

NEW GROUND SPRING 2013

Campaigning For Environmental Change & Social Justice



NEW GROUND

TRANSPORT SPECIAL

TOTAL
20

CLLR PHIL JONES

*NEW
DIRECTION
FOR TRANSPORT*

MARIA EAGLE MP



SERA40
ANNIVERSARY

Welcome to this
transport special
edition of New Ground



This year, 2013, sees SERA's 40th Anniversary. Throughout the organisation's history, many issues have waxed and waned, but transport is one matter that has remained of interest to SERA members. With 24% of the UK's carbon emissions coming from the transport sector, and the prevalence of pollution-related asthma and respiratory diseases rising dramatically over the past decade, Transport is set to continue to be a key environmental issue facing us.

Back in October, at Labour Conference, I had the honour of being elected as one of the Socialist Society's representatives on Labour's National Policy Forum. And Transport has been the subject of our discussions on the Living standards and sustainability policy commission for the past few months. I'm therefore very pleased to introduce this 'Transport Special Edition' of New Ground and hope that it will help make a contribution to Labour's discussions on this key environmental issue.

In 'We Need a New Direction' on

page 8, Labour's Shadow Transport Minister Maria Eagle sets the scene for the task ahead for Labour, arguing that decision after decision by Transport Ministers over the past two and a half years has set back the progress needed to meet our emissions reduction targets.

One particular aspect of transport policy that we have been discussing within the National Policy Forum is how to increase community involvement and ownership in public transport. On page 14, Cooperative Party Parliamentary Officer and SERA Transport Coordinator Joe Fortune makes the case for more cooperative owned transport.

But it's not just in Westminster where Labour can make a difference. Cllr Phil Jones, Cabinet Member for Sustainability at the London Borough of Camden explains what Labour in Camden is doing to reduce traffic speeds and traffic accidents with their 20mph zone.

Finally, as this year is SERA's 40th anniversary, the next edition of New Ground will be an anniversary special – reflecting on our last

40 years of campaigning for environmental and social justice, but also looking forward to the next 40 years. If any members have any memories they would like to share, or ideas for the future, please do get in touch as I'd love to hear from you.

Melanie Smallman
National Secretary, SERA
May 2013

About

New Ground is published by SERA, Labour's environment campaign
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If you would like to contribute to future editions or join our mailing list, please contact
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The views expressed in New Ground are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editor, SERA its executive or its members.

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NEW SERA BRANCH FOR BRIGHTON AND HOVE



SERA's newest branch in Brighton and Hove met for the first time in January 2013 for a discussion about the policies that will make Brighton better, not just greener.

Taking the theme of "Sustainable for All", the meeting began by identifying the key issues faced in the city and then moving on to discuss sound environmental policy ideas that would address some of those key issues.

"Concerns over jobs, the cost of living and threats to vital services can be overwhelming, so we need to promote environmental policies which address everyday concerns, as well as moving us towards a more

sustainable future." Explained local member Tracey Hill.

Ideas put forward by the group include energy efficiency schemes that provide training opportunities for young people and linking school meals with local community growing projects.

Brighton and Hove SERA's next meeting will focus on food-growing projects.



For more information, please contact Tracey Hill at tracey@traceyhill.co.uk

ED MILIBAND COMMITS LABOUR TO 2030 DECARBONISATION TARGET

Labour leader Ed Miliband has announced that Labour will deliver a virtually carbon free electricity supply by 2030, putting pressure on the coalition government to do likewise as part of its energy bill.

Speaking at the Whitelee Windfarm in Scotland, Ed Miliband said "David Cameron promised that this Government would be the greenest government ever. But this Government is not up to the task. We now have

a Minister for Energy who is against building new wind turbines - and a government that has delayed crucial decisions on the Green Investment Bank and decarbonisation targets.

"George Osborne is trying to undermine the Climate Change Act, leading the dash for gas, and pandering to the climate sceptics on the back benches. Already billions of pounds in investment is going elsewhere or being put on hold. Thanks to this Government, the investors who want to invest

in our green sector are shutting their wallets or going elsewhere. Since this Government came to power, investment in renewable energy hasn't gone up, it hasn't even stagnated - it has halved.

"I am calling on the Government to commit in the energy bill to the 2030 decarbonisation target. That is what I would do if I was in Downing Street now and that is what this Prime Minister - who once flew halfway across Europe to hug a husky - should do."

RAIL FRANCHISING FIASCO COULD COST TAXPAYER MORE THAN £100M

The chaos created by the Government's rail franchising fiasco could cost the taxpayer more than £100m according to Maria Eagle MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary.

Earlier this year, Tory Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced that he was shelving the competition to operate services between London, Bristol and Cardiff and instead negotiating a two-year contract with FirstGroup. The Department for Transport refused to reimburse the £40m costs of the bidders and as a result, Arriva, FirstGroup, National Express have put in a claim to the specialist Technology and Construction Court.

"The decision by the rail

companies to sue over the franchising fiasco is an absolute catastrophe for this Government and will mean more taxpayers' money going down the drain." Commented Maria Eagle, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary.

"As a result of the franchising failure the taxpayer could now end up forking out over £100million and it's time that David Cameron and his Ministers took responsibility for this shambles instead of continuing to hide behind civil servants."



RAIL CYMRU – A RAILWAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF WALES

A new SERA/Cooperative Party report looking at the future of railways in Wales, was launched by Labour/Cooperative AM Vaughan Gething and rail expert Paul Salveson at the Welsh Assembly in November 2012.

