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Department for Transport [REDACTED]
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Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

27 May 2020

To all Local Transport Authority Lead Officers

via email

Dear colleagues,

COVID-19 Restart Step 2 – Continuing to support local transport and its passengers In these unprecedented times, local government officers across the country have risen magnificently to the challenge of keeping essential workers moving in the face of significant disruption. In particular, I would like to thank all local authority transport and highways officers, like yourself, for your tireless work, dedication, and commitment to keeping your respective networks running through the crisis. This has enabled essential workers, such as our emergency services and NHS staff, to continue to travel freely and safely so that they can keep carrying on the fight against the virus. As you are aware, following the Prime Minister's broadcast on 10 May, the Government set out its roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the COVID-19 crisis. 1 Over the coming months, the Government will introduce a range of adjustments to social distancing measures, timing these carefully according to both the spread of the virus and the Government's ability to ensure safety. These will happen in "steps," as set out in the roadmap, with strict conditions to be met in order to safely move from one step to the next. I am confident that, as you have done through the first step earlier this month, you will again meet the demands of this next phase and ensure your communities will be able to move around safely in line with Government guidance. Following the announcements from the Prime Minister over the bank holiday weekend, the Government has now set out its plans to move to Step 2, including the reopening of nurseries and some years in primary schools (reception, year 1, year 6), outdoor markets and car showrooms from 1 June. The Government also intends to enable some contact for secondary school pupils with exams next year (year 10 and year 12) with their teachers, and the reopening of all other non-essential retail, ranging from department stores to small, independent shops, from 15 June. Further to my letter of 12 May, and given the capacity constraints on public transport as a result of social distancing guidelines, your authority will need to manage travel demand to ensure services continue to operate effectively for essential journeys. Local transport authorities should develop suitable plans to spread and control demand in their areas, in line with national guidance and communications. The Secretary of State has announced a 1 www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
Department for Transport [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] www.gov.uk/dft 27 May 2020 range of measures to support Local Transport

Authorities and operators with this next phase. 2 This includes:

- Further details on the new £250 million Emergency Active Travel Fund announced on 9 May, to support the implementation of pop-up bike lanes, widened pavements, and cycle and bus-only corridors. This represents the first part of a longer-term cycling and walking programme for the next Spending Review period, announced through the £5 billion buses, cycling, and walking package on 11 February. The Department will write to you separately with further details on this.
- A further £283 million in funding, made available to local authorities and operators for bus (£254 million) and light rail (£29 million) services, to increase the number of local transport services as quickly as possible. This is so that people who need to travel by public transport, including critical workers in the NHS, can do so safely whilst observing social distancing measures. This further funding for bus services is in addition to the Department maintaining the Bus Service Operators Grant at pre-coronavirus level during the outbreak. I would like to thank Local Transport Authorities for making those payments, as per [REDACTED] letter of 25 March, and would like to urge you to continue to pay operators for tendered services, home to school transport and concessionary fares at levels before any downturn. This will enable operators to continue to provide essential services to your respective local communities. The Department is committed to supporting local authorities to develop their plans, and Departmental Area Leads have continued to proactively engage to understand current assumptions and provide advice. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have also published guidance on the creation of safer spaces, particularly around transport hubs and bus stops where there are risks around crowd gathering affecting the ability for individuals to ensure social distance can be observed. On 24 May, Minister Clarke announced the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to provides councils with an additional £50 million to support business communities with creating safe and welcoming spaces, and to prepare for the reopening of retail when the scientific advice allows. The funding can be used to support a range of extra measures on high streets and other retail areas, including information for businesses and the public and street markings and signage. The MHCLG guidance on the creation of safer spaces complements separate DfT statutory guidance expecting local authorities to reallocate road space to increase the size of pavements and introduce new bike lanes to reduce the pressure on public transport services.³ As mentioned previously, as we are looking to upper tier authorities to lead on overall transport planning working, we would expect lower tier authorities to co-operate fully with, and respond rapidly to, the area-wide planning, to ensure this is as effective as possible. I cannot stress enough the importance of first class communication to passengers so that they can move around safely, and I would urge you to put clear information at transport hubs and bus stops that your local authority is responsible for, in line with MHCLG guidance. As you will be aware, we have also launched our Safer Transport communications campaign and produced a stakeholder toolkit to ensure consistency of 2 www.gov.uk/government/news/transport-secretary-announces-new-measures-to-keep-passengers-safenow-and-level-up-for-the-future 3 www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19 messaging around planning journeys, avoiding rush hour, social distancing and considering alternatives to public transport which many operators and local authorities have been amplifying across their digital channels and at transport hubs and bus stops.⁴ We have also worked with the Confederation of Passenger Transport to create a range of social media graphics and posters to be displayed at bus stops and onboard vehicles 5 . Those are available to use if you do not have your own versions designed. Please continue to engage with the Department's Area Leads on your plans to identify any concerns, challenges, or local issues with implementing changes in your areas. I, and my officials, will do our best to keep you informed of further developments with as much notice as possible.

Yours faithfully,

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[REDACTED] Department for Transport