



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
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The Rt Hon the Lord Strathclyde CH
Chair of the Lords Constitution Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

23 February 2026

Dear Thomas,

I am writing to provide an update to the Constitution Committee on the Department for Transport's progress in finalising its four Common Frameworks.

As you will be aware, the Department for Transport is responsible for the publication of four of the 30 Common Frameworks: Commercial Transport Operator Licensing, Driver Licensing, Motor Insurance, and Rail Technical Standards. These frameworks were provisionally published in September 2021, following scrutiny by the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee (CFSC). In late 2021, then-Minister Heaton-Harris and Baroness Vere of Norbiton responded to the CFSC's recommendations on behalf of the Department.

Since then and following the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Executive in 2022 and the establishment of the Windsor Framework, my officials have worked closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Cabinet Office, and the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland to update and finalise these frameworks. These updates reflect the feedback provided by the CFSC and ensure the frameworks remain fit for purpose.

The CFSC played an important role in scrutinising the UK Government's provisional frameworks until its disbandment in 2023. In light of its earlier work, I am pleased to share that responses to the Committee's policy-level recommendations are included in the annex to this letter.

The Department's finalised Common Frameworks will be published on GOV.UK and I am placing a copy of the frameworks along with this letter in the libraries of both Houses on 26 February 2026.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Alexander". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and 'A'.

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

Annex – Responses to policy-level recommendations, provided by the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee

1. Commercial Transport and Operator Licensing

1.1. Recommendation one - We recommend that section 3.8 of the framework is updated to use party neutral language where relevant. (CFSC)

Response: We have amended the framework document to account for this comment to use party neutral language, unless references are specifically needed to either Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

2. Driver Licensing

2.1. Recommendation one - We have updated the Framework document to account for this comment, to cite appropriate JMC (EN) principles.

Response: We have updated the Framework document to account for this comment, to cite appropriate Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) (JMC (EN)) principles.

2.2. Recommendation two - We recommend that the framework is updated to include a GB position on the likelihood of future policy change.

Response: We have updated the Framework document to account for this comment, to include the likelihood of future policy change.

2.3. Recommendation three - We recommend that the framework is updated to remove the imprecise language.

Response: We have updated the Framework document to account for this comment, to remove imprecise language.

3. Motor Insurance

3.1. Recommendation one - We recommend that the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive consider citing appropriate additional JMC (EN) Principles as the purpose for these frameworks.

Response: We have updated the Framework document to account for this comment and have made reference to the JMC Principles.

3.2. Recommendation two - We recommend revising the wording of section 3.8 to reflect the contents of the annex more clearly.

Response: We have updated the Framework accordingly to reflect the contents of the annex.

3.3. Recommendation three - We remain concerned that Article 11 of the Protocol may have implications in this area. We hope that these issues may be resolved through the ongoing scrutiny process in the Northern Ireland Assembly and pass these concerns on to the Committee for Infrastructure.

Response: DfT and DfI officials have discussed this matter and consider that suitable mitigations have been put in place to deal with the loss of access to the Visiting Victims system. In addition, it is considered that the loss of legal provisions on visiting victims will be less of a concern on the island of Ireland as there are no language barriers and the legal systems are similar. DfT and DfI officials will continue to liaise to monitor how the alternative arrangements are working on a practical level, in particular between the UK and Irish Governments, and will engage with relevant stakeholders as required.

4. Rail Technical Standards

4.1. Recommendation one - We recommend that the first review of this framework should consider whether an official level working group should be created, and if not, whether collaboration in this area would be better handled through a simpler Memorandum of Understanding between administrations rather than a Common Framework.

Response: We have amended the framework document to include an official level working group which will meet quarterly. We have also committed in the framework to review the structure in Phase 5 at the first review point after a year.

4.2. Recommendation two - We recommend that the framework should be revised to include a commitment to publish a Written Ministerial Statement in the Northern Ireland Assembly if divergence is being considered between the GB and NI technical standards regimes.

Response: We have amended the framework to commit to publish a Written Ministerial Statement when there is an update to the rail technical standards where divergence is being considered between the GB and NI technical standards regimes.