



Department
for Transport

Motoring Services Strategy Consultation

Moving Britain Ahead



November 2015

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Foreword



The United Kingdom's road network is central to its prosperity. It is essential that those who use the network are properly trained and licensed, and that the vehicles they drive are safe and meet environmental standards. The three motoring services agencies, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA), are charged with ensuring that this is so.

I am clear that these agencies must continue to offer an efficient service to users, be responsive to need and geared to the expectations of the 21st century in ways that promote productivity. The 2012 strategy for the agencies provided a starting point for this; and some of its achievements are described later on in this consultation document. We will continue the theme of that earlier strategy by putting the user at the heart of all that the agencies do. The purpose of this consultation is to hear your views on the next stage of the agencies' transformation, so that they can be even better positioned to deliver against user expectations; considering how we may deliver more flexible, and enhanced digital services to our users as efficiently as possible. The agencies provide services to a wide range of clients including most members of the public as well as many commercial organisations. The agencies' staff, delivering these services day in, day out, will also have ideas for the future and I am keen to ensure they have a full opportunity to inform this strategy. We are keen, therefore, to get as comprehensive a range of responses as possible.

Following a consultation, we plan to publish, in the spring of 2016, a strategy for the future direction and development of the agencies. This will align with the agencies' business plans and set out what we expect of them over the life of this Parliament, to spring 2020.

The Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon

Executive summary

Introduction

- 1 The Department for Transport's three motoring services agencies provide vital services to the country's drivers and vehicle owners. We want them to continue to improve their services, responding to users' needs in a way that reflects the way users live their lives, building on their achievements since the publication of the 2012 Motoring Services Strategy.
- 2 We will set out, in a refreshed strategy to be published next spring, a programme of reform for the remainder of this Parliament that will set an overall direction for the agencies.
- 3 This consultation has been launched ahead of announcements about the outcome of the 2015 Spending Review. Our response to this consultation will also reflect those announcements.

User experience

- 4 The 2012 strategy put the user at the heart of everything the agencies do. Our refreshed strategy will continue this focus.
- 5 We wish to see services delivered at times, and in places, that suit the users of those services. This document outlines proposals for reform of the practical driving test; as well as improvements to the ways in which the agencies interact with the haulage industry and other commercial clients.
- 6 Users want services that are relevant, not just convenient. This document sets out possible changes to enforcement inspections; as well as detail of the changes to Vehicle Excise Duty which better relate to today's choices about vehicle emissions.

Digital

- 7 Users increasingly expect that services should be available on demand, without the need to be in any particular place to access them.
- 8 Services for drivers and vehicle owners are amongst the most popular interactions citizens have with central government. We are therefore committed to their continuous improvement. Digital access to services is not universal, and we are keen to understand how to make them more accessible to users, and to assist those for whom digital access is challenging.
- 9 In addition we will ask for views on how the data that government holds can be used to improve the services that the agencies offer their users.

Efficiency

- 10 The services government offers should be delivered as efficiently as possible. We will continue to seek ways to make the agencies more efficient.
- 11 The agencies hold sizeable property estates which, as user needs shift, may no

longer be appropriate for delivery of services. We propose to continue to reduce the agencies' estate where it no longer serves the agencies' purposes.

- 12 Most of the agencies' income is derived from fees charged for services, with little call on funding from general taxation. It is important that such fees are transparent, and closely matched to the costs of the service provided. We will ensure that this continues to be so.

Agency transformation

- 13 To provide the services that people want, the agencies need to embed the changes required to deliver those services properly and thoroughly in their culture. We will also look at whether there is an appetite for agency mutualisation or other forms of private sector involvement.
- 14 We are asking for views as to how the VCA could be structured to ensure that it best supports the UK automotive industry.

Deregulation

- 15 Regulation should always be proportionate and relevant to the issues it seeks to address. The agencies have removed many regulations that place an unnecessary burden on the public or business. We are keen, however, to find further examples of regulation that could be removed.

Full list of consultation questions

A full list of the questions posed in this document is given below, together with a reference to the paragraph in the chapters below where each occurs. Respondents are also invited to make any observations and suggestions concerning the motoring agencies which are not covered by the questions.

User experience

- 1 As we change the practical driving test to ensure it reflects the modern driving experience, what views do respondents have about how we can maintain standards and give candidates clear information about the competencies tested in the driving test? (para 2.4)
- 2 Driving tests might be offered from a wide range of venues. What factors should be considered in deciding on these? (para 2.7)
- 3 We are interested to hear whether respondents would be willing to pay extra for more flexibility of driving test slots, both in terms of timing and location. (para 2.8)
- 4 What could be done to ensure that candidates are better prepared for their practical test? (para 2.10)
- 5 What opportunities and risks would respondents see in alternative delivery models for aspects of the practical test? (para 2.12)
- 6 What factors are likely to attract potential partners to provide a practical driving test service? (para 2.14)
- 7 What are the most important linkages we should make to streamlining the LGV driver licensing process, while ensuring standards are maintained? (para 2.17)
- 8 Do respondents believe that the on-road and manoeuvring components of the LGV driving test could be conducted separately and be of benefit to the haulage industry? (para 2.19)
- 9 We would be interested to hear suggestions on how the Drivers Medical service might resolve cases more quickly. (para 2.23)
- 10 What more can we do to meet the needs of users, so that vehicle testing services could continue to meet industry's needs? (para 2.25)
- 11 Would an expansion in the number of LGV testers to include private sector testers be welcomed? Does industry have the appetite and capability to provide such an expansion? (para 2.27)
- 12 Is there an appetite amongst LGV/PSV operators to be involved in an 'earned recognition' enforcement scheme? What more do you think DVSA could do to process vehicles more quickly during roadside checks? (para 2.30)
- 13 Are there other ways in which DVSA could better target enforcement on non-

compliant operators? (para 2.31)

- 14 What would be the best way(s) to ensure that commercial users are kept abreast of developments in the agencies? (para 2.33)

