



Department for
Transport

From the Secretary of State

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Lord Faulkner of Worcester
House of Lords
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22 March 2011

Dear Lord Faulkner

I am writing on behalf of myself and Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, to follow up on the commitment made at Committee Stage of the Public Bodies Bill to provide an update to you on discussions around the future of the Railway Heritage Committee's power of designation. As you know, Lord Taylor said at Committee on 28 February that the Government sees merit in the proposed transfer of the RHC designation power to the Board of Trustees of the Science Museum, the legal entity which stands behind the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI). Lord Taylor indicated that the time between then and Report Stage could be used to take forward the positive discussions that had already taken place between government departments, and that he would update the House at Report which is expected to start on 23 March. As a result, you agreed to withdraw your amendment on the basis that the Government is able to come forward at Report with alternative arrangements.

I am pleased to report that since 28 February there have been further positive discussions between the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In particular, both departments have now agreed that:

- The power of designation and the statutory protection it affords should be retained after the RHC itself is abolished.
- The power of designation should be transferred to the NMSI in a smooth and timely manner.

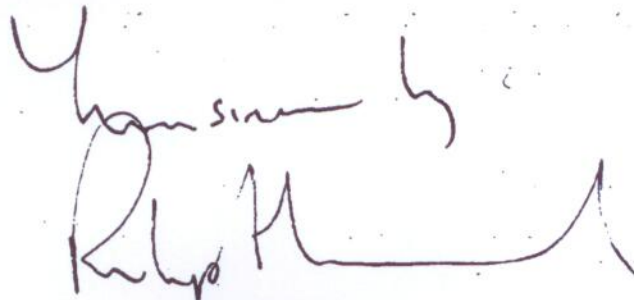
- The DfT will take the lead on the legal drafting to enable the RHC to be abolished and transfer of its statutory functions to take place.

Further discussions are ongoing to agree the precise detail of the arrangements, and we shall set that out in due course.

Finally, I know that it has been suggested that the Implementing Order is used to extend the scope of the power of designation in advance of its transfer to NMSI. However, I think this issue would be best considered by the NMSI after the transfer of the designation power has taken place.

I trust that you will be reassured that a clear commitment is now in place to retain the designation power, and that good progress has been made on the detail of transferring the power of designation to the NMSI upon abolition of the RHC. Discussions will, of course, continue between DfT and DCMS to resolve any outstanding issues and the RHC will also be encouraged to make early contact with the NMSI. The Implementing Order itself will also of course be subject to full consultation.

I am copying this to Lord Taylor of Holbeach.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Philip Hammond', with a stylized flourish at the end.

PHILIP HAMMOND