



# ***Keeping the country moving***

A manifesto for the road transport industry  
2022 local authority elections



# About RHA, the trade body for UK commercial vehicle operators

Our mission is to drive business on our roads, creating the best environment for road transport businesses to thrive to support the economy and our supply chains as we recover from the pandemic.

The road freight industry is critical to ensuring that our country runs around the clock, **with 89% of all goods transported by land in Great Britain moved directly by road, and with 98% of all food, agricultural and consumer product transported by road.**

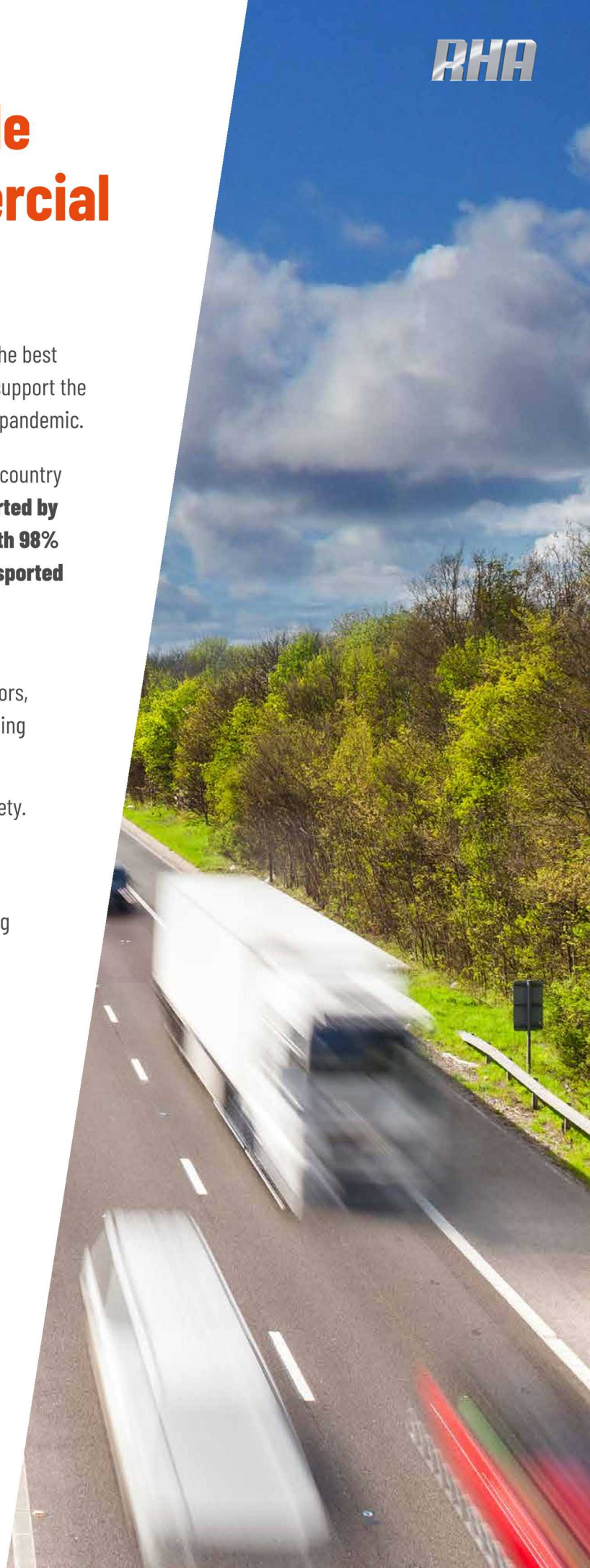
Coaches provide cost effective, sustainable passenger transport, especially for the tourism and education sectors, a critical contribution to local economies and the wellbeing of society.

The movement of goods and people is essential for society. Our economy and environment depend on our ability to operate in efficient and sustainable ways.

Our industry is facing an incredibly challenging operating environment, in light of record high diesel prices and increases in energy, wages and vehicle parts. Local authorities must be strong partners to road transport businesses in the short and long term for them to be sustainable and grow, recognising the essential role of road freight in their local economies.