Digital

- 15 What more could be done to expand and increase the use of digital services offered by the motoring agencies and what should be done for those who cannot or choose not to use a digital service? (para 3.5)
- 16 In the past, services requested by industry groups have often not been used to the level forecast. How can we incorporate their requests into service design? (para 3.6)
- 17 In providing assistance to those accessing digital services, are the agencies providing the right kind of assistance? Would web page pop-up assistance be valued? Would guidance for those assisting users (in, say, community centres, council offices or job centres) be more helpful? (para 3.8)
- 18 Is there a demand for developing and publishing an application programming interface (API) for fleet management software developers to build on? If so, which services should it cover? Is there industry appetite to lead this work? (para 3.10)
- 19 Would smartphone or tablet applications for drivers and owners be welcomed? Would the public sector be best placed to provide such services? (para 3.12)

Efficiency

- 20 Are there any social or economic factors which the fees review should consider in proposing either to reduce or to increase fees for these services in the future? (para 4.8)
- 21 Should fees more closely reflect the differential cost of service provision by different channels? (para 4.11)

Agency transformation

- 22 We would be interested to hear from respondents what operating models for the agencies would best promote ever increasing efficiency, improve user service, maintain standards and deliver accountability to Parliament. (para 5.2)
- 23 We would value views from respondents with experience of VCA operations overseas on the value VCA adds to business or the automotive sector through such operations. (para 5.10)
- 24 We welcome views from industry about the services currently provided by VCA in the UK and overseas, its effectiveness in supporting users and growth in the sector and whether the existing operating model should be retained. (para 5.11)

Deregulation

- 25 Are there any other areas of regulation administered or enforced by the motoring agencies, which you consider should be reviewed and potentially be safely reduced during the next four years? (para 6.13)

Achievements of the 2012 Motoring Services Strategy

- 1 A Motoring Services Strategy was published and consulted on during 2012-13. Its vision was for "motoring services that have the user and businesses at their heart". In response to the consultation, the strategy announced various measures that would be taken to improve the quality of services delivered through the Motoring Agencies, and their efficiency.
- 2 Organisational reforms taken as a result of the Strategy were
 - the creation of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), by merging the Driving Standards Agency and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. The merger brought together driver and vehicle testing and standards into one user-focused agency, to improve and standardise the quality of services provided to users;
 - a New Commercial Models project to look at a potentially different operating model for VCA, to enable it to grow and contribute to the wider economy, whilst continuing to provide a high quality and trusted service. An ensuing competition was not successful in identifying a suitable joint venture that would achieve the objectives of both partners, though it did give us a stronger understanding of the business, which will feed into our long-term aims for the agency. The project closed in late 2014.
- 3 As a result of the Strategy, and the Review of DVLA by Mary Reilly in 2013, a number of other actions were taken to improve the motoring services provided to users (on which we are not consulting further in this document). These included:
 - DVLA and DVSA to work with the Government Digital Service to maximise the digital delivery of driver and vehicle licensing and other services;
 - DVLA's creation of the View Your Driver Record Online service, which allows users to view their driving licence information online and check their details are up to date and correct;
 - DVLA's Direct Debit Project, giving greater choice on how users can tax their vehicles and allowing the them to spread the payment of vehicle licensing;
 - helping more users to tax or declare their vehicle off the road online;
 - looking at the locations from which the DVSA delivers practical driving tests and trialling approaches which take these closer to the user;
 - DVSA expanding its network of Authorised Test Facilities (ATFs), and reorganising its test facility estate in response;
 - DVLA delivering a sustainable reduction of £100m in its operating expenditure (including the impact of inflation) by March 2015 against a 2010-11 baseline and maximise the digital delivery of its services to motorists. In fact, DVLA exceeded

its £100m efficiency target and in 2014 published its plans to achieve further efficiency savings against the 2013-14 inflated baseline;

- DVSA becoming a Trading Fund in 2015 (merging the old VOSA and DSA Trading Funds).
- DVLA significantly simplifying the public's experience of its services by removing the need for a tax disc and the introduction of direct debit for the renewal of vehicle tax. DVLA also cut fees for drivers by over £20 million, and a further £20 million reduction in personalised registration fees;
- DVSA progressing an estates rationalisation programme which has already generated £7.1m in capital receipts and £0.58m in annual savings, with some 30 sites due to have been marketed by the end of 2015-16. A further £6.62m in capital receipts and £0.98m in annual savings is expected by the end of 2015-16.
- In 2013, DVLA closed its network of 39 local offices and centralised work in Swansea, and from 2014 provided services directly for an additional 1.7 million users from Northern Ireland giving access to online services for the first time and saving a total of £40 million a year;
- DVLA has completed a wide ranging IT procurement that has replaced its Partners Achieving Change Together (PACT) contract, bringing its IT functions in-house.

How to respond

The consultation period began on 13 November 2015 and will run until 8 January 2016. Please ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date. If you would like further copies of this consultation document, it can be found at gov.uk; or you can contact Edward Bunting at the address below if you need alternative formats (Braille, audio CD, etc).

Please send consultation responses to:

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When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