'Rail Cymru: A people's railway for Wales' begins to set out a vision for a railway in Wales that is owned by and for the people of Wales, bringing together communities, employees and passengers. The paper, authored by rail expert Prof. Paul Salveson, was commissioned by The Co-operative Party, SERA, ASLEF, Co-operatives UK and Co-operatives and Mutuals Wales. It argues that Welsh Assembly Government should hold on to the Arriva Trains Wales franchise in 2018, and put in place a model that would run the service not for private gain.

This would see profit invested directly back in to the service itself rather than leaving Wales.

Vaughan Gething AM said: "Rail Cymru marks a once in a generation opportunity to change for the better our rail service in Wales. No-one can pretend that the current franchise model serves the passenger well in terms of cost or quality. If we don't demand a better service then we will get more of the same. The Rail Cymru report sets out how we could finally move towards a rail service that we all want and deserve."

WATER BILL FAILS TO ADDRESS FLOODING

The Government has been too slow to implement changes that would protect homes and businesses from the shattering effects of flooding, according to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee who were commenting on the draft Water Bill.

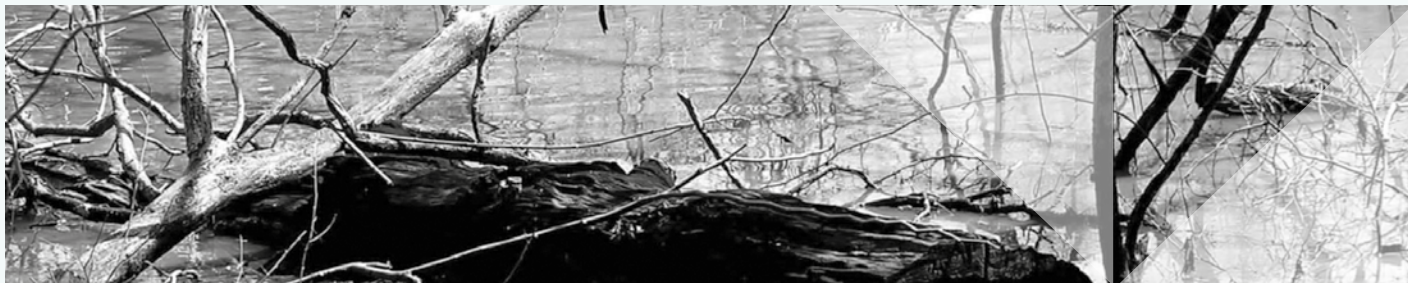
The Bill is primarily focused on water company pricing and competition. But the committee was concerned that the government was missing

an important opportunity to implement changes that would protect homes and businesses from the shattering effects of flooding.

Mary Creagh MP, Labour's Shadow Environment Secretary, commenting on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee report on the draft Water Bill said: "The Government has cut funding for flood defence schemes and failed to tackle rising water bills. The report highlights the lack of government action on protecting

our water resources, dealing with flood risk or helping households feeling the squeeze.

"It is astonishing that the Government still have not put in place the advanced computing system to predict severe weather events as recommended in the Pitt review. Instead they are pursuing an ideologically driven shake-up of the water industry that could mean higher bills, and serious environmental damage."



SERA SECRETARY ELECTED TO LABOUR'S NPF

SERA's National Secretary Melanie Smallman has been elected to Labour's National Policy Forum (NPF), representing the Socialist Societies.

Sitting on the 'Living Standards and Sustainability' policy commission in particular, Melanie will have the opportunity to raise SERA issues with the Shadow Cabinet on a regular basis. She is also keen to hear from SERA members about the issues the

commission needs to discuss.

"I'm keen that we use this as an opportunity to have a proper discussion with Labour members, voters and potential voters about the issues that are important to them" said Melanie.

If you would like to raise any issues with Melanie, or help host a discussion meeting in your constituency, please email melanie.smallman@sera.org.uk

YOUR BRITAIN



YOUR CHANCE TO JOIN THE DEBATE

Labour has launched a new website for members and voters to join the debate on how the next Labour Government can tackle the challenges that face Britain.

www.yourbritain.org.uk gives access to the discussion papers that are being considered by the National Policy Forum, setting out the key questions or policy

options being considered, which SERA members might want to comment upon. In particular, you can currently comment upon the 'Living Standards and Sustainability' Policy Commission paper "Our Buses and Railways: Giving Communities more of a say"


"At each Policy Commission meeting, we discuss the submissions that have been made to us through the YourBritain website, so it really is an excellent way to get your views heard" explained SERA Secretary and NPF member Melanie Smallman.

LOW CARBON VEHICLES – AN UNMISSABLE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

With a growing global market and swiftly evolving technology, ultra-low-emission vehicles present an unmissable window of opportunity for the British automotive industry, according to the report 'Leading the Charge', published recently (April 2013), by the IPPR.

Presenting a roadmap for how Britain can both win

a greater share of the international market and develop domestic demand for ULEVs, the report argues that doing so can secure jobs and growth, help achieve environmental targets, and improve the energy grid.

