

Transport Strategy

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Douglas Alexander): Sir Rod Eddington will tomorrow publish the conclusions of his study into the effects of transport on economic growth, competition and productivity. Copies of his final report and advice will be made available in the Vote Office.

The study, which was commissioned last year by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and my predecessor as Secretary of State for Transport, has carried out a rigorous and independent review of the effect of transport policy on economic growth in the UK.

A key challenge for Government over the coming decades will be to deliver sustainable development. Sir Rod Eddington's work has been informed by the recently published report by Sir Nicholas Stern on climate change which made a major contribution by demonstrating, on the basis of the most robust and comprehensive evidence available, that economic growth and the environment cannot be considered in isolation.

Indeed Sir Rod Eddington's work, which was supported by Sir Nicholas Stern and a group of leading academics, provides another extremely significant addition to the evidence base, and to the delivery of sustainable economic growth.

The Government will outline shortly its initial reactions to his advice, taking account of my Department's environmental and social objectives. I will then publish next year, alongside the Comprehensive Spending Review, a more detailed response, which will take forward the 2004 White Paper and set out new plans to minimise carbon emissions and sustain economic growth, by delivering improvements to transport at the national, regional and local levels. And it will reflect the conclusions of ongoing work on the long-term development of rail, as well as the conclusions of the ports policy review and the further steps on road pricing mechanisms.

I am extremely grateful for the immense hard work of Sir Rod and his team in producing this valuable and well-evidenced study.