1. Context

The Motoring Agencies

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) provides services to drivers, vehicle owners and the automotive industry through three of its executive agencies:
 - **The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)** collects revenue on behalf of HM Treasury, in the form of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), more commonly known as road tax; and maintains registers of drivers in Great Britain and vehicles in the United Kingdom. This information helps improve road safety, reduce vehicle related crime, support environmental initiatives and limit vehicle tax evasion.
 - **The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)** works to improve road safety in Great Britain by setting standards for driving and motorcycling, and making sure drivers, vehicle operators and MOT garages follow roadworthiness standards. DVSA is a user-facing organisation which delivers a range of licensing, testing, education and enforcement services. The Agency was created in 2014 through a merger of the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA).
 - **The Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)** is the UK's designated Vehicle Type Approval authority, ensuring vehicles, systems and component parts comply with internationally agreed safety and environmental standards. VCA supports the automotive industry globally by providing internationally recognised testing and certification for vehicles, their systems and components.
- 1.2 The motoring agencies play a vital role in keeping the UK moving: they test and license drivers; test vehicles and components for safety and conformity to international standards at the point of manufacture and throughout their lifespan; and conduct enforcement activity to ensure the drivers and vehicles on our roads are competent, qualified and safe. The agencies interact with millions of users per year. In the last quarter of 2014 alone, 461,000 practical driving tests were conducted in Great Britain, and 462,000 driving theory tests.
- 1.3 The motoring agencies therefore need to operate in a way that allows them to respond to change and adapt to new trends in both motoring and the way people and businesses operate in an increasingly digitally-driven world. Whether ensuring that vehicles and drivers are properly licensed, testing whether aspiring drivers are competent to drive, or checking that vehicles are safe and being safely operated, they provide confidence to all road users that safety is not compromised, and drivers are using the road in accordance with the law.
- 1.4 The government is therefore keen to ensure that the motoring agencies are able to do their job as efficiently as possible, while providing as quick and simple a user experience as possible. At the same time, the agencies have a part to play in reducing unnecessary regulation for business, and in maintaining and improving the UK's excellent road safety record.

Moving Britain ahead

- 1.5 Roads are integral to both passenger and freight transport. At the end of 2014, there were 36.7 million licensed vehicles in the UK; and that year's journeys totalled 311 billion vehicle miles. Sixty eight per cent of people travelling to work do so by car, for example. A similar percentage of freight is moved by road;¹ getting goods to market, whether at home or abroad, also relies heavily on a well-functioning road system. Motoring costs are a significant component of most households' expenditure, and government is mindful of the costs it imposes on individuals and business. So it is important that regulation is seen to be proportionate and services are as efficient as possible.
- 1.6 The motoring environment is changing and automotive technology continues to develop, with the prospect of driverless cars now a real possibility. New, cleaner technologies and ways of driving are also being developed. In the last quarter of 2014, 6,121 new ultra-low emission vehicles were registered for the first time in the UK, up 422% from the same period in 2013. The rapid growth in this emerging sector is just one indicator of how our driving preferences and habits are evolving in response to technological advances.
- 1.7 Five people are killed every day on Britain's roads. Although this is down from nine a day ten years ago, the decrease in road casualties is levelling off. In 2014, the number of people killed and seriously injured increased slightly compared to 2013, but was still the third lowest annual total on record.² We need to ensure that the motoring agencies continue to contribute to safe motoring; the proposals here will need to be consistent with our forthcoming road safety framework.
- 1.8 At the same time, technological and demographic developments are changing our use of road transport. Government needs to keep pace with such change; the way it delivers and charges for services will need to do so too. The agencies need to be structured so as to be able to deliver services appropriate to the moment, and responsive to change.

Supporting industry

- 1.9 There are 4.2 million goods vehicles licensed in the UK,³ and company car registrations account for 8.6% of the total stock, and 54% of new registrations.⁴ We need to ensure that the agencies cater not just for individual drivers and owners/keepers, but also for fleet operators and professional drivers.
- 1.10 The UK also has a thriving automotive industry, contributing £34 billion in exports and employing 770,000 people.⁵ The VCA is responsible for certifying much of the industry's output; supporting trade in the UK and overseas. We are keen that all three agencies should support the sustainable growth of the UK's automotive industry.

¹ Department for Transport (2014), *Transport Statistics Great Britain 2014*, available from www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389596/tsgb-2014-print-ready-version.pdf

² Department for Transport (2015), *Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: Main Results 2014*, available from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/438040/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-main-results-2014-release.pdf

³ Department for Transport (2015), *Licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, quarterly from 1994*, available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/veh01-vehicles-registered-for-the-first-time#table-veh0101>

⁴ Department for Transport (2015), *Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Quarter 4 (Oct - Dec) 2014*, available from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421337/vls-2014.pdf

⁵ SMMT (2015), *Motor Industry Facts 2015*, available from http://www.smmmt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/100049_SMMT-Facts-Guide-2015.pdf

Forecasts by industry suggest that car manufacturing could, in the next two to three years, exceed its long-standing previous record of 1.92 million vehicles.⁶

Fees, Charges and Agency Spend

- 1.11 In the July 2015 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced reform of Vehicle Excise Duty and the MOT (which are administered by DVLA and DVSA respectively). Later that same month, the Chancellor and Business Secretary announced a plan to raise the country's productivity.⁷ As part of this, the government is committed to producing Single Departmental Plans (SDPs). The motoring agencies have a central role to play in delivering the DfT's SDP. As with the rest of the Civil Service, they will do this in the context of the Spending Review 2015. Decisions about the Department's budgets for the remainder of this Parliament will be determined while this consultation is underway; the strategy we publish next spring will be informed not only by responses to this consultation, but also the outcomes of the Spending Review.
- 1.12 Much of the agencies' operating expenditure is recouped in fees from clients and users, and efficiency gains can be passed back to users in the form of fee reductions (for the driving theory test, for example). We will carry out a review of agency fees, to ensure that the agencies continue to work within the requirements of HM Treasury's rules. Our aim is also to provide a clearer framework for commercial fees where appropriate.

Our vision for the Motoring Agencies

- 1.13 The Coalition Government published a strategy for the motoring services agencies in 2012, focused on how the agencies could be best structured to deliver excellent services to users. On this, the agencies have made substantial progress. Some of the achievements of the 2012 strategy are outlined on page 10. We continue to believe that the Motoring Agencies should provide user-centred services that deliver convenience, safety, and savings to users and to the general public.
- 1.14 In October 2014 the Transport Select Committee challenged the Coalition Government to "make clear its long term agenda for change by setting out clearly its overall strategy for provision of motoring services".⁸ This strategy is also a response to that challenge.
- 1.15 We will ensure the services we provide best meet user need through five key areas:
- *improving the user experience*: chapter 2 sets out our ideas on reforming the practical driving test and reforming the way the agencies work with commercial clients, as well as describing changes to the way Vehicle Excise Duty is administered;
 - *embedding digital in the way we work*: chapter 3 describes how we are continuing greater digitisation of how the agencies work, opportunities for sharing data, and improvements to IT systems;

⁶ SMMT (2015), *Motor Industry Facts 2015*. The previous record dates from 1972.