 Copies of the report can be downloaded from www.ippr.org



WE NEED A NEW DIRECTION

to cut transport's contribution to climate change

MARIA EAGLE MP

Transport emissions are responsible for more than a fifth of the UK's contribution to potentially irreversible climate change. Despite the green rhetoric of the Coalition Agreement, this government's record is woeful. The key transport pledge in the deal between Conservatives and Liberal Democrats was "to make the transport sector greener and more sustainable." Yet decision after decision by Transport Ministers over the past two and a half years has set back the progress needed to meet our emissions reduction targets. Whether it is commitments on buses, rail, cycling, roads or aviation, the gulf between the Coalition Agreement and the record of the past two and half years is vast.

Vehicles using our roads make up by far the largest share of transport emissions. A government that was serious about sustainability would be making it easier to make the

choice to switch to public transport, cycling and walking wherever possible. Instead the first decision of this government was to cut support for local transport by 28 per cent and axe 20 per cent of the direct support for bus services. The consequence has been fares rising by twice the rate of inflation and the loss of one in five supported bus services. The loss of a local bus service, particularly in rural areas, forces people back into their cars. Where services survive, rising fares hit household budgets that are already under pressure and prevent young people from taking up college courses and apprenticeships.

The Coalition Agreement pledged to "encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities". Instead they have undermined local authorities wishing to use the powers introduced by Labour that enable them to take on responsibility for setting bus fares and planning the bus network to

increase integration and improve chances to use public transport, walk or cycle - even though these powers already exist and have been effective in London. Ministers have caved in to pressure from the private bus companies and now threaten to penalise transport authorities that seek to regulate services using a Quality Contract by excluding them from Better Bus Area funding.

There has been a similar failure to support rail passengers and stand up to the private train companies, risking pricing people off the railways and on to the road. According to the Coalition Agreement, Ministers would deliver "fair pricing for rail travel" and the rail regulator would be turned into a "powerful passenger champion". Instead train companies have been given back the right to flexibly apply the so-called fare cap, meaning a one per cent above inflation cap has in fact seen tickets go up by as much as 9.2 per cent this year alone.

Despite the green rhetoric of the Coalition Agreement, this government's record is woeful

Ministers are now also proposing new so-called 'super peak' tickets so commuters already paying more than their mortgage or rent just to get to work will find their season ticket is no longer valid on every train. Before the franchising system collapsed into chaos, the tender documents promised bidders they could reduce services, close ticket offices, axe frontline staff and even remove CCTV from trains. There have been no new powers for the regulator which remains weak in the face of powerful train companies.

Commitments to support active travel have also come to nothing. Instead of the 'promotion of cycling and walking' that was promised, we've seen the closure of Cycling England and the loss of its dedicated £80m annual budget. Instead, cycling now only shares part of a single £112m annual pot that has to support all sustainable transport initiatives across the whole country. Labour's Cycling Towns

and Cities initiative was abandoned, rather than rolled out. All funding for speed cameras and road safety was axed and national targets to cut deaths and serious injuries on our roads abolished. Longer HGVs have been allowed and speed limit restrictions are set to be lifted. We've seen the first increase in deaths and serious injuries on our roads for more than a decade.

The Coalition Agreement pledged to help create a low carbon economy through investment in transport infrastructure, yet planned rail investment has actually been cut. The £9bn of 'new' rail investment announced at a Cameron and Clegg photo opportunity unravelled as it was revealed that the majority of the schemes, such the rolling programme of electrification, were revealed to have been announced by the previous Labour government. The rest was nothing but a post-dated cheque for the next government to deliver after 2015.

There was a promise in the Coalition Agreement of 'longer trains and better rolling stock', yet the order for a new generation of inter-city trains was halved and Ministers decided to build the new Thameslink trains in Germany, costing jobs in the UK. Ministers have failed to provide the leadership needed to deliver HS2, which is not only vital to address the capacity crunch on our major rail routes between north and south but has the potential to replace short haul flights.

The pledge to back "tougher emission standards and support for new transport technologies" has come to nothing. In fact far from supporting "a national recharging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles" as the Coalition Agreement promised, the Government has slashed support, leaving them well short of their own target. The Committee on Climate Change estimate that we will need 1.7million electric cars



by 2020 to meet the commitments set out in Carbon Budgets must now be impossible to deliver.

And now Ministers are drawing up plans for the privatisation of the road network to entice the private sector to kick start the biggest road building programme in decade. Private companies could be incentivised to take on sections of the road network by being handed revenue from VED and permission to introduce tolls, provided they upgrade the infrastructure. Private-sector led Local Enterprise Partnerships are to be given devolved transport infrastructure budgets and are already drawing up wish lists of new road schemes. Yet local transport authorities will be left with integrated transport strategies and little funding to make them a reality. In perhaps the most disastrous decision yet taken by the Coalition, they are now proposing to remove the requirement for

the impact on transport to be a consideration in planning decisions.

Finally, the Coalition could not have been clearer about its approach to aviation, placing its commitments not within the transport section of their agreement but under climate change. The pledge was clear: *"We will cancel the third runway at Heathrow. We will refuse permission for additional runways at Gatwick and Stansted. We will replace Air Passenger Duty with a per-flight duty."* Yet the independent commission on aviation, established under Sir Howard Davies, is free to consider all of these options for aviation growth including expansion at Heathrow. The commitment to replace Air Passenger Duty with a per-flight duty has been abandoned completely. Ministers have stood aside as the Emissions Trading Scheme for aviation has been suspended. The Government has rejected the Committee on

Climate Change advice to include the UK's share of emissions from international aviation and shipping in Carbon Budgets.

Line by line, the commitments in the Coalition Agreement have not only done nothing to make our transport system greener but put into reverse the progress that had started to be made under Labour.