This manifesto is aimed at councillors, prospective councillors and council officers who are making and implementing policies across local authorities. It identifies five priority areas where local councillors can support the road transport industry.

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) is a major trade body and training provider representing 8,000 road haulage, coach, and van operators across the UK, 85% of whom are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).





# In the upcoming local authority elections, we ask councillors and council officers to support the road transport industry by:

## **1. Addressing the skills shortage**

With the chronic skills shortage of HGV and coach drivers as well as other roles in logistics, councils must do more to help people access training opportunities and encourage new talent into the industry.

## **2. Improving local roads and infrastructure**

We ask local authorities to focus on delivering resilient transport infrastructure and schemes that reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability to improve freight and passenger movements.

## **3. Increasing driver facilities and parking**

Local planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing adequate overnight lorry parking facilities and councils should review the demand for lorry parking facilities in their area.

## **4. Support the move towards cleaner and net zero transport**

Local authorities should ensure local policies on air quality align with a national approach to develop and phase-in low and zero emission vehicle technologies and ensure Clean Air Zones and Low Emission Zones are only introduced when sufficient compliant vehicles are available to enable operators to upgrade.

## **5. Supporting local coach operators and the visitor economy**

Councils should involve local coach operators in community travel including school and hospital transport, travel to local attractions and ensure there is adequate coach parking and passenger facilities in key tourist locations.

**More information on each of these areas is enclosed.**

# Address the skills shortage

**Our industry has an acute skills shortage and an estimated shortage of 85,000 HGV drivers nationally as well as a major shortage of coach drivers. With a record number of UK job vacancies combined with low unemployment, the road transport industry faces significant challenges ahead as a result of a perfect storm of COVID-19, the UK's departure from the EU and an ageing workforce. Without further action, this risks impacting our economic recovery.**

Road transport businesses are focused on investing in, attracting, and retaining their workforce but they need the support of local councils to help address local labour shortages.

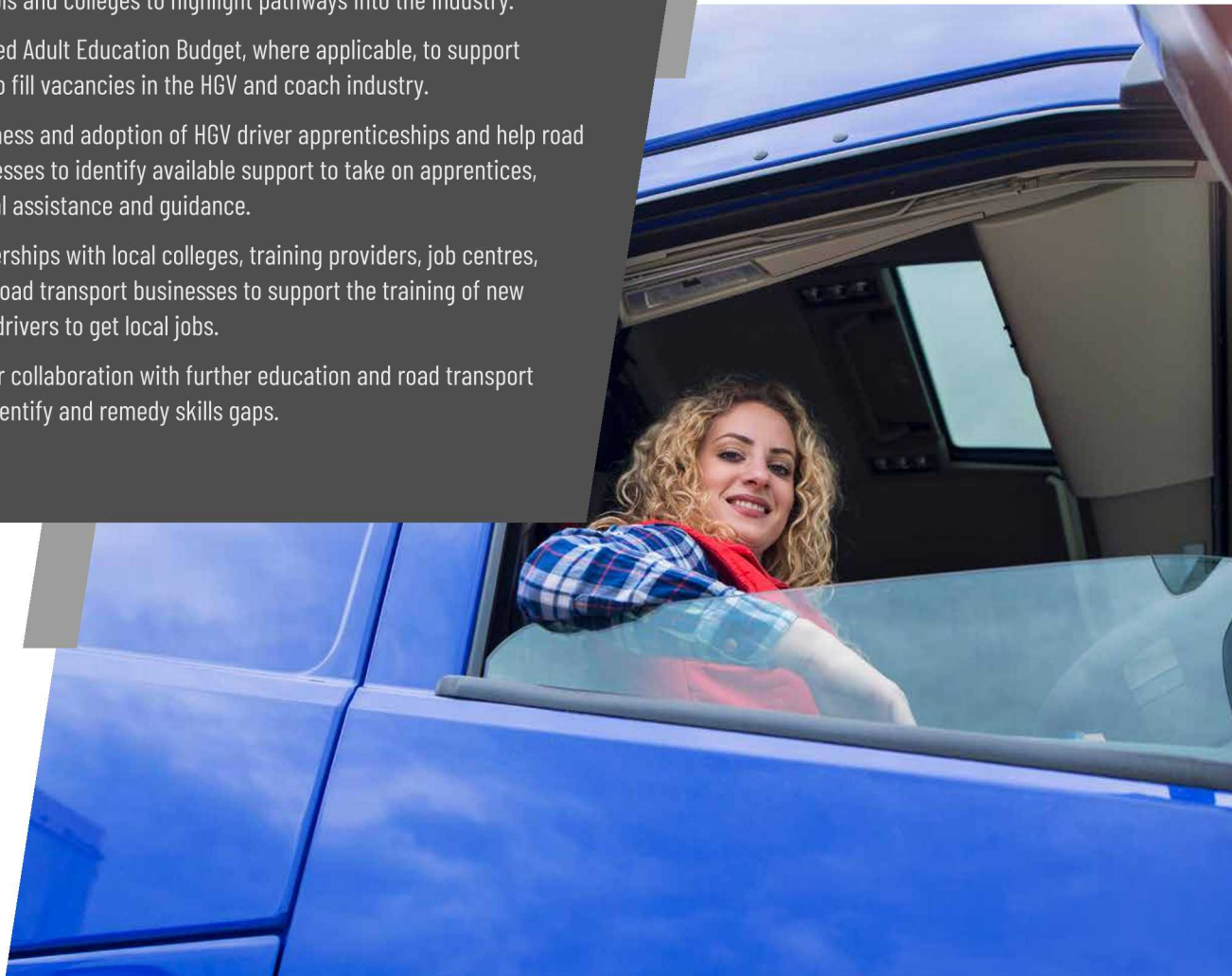
A significant barrier to entry is the significant upfront cost of driver training.