⁷ H M Treasury (2015), *Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation*, available from www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443897/Productivity_Plan_print.pdf

⁸ Transport Select Committee (2014), *Government motoring agencies - the user perspective* (HC287), recommendation 2, available from www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/transport/Report%20-%20GMA%20-%20the%20user%20perspective.pdf

- *ensuring our processes are as efficient as possible to support delivery of excellent user service*: chapter 4 sets the DVSA a challenging estates rationalisation, and describes our plans for a review of agency fees;
- *transforming the agencies*: chapter 5 describes how we intend the agencies to be as joined-up as can be with each other and across government, to improve the service we offer our users. It also invites views on the future of the VCA;
- *making driving easier through deregulation*: chapter 6 invites ideas on areas of regulation that might be considered for repeal.

2. User experience

Introduction

- 2.1 The motoring agencies are service delivery organisations. They are involved in licensing, standards setting, enforcement and testing. Every one of the country's business and individual vehicle owners/keepers and drivers needs to transact with the agencies to a greater or lesser degree. Many of these contacts come at times when drivers are already feeling under pressure: taking their driving test, moving house, or dealing with illness. Our aim is to make such interactions as straightforward as possible, simplifying processes for the user and better meeting business needs.
- 2.2 We are aware that in the past many processes have been built around individual, private drivers and owners. We want to build on the agencies' current relationships with their commercial users, to improve access to services that take account of their different needs.

A new approach to driving tests

- 2.3 We are undertaking a thorough review of the practical car driving test. This review is looking at the competencies and skills tested to consider how we could change the test to assess better the skills needed for today's roads and vehicles and those of the future.
- 2.4 **As we change the test to ensure it reflects the modern driving experience, what views do respondents have about how we can maintain standards and give candidates clear information about the competencies tested in the driving test?**
- 2.5 We want to reduce waiting times for car and large goods vehicle (LGV) practical driving tests, by offering a more flexible service. This could include greater use of evening and weekend appointments, as well as greater choice in where tests might start.
- 2.6 **Tests might be offered from a wide range of venues. What factors should be considered in deciding on these?**
- 2.7 **We are interested to hear whether respondents would be willing to pay extra for more flexibility of driving test slots, both in terms of timing and location.**
- 2.8 The pass rate for the car practical driving test is, overall, below 50%. We will consider ways in which this figure can be improved, consistent with maintaining high competency standards; though candidates can help themselves by getting in as much practice as they can before taking the test, both because they are more likely to pass and because they are likely to be safer (there is evidence that crash risk reduces, the more people practise before taking their test). Those taking a second or subsequent test (55% of candidates) will have feedback from the examiner of their previous test to assist them in preparing. There is anecdotal evidence that some

learner drivers are booking a practical test date well in advance, at the start of their lessons, and then taking the test at that time whether or not they are ready. It is in the interests of candidates, instructors and examiners that candidates take the practical test only once they are properly prepared.

- 2.9 What could be done to ensure that candidates are better prepared for their practical test?**
- 2.10 A fifth of all those killed and seriously injured on our roads are aged between 17 and 24. A sizeable proportion of those passed their driving test less than six months before the collision. A review of international approaches to learning to drive showed that greater and more varied experience pre-test, lowered the likelihood of a new driver being in an accident post-test. Around 1.5m tests are conducted each year; under a quarter (21%) result in a first time pass, the remainder are fails (53%) or people who pass on their second or subsequent attempt (26%). Encouraging learner drivers to take more practice before attempting their first test could reduce the total number of attempts taken to pass the driving test and lower the likelihood of their being in an accident post-test.
- 2.11 We will explore whether a financial incentive to encourage people to take their test when they have a higher chance of passing, rather than having a go in hope of passing, would improve road safety and increase test pass rates. This could be done through a reduced test fee, in the form of a deposit when the test is booked, refundable if the candidate passed. The proposal would not lead to a revenue increase to the DVSA as retained deposits would be used to fund a reduction in the basic practical test fee.
- 2.12 Would a financial incentive encourage learners to sit the test when they have a better chance of passing?**
- 2.13 At what level should such an incentive be set?**
- 2.14 We will also consider how we might meet continued strong user demand for the practical driving test, through exploring partnerships with other organisations. This might include operating from a range of different sites, or delivering some elements of the test through partners. There is a trade-off between the efficiencies this would introduce and the ability to deliver the changes noted in paragraph 2.3. We are considering alternative delivery models for the practical driving test, but will not compromise road safety. In any case, the government is clear that the DVSA would retain a standards-setting and regulatory function.
- 2.15 What opportunities and risks do respondents see in alternative delivery models for the practical test?**
- 2.16 We will work with industry to determine whether there is an appetite in the private sector for partnership, and to consider how these would work.
- 2.17 What factors are likely to attract potential partners to provide a service?**

A new approach to commercial clients

- 2.18 For individual motorists, use of a car can be central to life and work; but for the logistics, road haulage, bus and coach industries, vehicles are essential to the very purpose of a company. While these industries (including, for example, the logistics arms of retail companies) vary enormously in size and scope, the motoring services agencies aim to provide services that reflect the particular needs of commercial users. We propose to strengthen this aim in future through better digital links aimed

specifically at commercial users, providing forums through which commercial needs can be discussed and progressed, and through proposals such as those set out below.