A One Nation Labour Government would be taking a different approach, placing the need to significantly cut transport's contribution to climate change at the centre of the Department for Transport's priorities.

Even in this tough economic climate and the need to tackle the deficit, there is much that we could be achieving. Our willingness to take on the vested interests in the rail and bus industries would be delivering a better deal for passengers,

A One Nation Labour Government would be taking a different approach, placing the need to significantly cut transport's contribution to climate change at the centre of the Department for Transport's priorities.



rather than driving them back into their cars. We'd be banning train companies from hiking fares beyond a strict cap, preventing super peak fares, protecting ticket offices and introducing a series of ticketing reforms such as a common peak time clearly advertised on tickets and a legal right to the cheapest deal. We'd be standing up for transport authorities that wish to reregulate bus services by giving the Transport Secretary a new power to designate an area as a Deregulation Exemption Zone and restoring fairness to funding. We'd support young people by requiring bus companies to introduce a concessionary fares scheme for 16-19 year olds in return for the significant subsidies they receive. And for that funding, we'd force real action on extending smart ticketing on bus services across England. Even within existing budgets we could be achieving more to encourage and promote

active travel. As a start, there are real lessons to learn from the Active Travel legislation being taken forward by the Labour Government in Wales. We'd also be switching funding from the Highways Agency budget to support dedicated separated cycling infrastructure and making a cycling safety assessment a central part of approval for transport schemes. The devolution of infrastructure spending is right, but we'd be passing that funding to accountable transport authorities to support integrated transport not just new road schemes. The best way to support jobs and growth is investing in smaller local transport schemes and maintaining the quality of existing roads. On aviation, we would include our share of international emissions in Carbon Budgets and only take forward proposals from the independent commission that could be met within the emissions reduction target to which we are committed.

Half way through the parliament, the Government's Mid Term Review failed even to include a section on transport, the only Government department to be excluded. No wonder, considering the catalogue of failure to which Conservative and Liberal Democrat Ministers would have been forced to admit.

Putting the reduction of transport's contribution to climate change should be at the centre of the Department for Transport's priorities and policies. It's increasingly clear that it will be the responsibility of a future One Nation Labour government to pursue that alternative direction for transport.

Maria Eagle MP is Shadow Transport Secretary
Twitter: @labourtransport

TOTAL 20

CLLR PHIL JONES

It is 22 years since the first 20mph zones were introduced in residential areas in the UK to guard against speeding traffic and create more pleasant places to live. But now more and more communities, councillors and campaigners are asking whether a more comprehensive shift to slower speeds can not only reduce road accidents, but also contribute to a more sustainable transport system and better quality of life.

In Camden, north London, we are moving towards a 20mph borough-wide speed limit including on the main roads where most accidents happen. Greater safety is the goal but we also want to reduce traffic domination on our congested, polluted roads, improve our public spaces and encourage more people to walk and cycle.

It is not just Camden that is moving forward on this agenda. Labour councils in Liverpool and Islington are implementing comprehensive shifts to 20mph, while Southwark and Hackney are actively exploring extension of 20mph to main roads. Growing numbers of councillors believe that safe speeds should not just be for quiet residential

zones or for outside schools. Instead, we want a bolder 'total 20' approach of a default 20mph across a whole local authority area.

The simple fact is that most accidents occur on main roads rather than on side streets. More than half of road deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with 30 mph limits. So making further reductions in casualty levels needs to focus on these places. Drivers may have got used to driving at 30mph but this is faster than the norm in many cities and towns in other parts of northern Europe. Slowing down doesn't even add significantly to journey times as most delay is caused by stopping at traffic lights and congestion points rather than by the driving speed.

Slower speeds mean fewer casualties. According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), a pedestrian hit at 20mph has a 2.5 per cent chance of death compared to a 20 per cent chance at 30mph. Of course, it would be naïve to assume that all motorists will suddenly slow to 20mph as soon as a council decides they should. But that is not necessary to achieve fewer casualties. The DfT

estimates that for every 1mph reduction in speeds, a 6% reduction in accidents results. So, even a couple of miles slower on average means a lot of families spared considerable pain and distress. Not to mention the significant cost to the NHS of treating the victim and the wider impact on the economy – road accidents cost the country £15.5bn per year.

Any serious road accident is a tragedy for the victim and their friends and family, but some groups are more likely to suffer than others. Children living in deprived areas and some ethnic minorities are more likely to travel as pedestrians and are therefore at greater risk of injury from road accidents. So improving road safety through adopting 20mph is also about fairness and equality, and Labour councils have a responsibility to consider it in those terms.

Introducing road humps where they are not wanted can cause enough local controversy to strike fear into the heart of even the most road safety-conscious councillor. But traffic calming measures are not needed to establish a 20mph speed limit. Evidence demonstrates that

using signage and road markings alone will bring reductions in speeds. In Camden, a 20mph zone implemented in Belsize without significant traffic calming brought an average reduction in speed of 2.3 mph. On Camden High Street, one of the only 'red routes' in London with a 20mph limit, we also saw falls in the number of cars travelling at over 20mph after the restriction was implemented.

