

Conservative Transport News



Conservative Transport Group

A Special Interest Group of the Conservative Party

Founded in 1992 by Dr Robert Kinghorn

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Transport: where the Conservatives have the better moves

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Chairman's Chat

Since the Committee's Strategy Report was completed in early March, the much increased focus on the Brexit vote implications and the pre & post-Election political turmoil and positioning have together greatly magnified the critical need for the **"Infrastructure Investment Prioritisation"** which our Strategy Report had already concluded was radically and urgently needed. Also since early March other supporting factors have come to light

That the UK needs to very substantially increase its investment in its Infrastructure is universally accepted by all political parties and industry bodies as well as by the population at large.

To be clear, Infrastructure includes all transport modes (including digital broadband and mobile connectivity), housing and associated services (including schools, hospitals etc), energy (particularly electricity), water (fresh and sewage).

As the strategy report highlighted the provision and maintenance of Infrastructure doesn't just require investment funding, more importantly it requires skilled construction resources. **More importantly** because construction skills are delivered by real people who have to physically exist with the right skills, some of which need decades to acquire. And the public at large accept, without question, that the "Magic Skilled People Tree" does not exist - full stop.

Finance availability on the other hand is less concrete. Public finance can be supplemented by private finance, borrowing appears to be a very flexible facility, cash availability is a moving target (Quantitative Easing!!) and taxation is a tap to be turned on or off etc. – arguably a sizeable chunk of the population (maybe only subliminally?) do sort of believe in the **"Magic Money Tree"** – judging from the Labour Party's Manifesto they certainly appear to do so

As our Strategy Report highlighted there was a very substantial shortfall in construction skills necessary to deliver the pre-Election committed Infrastructure on anything like the committed timescales. For example to deliver the promised, essentially required, additional new housing (with all the associated services) alone requires a very substantial increase in construction resources

Pre-Election, the February Arcadis Report forecast that a 400,000 shortfall, lasting to the next parliament and beyond, was just round the corner -- a situation politically ignored on an ongoing basis and, after a brief flurry, forgotten by the media. <https://www.arcadis.com/en/united-kingdom/news/latest-news/2017/02/britain-must-recruit-one-worker-every-77-seconds-to-meet-construction-needs/>

The only acceptable way out of this Catch22 situation (arguably made worse by Election promises) is to rigorously prioritise all desired Infrastructure funding (capital and maintenance) and our Strategy Report made some definitive proposals focused on rail and digital communications. Not surprisingly, a key conclusion was that HS2 Phase One had a very low priority ranking. The recent policy recognition by various planning authorities of

the need for much more investment in road construction and maintenance further amplifies the urgent need for transport investment prioritisation.

Factors influencing the prioritisation process

First and foremost is the expectation that post-Brexit access to immigrant skills is likely to become more limited - very possibly to a substantial degree, although national imperatives (NHS, social care, seasonal agriculture needs etc.) may force a more liberal position. Recent reports indicate that the immigrant flow is already slowing due to the continuing positive economic growth within the eastern EU countries.

Secondly at the time of preparing our Strategy Paper we were not aware of the latest population forecasts from the ONS which headlined that the UK's population will rise from the current 65m to 76m by 2045 and that a quarter of the population will be over 65 (up from 17.8% in 2015). Media reporting pointed out that whilst a larger population increases the size and productive capacity of the workforce, it also increases pressure and demand for services such as education, healthcare and housing – which means that further substantial growth in critical infrastructure investment will be needed just to stand still. Thirdly, during the Election process both major political parties highlighted the urgent need for the UK to invest in Infrastructure – but without any construction skills caveats!

Fourthly, the skills shortfall should not be limited to construction skill shortfalls. It is becoming increasingly clear that the rapidly growing demand for digital skills means that the “Infrastructure Investment Prioritisation” process needs to take account of digital skill resource availability.

Fifthly, feedback from various discussions and from media reports have highlighted some key reasons why popular support for HS2 is so low in the population at large. It appears that there are at least six key factors

- First and foremost it doesn't pass the “man in the street” common sense test – e.g. why do we want even more people traveling to overcrowded London? With the already speedy WCML surely the problem to be addressed is the journey before & after the train journey? All that money should surely be better directed towards the NHS, social care, social housing, better schools, and more police? etc.
- A widespread understanding of the construction skill shortage issue from personal day by day experiences (travelling delays, domestic project resourcing, local infrastructure delays etc.)
- The “man in the street” is taken in to a degree by economic “jiggery pokey” but has an unshakeable appreciation that people resources are real and can't be ‘magically increased. So don't starve Network Rail and all the local transport projects dear to our heart by letting HS2 pinch the skilled people. The recent delayed/canned ‘electrification’ schemes will add weight to this thinking [the reality seems to be that the delayed scheme announcements were in practice just an acknowledgement of the inevitable]
- The UK's cities are close together compared to EU and other countries with HS Rail, so why choose such a fast speed that destroys so much property and virgin

countryside when a still fast but slower speed line could be routed around existing transport corridors, e.g. alongside motorways etc.

- It involves technology boundary issues so there are bound to be problems - with the consequent big cost increases and large delays - is a view that is instinctively widely understood
- Lastly, its only now emerging that one of the major justifications for Crossrail 2 is that it is critically needed to deal with HS2's Euston passenger volumes. Why should London get yet another £30+bn rail investment when the Northern Powerhouse is crying out for investment and resources? It's not fair

Sixthly, the need to radically increase new house building has become even more widely understood and endorsed by all Parties – the only disagreements are where to build, how much social housing etc. However the construction effort to provide the supporting infrastructure for new housing is almost certainly underestimated – not just to provide all the essential services but also the necessary road and rail connectivity, the schools and hospitals etc. that all new housing conurbations need.

