making the switch - upfront costs and access to charging.

The truck grant will offer savings of up to £81,000 off the heaviest zero emissions trucks, covering up to 40% of the cost. The van grant will continue to offer discounts of up to £5,000 off the cost of electric vans.

On top of that, businesses and public authorities could save up to £1 million, covering up to 70% of the cost, when installing charging infrastructure for vans, coaches, and eHGVs, thanks to a £170 million boost to the government's Depot Charging Scheme.

Government investment in roads: third Road Investment Strategy

DfT announced a major £27 billion boost for England's motorways and major A-roads over the next 5 years – one of the largest ever road investment plans. After years of decline, plans will fix the country's ageing roads, fund major schemes like the dualling of the A66 and unlock private investment into the Lower Thames Crossing to improve connectivity and cut congestion. The government also gives green light to 16 key road schemes on local roads, helping create thousands of new jobs and homes across the country. Spread across 5 years, the plan puts more money into maintaining the network to help deliver smoother, more reliable journeys for drivers, businesses and freight operators by resurfacing roads, fixing potholes, and replacing worn-out stretches of motorway. The RIS 3 investment will fund major schemes that unlock growth and improve connectivity across the country and allow National Highways to resurface over 9,000 kilometres worth of motorway and major A-road lanes – almost a quarter of the network.

Stalled housing and employment sites to be unlocked with new £165 million road fund

Thousands of new homes and jobs are set to be unlocked as the government launches a new £165 million fund to remove the barriers holding back housing and key growth developments across England. The new Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund will target sites where progress has stalled due to funding constraints, delivering the transport improvements and links needed to get building started. Launching in the coming weeks, it supports the government's plan to raise living standards and deliver 1.5 million new homes across England this Parliament. The new fund forms part of RIS3 and is designed not just to maintain and renew the existing network, but to ensure England's roads actively support economic growth, removing the infrastructure barriers that have held back new homes, jobs and investment. The new Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund will bridge the funding gap for critical transport works to unblock and accelerate the delivery of housing and employment sites. It will focus on locations on or near to motorways and A-roads across England, ensuring communities can benefit from new homes and the jobs and opportunities that come with them.

The Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund is designed for targeted, smaller-scale transport interventions where a specific infrastructure barrier is preventing development. It complements, rather than replaces, larger strategic investment programmes. We are working hard to open the fund for Expressions of Interest as soon as possible and will confirm dates shortly. We want to make sure the process is straightforward and that applicants have everything they need to put forward strong proposals.

Integrated National Transport Strategy Better Connected and Local Transport Plan Guidance Released

Better Connected and the Local Transport Plan guidance were recently released and should be read in conjunction with one another. Area Leads will discuss these in more detail with LAs during regular catch up sessions.

Structures Fund

The new Structures Fund opened on 15 April.

The new fund will put money directly into the hands of councils to tackle the most pressing cases they cannot afford to fix alone.

The fund is now open for bids and will inject cash into repairing critical structures across England, ensuring transport infrastructure is more resilient to extreme weather, while making everyday journeys safer, smoother and more dependable.

To help councils put forward the strongest possible proposals, the government has appointed consultants WSP to provide free guidance and hands-on support to all applicants, from reviewing cost estimates to helping develop delivery plans.

Councils are encouraged to submit draft applications by 19 June for early feedback, giving them the opportunity to strengthen proposals before the final deadline of 3 August 2026. A series of webinars will also be held throughout April and May to help authorities navigate the process.

Nearly £50 million government backing to power up drone and flying taxi tech and crack down on illegal drones

Drone deliveries, flying taxis and smarter emergency services could be a step closer to use in UK skies, as the government awards almost £50 million to unlock growth in the drone and advanced air mobility sector.

Part of the investment will also see a crackdown on 'faceless' drones, which can be used in suspicious or illegal activity, through the first bespoke drone identification system. The measures will make it easier for police to identify illegal or nuisance users and clear the way for legitimate drone operators.

Delivered through the Civil Aviation Authority, the funding will also cut red tape and support the regulatory, digital and security foundations needed to bring drones and advanced air mobility – such as electric flying taxis – into more routine use across the UK.

Cost of living boost with free bus travel for children

Families travelling this summer will benefit from free bus travel for children.

The Chancellor is committing more than £100 million to fund the free fares scheme and also continuing to support bus services. Every child aged five to 15 in England will travel free on participating local buses throughout August – with unlimited journeys, no registration required, and at no cost to families.

In terms of how the national scheme is expected to work, operators will claim reimbursement directly from DfT. They'll provide data which we'll use to calculate a bespoke reimbursement rate for each operator using a formula-driven methodology.

The terms and conditions are still being finalised but a draft version was shared with operators alongside a data collection exercise on 29 May.

For the LTA-led variant of the scheme e.g. where an LTA is claiming reimbursement on behalf of their own supported services, or for operators without a BSOG reference number - a similar approach will apply. Bespoke reimbursement rates will be calculated, and guidance and relevant conditions will be provided to LTAs, when data collection is launched this month.

New mass transit taskforce to reshape the future of transport in towns and cities

New tram, light rail and bus networks in towns and cities have taken a step forward, as the government launched the new Mass Transit Taskforce on 20 May.

The group, which includes leading experts from the world of transport, industry, finance and academia, will identify the biggest hurdles facing the introduction of mass transit systems across the UK and how to overcome them.

Mass transit encompasses networks of trams, light rail and high-frequency buses that move large numbers of people quickly across towns and cities, and has transformed urban life in places like Greater Manchester, Nottingham, the North East and the West Midlands. These systems connect people with jobs, homes, public services and opportunities, while cutting congestion and carbon emissions.

Working independently, and led by Chair Bridget Rosewell CBE, the taskforce will draw on best practice from across the world to make recommendations on how mass transit systems can be delivered more quickly and efficiently.

Highways Maintenance Incentive Funding

Local Authorities all received the Highways Maintenance Incentive Funding letter dated 13 April 2026 which set out the relevant requirements. Further supporting information and detailed information will be provided to LAs in the next few weeks.

Local Transport Funding

All LAs should now have received confirmation of their Q1 payments of Local Transport Funding along with a letter providing feedback on LTDPs and details on next steps, a letter confirming that Q1 payments have been made and a copy of the MoU.