Another area where the pro-car lobby like to challenge 20mph limits is over enforcement. It is suggested that the move is pointless unless the police are lined up with cameras to catch and punish drivers who stray over the limit. The fact that the police don't generally enforce speed limits at 30mph is ignored. However, you don't necessarily need police enforcement to encourage drivers to slow down – simply introducing the new limit has an effect. So while it makes sense to encourage the police to enforce 20mph where there is a proven speed problem, as they have begun to do for example in Oxford, the confusing position of some police forces that they will not enforce 20mph limits unless they are self-enforcing, should not be a barrier.

As well as a way of avoiding unnecessary road deaths, shifting to 20mph is also about encouraging sustainable transport like walking and cycling that help us reduce carbon emissions. In Camden we have reduced car journeys and increased levels of cycling, but we still suffer from road traffic pollution that is so severe that it contributes to thousands of deaths in London each year.

The biggest barrier to encouraging more people to take up urban cycling is fear of the busy main roads where too many cyclists are still knocked down. Fixing dangerous junctions and providing safe routes is part of the answer, but slowing the traffic is crucial. Pedestrian groups also back the change as part of a shift to putting people before cars. Slower traffic gives greater confidence to vulnerable pedestrians when crossing the road and the evidence from other parts of Europe is that slower vehicle speeds are associated with higher levels of walking.

But what about air quality? Doesn't 20mph simply increase fuel consumption and therefore pollution? There is negligible



evidence of this. Fuel efficiency and emissions are influenced more by levels of accelerating and braking than by vehicle speed. And there are far more important factors in determining levels of pollution from transport, such as type of vehicle, the fuel used, and volume of traffic. If a 20mph limit encourages more people to walk and cycle rather than drive then the impact on pollution levels can only be positive.

'Total 20' is first and foremost about reducing road casualties. However, it is also about encouraging a shift to sustainable transport, reducing the harmful emissions that damage the environment, and recognising that our streets are not just routes for motorists but also public spaces used by all. It is a popular and evidence based policy, and its time has come.

CLlr Phil Jones is Cabinet Member for Sustainability at the London Borough of Camden
Twitter: @philjones79

PEOPLE'S RAIL

JOE FORTUNE

We in SERA understand the importance of good public transport policy. We understand the importance of this area not only for our environment but also social inclusion, economic development and community cohesion. SERA must continue to influence the wider Labour movement's thinking to ensure the policy platform is routed in the promotion of environmental policies and values. Therefore it was particularly gratifying that SERA was able to contribute so much towards a recent publication titled 'Rail Cymru'.

Rail policy is currently under great scrutiny, especially after the West Coast fiasco. It is a debate punctuated by a paucity of ideas and ever rising fares. However salvation may be found in the above report, which was authored by Paul Salveson. The report was launched in the Welsh Assembly by Vaughan Gething AM the Chair of the Cross Party Group on Rail. When launching the Vaughan Gething AM stated:

"Rail Cymru marks a once in a generation opportunity to change for the better our rail service in Wales. No-one can pretend that the current franchise model serves the passenger well in terms of cost or quality. If we don't demand a better service then we will get more of the same. The Rail Cymru report sets out how we could finally move towards a rail service that we all want and deserve."

This report was also given the stamp of approval from the Co-operative Party, ASLEF, Co-operatives UK and Co-operative and Mutuals Wales. The Shadow Secretary of State Maria Eagle MP also endorsed the report, saying that it play an 'important part of the report gives further weight to the new idea for mutual not-for-profit train operating companies. The proposal has found support in Wales as the Labour Government seeks to develop a new model for rail services that serves only the people of Wales – not shareholders and private companies.

It is fair to say that numbers of passengers carried by the railways

in the UK have continued to increase and punctuality and reliability of train services has improved. As this industry seemingly will never be free of public subsidy many believe there is real democratic deficit in the industry. To go a step further it may be the case that the current system has not given the public the confidence that the railways are being run in their interest.

The solution Paul Salveson suggests brings together employees, passengers and communities. This mixed model would have true democratic accountability at its core. It would see elected passengers on regional and national boards, where they would join employees and community groups in the direction of the organisation, managed by rail professionals. The report focuses on measures that would tie the company closely to the people of Wales, giving them a service they can call their own.

Central to the vision for 'Rail Cymru' is building an integrated network of rail and connecting bus services, with improved access for

Rail Cymru marks a once in a generation opportunity to change for the better our rail service in Wales



walkers and cyclists to stations. The report shows how having a more mutual approach would allow the company's focus to shift from profit to allowing assets such as stations to be transformed into hubs of community and business activity.

The co-operative movement believes that people should have a greater say over the services they use. This proposal is backed by a recent survey by Co-operatives UK, which indicated that over 85% of respondents in Wales supported having more say in the way in which the rail services are delivered.

Of course the report looks towards the Welsh Rail franchise. However there is no reason why the principles cannot be adapted to the other rail franchises currently operated in this country. This is a new model of public ownership, owned by the people for the people. Some argue that co-operatives and mutuals are ok on a small scale but that the governance model could not possibly run something as large and complex as trains – but one does not need to look further than the

Co-operative Group (what would be a FTSE 20 company), Mondragon (15Bn Euro turnover business) or indeed even Barcelona FC! For those who doubt that mutuals and not for profit companies can run utilities look no further than Wales' water company Glas Cymru. It happens now and it works.

It is clear that this Government and its current Government and Ministerial team is not in a place to come up with a long term strategy for rebalancing the privatised rail franchise structure, accountability and value for money. This is not a biased view – the NAO recently stated:

"[there is] no comprehensive strategy for prioritising resources based on a full understanding of costs and value."