Local councils have a key role in providing skills training and must do more to help people access training opportunities for in-demand jobs based on local skills needs, using labour market information to identify skills gaps and tailor solutions accordingly.

Councils must encourage new talent into the logistics industry from schools and adult retraining, encouraging vocational education routes into the sector.

## We ask local authorities to:

- Champion careers in the road transport industry, promoting opportunities to fill vacancies with local businesses.
- Work with schools and colleges to highlight pathways into the industry.
- Use your devolved Adult Education Budget, where applicable, to support driver training to fill vacancies in the HGV and coach industry.
- Increase awareness and adoption of HGV driver apprenticeships and help road transport businesses to identify available support to take on apprentices, such as financial assistance and guidance.
- Facilitate partnerships with local colleges, training providers, job centres, recruiters, and road transport businesses to support the training of new HGV and coach drivers to get local jobs.
- Prioritise further collaboration with further education and road transport businesses to identify and remedy skills gaps.





# Improve roads and infrastructure

**It is a fundamental need for the UK economy that road transportation meets the needs of people and businesses in an efficient and predictable way. Roads are the workplace of the logistics and coach industries. Current levels of congestion result in unpredictable and longer journey times. This undermines productivity and the competitiveness of the UK economy.**

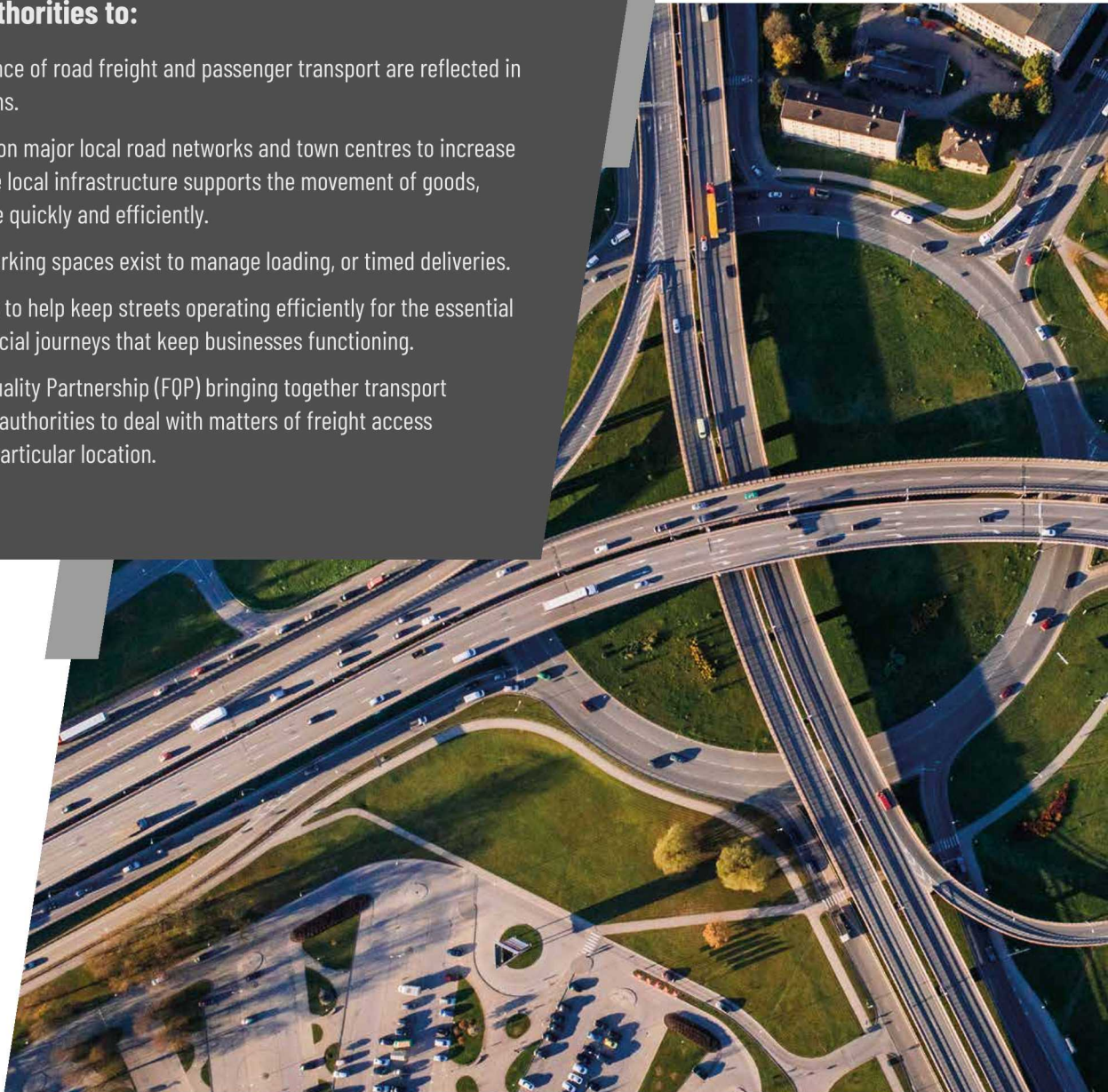
Efficient freight and passenger movement is essential to our everyday lives and the operation of our economy, ensuring business and individuals receive the goods they need at the time and location they need them.

Local authorities must focus on delivering resilient transport infrastructure and schemes that reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability to enable economic growth.

Strong collaboration is required between the Council and road transport businesses in order to maximise efforts to improve freight and passenger movements.

## We ask local authorities to:

- Ensure the importance of road freight and passenger transport are reflected in Local Transport Plans.
- Reduce congestion on major local road networks and town centres to increase capacity and ensure local infrastructure supports the movement of goods, services, and people quickly and efficiently.
- Ensure sufficient parking spaces exist to manage loading, or timed deliveries.
- Maintain local roads to help keep streets operating efficiently for the essential freight and commercial journeys that keep businesses functioning.
- Develop a Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) bringing together transport operators and local authorities to deal with matters of freight access and deliveries in a particular location.