Seventhly, it is now even clearer that all planned/proposed Infrastructure Investments have an absolute need to have a rationally prepared “priority rating credential” which is well understood by everyone. The public needs to be prepared for a rating system where, for example, “parts of the national road pothole repair programme” could end up with a higher rating than say Heathrow expansion, HS2 and Crossrail 2.

Eighthly, the technology driven “Innovation Revolution” is gathering momentum. Infrastructure investment is just one of area of strategic planning that will increasingly be impacted, often unpredictably. For example, in the water supply field, the innovation described in a recent Telegraph article entitled “Water harvester can pull moisture out of the air using only power of Sun” could be game changer world wide <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/04/13/water-harvester-can-pull-moisture-air-using-power-sun/>

Other recent examples to hit the media include

- Volvo's “All new car models to be electric from 2020” announcement
- Solar power is becoming much cheaper and more efficient on an exponential scale (“UK sets new renewable energy record as wind and solar surge“ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/06/07/uk-sets-new-renewable-energy-record-wind-solar-surge/>)
- Ditto battery technology (<https://www.ft.com/content/5ed49ffe-6305-11e7-91a7-502f7ee26895> Tesla to build giant battery to provide power to 30,000 homes FT 7th July 17)
- Driverless vehicles – hardly a day goes by now without another progress announcement. A recent media article headlined “Will the Driverless Car Kill High Speed?” concluded that “point to point convenience” would win the day.
- The operating cost reduction and capacity increases that will be delivered by fully deploying digital signalling and train control systems across the whole rail network has almost certainly been underestimated in the DfT's planning. For example not only is a circa 40% per route capacity increase expected but also a reduction of 30% in operating costs – which would/will make the WCML even more HS2 cost competitive.

Finally, it has been pointed out that allowing a major uncontrolled construction skills shortage to develop means that the marketplace will decide where the scarce skills are deployed – almost certainly in many cases not where they are most needed. The same is true of some construction materials – in the last major house building boom, bricks became a limiting resource. To conclude, it is now even clearer that the allocation of people resources and knowhow rather than money should be the prime focus for the very urgently needed “Infrastructure Investment Prioritisation Process

” - An additional Treasury function? A new treasury style government body?

A new Select Committee?

Footnotes

- Building of HS2 to cost £403m a mile - Times 16th July 17. The full scheme is now credibly forecast to cost **£104bn**, twice the current DfT figure (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/building-of-hs2-to-cost-403m-a-mile-drzrdzthw>)
- 'Reputational damage' as late £75m tram-train scheme passes red light - Transport Network 4th July 17 (<https://www.transport-network.co.uk/Reputational-damage-as-late-75m-tram-train-scheme-passes-red-light/14232>)
- The Hinkley C nuclear power plant will be a costly mistake – we can still stop it - New Statesman 4th July 17 (<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/energy/2017/07/hinkley-c-nuclear-power-plant-will-be-costly-mistake-we-can-still-stop-it>)
- 267 new schools needed to cope with baby boom - Telegraph 15th July 17 (<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph/20170715/281715499662449>)

TRANSPORT OVERVIEW

Membership News

Do not forget our website with up to date news from various sources.

<http://www.conservativetransportgroup.uk/news/>

The Conservative Party Conference is in Manchester this year – Sunday Oct 01 to Wed Oct 04. As always there will be a variety of fringe meetings with the Transport theme. Some will be held within the secure area – everyone needs passes, and some outside secure area – where you can just come up to Manchester for the meeting.

TRANSPORT NEWS

Air News

Gatwick

British Airways is now South Terminal only while easyJet and Virgin Atlantic have both consolidated at North Terminal. The complexity of these changes warranted a reduced

flying programme for all three airlines whilst the necessary alterations were made and tested. The changes are expected to simplify passenger journeys and provide improved facilities. 43 million passengers used Gatwick in 2016, a rise of 7.3% with long haul up most at 26.8%. New York, Milan and Toronto grew by nearly 100%.

Augmented reality will help passengers to find check-in areas, departure gates and baggage carousels. It will give directions via the camera view of passengers' mobile devices. This involved installing 2,000 beacons across both terminals.

Heathrow

The National Planning Statement (NPS) for the proposed third runway has been published. It requires:

- Noise mitigation plans.
- Ban on night flights for a 6.5 hour period.
- Road traffic must not increase.
- Must enable more than half the passengers to use public transport.
- Compensation for compulsorily purchased homes to be 25% above market level.
- A high standard of noise insulation and improvements to public facilities.

The "Cranford Agreement" of the 1950s, which prohibited most take-offs from Runway 09L is to end.

Meanwhile Flybe is to launch services to Aberdeen and Edinburgh as a result of getting slots released by IAG (BA's parent) as a condition of their 2012 takeover of British Midland International. Flybe already operates from London City.

Stansted

A new arrivals facility is to be built, subject to planning permission. It will raise capacity to 35 million passengers.

Southend

Stobart Air will add 12 new destinations, including Budapest, Cologne, Lyon, Milan, Prague, Vienna and Venice. They will be flown by Flybe

There is now an executive jet centre open 24/7.

Penzance Heliport

Cornwall Council has granted planning permission for a heliport in Penzance. This will replace that demolished for a supermarket in 2012 and will enable the link with the Scilly Isles to be re-established.

Punctuality

In 2016 flights to and from Birmingham were the most punctual in the world. For small airports Newcastle was first.