As this Government fails, it must be the Labour Movement, Co-operative Movement and Labour Party who fills the void and offers the country a new approach and set of values with regard to passenger rail.

Joe Fortune is Parliamentary Officer for the Co-operative Party and SERA's Transport Coordinator



A copy of Rail Cymru can be downloaded from <http://www.party.coop/files/2012/11/Welsh-Rail-pamphlet-online.pdf>.

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

JAKE SUMNER

'A developed country is not one where the poor own cars but where the rich use public transport'

Enrique Penolosa, Mayor of Bogota, 1998-2001

This year the Tube - London's iconic underground system - celebrates its 150 year anniversary, the first underground public transport system in the world. Those pioneers laid not only the public transport foundations but an idea that shapes this city today - the shared experience and identity from the system they put in place.

This is what the former Mayor of Bogota encapsulated in his now virally retweeted quote and should be uppermost as we consider the urbanisation of the world and the inexorable growth of cities. Good public transport not only makes our lives more liveable but as I will argue, brings wider benefits to an economy - direct and indirect - and to society through identity, shared space, and manifestation of the power of the collective.

While many US cities are finding to their cost the lack of public transport through the failure to invest, new urban centres are recognising these benefits. From

Bangkok to Lagos, cities are putting in place new systems: light-rail to metros to buses.

London itself is being renewed with the construction of Crossrail, the largest engineering project in Europe. While I was at Transport for London, working on the campaign which secured Crossrail funding and putting in place the communication programme which launched construction, I saw what was at stake - a new rail service under London's streets with 24 air-conditioned trains an hour boosting capacity by 10 per cent. Combined with the new London Overground services, the upgrade of Thameslink and the revamp of the Tube, the city, with a population slightly smaller than Sweden's and with an economy significantly larger than Portugal's, is getting the renewal it needs.

We all know that public transport enables us to travel between A & B more easily, quickly and in a more sustainable way but the benefits are much wider.

Public transport connects people to jobs and supports economic and business development - an enduring ferrying of people and key infrastructure for thriving cities and towns. Crossrail will generate

more economic benefits than it will cost to build. And it is not just grand projects - bus services are often vital, particularly for young people, to get to jobs

Stations and transport hubs can support a thriving ecology of small businesses. The remodelled St Pancras station has become a destination to go to not merely somewhere to pass through. And it is not just retail. Light-industrial premises are often created along train infrastructure providing much needed space for small businesses.

Public transport is not just a connector to but a driver of employment opportunities, providing employment through the running of the services, supplier businesses, and the construction and manufacture of the kit. We do not capture enough of this benefit in the UK but we could and should.

HS2 and the world-wide development of high speed rail, provide opportunities for those willing to align government support with industry to secure the global manufacturing jobs and the supply chains through this new generation of railways. China is looking at this prize. We and other European nations should too.



As well as economic gains, public transport has a positive role in shaping the lives we lead. In a successful system like London's, people from all walks of life and communities travel on it. It brings people together, creates surprising connections and strengthens the common bond.

When the London Overground line opened, it connected the capital's two largest Vietnamese communities in Hackney and Deptford.

From Blackpool and San Francisco's trams to Paris's Art Nouveau Metro, iconic public transport systems can help define a city or town. London's red buses and the Tube system, with its copyrighted Johnson font, the roundel and Beck map, is one of the strongest public sector brands in the world. It is part of why people feel proud of and connect with their city.

Urban transport systems can give definition to neighbourhoods through local stops. Histories have grown through them. Camden, where I live, is integrally linked to the development of its railways, canals and Tube stations.

In London there has been a very strong sense of design underpinning the Tube. The Holden designed

stations like Southgate are landmark buildings, defining and shaping the town centre as well as arterial routes into the city.

Lagos in Nigeria, the sixth largest city in the world, has recently introduced a new Bus Rapid Transit system. The idea is not just a new bus fleet but to provide a different type of service. With segregated right-of-way lanes and a focus on customer service it aims to create an oasis in the bustle and complexity of Lagos. The authorities have recognised the effect of the transport system on how people see their city and relate to each other.

Public transport can help broaden minds, such as supporting the reading of books and newspapers, when travelling. The Metro newspaper exists primarily because of the readership through the morning London commute. And on Tube we have Poems and Art on the Underground widening cultural experiences.

Once we begin to understand the full benefit and value of public transport, it can move from the silo it is sometimes located. Public transport is investment not just in mobility but in economic and public value. Like the NHS it is a

manifestation of the power of the collective. It stands in contrast to the atomised view of society, that the individual is always best. There are those that argue that car driving is liberating - it can be, but also restrictive. Public transport unleashes a much stronger, deeper power.

We have considerable experience of public transport systems and we should align this to the global growth of cities and new opportunities. China sees this. Last year when I was in Conakry, the capital of Guinea, it was China that was putting in place the city's first bus service.

150 years ago we showed the world a new vision. Today we can renew this but let's have the confidence to realise the full value of public transport not leave it in the sidings.

Jake Sumner is a SERA Executive Member

ENERGY BILL

Cooperative and Community Energy in the spotlight

JOE FORTUNE

The Tory-led coalition Government are busy pushing the Energy Bill through Parliament. As currently drafted, it seeks to make a number of changes to reform the electricity market, opening up significant opportunities and challenges for Cooperative and Community energy – models that SERA has supported for a longtime. SERA executive member and Parliamentary Officer at the Cooperative party explains the work that the Co-operative and Community Energy Coalition has been doing on this issue over the past few months.