- 2.19 One of the largest issues facing the haulage industry is a shortage of LGV drivers: the workforce is ageing and insufficient young people are coming forward to replace them. There are several reasons for this, including demographic and economic factors, but we acknowledge that the way in which the agencies process applications could be more joined-up, while maintaining standards, to enable LGV drivers who have met the required driving standards to obtain their licence and start work. We propose to develop a more integrated approach to the process of gaining an LGV driving licence, to remove some of the obstacles.
- 2.20 What are the most important actions we should take to streamline the LGV driver licensing process, while ensuring standards are maintained?**
- 2.21 At present, goods vehicle and bus/coach driving tests are conducted partly on the road and partly through an examination of manoeuvring at a test site. Delivering both aspects as part of a single test can lead to inefficiency in the use of test facilities. We will explore how we could split these elements of the LGV and public service vehicle (PSV) practical test, to give users more flexibility in when they could take their test, and will seek volunteers to participate in a pilot scheme.
- 2.22 Do respondents believe that the on-road and manoeuvring components of the LGV test could be conducted separately with benefit to the haulage industry?**
- 2.23 LGV drivers must obtain a certificate of fitness to drive when applying for a licence. In 2013/14 DVLA received over 260,000 vocational applications. Of these, 40% were referred to the medical section for investigation before a licensing decision could be made.
- 2.24 Some delays in the vocational application process are unavoidable due to increased medical investigation being needed, because of the greater potential for damage associated with accidents involving heavy vehicles. If a vocational driver needs a medical investigation, examination or test to confirm that they are fit to drive, there are often delays due to a reliance on replies from the driver's optician, GP, consultant or other medical professional.
- 2.25 The DVLA is however reviewing and piloting how it can improve the processes for both non-medical vocational applications and those where a driver has declared a medical condition.
- 2.26 In the meantime, however, we would be interested to hear suggestions on how, and not only in relation to vocational drivers, the Drivers Medical service might resolve cases more quickly.**
- 2.27 DVSA will continue to review the extent to which it needs to maintain its own LGV testing stations; and will, in any case, look to expand the number of privately owned test sites accredited as Authorised Testing Facilities (ATFs) in hard to reach locations. DVSA will look to increase its testing resource availability, to provide increased flexibility to users, and reduce the time vehicles need to be off the road.
- 2.28 What more can we do to meet the needs of users, so that testing services could continue to meet industry's needs?**
- 2.29 We will consider whether industry would be best served by a 'mixed economy' which allows some private sector delegated examiners to conduct LGV tests at ATFs

(following the model for cars), with appropriate safeguards to ensure fleet operators could not certificate their own vehicles.

- 2.30 Would an expansion in the number of LGV testers to include private sector testers be welcomed? Does industry have the appetite and capability to provide such an expansion?**
- 2.31 DVSA conducts a wide-ranging programme of LGV and PSV enforcement inspections, to ensure that vehicles on the road are safe, and operators and drivers are compliant. We recognize that this programme can be a burden on those operators who take appropriate care to keep their vehicles in good repair, properly loaded and competently driven. A road-side pull-over can cost a company thousands of pounds, not only in vehicle and driver delay, but also in penalties for lost delivery slots etc. DVSA is moving to targeting its inspections on the seriously and serially non-compliant. The targeted approach is effective: some 75% of those pulled over are found to be in breach of the law. DVSA is trialling increased use of technology and data to tackle some of the less serious non-compliance remotely, and also to target serious and serial infringements more effectively.
- 2.32 DVSA is also trialling a programme in which it has direct access to operators' fleet records, where a haulier has demonstrated a history of compliance and has an appropriate Operator Compliance Risk Score. Such acknowledgement of continued compliance is being explored as an 'earned recognition' scheme with industry to reduce the level of enforcement for those who are most compliant. This will enable the agency to improve its focus on non-compliant hauliers at the road side. At the same time, DVSA is re-examining its operational procedures, with a view to reducing the amount of time a roadside inspection detains a vehicle.
- 2.33 Is there an appetite amongst operators to be involved in such an 'earned recognition' scheme? What more do you think DVSA could do to process vehicles more quickly during roadside checks?**
- 2.34 Are there other ways in which DVSA could better target enforcement on non-compliant operators?**
- 2.35 Several commercial users have told us that the agencies could be better at communicating change to fleet managers. We will examine ways in which this can be improved, so that clients can better manage their fleets and the agencies can spend less time on dealing with individual inquiries.
- 2.36 What would be the best way(s) to ensure that users are kept abreast of developments in the agencies?**

Changes to Vehicle Excise Duty

- 2.37 In the 2015 summer Budget, the Chancellor announced a number of changes to Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) which will take effect for vehicles first registered on or after 1 April 2017. The first year rate (first vehicle licence) will continue to be set according to CO₂ emissions. From the second year a flat standard rate of £140 will be introduced for all cars, except those with a CO₂ emissions figure of 0 (e.g. electric vehicles) for which the standard rate will be £0. Cars with a list price (including optional extras) above £40,000 will attract the standard rate of £140 plus a supplement of £310 per year for the first five years in which the standard rate is paid. There will be no change to the VED structure for cars registered prior to 1 April 2017.

In addition, from 2020-21 the government will create a Roads Fund and spend all of the revenue raised from VED in England on the English Strategic Road Network.

2.38 Delivering this policy by April 2017 will require extensive technical changes to DVLA's systems as well as car manufacturers' systems. There will be a significant technical impact to accommodate the collection and subsequent management of these data and DVLA will work closely with the industry to implement these changes.

