

Public Affairs Group minutes

Thursday 7 November 2024
14.00 – 16:00
20 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, SW1H 0NB

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was chaired by Ben Garratt, Deputy Director – Public Affairs, Logistics UK
- Introductions were made.
- Minutes of the last meeting were approved.
- Members were reminded about competition law compliance rules.

THE BUDGET AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

- Members were updated on the positives, negatives and unknowns of the Autumn Budget. With the unknowns, Logistics UK is seeking clarity from the relevant government departments and is updating members as and when information is made available.
- Ben asked members to consider sharing case studies to support Logistics UK's reaction to the Budget. He also confirmed that members are permitted to use the statistics on the National Insurance slide, with Logistics UK cited as the source.
- Members were also updated on the Industrial Strategy Green Paper, and Logistics UK's strategy for responding, which was to seek recognition for logistics as being a foundational sector. Ben asked members to consider sharing case studies to support Logistics UK's response, to demonstrate how logistics businesses support the identified growth-driving sectors.

SHADOW CABINET

- Members were updated on the new Shadow Cabinet team following the Conservative leadership election.
- Gareth Bacon has been appointed as the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport. He has been the MP for Orpington since 2018, is new to the transport sector but has previously served as the Shadow Business and Trade and London Minister. He is known for his opposition to Heathrow expansion and formerly was a Member of the London Assembly. No members reported previous engagement with him.

LOGISTICS UK ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

- Members were updated on Logistics UK's public affairs activity since the last meeting in July.
- Highlights included meeting with Mike Reader MP (Northampton South) who has tabled PQs and agreed to sponsor the 2025 Generation Logistics reception and Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to discuss the Windsor Framework.

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- Event highlights included Logistics UK CEO David Wells attending the Prime Minister's Garden Party for Business Leaders and Logistics UK's President's Council hosting newly appointed Transport (Roads) Minister, Lilian Greenwood, and the logistics team at the Department for Business and Trade.
- Correspondence highlights included launching Logistics UK's priorities for the government's first 100 days and securing over 70 business supporters for a joint letter on the Lower Thames Crossing, with David Wells addressing a Parliamentary reception backing the project.
- Policy win highlights included securing a further extension to the 5ppl fuel duty freeze and the Plug-in van grant in the Autumn Budget until March 2026; extension of the Direct Vision Standard Phase 2 grace period by three months (six months in total); and delay to the introduction of the EU Entry and Exit System beyond 10 November.

GUEST SPEAKER: IAIN STEWART, SENIOR CONSULTANT, MILTON ADVISERS AND FORMER CHAIR OF THE TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE AND ALEX WALKER, CO-FOUNDER, MILTON ADVISERS

- Iain introduced himself to the group and gave a brief overview of his political career. He served as Member of Parliament for Milton Keynes South from 2010 – 2024 and was a former Chair of the Transport Select Committee.
- On how to engage with MPs, Iain noted that MPs are consistently overwhelmed with reports and full inboxes, so it's essential to make contact personal, focusing on their specific constituency. He noted that now is an optimal time to engage with MPs, as they are settling into their roles and Select Committee members are being appointed.
- Iain commented that building a lasting relationship is key - reach out not only when there is an issue or something to promote, but also consider inviting MPs for site visits. He noted that the Industry and Parliament Trust offers an excellent programme for further engagement. Additionally, it's important to cultivate relationships with officials who advise ministers.
- When asked about how to make the case for Low Carbon Fuels (LCFs) to government, Iain advised that the sector must present LCFs as an educational piece, as the government currently underestimates their potential in advancing the decarbonisation agenda. Consumer and manufacturer concerns about Electric Vehicles (EVs) highlights the need for the government to seriously consider LCFs as an alternative.
- The case for adopting LCFs is compelling and dismissing them reflects a lack of understanding at the governmental level. Devolved bodies will likely play a larger role in introducing LCFs to meet their decarbonisation targets. However, members noted that this approach is complicated by the absence of a cohesive national strategy, as it limits their ability to invest in the vehicles to operate nationwide.
- On Great British Railways (GBR) reform and the elements that will resonate with MPs, Iain commented that the Transport Committee will need to give focused attention to the freight aspects of the GBR Bill, aligning the role of freight with the UK's broader strategic objectives.
- MPs must grasp the critical role of freight in sustaining supply chains, even if freight itself cannot vote – after all, it delivers goods to the voting public. A unified, strong voice from the freight and logistics sector is essential to ensure its priorities are acknowledged. While the

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government and MPs often prioritise passenger services, disruptions in supply chains would inevitably prompt attention to freight.

- When questioned about how much of a role Select Committee chairs have in deciding inquiries, Iain said that it is helpful to analyse each candidate's pitch for the role of Chair, focusing on their pledges and key areas of intended focus, as the style and objectives of Chairs are crucial factors to watch. The most effective Select Committees are those that remain objective, steering clear of party politics.
- Due to the recent early election, some inquiries were nearing the reporting stage but remain unpublished. Iain confirmed he has been in discussions with his successor, Ruth Cadbury, to explore how these inquiries can be taken forward or concluded.
- Iain's email address is: istewart@miltonadvisers.com

REMAINDER OF 2024 AND 2025 PLANS

- Members were advised that the UK Logistics Network report will be launched on 12 November, the Logistics Awards will take place on 12 December. The Industrial Strategy and Logistics roundtable will take place in early 2025.
- In 2025, Logistics UK is planning a new campaign titled 'Nothing works without logistics.' The aim will be to link logistics with regional manufacturing.
- Logistics UK is starting the early planning for Party Conferences 2025. Panel events and receptions will be held at both Labour and Conservative conferences on the theme of 'Is logistics the answer to growth and sustainable communities?'. Logistics UK also plans to attend the Lib Dem and SNP business days.

AOB

- The Purpose Union, an agency focused on driving social change, has been commissioned by Impact on Urban Health to establish a trade association for urban freight, with a specific focus on addressing air pollution—a strategy often seen in the life sciences sector among pharmaceutical companies.
- Meanwhile, Heathrow has highlighted its £2,000 grant programme for SMEs aiming to expand their exports. Although applications from London are high, there is a strong desire for more applicants from other regions, with the entry deadline set for 24 December. Details were shared with members via email following the meeting.

MEETING DATES FOR 2025

- Thursday 13 February
- Thursday 5 June
- Thursday 6 November
- All meetings will be held from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at 20 Victoria Street.
- Diary placeholders will be emailed to the group.

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ATTENDEES

Chair

Ben Garratt

Deputy Director – Public Affairs, Logistics UK

Members

Helen Barker

Sarah Bell

Rob Gwynn

Becca Hammond

Fionnuala Horrocks-Burns

Carita Ogden

Amy Swash

Matthew Wright

James Adcroft

Sarah Ralphs

Lewis Van Diggele

Fiona Campbell

Charlie Allen

Joseph Blenkinsop

Evri

UPS

Asset Alliance Group

Royal Mail

DHL

Amazon

UKMPG

Freightliner Group

Tesco

Heathrow

Nestle

Biffa Waste Services

DP World

John Lewis

Guest

Iain Stewart

Alex Walker

Senior Consultant, Milton Advisers and former MP

Co-founder, Milton Advisers

Staff

Kevin Green

Natalie Chapman

Ellis Shelton

Director of Policy and Communications

Head of Public Affairs

Senior Policy Advisor