There has been much concern from the co-operative and

community energy sector relating to the energy market reforms and the withdrawal of the renewable obligation being proposed in the Government's draft Energy Bill. This reform will mean that suppliers will have no incentive to purchase renewable energy from independent generators. Indeed the Bill's standing committee in Parliament were told by Nigel Cornwall of Cornwall Energy that there seemed to be:

"A black hole in the Bill with regard to market access, particularly its impact on smaller players, generators and suppliers"— [Official Report, Energy Public Bill Committee, 15 January 2013; c. 79.]

Members of the Labour frontbench team, Tom Greatrex MP and Luciana Berger MP, have been critical in ensuring that these concerns have not been lost through the passage of the Bill. Indeed Luciana Berger MP visited the Brixton Energy Co-operative to learn about their experiences in setting up the co-operative and the schemes they have set up. Luciana Berger MP said that the scheme "was an example of what can be achieved through working co-operatively - the type of scheme Government policy should be used to encourage."

The shadow Energy Minister Tom Greatrex took the first Parliamentary opportunity to

There has been much concern from the co-operative and community energy sector relating to the energy market reforms

seek to amend the Energy Bill to improve the legislation for co-operative and community energy. Two amendments were tabled: the first to place a duty on the Government Department to set targets for this sector's development and critically to amend the existing Feed-in Tariff to better allow energy co-operatives to develop and operate within the reformed electricity market. Tom Greatrex told Government ministers that

"...as this Bill stands, there is little in relation to community energy. It is one of the areas that would benefit from some amendments and that is the point of these amendments

today. As I reminded the Secretary of State when he gave evidence at the start of this Committee process, he has previously said he wants a community energy revolution." Hansard 22nd January.

Through the course of the debate Tom Greatrex was able to extract a commitment from Minister that there would be Government amendments to the Bill as they recognise more should be done legislatively for co-operative and community schemes. The Government will have its first opportunity to correct this wrong at the Report Stage of the Bill's passage, likely to be early March.

Should the Government not be forthcoming with changes it seems possible that Labour MPs will be in a position to create cross-party support for the needed changes.

Joe Fortune is Parliamentary Officer for the Co-operative Party and SERA's Transport Coordinator

WHY CYCLING NEEDS MORE THAN ENCOURAGEMENT

ROMNEY TANSLEY

Politicians of all hues are united in saying that they want to encourage cycling and this has been the avowed intention of my home borough – Croydon – for many years.

The word encouragement is important. It incorporates both the wish, that people will want to cycle, and an added expression of support without being too explicit about the form this will take. How strange then that all this cumulative mass of good intentions has issued in so little change on the ground. The level of cycling has barely changed over the years, currently flat-lining at 2% of all journeys¹ nationally.

But even this represents a kind of progress, for before encouragement there was outright discouragement. Government policy was traditionally to discourage cycling because it was deemed too dangerous.

The turning point was the launch of the National Cycling Strategy in 1996 by the visionary and committed Tory minister Steven Norris. Ambitious targets were set for an increase in cycle journeys, envisaging not a doubling but a quadrupling within just a few years. Every borough devised its own cycling strategy and serious money was allocated for the provision of cycle lanes, advanced stop lines and the rest of the now familiar cycle 'facilities'.

But for all the initial enthusiasm ambitions were rapidly scaled back, targets deemed unrealistic were ditched and little more remained than the expression of encouragement. It's important to note that the provision of 'facilities' was never backed up with laws providing special protection for this vulnerable group of road users. Motorists can drive into and over cycle lanes at any time with impunity, thereby negating any

impression that they provide special protection to cyclists. No wonder then that for most motorists they are seen as little more than cosmetic.

Even recent increases in cycling in London and some other towns may not be all they appear. 2.1%² of all journeys in London are now made by bike, up from 1.5% just 6 years ago. The figure rises to 2.9% for inner London but falls to 1.5% for the outer boroughs. This suggests that special factors are at work. Along with much investment in cycle infrastructure in inner London there has been the introduction of the Congestion Charge which has reduced motor traffic in the central area. A further deterrent to car use is the scarcity of affordable parking here. But what is surprising is how little effect these favourable conditions have had in view of the initial low base-line. Add to these the high bike ownership of the UK population currently standing at 42% of people aged 5 and over.

¹ National Travel Survey Statistical Release 2012, DfT

² All figures for London from Travel in London, Supplementary Report: London Travel Demand survey 2011, TfL

³ The British Cycling Economy, Dr Alexander Grous, LSE, 2011

2.1% Of all journeys in London are now made by bike

42% Of people aged 5 and over own a bike

57% Of these only 57% cycle

Yet only 57% of these people ever cycle³. At the very least this suggests a suppressed demand for an improved environment for cycling which might be realised with the introduction of the right measures.

A long-standing campaign was recently mounted by the Times newspaper following horrific injuries sustained by one of its journalists in a traffic accident with a lorry. This led to an enquiry by MPs and peers which has now reported and made a strong case for the economic and business benefits of cycling.

It is acknowledged that greater ambition will be needed if there is to be any hope of an increase in cycling and it's clear that this should focus primarily on both actual and perceived danger. For despite the mantra that with only 20 cyclist deaths per billion kilometres cycled, cycling is a safe activity, the perception remains that it is inherently dangerous. The thousands who cycle from London to Brighton each July and who flock to Richmond

Park at the weekend are, it seems far less likely to cycle to work during the week. Statistics based on mass observation can never satisfactorily reveal how safe or dangerous is one's own situation. Other cyclists like myself I'm sure remain acutely aware of the special risks they run whenever they get onto their bikes – risks not faced by any other road-user group other than pedestrians.

