



## RHA Election Manifesto 2017

The 2017 General Election announced yesterday comes as the road haulage industry is seeking to redefine itself and to secure short-, medium- and long-term policy objectives. These include:

1. **Overnight allowances:** Reversal of the changes to the RHA/HMRC agreement on lorry drivers' overnight allowances, implemented from April 6 2017. The requirement for random sampling of receipts in effect kills this 26-year old agreement and is opposed by employers of all sizes and by their drivers. HMRC has failed to respond to the many concerns raised, failed to wait for the conclusion of the review of employee expenses as it said it would, and – it appears – has even failed to tell its own Help Desk, leaving haulage firms at risk of non-compliance and subsequent claims for back-tax and penalties. The change is damaging to the industry, very poorly made and must be reversed.
2. **Enforcement:** More effective enforcement of road haulage rules and existing National Living Wage regulations in respect of hauliers visiting from abroad. This is irrelevant to Brexit and has been RHA policy for many years but has become increasingly urgent as government figures show sharp increases in the use of foreign hauliers for UK domestic work. That trend is because they are cheap – partly due to low-cost fuel but more because they grossly under-pay their drivers and, overall, they are much less compliant with road safety rules.
3. **Operator licensing:** Introduction of compliance auditing of all HGV operators. The RHA has proposed an audit within six months for new operators before their licence is confirmed, and subsequent audits every five years. These would be regulatory audits and would go a long way towards ensuring adherence to the requirements set out by traffic commissioners.
4. **Lorry parking:** Facilities on the road network are often so poor that they shame our country, as well as undermining the road haulage industry. John Hayes has done much in recent months to change the government's view and get more involved in ensuring adequate provision, appropriate facilities for drivers and appropriate security, and to build a political and industry consensus. But that work has a long way to go and the new government must build on the momentum already established.
5. **Apprenticeships:** The RHA is working to lead a transformation in the way the road haulage industry recruits and trains lorry drivers and other staff. We gave that commitment to the government and we have been delivering. The in-coming government needs to ensure that it is doing what needs to be done to ensure the system works smoothly and efficiently for firms of all sizes; and to facilitate an appropriate settlement of apprenticeship levy money with the devolved governments in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast.
6. **Air quality:** In the air quality debate, the positive contribution of Euro VI diesel engines fitted to lorries must be recognised by government. It is already recognised by Transport for London, the toughest emissions regulator in Europe, which describes these vehicles as "ultra-low emission". NOx from HGVs is estimated by the RHA to have fallen by one third in the past three years and is falling, month by month. Plans to impose local bans on HGVs around the country must be fully costed and measured against the benefits they will bring.

We doubt if bans involving HGVs would be justified but, were there to be bans, it would be wholly unreasonable for road haulage firms to suffer the sudden, premature obsolescence of their vehicles without compensation, in some form of scrappage scheme.

- 7. Carbon:** The Department for Transport's recent Freight Carbon Review identified that HGVs accounted for 5% of all vehicle miles in the UK and 16% of all road transport carbon. The 5% figure accounts for by far the most productive vehicle miles on the network, especially those relating to larger lorries. This is the result of innovation in vehicles (Euro VI are the most fuel-efficient ever), operations, and IT and telematics in the face of rising challenges posed by congestion and the service demands of customers. The next government could accelerate carbon savings through modestly-funded promotion of the intelligent use of telematics; there is no market failure but there is much to be gained by accelerating uptake and development, at every level of the industry.
- 8. Roads:** The road network is the road haulage industry's main place of work. While employers and their suppliers aim to provide safe and comfortable vehicles, they rely on infrastructure providers to deliver roads on which trucks travel. The RHA welcomes the commitment to investment in the strategic road network but is alarmed at the deterioration of other roads. Our members regard roads as a single network, whereas in England it is clear that quite different standards are applied depending on whether the road is the responsibility of the Department for Transport or some other authority. The new government should develop, and deliver to, a down-to-earth vision for roads – for example, they should have with a smooth and quiet surface, that traffic information must include information on congestion, in real time and forecast for the future, and with efficient traffic management.
- 9. Fuel duty:** Duty on diesel remains by far the highest in the EU, despite the prolonged and welcome absence of any increase in recent years. The incoming government should rule out any increase in fuel duty paid by HGVs in the coming Parliament, in order to avoid damaging not only the road haulage sector but also competitiveness and the price of food and other essentials.
- 10. Brexit:** The RHA has been clear about priority outcomes it wants to see as a result of Brexit, with a four-part policy: frictionless road haulage movement and delivery to customers for goods moving between the UK and the EU from Day One of leaving the customs union; an ability to recruit lorry drivers and other workers from abroad based on the industry's need, rather than a notion of earnings; an essentially unchanged licensing system for lorries on international journeys between the UK and the EU; and review of UK domestic road haulage rules post-Brexit. Of these four, the review of domestic haulage law is currently the least pressing and the issues around leaving the customs union the most concerning. The new government must commit to giving HMRC whatever resources it needs to ensure a frictionless supply chain from Day One of leaving the customs union and must work with the industry to ensure as positive an outcome for the UK economy as possible.

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**April 19 2017**