# Increase driver facilities and parking

**There is a major shortage of lorry and coach driver rest facilities and parking, and this is an increasingly prominent issue facing local authorities. Nationally, there is a shortage of around 11,000 lorry parking spaces.**

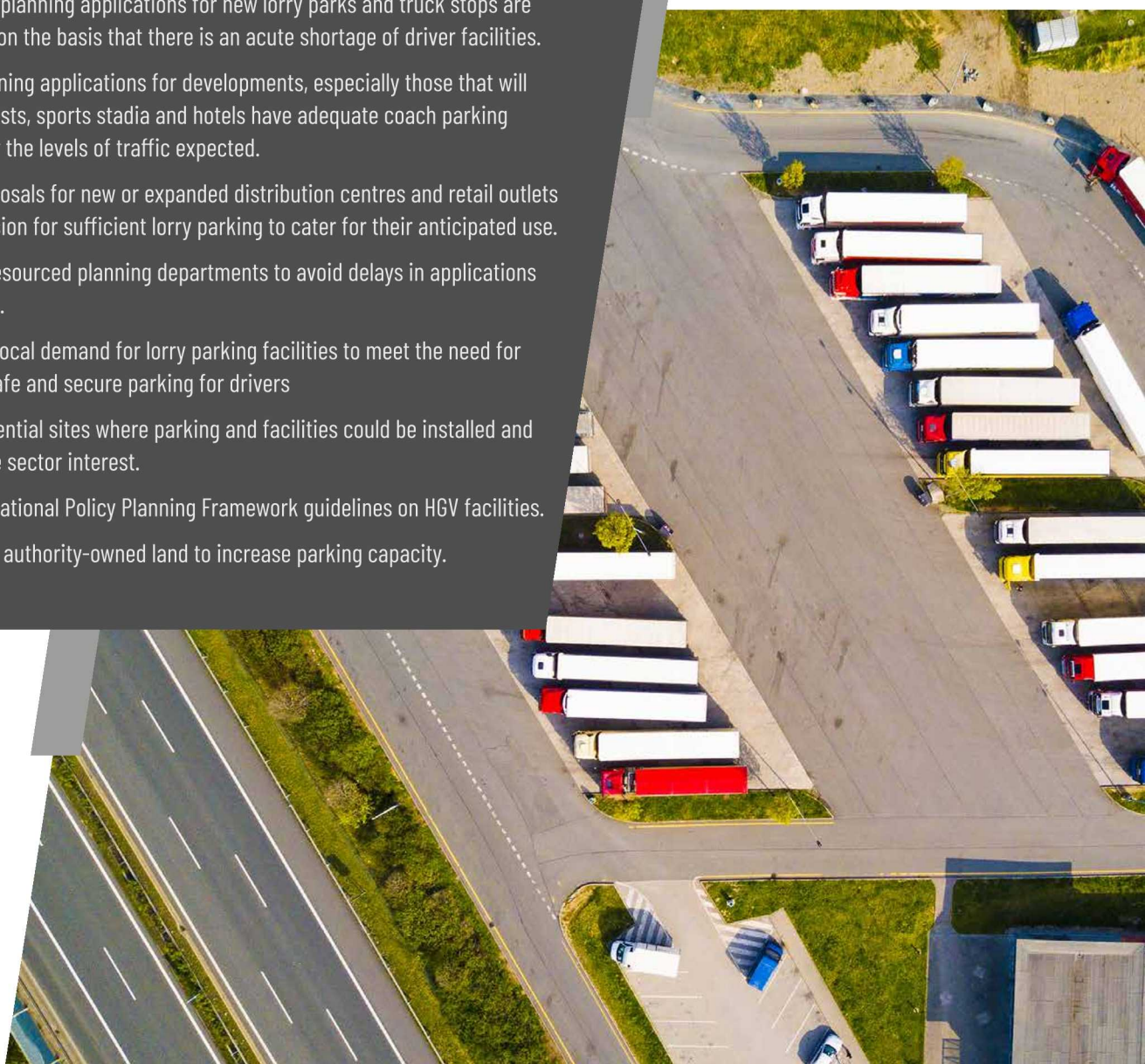
It is crucial for drivers to have places to park with toilet facilities where they can rest, eat and sleep in secure locations. This is vital for promoting driver well-being and retaining drivers. There is a significant amount of unofficial, unsafe, and insecure overnight lorry parking resulting from the shortage of parking spaces and truck stops.

