

Transport: connecting communities



An integrated Green transport system would strengthen communities by making reliable, affordable and convenient public transport accessible to everyone. Designed with safety in mind, it would reduce traffic casualties and deaths attributed to transport air pollution. Powered by clean renewable energy, it would improve local air quality and reduce carbon pollution, helping to safeguard our health and the environment on which we all depend.

Lower income groups suffer more from road related casualties and pollution and as a result, are much more likely to develop illnesses like asthma and heart disease. By investing in safe and spacious cycle lanes, pavements and pedestrian areas and in better local rail and bus networks, we would encourage active travel such as walking and cycling whilst reducing air pollution and congestion and promoting healthy lifestyles. Our commitment to a 20mph speed limit in urban areas is already helping to tackle pollution, cut casualties and encourage cycling and walking.

To achieve a fair and sustainable transport system, a Green government would regulate bus services everywhere, not just in London, to ensure appropriate service levels and fares that are affordable to all. We would take the railways back into public ownership, increase investment,

re-open lines and stations and reduce fares. We would provide incentives where necessary to encourage car users to switch to public transport. Where practical, we would support the replacement of flights with train travel and videoconferencing, which could significantly reduce the demand for air travel.

Current transport policy is strongly biased towards higher income groups who receive a great deal more public subsidy to meet their transport needs, while causing more pollution than people with lower incomes. There is also a strong divide in transport spending between London and other regions, as well as between rural and urban areas. A Green government would address these inequalities by focusing upon demand management rather than trying to accommodate demand.

Applying the 'polluter pays' principle, a Green government would use 'eco-taxes' to ensure that the cost of different transport modes reflects their true social and environmental impacts. Income from more polluting transport would be used to provide more efficient and affordable public transport alternatives. This would certainly apply to flying, which causes more environmental damage than any other form of transport: in 2010, commercial flights were responsible for about 32% of UK transport greenhouse gas emissions and around 7% of total UK emissions. Many flights would be avoidable through the availability of better and more affordable surface transport. The Green Party opposes further

airport expansion and recognises the need for a drastic reduction in the number of flights, mainly due the significant role of aviation pollution in driving climate disruption. We will support the introduction of an aviation fuel tax, emission charges and increased landing charges to ensure all the impacts of flying are included in ticket prices.



How would renationalisation of the railways work?

As franchises expire, they would simply be reabsorbed and integrated into the existing government owned train operator, Directly Operated Railways. There would be no need for the State to pay for this. In fact, we would save money immediately, as we wouldn't have to bankroll the expensive and flawed tender process.

If we increase the price of running a car, how will I manage?

At the moment, many people are forced to pay the high cost of using cars due to a lack of alternative transport links. A Green government would invest in public transport to ensure that it becomes the most attractive means of travel for most journeys, even for people with access to cars. With two thirds of all

journeys made under 5 miles and a fifth under one mile, most journeys, especially in cities and towns, can be made more quickly by bike than car, while a train can take you further in less time than driving if it is properly integrated with other public transport and with routes for walking and cycling.

How can we encourage cycling with so many accidents?

We need to redistribute the space on roads to stimulate active travel. More road space needs to be used for cycle lanes and pavements, making it safer and more convenient to travel by bicycle or foot. Also, the 20mph speed limit is fundamental to reducing the amount of road casualties that destroy so many lives every year.

But don't we need more roads, especially bypasses, to reduce congestion and create jobs?

The type of economic activity that is generated by road travel does not benefit our society evenly. These are massive investments, made with taxpayer money, that usually benefit the wealthy more than everybody else. They also empty our high streets and harm small businesses, while concentrating power in the hands of few out of town retailers. Meanwhile, all of society pays the cost of pollution, noise, casualties and traffic.



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