



All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Light Rail & Trams, Affordable & Sustainable Transport



A presentation to Apprg 8th November 2011

By

Lilian Greenwood MP

Introduction



- Labour MP for Nottingham South
- Elected May 2010
- Briefly a member of the Transport Select Committee
- Whip for a year
- Delighted to join our Front Bench Transport team (1 month ago)
- Very enthusiastic about Nottingham's tram and especially the extensions to Clifton and Chilwell

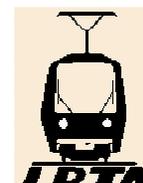
My new role and responsibilities

This meeting by invitation only, where MPs, Stakeholders etc., within the Light Rail industry and invited members of the Public will have a chance to discuss debate and raise questions concerning Light Rail.

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Maria (Eagle) took the opportunity of the reshuffle to reorganise the responsibilities of our team in line with the priorities that emerged from the first year of the party's policy review. So we've moved away from a strict mirroring of the government's division of Ministerial responsibilities and instead have three new cross-cutting briefs covering international, national and regional/local transport.

This reflects our commitment to integrated transport. People make journeys that go from door to door. If we're going to put passengers at the heart of our transport system, we need to make sure that our public transport system can deliver seamless journeys in the same way that cars do.

So my role focuses on local transport delivery and affordability including:

- Local rail
- Local roads
- Trams
- Buses
- Cycling
- Walking
- Alternatives to travel and,
- Road Safety

I'm looking forward to working with the Light Rail group as I take forward my work particularly the next stage of Labour's Policy Review.

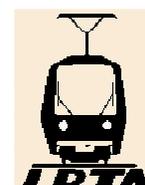
Labour's Policy Review

Each member of the shadow transport team will lead a review into issues identified as priorities for the coming year.

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- Maria Eagle MP will look at reform of the rail industry. The review will look at all options for reform, with its starting point being that tackling the fragmented structure of the industry is vital to deliver better affordability for both tax-payers and fare-payers. Labour's policy review has supported the devolution of rail services and the review will look at how best to achieve this, while identifying the right future delivery model for inter-city services.
- Jim Fitzpatrick MP will lead a review looking at how we can best deliver the aviation capacity needed for economic competitiveness, while reducing emissions and increasing sustainability.
- John Woodcock MP will lead a review looking at how transport infrastructure and procurement could contribute to growth and jobs through longer term planning. The review will also look at how investment in different modes, such as road and rail, could be better integrated and jointly planned. In addition, John will lead a review into how surface transport's contribution to climate change should be tackled.
- I will lead a review into how best to further devolve transport decision making and funding, including local roads and rail services. The review will look at the powers and responsibilities of Integrated Transport Authorities and how these could be extended and rolled out across other parts of England. The review will also seek to identify how best to deliver a reversal of bus deregulation and ensure local communities can deliver bus services in a more effective way that puts passengers first.
- Finally, Pat Glass MP will lead a review into affordability and accessibility of transport for young people and how to deliver a concessionary fares scheme for 16-18 year olds in education and training.

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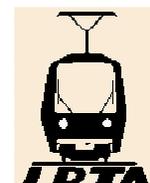
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These Reviews will build on the listening exercise we've carried out over the past 12 months and the clear principles that we've identified as underpinning the whole process, which it's worth reiterating here:

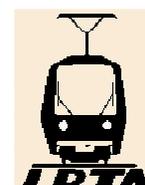
1. We believe that world-class transport is vital to Britain's economic prosperity
2. We think that passengers should be at the heart of our policies. Transport must be affordable and accessible to everyone.
3. That transport must be sustainable - it needs to be part of the solution to tackling climate change -not part of the problem.
4. That local people often feel they have little influence over transport. We want decisions to be taken as close as possible to the people who are affected – that means devolving greater responsibility and control of spending decisions to local or regional level, putting communities in charge.

I am pleased to say that Light rail has potential to tick all these boxes – it can play a significant part in an integrated transport strategy for urban areas, it can promote economic growth and help transport to contribute to reduction in carbon emissions, and be responsive to passenger needs. So, why, considering all its potential, has the Light Rail project not progressed further?

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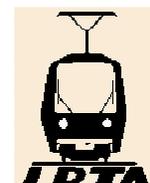
I'd like to turn now to specifically address the issues I think we face in maximising the opportunities offered by Light Rail.