End to Random Bag Checks?

As the first cabin baggage X-ray system to meet the new European ECAC standards the Smiths Detection Hi-SCAN 6040a TiX system includes:

- Automatic detection of explosives in carry-on baggage.
- Real-time evaluation.
- Two high-resolution and detailed views of bags.

- X-ray generator with optimised spectrum.
- High-resolution sensor technology.

London City

In April LCY and the National Autistic Society held a series of open days to make the facilities less daunting for people affected by autism. They are part of a wider effort by LCY to help passengers, including those with reduced mobility and non-visible disabilities.

Bristol

On May 3rd airlines had been operating from Bristol (BRS) for 60 years. In 2016 it had 7,532,298 passengers, 4.2m of them carried by easyJet over 62 routes.

Durham Tees Valley

The DTVA Masterplan sees the creation of 3,800 new jobs by 2020. Phase 1 will remodel the departure lounge, provide free Wi-Fi, workstations, charging points and retail services and will finish by September. Phase 2, which will follow close behind brings back tax-free shopping and a business lounge upgrade. Later projects include aircraft dismantling and recycling and a multi-modal logistics centre with enhanced road connectivity.

Favourite Airlines

May 29th brought turmoil to British Airways due to worldwide IT failure across the airline's network. Passengers' travel was disrupted with flights missed, flights caught but without luggage and many passengers stranded at their remote location.

Commentators have expressed surprise at the initial explanations. If true they would suggest that BA and, presumably, IAG had not been anticipating obvious risks when installing and developing their key IT systems. This would imply fundamental weaknesses in senior management and project management strategy. The "power supply issue" raises fairly basic matters such as back up arrangements and the failure modes to be considered.

BA confirmed that an "exceptional power surge" caused failure of computers including flight, baggage and customer communications systems. Experienced commentators expressed surprise that the backup was in the same area as main service. The consensus was that "backup should be on completely different power infrastructure".

If BA's early diagnosis is correct similar recent incidents with major US carriers should have warned them of how the crisis was likely to develop and what response would be expected of BA by passengers, media and public commentators.

First indications of the saga seem to have been at 11.00am when the check-in website said "error". BA Heathrow and Gatwick staff started taking down check-in data by pen and paper. IT systems had collapsed. For 3.5 hrs passengers read on their mobiles of the global IT disruption that had left all BA's London outbound flights cancelled. Interestingly, BA refused offers of help from its IT supplier, Amadeus Global. The Royal United Services Institute questioned how a "power outage" could really cause such a systemic failure. The basic software is used by other airlines.

By 4.30pm BA decided to cancel the day's remaining flights so passengers scrambled unaided for available accommodation. Many had to use airport conference rooms as

dormitories. The following day, even those who arrived at 5.00am had no flight information by mid-day. Many who did fly arrived without their luggage.

Alex Cruz, BA CEO, apologised for the “huge inconvenience” but was accused of causing the crisis by outsourcing jobs to India. Interestingly the December 2016 Which report had already found customer satisfaction down to 60% for long-haul flights.

Passengers were running up huge phone bills while experiencing long waits for Customer Services. Because of the premium rate normally applicable BA was accused of “profiting from incompetence”. BA set up a free-phone number but some passengers never became aware of it. BA call centres around the world use a 0800 number for rebooking or tracing baggage. Passengers were told to include phone charges in claims.

Cruz claimed two thirds of passengers would have reached their destination by the end of Mon 29th May. By 30th May 583 flights had been cancelled from Heathrow and Gatwick alone. Some 75,000 passengers will have been affected with flights cancelled, separation from luggage or stranded abroad.

We may never know the cause. There was a campaign to lower operating costs. It is suggested that the cost-cutting management culture has allowed customer service to decline alarmingly, increasingly mimicking the “brutality” of the budget airlines but without the ultra-cheap fares. Some companies cut costs brilliantly. Others just grind themselves down. It’s hard to believe that IAG will have disregarded major factors in cost reduction projects.

This is expected to be a financial blow to BA and its parent IAG (International Consolidated Airlines Group). Under EU rules passengers are entitled to claim compensation. When US carrier Delta Airlines cancelled 2,300 flights last August it suffered a \$100m hit. IAG was alarmed at the UK’s referendum decision to leave the EU and has reported reduced business demand.

BA is understood to have saved £91m in a cost cutting drive including the outsourcing of IT. Compensation is widely expected to exceed that. Unions blame outsourcing to Tata Consultancy. Cyber attack has been ruled out. Cost estimates range from £82m to £100m. However IAG operating profit rose 8.6% last year to £2.54bn. On 30th May IAG shares were down 2.8%. Despite the deteriorating image the price has held up well. How long will the two be reconciled?

Willie Walsh is supporting Cruz. BA’s own investigation is focussing on the uninterruptible power supply to Boadicea House (which shut down just after 8.30am Saturday for no known reason). Power was then resumed in a prompt and “uncontrolled fashion” although power should have been resumed slowly. This caused “catastrophic physical damage” to BA’s servers which contain much data, e.g. customer and crew info, operational details and flight paths, although apparently this was not permanently lost or compromised. BA’s team spent the weekend repairing servers and normal operations resumed on 31st May. The intended slower resumption of power would have restored services much sooner. The problem affected 75,000 passengers around the world. The hit came at BA’s busy period with public and school holidays. It suggests serious management and planning weaknesses. On 3rd June were announced four days of strikes by flight crew over pay and travel concessions.