What is needed to make a difference? More cycle facilities would achieve little on their own. Without the underpinning legal framework needed to regulate and restrain the behaviour of other road users, not just cars but HGVs which are disproportionately involved in cyclist deaths in London, these can achieve little. Some European countries have enacted laws automatically putting the onus of responsibility in crashes involving cyclists onto the motorist, unless proven otherwise. There is currently little appetite in the UK for such a provision, but unless cyclists feel that their

vulnerability is specially catered for and protected in law they will continue to feel disadvantaged vis-a-vis other road users.

Other than greater legal protection, some reduction in perceived danger on the road could be brought about by a radical reallocation of road space to cyclists so that they are surrounded by a sufficiently large safety envelope. This could be achieved by reducing the space allocated to traffic lanes allowing more space for cyclists, as well as by radically reducing speed limits where cyclists and motorists travel in close proximity.

Whatever exactly Professor Goodwin proposes, nothing will be achieved without the necessary political vision and commitment. Labour should wholeheartedly take ownership of this cause.

Romney Tansley is a member of SERA's Executive

QUESTIONING OUR AIR QUALITY

SAMANTHA HEATH

We know quite a bit about air quality in terms of facts and figures. We know quite a bit about air quality in terms of facts and figures. We know how bad it is in London, for instance, and how it's doing us harm. We know where it comes from - in terms of traffic, dirty diesels, vans, freight and cars. The impact of poor air quality averages out to a "loss of life expectancy from birth of approximately six months" for every UK resident.

2013 is the 'Year of Air'. Many people are calling for a public campaign, what do we want people to do with their awareness?

In 2004 I felt like a Cheshire Cat, having convinced Ken Livingston to put Low Emission Zones into the Labour Manifesto. I didn't have many supporters at the time, but I knew that it was the only "game changer" in town at the time.

The introduction of LEZs caused a small furore amongst charity groups who were not able to afford to improve their vehicles to the then require Euro iii compliance.

We know quite a few horrifying stuff about air quality, the statistics should really speak for themselves

- There was "an effect on mortality in 2008 equivalent to nearly 29,000 deaths in the UK at typical ages." In other words, 29,000 deaths occurred that year that were attributable to man-made particulate pollution.
- The costs to the UK of 2008 PM2.5 levels is in the range of £8-17 billion per year (with a central estimate of £15 billion).
- About 320,000 London children go to schools within 150m of roads that carry over 10,000 vehicles a day.
- Recent medical studies have

concluded that such roads could be responsible for some 15-30 per cent of all new cases of asthma in children,

- 80% of PM10s come from vehicles
- Poorer communities tend to live on the busiest and most polluted streets
- And yet still nearly a third of children in London travel to school by car, over 40% in the UK...

We have known for quite sometime that the traditional public awareness or even policy changes aren't enough to improve air quality. We now know that we need an extra something before we can change our love affair with cars and long supply chains that require our goods to travel miles around the world before they get to us. So whilst our air quality policy must include public engagement – awareness and behaviour change along with

The impact of poor air quality averages out to a "loss of life expectancy from birth of approximately six months" for every UK resident.

important changes to our transport infrastructure – some policy changes that we need to improve air quality will require a deeper rethink, that will ask us to change how we buy our goods and services.

I am now working with The Healthy Air Campaign; a coalition of health, transport and environmental organisations who are working to tackle the public health crisis caused by air pollution. We aim to encourage behaviour that helps reduce air pollution and exposure to it and persuade the government to take action so the UK complies fully with air quality law.

Things that we are asking for specifically are:

AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

- Tackle diesel exhaust
 - Ban unfiltered diesel vehicles from Britain's towns and cities

through a national network of low emission zones

- Support the retrofitting or upgrade of the most polluting vehicles such as buses and taxis
- Work to ensure that the 2013 year of air leads to further tightening of legal protection against the dangers of air pollution
- Increase public understanding through core health (and other) channels
 - Support NICE to develop guidance on air pollution
 - Improved system to warn vulnerable populations of high pollution events
 - Better costing of impacts which reflect for example NHS costs

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Support a national framework of low emission zones

- Health and Wellbeing Boards to:
 - Include air quality data in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
 - Prioritise air quality indicator in Health and Wellbeing Strategies and
 - Influence key areas of responsibility such as transport and planning
- Local awareness raising of health impacts and how to reduce personal exposure
- Implementation of NICE guidance on walking and cycling

Samantha Heath is a member of SERA's Executive
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40 YEARS OF RED-GREEN LABOUR

SERA is 40 this year

Founded at Labour Party Conference in 1973, SERA has championed issues of social and environmental justice within Labour for 40 years. And our members have gone on to become key voices within the Environment movement and in Parliament.

To celebrate our successes, and to raise the profile of the issues we continue to champion, we want to mark this important anniversary. Plans so far include a special event at Labour Conference 2013 and an anniversary edition of New Ground.

But we would like you involved. We would like to hear your memories from SERA's past and your thoughts for SERA's future, as well as any ideas for how we can mark this important milestone in our history.

Please get in touch with your comments by
emailing melanie.smallman@sera.org.uk