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## **LONGER HEAVIER LORRIES WILL NEED A SOUND ROAD NETWORK**

**Whilst appreciating the proposed potential environmental benefits of longer, heavier vehicles (LHVs), Britpave, the transport infrastructure group, warns that our road network is barely able to cope with existing sized HGVs let alone the proposed LHVs.**

The Freight Transport Association argues that LHVs would mean fewer truck journeys and therefore fewer emissions. Currently, three maximum 16.5m long articulated vehicles travelling with the recommended 40 metre gap between them and other traffic can carry 41 cubic metres of load, taking up 169.5 metre of road space. Two 25.25 metre long LHVs could carry 43 cubic metres of load in just 130 metres. FTA calculates that 47 LHVs would carry the load of 74 HGVs using just 76% of the road space.

The proposition is being examined by the Transport Research Laboratory, which is due to present its findings to Roads Minister Stephen Ladyman in June.

“LHVs have the potential to be more fuel efficient and reduce costs, congestion and pollution. Yet, there is widespread evidence of the road damage and rutting caused by HGVs on our motorways and dual carriageways. The real question is not LHVs or HGVs but whether our road network has the adequate strength to begin with”, warned David Jones, Director of Britpave.

On a typical UK motorway 77% of HGV traffic uses the inside lane. On dual carriageways this percentage rises to 95%. This needs a road construction solution that can cope with the intensive traffic weight in order to reduce required maintenance and repair.

“What is needed is a construction solution that can successfully meet the demands being placed upon it”, said Jones. “The amount of ongoing, premature maintenance and repair on our roads clearly shows that this is not the case with much of our road network”.

Britpave believes that the answer is specifically designed truck lanes where the road is constructed from a continuously reinforced concrete pavement that is covered with a thin layer of asphalt. Concrete has up to 4 times the strength and stiffness of asphalt. Roads where the main structural component is concrete will last for a minimum of 40 years.

“This approach provides the best of both worlds: the long-term performance of concrete and the noise reduction properties of asphalt”, explained Jones. “The thin layer of asphalt can be replaced overnight while the concrete pavement should require no maintenance. The premise for LHVs is sound. Unfortunately, their increased weight means that may not be the case for our road network.”

**ENDS**

Notes to editors

1. Britpave (British In-situ Concrete Paving Association) promotes the better and greater use of concrete for transportation solutions. Its members include major contractors, specialist equipment and material suppliers, consulting engineers and interested trade associations. Together they provide a single voice for the in-situ concrete paving industry. For further information see: [www.britpave.org.uk](http://www.britpave.org.uk)
2. Issued by Steve Elliott, Constructive Dialogue, tel: 01276 36735, email: [condialogue@aol.com](mailto:condialogue@aol.com)

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