BA has a recent record of controversies. Thus in 2004 there were threatened strikes, in 2005 there were sackings at Gate Gourmet, BA's in-flight catering supplier, in 2007 a threatened strike cost BA £80m in lost bookings. The opening of Terminal 5 in 2008 was accompanied by an embarrassing period of discomfort for passengers with all possible forms of confusion over luggage. In January 2017 BA stopped free food on short haul flights. IAG has declared that IT "is a BA operational issue". Walsh has also distanced himself. Does IAG care what happens at BA? There is a need for someone to take ownership of the problem, for a high level investigation and presumably a need for change. Any company can suffer an IT failure but this is not the first instance at BA since its merger with Iberia, e.g. September 2016. Meanwhile we have instances of staff striking over pay and conditions, food running out on long haul flights, take-off delayed 6 hrs for lack of toilet rolls. Is this failure of management strategy? At one time flag carriers were as much Foreign Office agents as commercial airlines whilst the low cost carriers (LCCs) have created a successful class of no-frills travel. Now carriers like Norwegian are taking the LCC model into long haul.

On 6th June Willie Walsh, at a conference in Mexico, stated that "power to servers disconnected then resumed in uncontrolled fashion". There will be an internal inquiry into why the systems failed and improved processes will be installed wherever identified. On 15th June Walsh stated that "the failure had absolutely nothing to do with the changes to the way we resource our IT systems. Watch this space.

A Flight with Air India – What it's Really Like!

I was really worried about flying Air India. I was thinking filthy loos, horrid food, legs crammed in. But the Air India flight was really good which is a relief because we have 4 flights with them over the next two weeks. Visa security is really tight at the various points in the booking in process so I was surprised that we were delayed leaving by an hour because five people had tried to get on to the plane without the right documentation. And yet they had managed to book their luggage onto the flight and arrive at the departure gate! In the meantime unlike more up-market flights, everyone was wandering up and down the aisles until seconds before departure. Even the flight attendants were surprised that the plane was about to leave and were running frantically up and down the plane securing doors, closing overhead lockers and getting people out of the loos. Reader, I think you would be surprised at the failure to check seats reclined, tables down and even seat belts!

Nevertheless, the 9 hour flight was excellent, lots of leg room, pillows and blankets to sleep despite a full plane and clean loos. We were a bit surprised to be woken up at midnight for curry! Delicious, however! We could only see two or three other couples with white faces. The Indians are very demanding of the hard working attendants asking all the time for water and for some reason pens and paper? Several of them even asked for complaint forms. Clearly I am just too British because I thanked the attendants for a great service.

Delhi Airport is only five years old and won the World's Top Airport Award in 2014 and 2015. But immigration was so slow and tedious. Britain could learn from India's attitude to anyone unwelcome or overstaying. They wanted not only a photo but my right hand fingerprints plus my left hand and to cap it all my thumbprints! An amazing journey to the newly built hotel avoiding cows (and this is the city) elephant and beggars who hang on to the car. But our driver who is with us for a week loves his Tata Indigo and drives safely (or at least as far as an Indian can drive sensibly!)

Maritime & Waterways News

Parliament

The meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Maritime and Ports Group on 20th March received presentations from Nautilus International (formerly NUMAST), the RMT and the UK Chamber of Shipping. All were keen to stress the importance of shipping to the UK and updated us on the current position. Thus employment was down 14% in a decade, of the 87000 ratings only 10% were British and a third would retire soon.

Yet there was a lot of interest in a seafaring career amongst young people and it was a great vehicle for social mobility. There was a great need for more training and employment opportunities as well as improvements in visa requirements. The UK was an expensive place to train. There was concern by all speakers that Ofsted did not recognise nautical courses for their points system. This was a powerful deterrent to young people who would otherwise welcome nautical training. It was suggested that this might be a suitable application for the new "T-levels".

The opportunity was taken to look forward to the Mayflower 2020 celebrations.

Cleaner Propulsion

Current efforts are directed at LNG and electricity with hydrogen rejected for the foreseeable future as too expensive.

Because of the limited availability of LNG its progress is currently often in the form of LNG-ready ships (designed to be easily converted) or hybrid (designed to use diesel and batteries as well). CMA-CGM is expected to order dual-fuel container ships. All large product carriers built in the USA are now being completed to facilitate future LNG usage whilst LNG bunkering facilities are being built on the Gulf of Mexico, Florida and Washington. Bureau Veritas has developed a "Gas-Prepared" notation which will allow the easy conversion of tankers to dual-fuel propulsion. The order on Samsung by Norway's Viken Shipping AS for four tankers includes the option to convert one to run on LNG. Of course, the lack of bunkering facilities means that LNG operation is more attractive for short sea vessels like ferries and we find Poland is building LNG ferries for places like Vancouver whilst Turkey is building hybrid diesel/LNG/battery ferries for the same market.

At present electric propulsion is most conspicuous in Norway where the Government requires new ships to be even cleaner than LNG. Two are being built in Turkey with a Siemens propulsion system.

Containers

The process of consolidation of container ship operators has continued. After its expected takeover of Hamburg Sud (including CCNI of Chile and Alianca of Brazil) Maersk will have over 740 vessels totalling 3.8 million TEUs. Meanwhile NYK, MOL and K Line of Japan plan to merge their container operations, CMA CGM has taken over APL, COSCO and China Shipping Container Line have merged and Hapag-Lloyd has taken over the container operations of CSAV. Future candidates include Evergreen and Wan Hai of Taiwan, Orient Overseas of Hong Kong, Hyundai of South Korea and Zim of Israel.

Dover Western Docks

Work has begun at Dover Western Docks on a £115 million project to add two new ro-ro berths, a new pier, marina curve, navigation channel, lock gates and land reclamation. It is due for completion by end 2018.