Local authorities must develop a strategy ensuring there are sufficient and adequate driver facilities.

The planning system plays a critical part in the allocation of land for lorry parking. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing adequate overnight lorry parking facilities.

## We ask local authorities to:

- Ensure that planning applications for new lorry parks and truck stops are considered on the basis that there is an acute shortage of driver facilities.
- Ensure planning applications for developments, especially those that will attract tourists, sports stadia and hotels have adequate coach parking facilities for the levels of traffic expected.
- Ensure proposals for new or expanded distribution centres and retail outlets make provision for sufficient lorry parking to cater for their anticipated use.
- Have fully resourced planning departments to avoid delays in applications and appeals.
- Review the local demand for lorry parking facilities to meet the need for sufficient safe and secure parking for drivers
- Identify potential sites where parking and facilities could be installed and seek private sector interest.
- Follow the National Policy Planning Framework guidelines on HGV facilities.
- Make use of authority-owned land to increase parking capacity.





# Support the move towards cleaner and net zero transport

**We take seriously our responsibility in improving and protecting our natural environment for future generations and are determined to play our part in the move towards cleaner and net zero transport. The logistics industry has invested over £1.9 billion in the latest, cleanest lorries which have seen nitrous oxide emissions fall by nearly 70% since 2013.**

## Net Zero

We support the aim to decarbonise heavy goods vehicles and coaches. We welcome last year's announcement at COP26 to begin phasing out the sale of new diesel HGVs from 2035. It starts providing the certainty the sector needs to plan vehicle replacement cycles. We also welcome the UK Government's "Zero Emission Road Freight Trial" to steer how these pioneering technologies can be implemented.

It is essential that, to avoid counter-productive outcomes and to allow businesses to invest with confidence, that a national approach to decarbonising the transport fleet is adopted. By contrast, a patchwork of different and confusing local regulations must be avoided as it undermines investment and creates conflicting incentives and regulations across the country.

## Air quality

We know the importance of our role in improving local air quality across the country; however, we continue to have concerns over the timing and structure of the introduction of some Clean Air Zones across England.