- The role that light rail and tram systems play in communities up and down the country is invaluable, as I well know from my own constituency in Nottingham where we have has an excellent and well-used tram service.
- Passengers value light rail and tram, as can be seen by the 5.5% increase in passenger numbers between 2009/10 and 2010/11, which is the highest number of passenger journeys to date.
- For urban areas, light rail is the best option for quick, safe and affordable transport, all with minimal impact on the environment.
- Trams are not only quiet and have no emissions at source, they are also reliable and fast enough to encourage people to leave their cars at home for their commute to work or popping into town. Trams can achieve a modal shift out of cars and onto public transport that buses just can't reach.
- In 2004 the National Audit Office found that 18-20% of passengers on trams in Manchester Sheffield and Croydon had previously used their cars. In Nottingham the figure seems to be nearer 30% - partly because park and ride is integral to the scheme and there is good integration with local bus services.
- They also have vital economic benefits – helping to regenerate some run down areas and serving socially disadvantaged communities
- And they provide excellent access for people with disabilities – with audio announcements, visual displays, level access and room for wheelchairs and mobility scooters not available on other forms of transport.

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So why do we only have 7 modern light rail and tram systems in the UK?(almost 8 – Edinburgh yet to open) whilst they're commonplace in continental Europe? Partly it's about the priority given to transport and the attitudes to investing in transport to reap the social, economic and environmental benefits – European countries seem more willing to develop transport, with greater political consensus and more innovative use of new technologies.

But it's also because there have been real barriers to Light Rail's development and expansion in the UK:

- In the UK the overwhelming majority of utilities diversion costs fall on the promoters
- Decisions on funding are made centrally
- UK light rail tends to run on specially built infrastructure whereas in Germany for example, there's more shared use of track with heavy rail

So we welcomed the Government's decision to fund the Manchester Metrolink extensions to Ashton and to East Didsbury, and the announcement of their intention to support an extension to Midland Metro through Birmingham city centre to New Street Station. And of course I'm delighted that they are supporting the extensions to Nottingham's tram system.

But, we particularly welcome the publication of the Department for Transport's 'Green Light for Light Rail'.

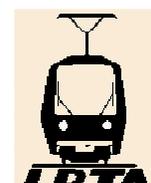
The report contains some important recommendations which seek to address those barriers to light rail in the UK particularly the high costs associated with schemes.

Implementing a new and uniform project design for light rail, setting up a 'centre of procurement excellence', and consulting on the relationship between utilities and light rail could all make a real difference to the future development of light rail in the future and we look forward to examining the proposals the Government brings forward in these areas.

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But I am concerned that despite these positive noises from the Government there is a cuts agenda that may mean the reality doesn't match the rhetoric.

- Recent figures showed that in the first year of this government alone 41% was cut from rail investment.
- And we have seen the impact of these cuts nationally, with plans to electrify the Great Western Main Line between Cardiff and Swansea being axed and the Midland Main Line from London to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield now not expected to see the planned progress on electrification in this spending review.
- The government may have committed to investing in procurement for a new generation of Inter-City trains, yet cut the order from 1400 to 600 vehicles. Other much needed new rolling stock for the rail network will no longer be ordered in this spending period.
- In our view, at a time when our economy desperately needs jobs and growth is precisely when we should be maintaining our spending on infrastructure.

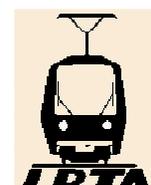
Integration and ITAs

- And light rail systems will never reach their full potential unless we provide the most integrated transport networks possible.
- That's what we have in London with Transport for London, and in other areas of the country where Integrated Transport Authorities have the ability to link up the different modes of transport in their region to create a service which is easy and affordable for communities to use.
- As part of the policy review Labour has seen how important ITAs are, and I'm sure Geoff Inskip will agree that the independence and devolution involved with ITAs means there are more flexible and quicker to respond to the demands of their passengers.

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That's why I think the policy review work I'll be undertaking - looking at the powers and responsibilities of Integrated Transport Authorities and how these could be extended and rolled out across other parts of England is so important.

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Conclusion

- So Labour is firmly committed to building on the successes that light rail systems have already had.
- Our review will focus on how we can maximise the ability of ITAs to take the devolved decisions needed to build up fully integrated networks, which see passengers able to use different modes of transport including trams easily and cheaply.
- And we want to see sustained investment in light rail systems, not only because they bring real economic benefits, but because well-designed light railways can bring huge improvements to quality of life in our towns and cities.

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