



**WIG**

The Whitehall & Industry Group  
connecting the sectors



## 'Infrastructure' Series

**Gareth Davies, Director General,  
Department for Transport**

### Expert Insight

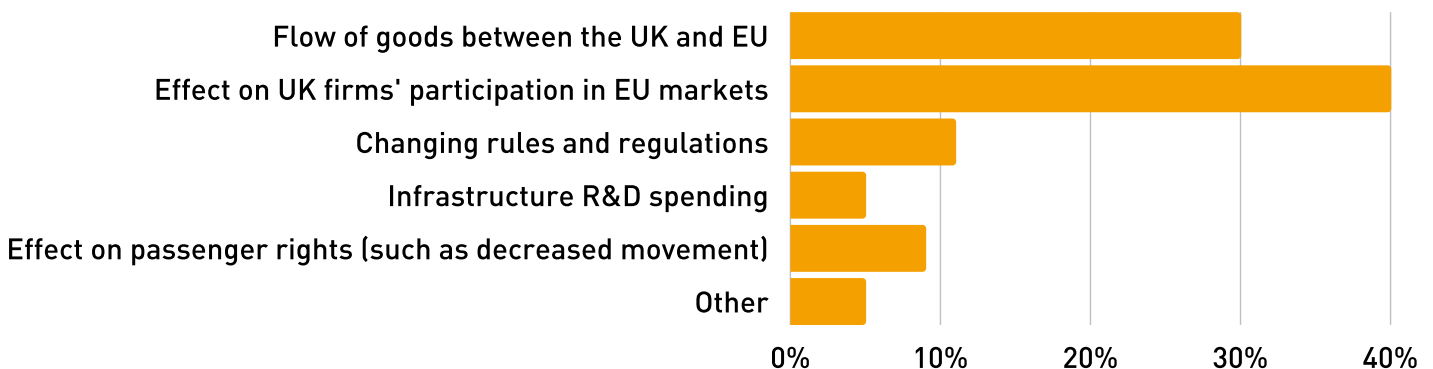
We were joined by Gareth Davies, Director General for Aviation, Maritime, International and Security Group at the Department for Transport. Gareth joined us to discuss what DfT is doing to ensure the UK's transport infrastructure is prepared for EU transition, and the impact of COVID-19. Gareth touched on many points, including:

- As the pandemic hit the UK, passenger demand collapsed, hitting rail, aviation and bus networks. With financial risk usually held by operators, in the early days of the crisis, the system was reconfigured with government taking on some of this risk.
- Transport, on the whole, relies on passenger density. As the UK moved from crisis-response to rebuilding, the transport network faced tough questions on safety vs. commercial reality.
- Internationally, the focus was on preventing reinfection from abroad, though intra-UK transmission was the greatest source of infections. Again, the balance was between open travel, and ensuring that this travel was safe, both during and after journeys.
- Going into the Autumn, the Department's major priorities will be continuing to fight COVID through a 2nd wave; supporting the long-term viability of operators faced with continuing low demand; navigating the risks of traffic disruption as the UK leaves the transition phase; and tackling longer-term transport issues sidelined through the crisis, such as decarbonisation of the transport sector.



### Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 WIG members from across the sectors tuned in live, we asked them: What is your greatest concern about the impact of EU Withdrawal on the transport sector?



### Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered. The issues raised included:

- Whether we will see greater reliance on public funding to maintain transport networks, or a gradual reduction in transport capacity
- Future priorities for transport providers as we see a shift in cities from office spaces to home working.
- The role of autonomous vehicles in the future of transportation and decarbonisation.
- Whether the maritime sector will receive funding akin to the investment made in the aviation sector, particularly around decarbonisation and autonomous systems.

WIG members can listen to Gareth's presentation [here](#)  
To see our full programme of webinars, visit [www.wig.co.uk](http://www.wig.co.uk)