3. Digital

Embedding digital as the way we work

- 3.1 Where the government has decided to offer a service digitally, the Digital by Default Service Standard⁹ expects departments and agencies to "encourage all users to use the digital service (with assisted digital support if required), alongside an appropriate plan to phase out non-digital channels/services". Our intention is to make the digital experience so good that it will be the first choice as a channel, and the agencies have made significant strides in this direction. While there is more that could be done to improve the user experience, it is already the case, for example, that:
- over 90 per cent of driving tests are booked on-line;
 - individual drivers can now easily see their driving record;
 - well in excess of 70% of owners wishing to tax their vehicle do so on line;¹⁰ and
 - we have simplified the need for MOT garages to record the test equipment they use.
- 3.2 Access to the agencies' services is available through a single portal, the government website GOV.UK; and from the driver's perspective, the emphasis is not on which part of government delivers the functions. While we have set out in this consultation proposals for improving the integration of those online services, much of this will be hidden from public view. Currently, however, the digital channel is a series of discrete, web-based applications and does not always provide easy click through from one activity to another or a coherent user-centred view from one transaction to another, to provide a seamless online offering to drivers and vehicle owners. We will therefore consider how we can extend digital access to reflect better how people organise their lives today.
- 3.3 To improve the experience of using our digital services, we commit to continually improving them in line with user feedback, including 24 hours a day, seven days a week access, where there is significant demand for such services. Many such services, including all DVLA's digital channels, are already continuously available.

Improving the digital experience

- 3.4 The agencies are focusing considerable effort on continuously improving their digital services and have made very significant progress in helping both public and business users online. Our favoured approach, in line with the Digital by Default Service Standard on specific service design and assisted digital, is to encourage stakeholders to participate directly in service design, providing feedback that can be

⁹ Available from <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/digital-by-default>

¹⁰ See [gov.uk/performance](https://www.gov.uk/performance)

incorporated directly into services. DVLA's new User Experience lab is a good example of having capability in collecting user needs.

- 3.5 **What more could be done to expand and increase the use of digital services offered by the motoring agencies and what should be done for those who cannot or choose not to use a digital service?**
- 3.6 **In the past, services requested by industry groups have often not been used to the level forecast. How can we incorporate their requests into service design?**
- 3.7 Many of the agencies' user processes can be carried out on-line. In line with the government's aim of channel shift to digital, we will extend this where possible, while improving assistance for those for whom digital access represents a barrier, whatever kind of barrier that might be. Some people face barriers to using the internet at all; for those who have internet access, but could be helped in using the agencies' internet provision, we will explore extending assistance, which might, for example, include web pages that automatically offer an opportunity to chat to an adviser, where users appear to be hesitating.
- 3.8 **In providing assistance to those accessing digital services, are the agencies providing the right kind of help? Would web page pop-up assistance be valued? Would guidance for those assisting users (in, say, community centres, council offices or job centres) be more helpful?**
- 3.9 We intend to introduce processes better suited to commercial users. For some smaller fleet operators, a web interface through GOV.UK will meet their needs. Larger hauliers and fleet operators have sophisticated fleet management software to manage the business. Where data protection issues permit, we propose to develop an application programming interface (API) that would allow larger organisations to access the agencies' services from within their fleet management software, where the software supplier chooses to develop appropriate modules. This should help to eliminate the need for fleet operators to have to input information twice, once to their own management systems and then again for government.
- 3.10 **Is there a demand for developing and publishing an application programming interface (API) for fleet management software developers to build on? If so, which services should it cover? Is there industry appetite to lead this work?**
- 3.11 Individual drivers and vehicle owners might also welcome smartphone or tablet applications which, for example, might provide a reminder when an MOT is due, and then provide a click-through to booking an MOT test.
- 3.12 **Would such applications be welcomed? Would the public sector be best placed to provide such services?**

Sharing data

- 3.13 The motoring agencies hold vast amounts of data about the vehicles on our roads and the people who drive them. These data can be seen as valuable for other parts of government and wider commercial interests. However, the agencies have a responsibility to safeguard the information they hold and to ensure it is only shared where it is lawful to do so. DVLA is currently developing a comprehensive data management strategy to ensure that it meets the future needs of users and those whose data it holds.
- 3.14 To streamline our own internal processes, we will develop a more direct mechanism for DVSA driving test examiners to send test pass notifications to DVLA.

- 3.15 We will work with other departments and agencies, to consider the way we share data across government: in particular, we will examine how data can be shared to improve enforcement capabilities.
- 3.16 Our agencies will continue to work with the Government Digital Service to ensure that they provide connected services, such as the ability for businesses and members of the public to 'tell us once' in respect of events such as address changes.

Improving our IT systems

- 3.17 To ensure that we are able to deliver an efficient and digital service to users, the agencies need to have the right IT systems. DVLA has in-sourced its IT function, allowing opportunities to be more flexible and responsive in developing transformative new digital services and achieving considerable efficiency savings over the life of this Parliament.
- 3.18 Because they offer long standing, continuously available services, it has sometimes proved difficult to re-engineer some user processes to reflect a more digital way of doing business. As a result, some IT systems support a web-based paperless version of what was essentially a paper-based process. The agencies will continue to refresh their user-facing business processes, so that they reflect a truly digital approach while not imposing additional burdens on users. For example, DVSA has recently rolled out a new MOT system to some 22,000 garages and this service will be further developed over the coming years.

4. Efficiency

Introduction

- 4.1 This consultation is being conducted as the government is engaged on the Spending Review 2015. HM Treasury is clear that all government spending, at whatever level that might be set, "must be accompanied by measures to increase productivity and efficiency to ensure that every extra pound is put to the very best use".¹¹ This applies to the motoring agencies as much as any other area of government.
- 4.2 Many of the proposals set out in the sections on user experience and digital services will be delivered in a more efficient way than currently. However, there could also be efficiencies to be secured in the agencies' back office functions and in how they manage their businesses.

Estates rationalisation

*"The government has taken strides to reduce the size of its estate, getting out of expensive buildings that it no longer needs, and releasing surplus public sector land. This is vital to reducing running costs, promoting economic growth, and meeting the government's housing ambitions. [...] The government has committed to dispose of public sector land for at least 150,000 homes by 2020. As part of the Spending Review, departments will set out how they will meet their share of contributions to this target"*¹²

- 4.3 DVLA has now closed its local office network, and centralised operations in Swansea; DVSA has also made significant progress in disposing of its testing estate. However, DVSA still has considerable land holdings across the country, as well as three central operations buildings in Bristol, Nottingham and Newcastle. As the agencies' contribution to the target set out above, we will explore the options for further reducing the DVSA's driving test centre and large goods vehicle (LGV) test centre estates. In addition, we will consider whether DVSA's central functions could be more efficiently delivered from a smaller number of sites.
- 4.4 We will consider combining the DVLA and DVSA contact centre functions, to provide one integrated point of contact for all driver and vehicle related enquiries.
- 4.5 A number of corporate functions, such as finance, estates management, HR and contact centre provision, are currently provided separately for each agency. We will consider if these could be combined to achieve economies of scale.