US Navy under Trump

The fleet assessment plan issued by the US Chief of Naval Operations after the Trump inauguration describes a requirement for 355 ships. This compares with 274 now and 308 as it

would have risen under previous plans. It recommends the increase be achieved by additional construction to existing designs.

Rail & Tram News

Rail – the Next Few Years

If anything can be learned from the Brexit vote, the election of Donald Trump as President and the recent General Election it is that politicians can only be successful when they listen to the voters and give them hope. That also applies to transport.

There has been much concern at the much greater level of transport investment in London and the South East than in the rest of the UK. That has to change. If we look at rail investments in the pipeline, they include Thameslink/London Bridge, Crossrail, HS2 Stage 1 and Crossrail 2, all with budgets of over £10 billion, against Birmingham New Street and Manchester Ordsall curve which barely reach £1 billion between them.

Part of the reason is that projects on high volume routes deliver the best results on the outdated Benefit to Cost analyses of the Department for Transport that do not look adequately at the job creation opportunities from transport investment.

So where should the Government's rail transport set the priorities.

Firstly we know that rail journey times between many of the largest Midlands and Northern cities barely achieve 40 mph end to end whilst between those same cities and London average speed over 70 mph are easily achieved.

So the first move would be to design, plan and deliver what we talk about as HS3 linking Manchester, Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield. This should not be a closed loop, but part of a new high speed network that will extend to Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham and Birmingham which might develop into an inter-city Ringrail around the Peak District. At the same time investment should also be provided to deliver much needed improvements in local transport in all these cities in a manner that will increase access to jobs.

Patrick McLoughlin deserves great credit for the creating Transport for the North and Midlands Connect as Secretary of State for Transport. These organizations should be given greater powers and funding to deliver better transport for their population.

At the same time, we need to develop new East to West rail routes. When the Oxford to Cambridge line is complete, it will be the only East – West railway in the 100 miles between Hampstead and Melton Mowbray. That is not good enough in an era when rail use is expanding so fast. Business needs access to all available markets, not simply those on North to South routes linking London. Many large cities in the Midlands do not have direct rail connections to each other with examples such as Leicester to Coventry, Derby to Walsall and Northampton to Leicester. Connecting these cities would deliver much improved access to jobs.

Airports generate large volumes of traffic by road and rail, as well as their prime function for air transport. It is no longer good enough to provide rail links from the airport to the city

it serves. Airports attract traffic from all 360 degrees of travel, so their rail transport needs to offer access from all directions as a necessity, and not as an optional extra. Airports that are well connected by rail can attract 5 million rail passengers for every 10 million air passengers, so a rail connected Heathrow should be regarded as Britain's third city after London and Birmingham. Heathrow is one of the worst polluting locations in London so providing rail infrastructure to reduce this has to be high priority. A further way to reduce pollution at Heathrow might be to be a South Ringrail linking Heathrow to those parts of outer London that otherwise can only reach it via central London. Heathrow as the nation's major hub airport does need fast rail access to all the UK's largest cities and changes of train en route to an airport cannot persuade motorists out of their cars.

At the same time, better use of regional airports is needed to ease the congestion at Heathrow.

Whilst HS2 can offer benefits to the Midlands and North, it is very obvious that HS2 is far too London-centric and studies have shown that high speed rail benefits London as the largest city more than the rest. There are many serious unresolved issues around HS2 Stage 1, despite gaining Royal Assent, and its high cost might be better spent elsewhere. Certainly it is time for politicians to listen to the views of the population and as HS2 was shown to be the least popular item on the recent election manifesto, it would be a wise Government that holds back on building HS2 Stage 1. My impression is that politicians have bulldozed HS2 through the parliamentary process and the HS2 promoters have systematically disregarded alternative views from cities as large as Sheffield and Stoke on Trent rather than work with them to create a better and more popular solution.

The emphasis on rail transport for the next few years should be one of redressing the imbalance in transport investment within the UK.

Graham Nalty

Rail Lead Committee Member

Ringrail

The CTG proposal is for a National UK Northern and Southern Transport connective railway network, the primary aim of which is to support integrated Northern and Southern 'Powerhouses'.

The UK is in urgent need of a nationally integrated and nationally supported transport strategy for the WHOLE of the UK to deliver an enhanced and streamlined railway network, integrated with Britain's hub & regional airports and with local light rail networks. This would radically reduce road congestion and substantially improve passenger satisfaction ratings. Neither the current HS2 strategy nor Crossrail 2 will tackle the crushing problems of failing transport and the prolonged journey times that both the North and the South are facing right now, nor do they address regional pressures, capacity and connectivity issues.

The CTG 'Ringrail' Strategy will provide the enabling foundation to do this. It will also accommodate further additional connectivity expansions within the regions as and when required.

In summary, the proposal is as follows:

- That there should be a UK national transport strategy based around the building of a 'ringrail' inside the M25 connecting the existing outer reaches of the London rail and tube transport radial network in a ring (Ringrail South).
- That the 'Y' section of HS2 in conjunction with an HS3 solution should be built to form a northern 'Ringrail' (Ringrail North) connecting the northern and midland cities and northern airports to form a true 'N/S Divide-reducing' Northern Hub
- and that the London-Birmingham section of HS2 (i.e. Phase One) be substantially delayed (possibly re-assessed) in favour of the two proposed ringrails.