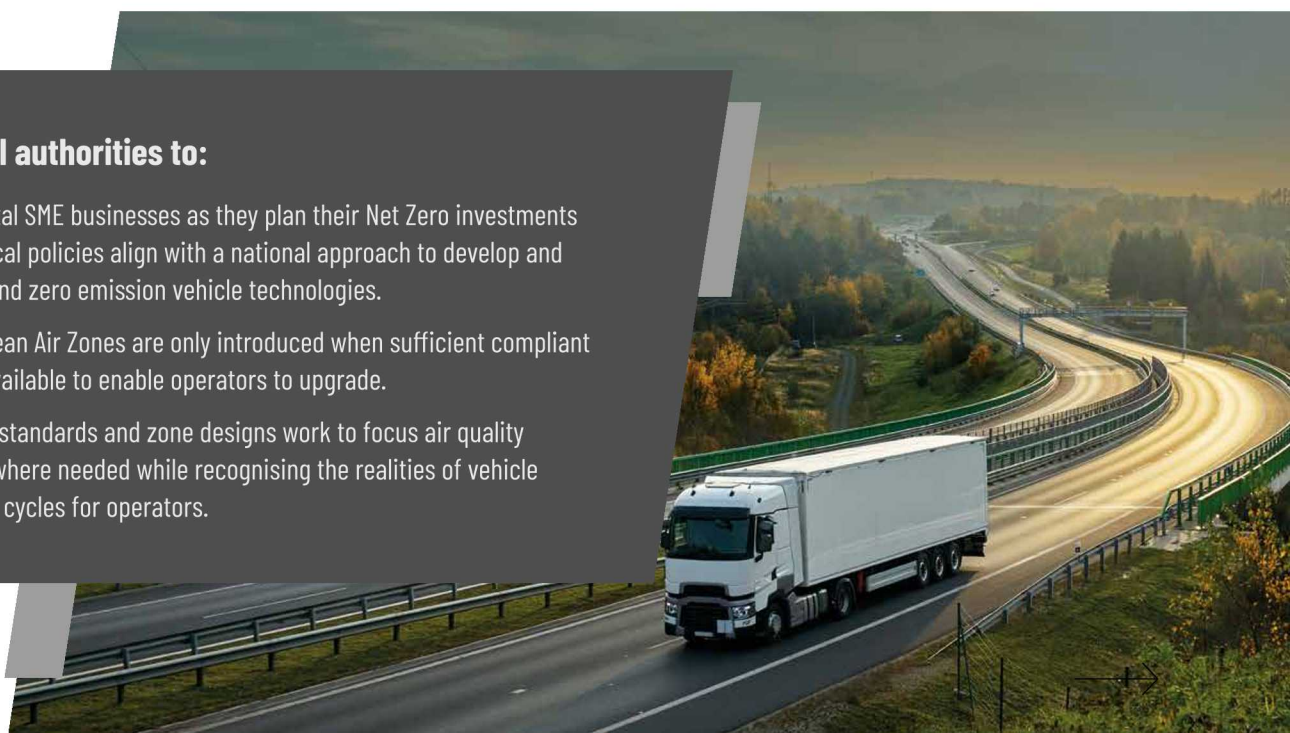
The problem exists because of the long life cycle of many vehicles that is now compounded by lack of supply of CAZ compliant diesel vehicles (either new or via the second hand market) which has caused the changeover to Euro VI vehicles to slow significantly.

Currently, around 35% of HGVs and 60% of vans do not comply with Clean Air Zone requirements, yet supply chain disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has meant the lead-in times necessary to manufacture the compliant vehicles have lengthened considerably. With new HGV registrations in 2021 down 16.9% on pre-pandemic levels, feedback from our members indicates that orders placed now will not be fulfilled until mid-2023.

Coaches have a longer life-cycle than lorries (and are usually more expensive too). Operators have suffered such a heavy blow to their businesses during the pandemic, the surplus of vehicles in the industry has depleted all used values to such a degree that the equity available to them in their existing fleets to help fund vehicle upgrades is minimal and in many cases, non-existent.

## We ask local authorities to:

- Support our vital SME businesses as they plan their Net Zero investments by ensuring local policies align with a national approach to develop and phase-in low and zero emission vehicle technologies.
- Ensure that Clean Air Zones are only introduced when sufficient compliant vehicles are available to enable operators to upgrade.
- To ensure CAZ standards and zone designs work to focus air quality improvement where needed while recognising the realities of vehicle supply and life cycles for operators.



# Support local coach operators and the visitor economy

**Coach operators are vital to the tourism supply chain and in supporting local tourism.**

## **We ask local authorities to:**

- Invest in local transport by involving local coach operators in community travel, e.g. schools, shuttles to hospitals, travel to local attractions.
- Support domestic tourism by allocating adequate Coach parking and passenger facilities in key local tourist locations.
- Ensure that coaches can access bus priority measures – bus lanes, access restrictions etc. Taxis, motorcyclists, and cyclists already take advantage of Bus Lanes. Prioritising access for coaches can benefit from the fact they increase journey time reliability and encourage the use of sustainable transport, something which has long been recognised for buses but is equally applicable to coaches.
- Adopt an approach to planning which recognises the need for sustainable transport planning in all new developments and considers the requirements for access by all modes likely to be used by visitors and residents.







## Road Haulage Association Ltd

For more information, visit [www.rha.uk.net](http://www.rha.uk.net)  
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