¹¹ HM Treasury (July 2015), *A country that lives within its means: Spending Review 2015* (Cm 9112), available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2015-a-country-that-lives-within-its-means>

¹² *A country that lives within its means*, 3.29

Matching costs and charges

- 4.6 Most of the motoring agencies' income is derived from charging a fee for the provision of a service. As the pace of technological change has increased, reviews of fees have not always kept pace; though where they have, this has often resulted in a fee reduction (as with the driving theory test). As a result, there is a risk that the fee being charged does not match the cost of the service being delivered and elements of cross-subsidy occur. The Transport Select Committee, in its inquiry on *Government motoring agencies - the user perspective*,¹³ indicated that it would like to see greater transparency in agency fees. We will therefore conduct a review of the whole range of agency fees.
- 4.7 The centre of our fees strategy will be to ensure fees are aligned with costs, following the principles set out in *Managing Public Money*.¹⁴ This sets out the government's approach to taxation and fees, and distinguishes between:
- services provided by the public sector to the population at large out of general taxation, where there is no direct link between those benefitting from the service and those paying for it; and
 - services provided by the public sector to discrete groups, where receipt of the service is linked to payment.

Fees are charged in relation to a specific service: "The standard approach is to set charges to recover full costs. [...] This approach is simply intended to make sure that the government neither profits at the expense of consumers nor makes a loss for taxpayers to subsidise".¹⁵

- 4.8 **Are there any other social or economic factors which the review should consider in proposing either to reduce or to increase fees for these services in the future?**
- 4.9 Better aligned and more transparent fees and costs allow operational efficiencies to be more easily passed on to the user as reduced charges. *Managing Public Money* does, however, permit differential pricing of services, where such a difference reflects a difference in cost of provision of service. Agency-to-business transactions, particularly, are obvious candidates for a digital only approach.
- 4.10 For those whose interactions with the agencies are not conducted on line, there is a case for using further direct encouragement to move away from non-digital channels. DVLA has already started to change its fee structure to better reflect the different costs of using different channels, and has been able to reduce driver fees by £20 million and personalised registration fees by a further £20 million.
- 4.11 **Should fees more closely reflect the differential cost of service provision by different channels?**
- 4.12 We will examine whether there is a case for simplifying the fee structure in some cases. We will also consider whether differential fees for statutory services might be charged to SMEs at the expense of larger organisations, where the cost of the

¹³ Transport Committee (2014), *Government motoring agencies - the user perspective*, available from <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/transport/Report%20-%20GMA%20-%20the%20user%20perspective.pdf>

¹⁴ HM Treasury (July 2013), *Managing Public Money*, available from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212123/Managing_Public_Money_AA_v2_-_chapters_annex_web.pdf. *Managing Public Money* is the UK Government's guidance document which sets out the principles for managing public resources which run through the many diverse organisations delivering public services in the UK.

¹⁵ *Managing Public Money*, 6.2.2.

service provided by the agency is large in relation to the overall value of the service or product provided by the SME.

- 4.13 Not all agency fees relate to charges for a statutory monopoly; either insofar as the service is optional, or where there are other providers in the market (as in VCA's provision of type approval or technical services). We will therefore consider how the agencies might maximise income from non-statutory services. In some cases, the fees for such services have been set out in legislation. We will look at the option to stop enshrining these fees in legislation, allowing the agencies to set them dynamically in response to the market.
- 4.14 The agencies have other sources of income besides fees. DVLA, for example, derives some income from reselling the services of the high security print facilities that it needs to deliver its core services. Greater utilisation of such services could allow the agency to pass reduced unit costs on to its core users.
- 4.15 DVSA compliance and enforcement work, particularly related to vehicles outside GB operator licensing, has been supported by general taxation. We are looking at whether some more of the burden of enforcement costs can be transferred to fees for services and, potentially, civil recovery routes (such as the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008). This includes consideration of a fee element in van MOT testing to support roadside compliance work and some fees for non-UK vehicles similar to those paid already for UK registered vehicles. It may also be possible to apply some of the financial penalties of criminal road traffic law to some of the significant drivers' hours and tachograph falsification offences committed by non-UK based offenders, as well as to the UK offenders who are already covered by the current arrangements.

5. Agency transformation

Introduction

- 5.1 Most of the proposals set out so far in this consultation focus on the user. From a more general perspective, it is just as important that the motoring agencies' operating models are internally efficient and free as far as possible from bureaucracy. Therefore, the agencies will continue to ensure their operating models are as efficient as possible.
- 5.2 **We would be interested to hear from respondents what operating models for the agencies would best promote ever increasing efficiency, improve user service, maintain standards and deliver accountability to Parliament.**

Challenging who delivers services

- 5.3 We will explore whether there is appetite for any agency to establish a mutual, and whether the services they provide could sensibly be provided this way.
- 5.4 Some of the proposals set out earlier in this document provide for greater use of third party providers in delivering the agencies' work (for example, using non-civil service LGV vehicle testers). The effect of any such changes would be to move the relevant agency more towards a market supervision role, rather than direct provision. We will challenge the agencies to consider whether any other services they provide could be delivered more collaboratively, offered by a different provider, and/or provided on a more commercial basis.