Very real benefits would be realised by this national strategy, and would be more realistically attainable than any other integrated transport strategy so far put forward for the UK. These benefits include full connectivity for all the main northern cities, a cost-effective approach to development, faster return on investment and better resource planning, skills usage and enhancement across the country. Overcrowding, congestion and poor connectivity would be vastly reduced and the 'north-south' divide too would be reduced if not eliminated. The economy in the north of Britain would be revived and congestion that clogs and limits the south would be reduced and streamlined. Airports too would benefit from the enhanced connectivity provided by 'Ringrail'. Last, and perhaps most importantly, immediate and ongoing environmental impacts would be reduced, especially if this solution could be implemented as an alternative to HS2 Phase One (London-to-Birmingham new route only).

This strategy accompanies the recommendation either not to build the London-Birmingham section of HS2, or at least to defer it (or an alternative) until such point in time when it can be more readily and accurately evaluated in terms of cost and benefits. HS2, as currently planned, is excessively costly, disruptive and damaging to the environment. Also, for reasons already laid out in previous strategy studies, it is unlikely that the expected revenue to pay for the capital investment of the London-Birmingham section will ever be forthcoming.

The problem not addressed by London's current plans is travel congestion (dominantly by car) outside the inner "rich" area, i.e. Greater London and either side of the M25 where an increasingly large number of commuting journey's are not served by a well connected mass transit system. Ringrail South will make a major contribution to easing the commuting problems of very large numbers of people making regular journeys, thus making the economic and passenger numeric benefits far more important than those arising from HS2 Phase One. Furthermore private financing is likely to be more readily attainable, at least in part, compared to HS2 which has none so far and is unlikely to have any going forward.

These proposals build on the work already carried out by Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 Ltd to create a well-integrated, socially inclusive network that spreads the resulting benefits widely.

Our proposals are for a range of new build railway routes/lines plus expansions of existing routes in order to deliver Ringrail based connectivity. Ringrails are very attractive because all stations are through stations with none of the passenger volume limitations and capital cost penalties incurred by having Terminus stations.

Furthermore the proposed Ringrails and associated local commuting rail investments are focused on providing new fast and frequent rail connectivity to address widespread, serious and growing road congestion. The consequent substantial reduction in congestion will make a major contribution to the quality of the UK's road infrastructure (and position in the world rankings).

The Ringrail proposal recommends HS2 Phase One London-Birmingham route should be re-assessed because:

1. It does not serve Heathrow or any other airport in London
2. It is environmentally very damaging
3. HS2 Phase One benefits London more than the cities connected to London via the proposed new HS line and will therefore increase the north-south divide - an imbalance that Britain neither wants nor needs
4. It does not directly connect to the HS1 London Terminus – a pre-requisite for any high speed line from London to the North
5. It is far too highly disruptive around Euston – it needs to serve more than one part of London and Crossrail does not do enough.
6. It overshadows the more regional programmes and needs.
7. There is already a very good rail service from Birmingham to London, yet is virtually nothing to cover the more heavily congested 'Ringrail' areas proposed and it excruciating trying to commute every single day in and around these regions.

The HS2 Phase One deferral would also allow time to evaluate the impacts of the other disruptive technologies and disruptive business models on the horizon such as advanced video conferencing, car sharing (now growing exponentially) and driverless cars, which will be better 'known quantities' in five to ten years time, whereas they are unpredictable at present.

In summary, we need to invest a in strongly targeted, prioritised national transport strategy to grow the economy, rebalancing it across the North/South divide. Today there is no such economically focused strategic plan to do this. The 'Ringrail' strategy accomplishes this by setting in place two integrated, ring-based transport networks to provide connectivity and capacity where there is little or none at present, connecting to existing East and West Coast Main lines to capitalise on existing railway infrastructure. HS2 and Crossrail 2 will not achieve these goals.

In all the Regions, particularly in the North & Midlands, we need very much better rail transport connectivity to create the right conditions for economic expansion, innovation and attractive job creation. We need to facilitate efficient local commuting between and within the major metropolitan centres together with faster links between those centres

which are currently connected by slow trains, and with new links where there is nothing at all, e.g. Leicester to Coventry. Part of this focus is to plan and prioritise better rail connectivity access to the larger regional airports.

In the South, congestion (primarily affecting commuters) in and around metropolitan London is extremely serious. Here growth is unsustainable and not controlled. It is especially dire in and around Heathrow on both roads and rail. For this region, priorities need to change in favour of a c. 15 mile radius southern Ringrail connecting existing tube and rail stations to relieve this economy-destroying congestion. Here there is currently no alternative to the car unless it is by millions of inefficient train journeys all the way in and back out of London again just get to work a few miles away in a neighbouring area. 360 degree local rail connectivity around Heathrow would increase transport efficiency even further.

'Ringrail will address these issues. It would mean deferring HS2 Phase One, but expanding/modifying the other currently planned HS routes and connecting them all together. The 'Ringrail' strategy would be easier to manage as a strategically staged programme and less disruptive both environmentally and to local communities.

It could be planned and implemented in manageable stages which would be easier to resource and fine-tune. It would obviate the risks currently present with HS2 Phase One which is in danger of consuming much public funding and a disproportionately large percentage of the available construction skills base, leaving far too little for other highly beneficial priority projects.

Finally the 'Ringrail' infrastructure would be easy to extend to provide further connectivity to other regional lines and it would more easily facilitate integration with existing transport modes such as trams/light rail and links to key regional airports.

Bicycle & Motorcycle News

'Wanton and furious' conviction for cyclist involved in fatal collision with London pedestrian

The verdict in the case of Charlie Alliston, the cyclist who collided in London with a pedestrian who died of her injuries, has just been announced. This is the statement we have issued on his conviction for 'wanton and furious driving':

"Riding a fixed wheel bicycle on the road without a front brake is illegal, stupid, and endangers other road users especially pedestrians. Charlie Alliston's actions had tragic consequences for Kim Briggs' family, and it was entirely right that this led to his prosecution.

