



Department for Transport

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From the Parliamentary
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Dear Mark Southgate

I am writing to you to underline the importance of the Water Preferred Policy when examining planning material for major power generation projects. It is a long standing policy, but I am keen for it to continue to be implemented vigorously, and it is relevant to a number of major electricity and manufacturing industry planning proposals.

In addition, the Government issued a grant in 2001 to manufacture a vessel that can carry specialist equipment in the form of an abnormal indivisible load (AIL). By definition, an AIL is one that cannot be divided into two or more loads for the purpose of being carried on a road without undue expense or risk of damage. This is a commitment by Government to reduce congestion on roads and mitigate the risk of a long term economic and environmental impact. There is a AIL Team at Highways England which oversees this and undertakes a reasonableness test to assess whether movement by water is economically viable.

Key parts of the water preferred policy guidelines for the movement of abnormal indivisible loads include the following: (The full document is available on the GOV.UK website).

www.gov.uk/government/publications/movement-of-abnormal-loads-by-water

2.1.1

It is recognised that the manufacturing and electrical industries need to transport abnormal loads internally within GB (many movements of which originate from overseas) and also for export. However, this has to be balanced with the disruption and traffic congestion to other road users, together with the impact this has on the UK economy, when compared to any extra costs or difficulty associated with using alternative transport modes.

3.6.1

Loads that cause the most traffic congestion and impact adversely on journey time reliability are generally heavy (loads over 150 tonnes gross vehicle weight which are subject to a speed restriction of between 12 – 25 mph dependent on vehicle type) and wide (loads over 5m in width). Primarily such loads are moved by the power industry, as well as heavy manufacturing industries. These businesses should undertake a strategic review of their operations in collaboration with the AIL team. The aim would be to agree individual strategies on whether a road or a water route is to be used for abnormal load movements on a site-by-site basis. Shipping to the nearest coastal port is expected to be the minimum requirement but the use of inland waterways should also be considered for each operational site.

Highways England, on behalf of the Secretary of State, can advise on some of the technical possibilities through its planning and abnormal load teams. I am keen for all reasonable opportunities to be taken to use waterborne transport for the public benefit, including through proportionate planning conditions.

Yours sincerely

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JESSE NORMAN