The future of VCA

- 5.5 The VCA is, in many respects, different from DVSA and DVLA. Its user base is the automotive industry, rather than the general public. It works with a small number of manufacturers, rather than millions of individuals. Its task is a specialist engineering one, ensuring that vehicle designs conform to international standards, rather than with individual vehicles.
- 5.6 The agency posted a £290k trading surplus in 2014/15. Following some business restructuring in the light of the New Commercial Models project,¹⁶ the agency is working to ensure that it continues to operate with a small surplus.
- 5.7 The vehicle certification process managed by the VCA can, for the approval of a whole vehicle, include a large number of test reports before a type approval certificate can be issued. This process is almost entirely paperless; but we will work through the VCA's business processes, to ensure that type approval is streamlined as much as possible, where this will improve the service to users.

¹⁶ See paragraph 2 of the Achievements section above.

- 5.8 VCA exists primarily to ensure vehicles used on our roads meet EU and UN international safety and environmental standards. However, we are considering whether the components of the Agency's business which do not discharge these functions best serve the economy by remaining in the public sector. The agency's central functions in provision of technical services, for example, need not be directly delivered by government. There is clearly a balance to be struck between work that could be left to the market, and the value to UK vehicle manufacturers and economy of having services delivered in a package.
- 5.9 The VCA has, over the years, expanded its operations to other countries to meet user demands. We are seeking views on VCA's international operations to ensure that they continue to add value to the VCA and to the UK automotive sector, and, ultimately, the UK economy.
- 5.10 We would value views from respondents with experience of VCA operations overseas on the value VCA adds to business or the automotive sector through such operations.**
- 5.11 The recent revelations about the emissions of diesel cars and vans manufactured by the Volkswagen Group have raised a number of issues about the way in which vehicles are tested, both within the EU and internationally. This may have implications for how the VCA conducts business and how it should be structured. However, it will be some time before the implications are clear.
- 5.12 We welcome views from industry about the services currently provided by VCA in the UK and overseas, its effectiveness in supporting users and growth in the sector and whether the existing operating model should be retained.**

6. Deregulation

Introduction

- 6.1 The government is committed to finding £10 billion of savings to industry over the lifetime of this Parliament, through reducing the regulatory burden on the country. This consultation has already outlined some reforms that will reduce red tape for individuals and business (for example, better targeting of LGV roadside enforcement).
- 6.2 DVLA is looking at ways in which it can build on the successful developments already mentioned to bring further benefits to business and consumers. These will include looking at how they can improve the way in which vehicles are first registered reflecting the needs of the motor industry, other stakeholders and consumers. They will look both at present needs and at the future and changes in automotive design and technology.
- 6.3 Where DVSA needs to prohibit a vehicle where the driver doesn't have the appropriate driver licence, such prohibition requires a call to the police to take the action. DVSA is seeking approval for its staff to prohibit a vehicle themselves.
- 6.4 DVSA is examining domestic drivers' hours regulations. For example, these expect a bus driver to keep a manual record of their driving time, because they are covered by EU law. This record has little value, as it is made by the driver with no external validation; employers would still keep duty records for payment reasons, but the driving record could be abolished.
- 6.5 We are working with the Northern Ireland Government, to allow the mutual recognition of Drink Drive Rehabilitation Scheme certificates.
- 6.6 DVLA will further simplify the process for commercial and private motorists to notify changes to the information displayed on their record. This will involve providing a digital service that is available to users when they want to use it; allowing them to notify individually or in bulk; and removing the requirement to send or receive documents from DVLA (wherever possible). The services will build upon the successful Vehicle Management and Personalised Registration exemplars by allowing users to change personal details (name & address), change their vehicle details etc.
- 6.7 On the Real Total Mass (RTM) requirement for goods vehicle driving tests,¹⁷ DVSA is looking at allowing an operator with an 'O' licence to present a driver for test with a vehicle carrying the type of load that they would typically carry (rather than the equivalent weight of containers of water or bags of aggregate currently required).

¹⁷ For information on the current arrangements, see the section on minimum load requirement at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-lorries-used-for-driving-tests>

- 6.8 DVSA is considering allowing Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who have voluntarily lapsed from the Register to re-enter it by successfully completing the standards check rather than re-qualifying.
- 6.9 Courses for driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) periodic training are, at present, only approved by DVSA for 12 months at a time, and then have to be reapproved. DVSA is considering whether the approval period could be extended to two years or longer.
- 6.10 At present, some of the emergency services have delegated examiner status, allowing them to undertake practical driving tests for their operational staff. DVSA is considering proposals to allow any of these services to test across all the emergency services; and to allow the Ambulance Service to gain delegated examiner status.

A new approach to MOT

- 6.11 In the 2015 summer Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that we would consult on changing the time of a vehicle's first MOT test to four years after first registration (for both cars and motorcycles). This would reduce the burden on some vehicle owners (both businesses and individuals), but would thereby reduce the volume of MOT test work undertaken by garages. MOT tests have been in place for many decades and vehicle safety and construction have changed substantially in that time. This will be the subject of a separate consultation.
- 6.12 Part of our approach over the next four years will be to continue to challenge whether other regulations are fit for purpose and proportionate given current and future circumstances.
- 6.13 **Are there any other areas of regulation administered or enforced by the motoring agencies, which you consider should be reviewed and potentially be safely reduced during the next four years?**

What will happen next

A summary of responses will be published on GOV.UK at the same time as the motoring services strategy it is designed to inform. Paper copies will be available on request.

If you have questions about this consultation please contact:

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Further background information can be found at GOV.UK

Annex A: Impact assessment

- A.1 This consultation is being launched ahead of the Spending Review 2015 (SR15), which will set out the Department's overall budget for the remainder of this Parliament. Once SR15 is published, at the end of November 2015, we will know the financial parameters within which the strategy for the motoring services agencies will be set. Consequently, this document does not contain a formal impact assessment.
- A.2 When responding to the consultation, please comment on any particular factors which you believe should be considered in evaluating the proposals.
- A.3 The motoring services strategy, which we intend to publish in the spring of 2016, will contain an appropriate impact assessment.

Annex B: Consultation principles

The consultation is being conducted in line with the government's key consultation principles which are listed below. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

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