"The fact that he has been convicted of an offence dating back to legislation from 1861, drafted in archaic language, will doubtless lead some to argue that the laws on irresponsible cycling should be aligned with the laws on irresponsible driving. The reality is that the way in which the justice system deals with mistakes, carelessness, recklessness and deliberately dangerous behaviour by all road users has long been in need of review.

"In 2014, the Government acknowledged this when announcing a full review of all motoring offences and penalties, but then waited three years to launch a limited consultation last year which closed six months ago, with silence ever since.

"To ensure that there is consistency with charging decisions, and with how dangerous behaviour on or roads is dealt with, it is vital that the Government ends the delay, and gets on with the wide scale review that politicians from all sides, victims' families and various roads safety organisations have tirelessly demanded."

Alliston will be sentenced in September.

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/publication/cycle-campaign-news-cycledigest/cycle-campaign-news-august-2017>

Driving 'green' but heavier vans: will relaxing licence rules be safe?

Cycling UK is concerned by government plans to allow drivers to operate heavier vans as long as they are 'alternatively fuelled'. The idea is motivated by the urgent need to improve air quality in urban areas, and the fact that batteries tend to make some less immediately polluting vans heavier.

However, allowing motorists with an ordinary category B licence to drive vans up to 4,250kg without applying for a new licence may not be in the best interests of road safety. We will look into the matter carefully and respond to the DfT's consultation.

Road News

Plan ahead to cope with urban charges and lorry bans across the UK - Aug 7, 2017

"Over the next three years a series of blanket restrictions will come into force in UK cities for HGVs and vans."

Christopher Snelling, FTA's Head of National and Regional Policy

Cities across the UK will start levying prohibitively high charges on older HGVs and vans, for air quality reasons, between early 2019 and the end of 2020. London has plans that could see, at the same time, many HGVs banned from the capital for having insufficient direct vision. Operators need to plan procurement or other coping strategies now to ensure the business impact is minimised.

The Freight Transport Association's Transport Manager Conferences, sponsored by Iveco, will brief this autumn on this topic, ensuring attendees have the latest information about what will happen where, which vehicles will be affected, and how best to plan for them.

The Government has named 32 local authorities across England that have to take further action on air quality, but it is a complicated picture as to which of these will result in a charging zone affecting commercial vehicles. The session will set out FTA's insight as to

where and when charges can be expected. It will also brief on the effects of the London Direct Vision Standard, which could see more than half the +12 tonne HGVs that currently visit London banned completely in 2020.

FTA's Head of National & Regional Policy, Christopher Snelling, who will be leading the session, said:

“Over the next three years a series of blanket restrictions will come into force in UK cities for HGVs and vans. With retrofitting of existing vehicles unlikely to be an option for most operators, transport managers need to be prepared for what is ahead, so the procurement of future fleets can be planned.”

Headline sponsor, Iveco, will give a vehicle manufacturer's perspective on the subject. Iveco's Alternative Fuel Director, Martin Flach, will provide an update on alternative fuel vehicles and the demands for Euro VI trucks in order to meet the government's proposed requirements.

Martin Flach commented, “We applaud local authorities' efforts to improve inner city air quality. The impact on truck operators is likely to be great, with many having to replace significant parts of their fleets to avoid incurring heavy penalties. This may be a fact they are not fully aware of. Iveco welcomes the opportunity to inform the audience at these important conferences.”

The conferences, which are also supported by Brigade Electronics, Goodyear Tyres and Microlise have been running for more than 20 years. They will provide an opportunity for delegates to hear direct from the Traffic Commissioner, with other sessions covering enforcement priorities and roadside stops, apprenticeships and skills, employment law, preventing vehicle use in terrorism activity and vehicle technology and in-cab cameras.

These 'must-attend' conferences broke records last year for the number of attendees, with 1200 delegates attending the series. Five new venues have been chosen for this year to enable more delegates to be accommodated.

For a full list of dates and venues or to book a place visit <http://www.ftatransportmanager.co.uk> or call 03717 11 22 22.

The cost for FTA members is £295 plus VAT for the first delegate and £265 plus VAT for

subsequent delegates; for non-FTA members £395 plus VAT for the first delegate and £365 plus VAT for subsequent delegates.

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Bus, Coach & Taxi News

The revolution in long distance bus operations

Around the world there has been an explosion in the availability of long distance bus services. Nowhere has this been more dramatic than the expansion in Germany, France and Italy where deregulation as provided competition to the previous monopolies of the state owned rail and road operators.

With vastly improved comfort buses are much more environmentally friendly. This can be related to the litres of fuel per passenger per 100kms travelled



Made famous by Clark Gable in the 1934 film “It happened one night” Greyhound buses in the US is possibly the best known and original long distance bus service. In 1935, national intercity bus ridership climbed 50% to 651,999,000 passengers, surpassing the volume of passengers carried by railroads for the first time.



During the intervening years from the 1930s to 2007 the company went through various ups and downs, including numerous changes of ownership and bankruptcies. In 2007 it was acquired by the UK Plc First Group.

In 2015 Greyhound opened 2 terminals in Mexico claiming to be the first American bus company to operate an intra-Mexican route.

National Express



In Europe one of the first companies to offer scheduled long distance services was the UK based National Express whose first operations commenced in 1973, following privatisation of the state owned bus operators..

National Express is an intercity coach operator providing services throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It is a subsidiary of the National Express Group. The majority of National Express services are contracted on long-term agreements to local coach companies, known as Partner Operators. As part of the contract, operators are required to use coaches in full National Express livery. On occasion, an operator will use its own branded vehicle due to lack of availability, but will be penalised financially for doing so. A wider list of additional operators are also available to 'bid' for occasional work on the network - usually providing a one-off duplicate service to meet demand. Whilst still having to meet strict criteria, these coaches are usually not in National Express livery.

FlixBus

FlixBus was founded in Munich in 2011 and launched its first route in Germany in February 2013. One year later in 2014, FlixBus had already established a nationwide network, and the company announced the internationalisation of its business model. In summer 2015 FlixBus launched its Italian subsidiary in Milan and entered the recently liberalized French market with "FlixBus France, and in November 2015 formed FlixBus B.V. in the Netherlands creating the very first national Dutch intercity bus network. After Germany, France and Italy, this is the company's fourth national market. The company's international

lines also connect cities in Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark.



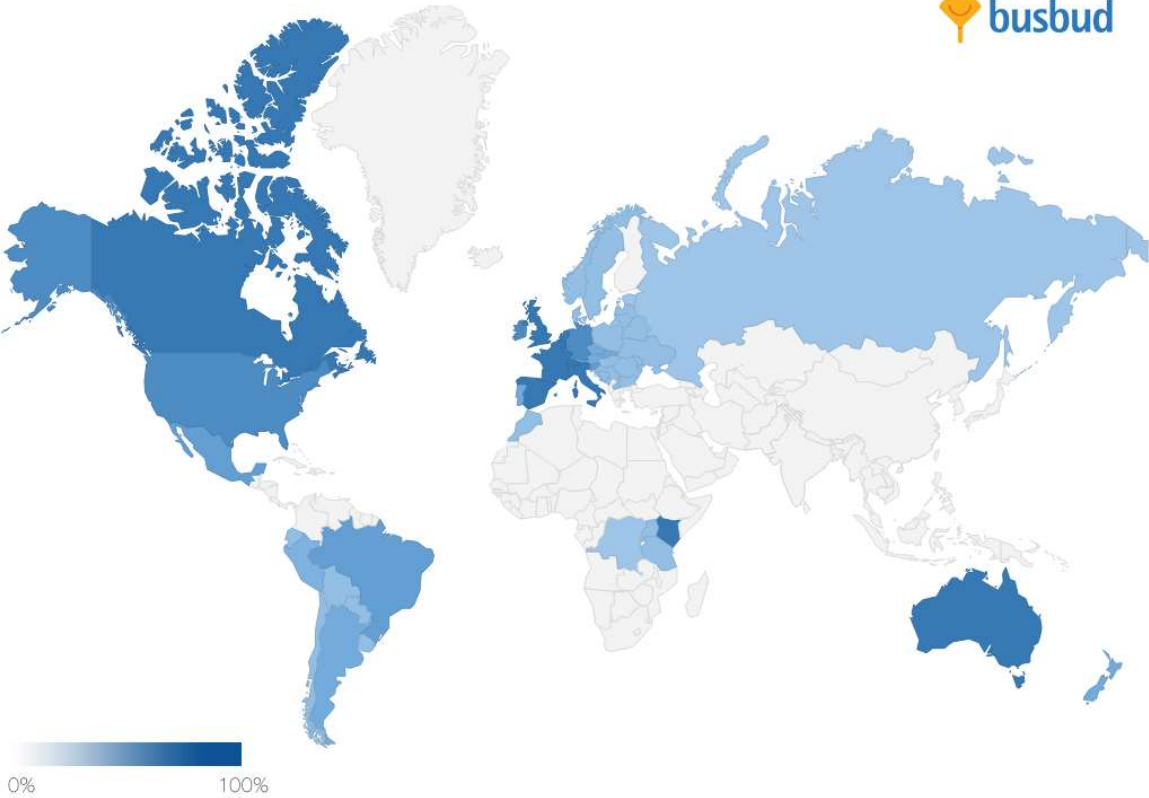
FlixBus runs on an international mobility platform by cooperating with regional bus companies from all over Europe. These local bus partners are responsible for the day-to-day running of routes, while FlixBus is in charge of the official authorizations required to operate the long-distance network. The FlixBus team handles network planning, marketing, pricing, quality management and the customer service. This unique business model leads to high scalability and has allowed a tremendous speed of international growth. On the other hand, the quality of buses is subject to the fleet available to subcontractors unlike competitors who own all or most of their buses and can thus guarantee consistent service. Furthermore, FlixBus has often offloaded the risk of low occupancy to subcontractors as their bottom line depends on the farebox revenue of the routes they operate on. The standard FlixBus formula is for the ticket revenue to be split 70% for the operator and 30% to FlixBus.

The network includes approximately 80,000 daily connections to 700 destinations in 18 countries, using over 3000 buses. In the beginning of 2016 the company announced its plan of building a long-distance network from Bordeaux to Bucharest.

Busbud

Finally it is worth mentioning the availability of Global ticketing for bus journeys. Established in 2013 Busbud is a worldwide bus and coach travel company that allows travellers to search, compare, and book intercity bus tickets. Busbud operates throughout Europe, through FlixBus, South America, North America, Africa, and other destinations. It partners with bus and coach operators to provide a search engine and a booking platform via its website and mobile app. At the end of 2016 Busbud served 10,463 cities in 89 countries, in 10 languages, and 21 currencies

The company acts as a reseller, but also provides support on the bus tickets that are sold.



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